



August 28th, 2026

Chairperson: Alderman S Skillen

Vice-Chairperson: Councillor N Parker

Aldermen: J Baird, M Gregg

Councillors: J Bamford, D Bassett, S Burns, P Catney, A Givan, A Gowan, G Hynds, B Magee, C McCready, M McKeever, R McLernon

Ex Officio:

The Right Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor B Higginson

Deputy Mayor, Alderman A McIntyre

Notice Of Meeting

A meeting of the Environment and Sustainability Committee will be held on **Wednesday, 2nd September 2026** at **6:00 pm** for the transaction of the undernoted Agenda.

Hot Buffet will be available in Lighters from 5.15pm for Committee Members.

David Burns
Chief Executive

Agenda

1.0 Apologies

2.0 Declaration of Interests

- (i) conflict of interest on any matter before the meeting (Members to confirm the specific item)
- (ii) pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest (Member to complete disclosure of interest form)

Attachment: Disclosure of Interests form Sept 24.pdf

Page 1

3.0 Report by the Director of Environmental Services

3.1 Presentation - Terms of Reference

Attachment: TOR (Updated 27.8.26).pdf

Page 3

4.0 Report by the Head of Service (Building Control and Sustainability)

4.1 Department for Economy Consultation on Geothermal Regulation

For Decision

Attachment: Item 3.1BC - Consultation on DfE Geothermal Regulation.pdf

Page 18

Attachment: Item 3.1 - Appendix 1BC - LCCC Geothermal Consultation Response.pdf

Page 20

5.0 Report by the Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning)

5.1 Data Sharing Agreement between Councils and Landlord Registration Scheme Northern Ireland (LRSNI)

For Decision

Attachment: Item 4.1 EH - REPORT - Landlord Registration Scheme Data Sharing Agreement.pdf

Page 24

Attachment: Item 4.1 - Appendix 1 EH - Data Sharing Agreement LRSNI and Councils.pdf

Page 26

5.2 Request to Waive Cemetery Fees

For Decision

Attachment: Item 4.2 EH - REPORT - Request to Waive Cemetery Fees.pdf

Page 41

5.3	Toy Safety Regulations Call for Evidence	
	<i>For Decision</i>	
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.3 EH - REPORT - Call for Evidence - Toy Safety Regulations.pdf</i>	<i>Page 43</i>
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.3 EH - Appendix 2 EH - Call for Evidence - Toy Safety Regulation Response LCCC.pdf</i>	<i>Page 45</i>
5.4	Consultation - Fireworks and Pyrotechnics in the UK	
	<i>For Decision</i>	
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.4 EH - REPORT - Fireworks and pyrotechnics in the UK Consultation.pdf</i>	<i>Page 50</i>
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.4 - Appendix 3 EH - Fireworks and Pyrotechnics in the UK Consultation - LCCC response.pdf</i>	<i>Page 52</i>
5.5	Consultation - Tobacco and Vapes, Packaging, Appearance and Display	
	<i>For Decision</i>	
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.5 EH - REPORT - Consultation on Tobacco and vapes - packaging appearance and display.pdf</i>	<i>Page 60</i>
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.5 - Appendix 4 EH - Consultation on Tobacco and Vapes - LCCC Response.pdf</i>	<i>Page 63</i>
5.6	Consultation - Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026	
	<i>For Decision</i>	
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.6 EH - REPORT - Consultation on the Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026.pdf</i>	<i>Page 95</i>
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.6 - Appendix 5 EH - Consultation on the Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026.pdf</i>	<i>Page 97</i>
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.6 - Appendix 6 EH - Draft LCCC Response to Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026.pdf</i>	<i>Page 131</i>
5.7	Consultation - Proposed Animal Welfare Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland 2026	
	<i>For Decision</i>	
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.7 EH - REPORT - Consultation on Proposed AW Policy Reforms in NI 2026.pdf</i>	<i>Page 136</i>
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.7 - Appendix 7 EH - Consultation on Proposed Animal Welfare Policy Reforms.pdf</i>	<i>Page 139</i>
	<i>Attachment: Item 4.7 - Appendix 8 EH - Response to Consultation on Proposed AW Policy Reforms in NI (June 2026).pdf</i>	<i>Page 172</i>

5.8 Consultation - Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

For Decision

Attachment: Item 4.8 EH - REPORT - Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland.pdf

Page 182

Attachment: Item 4.8 - Appendix 9 EH - Consultation of Bathing Waters Policy Review for NI.pdf

Page 184

Attachment: Item 4.8 - Appendix 10 EH - Draft LCCC Response to Bathing Waters Policy Review Consultation.pdf

Page 218

5.9 Consultation - Proposals to Restrict the Promotion of Products High in Fat, Sugar or Salt in Northern Ireland

For Decision

Attachment: Item 4.9 EH - REPORT - Consultation on Restricting Promotions of High Fat Sugar and Salt Foods.pdf

Page 241

5.10 Proposed Caravan Licence Model Conditions 2026

For Decision

Attachment: Item 4.10 EH - REPORT - Proposed Changes to Caravan Model Conditions.pdf

Page 243

Attachment: Item 4.10 - Appendix 11 EH - Proposed amendments to LCCC caravan site licence model conditions.pdf

Page 246

6.0 Confidential Report by the Head of Service (Waste Management and Operational Services)

6.1 Carryduff Household Recycling Centre Tender Evaluation Criteria

For Decision

Attachment: Item 1 Confidential - Carryduff Waste Recycling Centre, Tender Evaluation Criteria.pdf

Not included

6.2 Offensive Weapons Community Surrender Bins

For Decision

Attachment: Item 2 Confidential - REPORT - Offensive weapons community surrender bins.pdf

Not included

7.0 Confidential Report by the Head of Service (Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning)

7.1 Business Case for Landlord Registration Scheme

For Decision

*Attachment: Item 3 Confidential - REPORT - Landlord Registration Scheme
Business Case.pdf*

Not included

8.0 Any Other Business

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

MEMBERS DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

1. Pecuniary Interests

The Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors under Section 6 requires you to declare at the relevant meeting any pecuniary interest that you may have in any matter coming before any meeting of your Council.

Pecuniary (or financial) interests are those where the decision to be taken could financially benefit or financially disadvantage either you or a member of your close family. A member of your close family is defined as at least your spouse, live-in partner, parent, child, brother, sister and the spouses of any of these. Members may wish to be more prudent by extending that list to include grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces or even close friends.

This information will be recorded in a Statutory Register. On such matters **you must not speak or vote**. Subject to the provisions of Sections 6.5 to 6.11 of the Code, if such a matter is to be discussed by your Council, **you must withdraw from the meeting whilst that matter is being discussed**.

2. Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interests

In addition you must also declare any significant private or personal non-pecuniary interest in a matter arising at a Council meeting (please see also Sections 5.2 and 5.6 and 5.8 of the Code).

Significant private or personal non-pecuniary (membership) interests are those which do not financially benefit or financially disadvantage you or a member of your close family directly, but nonetheless, so significant that could be considered as being likely to influence your decision.

Subject to the provisions of Sections 6.5 to 6.11 of the Code, you must declare this interest as soon as it becomes apparent and **you must withdraw from any Council meeting (including committee or sub-committee meetings) when this matter is being discussed**.

In respect of each of these, please complete the form below as necessary.

Pecuniary Interests

Meeting (Council or Committee - please specify and name):

Date of Meeting: _____

Item(s) in which you must declare an interest (please specify item number from report):

Nature of Pecuniary Interest:

Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interests

Meeting (Council or Committee - please specify and name):

Date of Meeting: _____

Item(s) in which you must declare an interest (please specify item number from report):

Nature of Private or Personal Non-Pecuniary Interest:

Name:

Address:

Signed:

Date:

--	--

*If you have any queries please contact David Burns, Chief Executive,
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council*

Environment & Sustainability Committee

Terms of Reference

Wednesday 2 September 2026



Agenda

4

- Committee Structure
- Terms of Reference
- Contact Details



Council and Committee Structures



Terms of Reference

6

The Environment and Sustainability Committee has the following responsibilities:

Building Control & Sustainability

- Agree new street naming applications which do not meet agreed policy
- Agree applications for a change to a street name or a second language
- Agree and review council's policy in relation to the building control service functions
- Agree and review council's strategy and policy in relation to climate and sustainability



Terms of Reference

cont'd

7

Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning

- Approve the designation of an area for the purpose of street trading
- Approve entertainment licences in premises outside the scheme of delegation
- Agree and review council's policy in relation to Enforcement & Regulatory Policy
- Agree and review relevant policies and strategies including, but not limited to, safeguarding, cemeteries and off-street parking
- Agree and review rules and regulations for cemeteries
- Agree and review the Council's Emergency Plan



Terms of Reference

cont'd

8

Waste Management & Operations

- Agree and review the implementation of the council's Sub Regional Waste Management Plan and Policies
- Agree and review the relevant policies and strategies including but not limited to street cleansing and fleet

Capital Programme

- Agree business cases and investment decisions in line with the capital governance process
- Seek and agree third party funding related to capital needs
- Monitor and evaluate outcomes of capital projects



Terms of Reference

cont'd

9

Procurement & Contract Management

- Note or agree procurement/tender outcomes and related contract management matters including all STA's in line with policy

Budget Oversight

- Approve and monitor annual service budgets for the Environmental Services Directorate as part of the rates setting process



Contact Details

10

Director of Environmental Services:

Angela McCann 028 9244 7883 or 07971 954077

Angela.mccann@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Director's Personal Assistant:

Alison Wilton 028 9244 7866 or 07766 922192

Alison.Wilton@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk



Contact Details

11

Head of Building Control & Sustainability:

Colin Duff 02892 447370 or 07703 360126

Colin.duff@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Head of Waste & Operational Services:

Wilfie Muldrew 02892 447760 or 07739 948564

Wilfie.muldrew@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Head of Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning:

Richard Harvey 02892 447821 or 07350 454234

Richard.harvey@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk



Agenda, Papers & Any Other Business

12

- Aim to issue papers 5 working days in advance of Environment & Sustainability Committee
- Paper is either for *Decision* or *Noting*
- AOB

Agenda, Papers and Any Other Business (continued)

13

- Information and Correspondence Schedule:

In order to allow Elected Members to focus on more strategic decision-making issues at Committee, an Information and Correspondence Schedule is issued monthly, on the same day as the ESC papers.

Environment & Sustainability Responsibilities

Building Control & Sustainability

Administration & Enforcement of the Building Regulations	Energy Performance of Buildings Legislation
Carry out Plan Assessments and Site Inspections	Council Building Display Energy Certification
Provide a customer pre-consultation service to engage in building compliance with B Regs	Street Nameplate Erection
Carry out Fire Risk Assessments for Council Buildings	LPS liaison in new address creation and completion for rating purposes
Street Naming & Postal Numbering	Developing the Councils Sustainability response to the Climate Change (NI) Act 2022
Property Certificate Administration	Developing Councils Sustainability Strategy & Climate Action Plan
Administer Dangerous Structures Legislation	Developing Councils response to energy management and emissions reduction

Environment & Sustainability Responsibilities

Waste Management & Operational Services

Domestic waste collections	Residual waste Mixed dry recycling Organic waste Bulky household collections
Street cleansing	Mechanical sweeping Manual litter picking and street sweeping Litter bins Fly tipping removal
Commercial waste collection	Waste collection service to schools, charities and businesses
Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) (3)	Additional resident capacity for the management of household waste
Fleet Management	Management, maintenance and servicing of all Council owned vehicles and equipment

Environment & Sustainability Responsibilities

Environmental Health, Risk & Emergency Planning

Commercial	Community	Corporate/Contingency
Food Control Public Health & Safety Consumer Protection Tobacco Control Street Trading Entertainment Licensing Pavement Café Licensing Water Sampling	Public Health & Housing Derelict Buildings Air Pollution Noise Control Environmental Crime Planning Consultations Pest Control Home Safety Dog Control Animal Welfare Litter & Illegal Dumping Petroleum Licensing Abandoned Vehicles	Cemeteries Administration Off Street Car Parking Emergency Planning Business Continuity Risk Management Insurance Health & Safety – Corporate Safety Advisory Group (SAG) Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Community Health & Wellbeing Landlord Registration Scheme

Q&A





Committee:	Environment & Sustainability Committee
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service – Building Control & Sustainability

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Department for Economy Consultation on Geothermal Regulation

Background and Key Issues

- 1.0 The Department for the Economy (DfE) issued a consultation on Geothermal Licensing proposals on 15 May 2026. The consultation ran for a 12-week period, closing on 7th August 2026.
- 1.1 The consultation documents, along with impact assessment can be found at: [Proposals for Geothermal Regulation Consultation | Department for the Economy](#)
- 1.2 This committee agreed on 2 June 2026, subject to any Elected Member comments by 15 July 2026, to the submission of a response on behalf of LCCC before the closing date of 7 August 2026.
- 1.3 The committee also agreed that the submitted response would be brought to the September Environment & Sustainability Committee for retrospective approval.
- 1.4 The consultation response as submitted to DfE is attached in **Appendix 1BC**.

Consultation Overview

- 1.5 DfE sought views on proposals to introduce a new regulatory framework for geothermal energy in Northern Ireland.
- 1.6 Geothermal energy is the natural heat stored underground. It can be used to heat buildings, provide hot water, and in some cases cool buildings. It is a local, low-carbon energy source that is available at all times and does not depend on the weather. Increasing its use could help reduce carbon emissions, improve energy security, and reduce reliance on imported fossil fuels.
- 1.7 Northern Ireland has significant potential for geothermal energy. While small scale systems for individual buildings are already in use, there is currently no specific regulatory framework in place, particularly for larger or more complex geothermal developments.
- 1.8 This consultation set out proposals to introduce new legislation that would create clear and proportionate rules for geothermal development. The aim is to support the growth of a sustainable geothermal sector, while ensuring environmental protection and fair use of underground resources.

	<u>Summary</u>	
1.9	The LCCC response as submitted is largely in support of the consultation proposals.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
	It is recommended that committee	
	retrospectively approves the consultation submission made to the Department for the Economy on Geothermal Regulation.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	None for Council	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	Yes
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	
	Third Party Consultation	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	
	Third Party Consultation	

Appendices:	Appendix 1BC – LCCC response to DfE Consultation on Geothermal Regulation.
--------------------	---

LCCC Consultation Response: Geothermal Licensing Consultation

Question 1:

Do you agree that licensing and regulation can encourage growth in the geothermal sector in an economically viable way?

Please provide reasons to support your answer.

Yes. This approach can encourage investment and stability by providing a legal framework. However, the licensing and regulatory framework must be transparent and support, not be at odds with or duplicate, existing legislative powers such as planning, extraction licensing etc.

Economic support will be required to highlight, familiarise, train, educate, embed and embrace this technology. It is noted that future grants and support is being considered which is crucial.

Question 2:

Do you agree with the proposed exemptions from geothermal licensing?

If not, please suggest an alternative and provide supporting evidence. (Please refer to Annex B for further details on exemptions).

Yes. Small and domestic installations (60kwh), where risk to the environment etc is considered low, should be exempt. This will help streamline the domestic market, simplify the process and support the technology, removing any perceived obstacles to growth.

Consideration should be given to dense urban developments such as large housing developments that may have the potential to collectively cause thermal interference and ground temperature depletion over time. This could reduce the coefficient of performance (COP) resulting in higher electrical demand for householders.

Question 3:

Do you agree with the proposed licence requirements for geothermal systems?

Please comment on whether the level of regulation seems appropriate, proportionate and understandable. You may wish to refer to the technical details set out in Annex B when providing your views on the specific requirements. Please provide reasons to support your answer and any alternative suggestions.

We would agree that DfE with its expertise should be the Regulator and responsible for licensing, assessment, screening and enforcement through the full life cycle.

Question 4:

Do you agree with the three-tiered approach to the licensing and regulation of thermal storage systems?

Please comment on whether you support a risk-based approach. You may wish to review the detailed criteria in Annex B when forming your response.

A graded licensing system as described appears to be reflective of the risk-based approach and applies fuller regulatory oversight where required.

Question 5:

Do you agree that DfE will use installation and operation cost data to benchmark system costs?

Please provide reasons to support your answer.

Yes. This will provide the basis of future development, both regulatory and economically to support both the industry and customers should grants etc be later applied. This should ensure consumer protection and value for money in publicly owned geothermal resources.

Question 6:

Should existing geothermal systems providing more than 60kW of heat be required to obtain a geothermal licence?

Please provide reasons to support your answer.

All geothermal systems should be registered to note their existence and ensure regulatory consistency. However, as no licensing arrangement was in place at that time, it would seem onerous to apply full regulation, unless a risk to environment etc has been identified. Although a 'deemed licence' is proposed, all should be encouraged and assisted to gain a full licence.

Question 7:

Do you agree with the proposed initial 25-year duration of a geothermal licence?

Please provide reasons to support your answer.

Yes. This length seems appropriate to allow certainty of investment by the developer. It matches the expected lifecycle of commercial capital assets and is subject to 5 yearly review and oversight by DfE.

Question 8:

Do you agree with the proposals on public consultation as part of the licensing process?

Please provide reasons to support your answer and any alternative suggestions.

Broadly agree, for installations requiring a license as it provides a level of transparency. Final decision on issuing the licence rests with DfE.

Question 9:

Do you agree with the proposed enforcement measures?

Please provide reasons to support your answer and any alternative suggestions.

Yes, broadly agree. However, any licence conditions will need to be very clear and enforceable, including both environmental and public protection.

In addition, DfE oversight should be applied during installation/construction to ensure that all appropriate standards are applied. This will then include periodic operating inspections to ensure all operating standards are applied.

Question 10:

Do you agree with the plan to establish a public NI geothermal data portal?

Please provide reasons to support your answer and any alternative suggestions.

Further information on the geothermal data portal can be found in Annex D

Yes. This will allow full transparency and assist to build a picture/ database of where geothermal has potential and viability for academic and industry use.

Question 11:

Do you agree with the proposals for public ownership of heat and access to geothermal energy, with DfE responsible for the regulation of the resource?

Please provide reasons to support comments or alternative suggestions.

Yes. This is the case in other jurisdictions and balances the public interest against property rights. The consultation estimates that 98% of boreholes will remain within the first 100m depth and within the rights of the property owner.

Defining licencing/regulation of public heat ownership below 100 meters, this process should assure developers that neighbouring projects will not result in longer-term commercial risk through potential over-exploitation/depletion of a shared thermal resource, so as to build long-term investor confidence.

Question12:

Do you agree that clarifying ownership and access will contribute positively to the geothermal sector?

[Please provide reasons to support comments or alternative suggestions.](#)

Yes. Council agrees with the proposals for the public ownership of heat below 100 meters. DfE should act as the central regulatory authority as this approach should deliver strategic resource stewardship and protection, ensuring geothermal energy is managed in a way that maximises public benefit and long-term sustainability.

Landowner rights must be clearly protected from any potential adverse effect, with clear mechanisms for appeal and compensation if required.

Question13:

Do you agree with DfE's assessment of the equality and rural impacts of licensing geothermal systems?

[Please provide reasons and evidence to support your comments.](#)

The outcome of the equality screening is to 'screen out without mitigation,' due to the technical and licensing nature of the proposals.

As the licensing framework exempts small, domestic-scale systems, focusing on commercial and institutional installations, it does not place any direct financial burden on individuals or vulnerable groups. This development also offers unique, positive opportunities for rural communities that frequently lack access to the natural gas grid. This typically results in higher levels of fuel poverty and air pollution through burning of high-carbon/high-cost heating oil, coal or LPG. Geothermal offers opportunity to address these environmental/social justice challenges.



Committee:	Environment and Sustainability Committee
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Data Sharing Agreement between Councils and Landlord Registration Scheme NI (LRSNI)

1.0	Background and Key Issues
1.1	The functions of the Landlord Registration Scheme NI (LRSNI) transferred from the Department for Communities to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) in March 2025.
1.2	Landlord registration is a statutory requirement for all landlords operating within the private rented sector in Northern Ireland. Landlords are required to register both their personal details and information relating to their rental properties. The Scheme is self-financing and does not require financial contributions from councils.
1.3	Although Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council was appointed by letter in October 2025, it had been anticipated that formal appointment through an amendment to The Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 would have been enacted soon thereafter. LCCC has been advised that these legislative changes are not expected to be made before March 2027.
1.4	As councils' enforcement teams are the primary users of the data held by the Registrar, particularly in relation to their duties under the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, a revised Data Sharing Agreement between the LRSNI team and each council is required. This will provide a robust governance framework for both LRSNI and councils and will give assurance to landlords regarding the access that may be provided to their data.
1.5	The LRSNI team sits within the same unit as the LCCC enforcement team, but each team has separate and distinct roles. It is therefore necessary for a data sharing agreement to be arranged between the two teams, and that LCCC enforcement team is treated in the same manner as other councils.
1.6	The new Data Sharing Agreement is attached at Appendix 1 EH . The agreement was previously circulated to each Council for comment and no comments were received.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>
2.1	It is recommended that the committee: • approves the Data Sharing Agreement for signing by the relevant Head of Service on behalf of the council, allowing the council's housing teams to access the data relating to registered landlords.

3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Not applicable.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	n/a
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. A screening will be carried out on the wider project at the appropriate time, however the specification for this product has made mitigations to meet equality screening criteria including Website Content Accessibility Guidelines.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	n/a
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. A screening will be carried out on the wider project at the appropriate time.	

Appendices:	Appendix 1 EH – Data Sharing Agreement
--------------------	---

DATA SHARING AGREEMENT

IN RELATION TO THE SHARING OF DATA WITH DISTRICT COUNCILS UNDER THE LANDLORD REGISTRATION SCHEME (NORTHERN IRELAND)

DATED: [●] 2026

PARTIES:

(1) Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council of whose administrative address is at Civic Centre Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn BT27 4RL (the "**Registrar**"); and

(2) The councils listed in Schedule 1 (each a "**Recipient Council**" and together the "**Recipient Councils**").

(Each a "**Party**" and together the "**Parties**".)

BACKGROUND

- (A) The Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 (S.R. 2014 No. 9) as amended establish the Landlord Registration Scheme for Northern Ireland and provide for the registration of landlords who let relevant dwellings.
- (B) The Registrar has been appointed by the Department for Communities by way of letter of appointment dated 23 October 2025. In accordance with this letter of appointment, the Registrar shall establish and maintain the register of landlords and to operate the registration system on behalf of the eleven district councils in Northern Ireland.
- (C) Regulation 6 of the Regulations requires the Registrar to operate a system that allows for the disclosure of information to the persons specified in regulation 9, which includes district councils for the purpose of enabling or assisting them to exercise their functions under the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and Article 54 of the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.
- (D) The Parties wish to establish a formal framework for the sharing of personal data held by the Registrar under the Regulations to Recipient Councils for the purposes permitted by regulation 9, in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and applicable data protection legislation.
- (E) This Agreement sets out the terms on which the Registrar will share personal data with the Recipient Councils and the obligations of each Party in respect of such data.

AGREED TERMS

1 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

1.1 In this Agreement, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Authorised Officer" means an officer of a Recipient Council who has been authorised in writing by that Recipient Council for the purposes of regulation 9 of the Regulations and in accordance with clause 5 of this Agreement.

"Data Protection Law" means the UK General Data Protection Regulation (as defined in section 3(10) of the Data Protection Act 2018), the Data Protection Act 2018, the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and any other applicable law relating to the processing of personal data and privacy, as amended or replaced from time to time.

"Data Subject" means an identified or identifiable natural person whose personal data is processed under this Agreement.

"Non-Public Data" means personal data held by the Registrar in connection with the Register which is not included in the Public Register, including without limitation the information specified in Schedule 1 of the Regulations (as required by regulation 1) but excluded from Schedule 2.

"Personal Data Breach" means a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, Shared Data.

"Public Register" means the register of landlords maintained by the Registrar in accordance with regulation 6 and Schedule 2 of the Regulations, which is made available to the public.

"Recipient Council" means a district council in Northern Ireland that is a party to this Agreement and receives Shared Data from the Registrar under this Agreement.

"Register" means the register of landlords established and maintained by the Registrar in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations.

"Registrar" means Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council in its capacity as the person appointed by the Department to establish and maintain the Register and operate the registration system pursuant to the Regulations.

"Regulations" means the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 (S.R. 2014 No. 9) as amended, extended, consolidated, re-enacted or replaced from time to time.

"Shared Data" means the Non-Public Data disclosed by the Registrar to a Recipient Council under this Agreement in accordance with regulation 9 of the Regulations.

"Statutory Purposes" means the purposes of enabling or assisting a Recipient Council to exercise its functions under the provisions of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and Article 54 of the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, as specified in regulation 9(a) of the Regulations.

1.2 References to **"processing"** and cognate terms shall have the meaning given in Data Protection Law.

1.3 References to any statute, statutory provision or regulation include any amendment, extension, consolidation or re-enactment thereof.

2 STATUS OF THE PARTIES

2.1 The Registrar and each Recipient Council are independent controllers in respect of the Shared Data. The Registrar is the controller in respect of the collection, storage and maintenance of personal data in the Register and the disclosure of Shared Data under regulation 9. Each Recipient Council is the controller in respect of its receipt, use and processing of the Shared Data for the Statutory Purposes.

2.2 Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute the Parties as joint controllers in respect of the Shared Data, and no Party shall process Shared Data as a processor on behalf of any other Party.

2.3 Each Party shall comply with its obligations as a controller under Data Protection Law in respect of its processing of the Shared Data.

2.4 Each Party shall be responsible for ensuring that, in respect of its own processing of Shared Data as an independent controller, it has in place and maintains appropriate transparency information and privacy notices, records of processing activities, retention arrangements, data protection policies and procedures, and any data protection impact assessment or other risk assessment required by Data Protection Law.

3 LEGAL BASIS FOR SHARING

- 3.1 The Parties acknowledge that the lawful basis for the sharing of Shared Data under this Agreement is the performance of a task carried out in the public interest **Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR** or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Registrar and each Recipient Council pursuant to the Regulations.
- 3.2 Regulation 9 of the Regulations provides the statutory gateway for disclosure, requiring that information held by the Registrar and not included in the Public Register shall, on request from an Authorised Officer, be disclosed to a district council for the Statutory Purposes.
- 3.3 The Parties shall ensure that any processing of Shared Data is necessary for and proportionate to the Statutory Purposes and that any further processing is compatible with those purposes.

4 SCOPE OF DATA SHARING

- 4.1 The Registrar shall disclose Shared Data to a Recipient Council only:
 - 4.1.1 in response to a request from an Authorised Officer of that Recipient Council;
 - 4.1.2 where the Authorised Officer has identified the applicable Statutory Purposes for the disclosure by selecting the relevant Statutory Purpose from the drop-down menu made available for that purpose on the secure portal; and
 - 4.1.3 where the request, including any request for the Registrar to undertake a search of the register for information, is made in accordance with the Information Sharing Protocol at Schedule 3.
- 4.2 The categories of Shared Data which may be disclosed under this Agreement are set out in Schedule 2. These categories reflect the information required to be provided by landlords under regulation 3 and Schedule 1 of the Regulations which is not included in the Public Register.
- 4.3 The Registrar shall not disclose any Shared Data beyond what is necessary for the relevant Statutory Purpose specified in the request and shall apply data minimisation principles when responding to requests. For the avoidance of doubt, Shared Data comprises only Non-Public Data disclosed under regulation 9 of the Regulations. Information included in the Public Register is not Shared Data for the purposes of this Agreement and may be accessed separately without a request under this Agreement. Where any information category or data field appears in both a public and non-public context, only the non-public element disclosed under regulation 9 shall be treated as Shared Data and governed by this Agreement.
- 4.4 For the avoidance of doubt, information included in the Public Register (as specified in Schedule 2 of the Regulations) is publicly available and may be accessed by any person without the need for a request under this Agreement.

5 AUTHORISED OFFICERS

- 5.1 Each Recipient Council shall appoint Authorised Officers for the purposes of this Agreement and shall ensure that each such appointment is made in writing in accordance with the template set out in Schedule 4.
- 5.2 Each Recipient Council shall maintain a register of its Authorised Officers and shall provide to the Registrar:
 - 5.2.1 an initial list of Authorised Officers within fourteen (14) days of the Commencement Date; and
 - 5.2.2 updates to that list within seven (7) days of any appointment or revocation of an Authorised Officer.
- 5.3 The Registrar shall be entitled to conduct an annual review of each Recipient Council's register of its Authorised Officers.

5.3.1 Each Recipient Council shall, within seven (7) days of receipt of the annual review, confirm in writing to the Registrar that the annual review of its Authorised Officers is correct.

5.4 Only Authorised Officers may request or receive Shared Data from the Registrar under this Agreement.

5.5 Each Recipient Council shall ensure that its Authorised Officers:

5.5.1 are trained in the requirements of this Agreement, the Regulations and Data Protection Law;

5.5.2 understand the Statutory Purposes for which Shared Data may be used and the prohibition on collateral use;

5.5.3 comply with the Information Sharing Protocol at Schedule 3; and

5.5.4 maintain the confidentiality and security of all Shared Data.

5.6 Each Recipient Council shall promptly revoke the authorisation of any Authorised Officer who ceases to require access to Shared Data for the Statutory Purposes or who breaches any term of this Agreement, and shall notify the Registrar of such revocation within seven (7) days.

6 OBLIGATIONS OF THE REGISTRAR

6.1 The Registrar shall:

6.1.1 operate a registration system that allows for the disclosure of Shared Data to Authorised Officers of Recipient Councils in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations;

6.1.2 implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the security and integrity of the Register and any Shared Data, including role-based access controls, encryption and secure transmission channels;

6.1.3 maintain audit logs of all disclosures of Shared Data, including the identity of the Authorised Officer, the date and time of disclosure, the categories of data disclosed and the Statutory Purpose specified;

6.1.4 respond to requests for Shared Data in a timely manner, having verified that the request is made by an Authorised Officer and for a Statutory Purpose;

6.1.5 ensure the accuracy of the data held in the Register, including by implementing procedures for landlords to update their information; and

6.1.6 provide guidance to Recipient Councils on the operation of the registration system and the procedures for requesting Shared Data.

7 OBLIGATIONS OF RECIPIENT COUNCILS

7.1 Each Recipient Council shall:

7.1.1 process Shared Data only for the Statutory Purposes and not for any collateral or incompatible purpose;

7.1.2 ensure that Shared Data is accessed only by Authorised Officers who require access for the Statutory Purposes, and that such personnel are bound by appropriate confidentiality obligations;

7.1.3 implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect the security and confidentiality of Shared Data;

- 7.1.4 not disclose Shared Data to any third party except where such disclosure is required by law or is necessary for and compatible with the Statutory Purposes;
- 7.1.5 ensure that Shared Data is accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date for the purposes for which it is processed;
- 7.1.6 retain Shared Data only for as long as necessary for the Statutory Purposes and in accordance with its records retention policy, and securely delete or destroy Shared Data when it is no longer required; and
- 7.1.7 maintain records of its processing of Shared Data as required by Data Protection Law.

8 DATA SUBJECT RIGHTS

- 8.1 Each Party shall be responsible for responding to requests from Data Subjects to exercise their rights under Data Protection Law in respect of the personal data for which that Party is the controller.
- 8.2 Where a Party receives a request from a Data Subject that relates (in whole or in part) to personal data held by another Party, it shall:
 - 8.2.1 in the case of a request received by a Recipient Council, notify the Registrar within five (5) working days of receipt of the request;
 - 8.2.2 provide reasonable assistance to the other Party in responding to the request; and
 - 8.2.3 not disclose any personal data held by the other Party without that Party's prior consent, except where required by law.
- 8.3 The Registrar shall include in any privacy notice provided to landlords' information about the potential disclosure of their personal data to Recipient Councils under regulation 9 for the Statutory Purposes.

9 PERSONAL DATA BREACHES

- 9.1 Each Party shall notify the other Parties without undue delay upon becoming aware of a Personal Data Breach affecting Shared Data.
- 9.2 The notification under clause 9.1 shall include, to the extent known:
 - 9.2.1 a description of the nature of the Personal Data Breach, including the categories and approximate number of Data Subjects and records concerned;
 - 9.2.2 the likely consequences of the Personal Data Breach; and
 - 9.2.3 the measures taken or proposed to be taken to address the Personal Data Breach.
- 9.3 Each Party shall be responsible for:
 - 9.3.1 notifying the Information Commissioner's Office where required by Data Protection Law in respect of any Personal Data Breach for which it is the controller; and
 - 9.3.2 notifying affected Data Subjects where required by Data Protection Law.
- 9.4 The Parties shall co-operate in good faith to investigate and remediate any Personal Data Breach affecting Shared Data.

10 SECURITY

- 10.1 As required by Article 32 of UK GDPR, each Party shall implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure a level of security appropriate to the risk of processing Shared Data, including, as appropriate:
- 10.1.1 the pseudonymisation and encryption of personal data;
 - 10.1.2 the ability to ensure the ongoing confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of processing systems and services;
 - 10.1.3 the ability to restore the availability and access to personal data in a timely manner in the event of a physical or technical incident; and
 - 10.1.4 a process for regularly testing, assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of technical and organisational measures.
- 10.2 The Registrar shall ensure that access to the Register and to Non-Public Data is controlled through secure authentication, role-based access permissions and audit logging.
- 10.3 Each Recipient Council shall ensure that Shared Data is stored securely and is accessible only to personnel who require access for the Statutory Purposes.

11 RECORDS AND AUDIT

- 11.1 Each Party shall maintain records of its processing activities under this Agreement as required by Article 30 of the UK GDPR.
- 11.2 The Registrar shall maintain a log of all disclosures of Shared Data under this Agreement, which shall be retained in line with the retention and deletion periods detailed in Lisburn & Castlereagh City's Council's Retention and Disposal Policy.
- 11.3 Each Recipient Council shall maintain records of the Shared Data it has received, the Statutory Purposes for which it was used and its subsequent retention or deletion. Such records shall be maintained in line with the retention and deletion periods agreed between each Recipient Council and the Registrar.
- 11.4 Each Party shall, upon reasonable notice, provide to any other Party such information as is reasonably required to demonstrate compliance with this Agreement and Data Protection Law.

12 REVIEW AND VARIATION

- 12.1 The Parties shall review this Agreement at least annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and compliant with Data Protection Law and the Regulations.
- 12.2 This Agreement may be varied only by written agreement signed by all Parties or their authorised representatives.

13 TERM AND TERMINATION

- 13.1 This Agreement shall commence on [●] and shall continue in force until terminated in accordance with this clause 13.
- 13.2 Any Party may terminate its participation in this Agreement by giving not less than three (3) months' written notice to the other Parties.
- 13.3 This Agreement may be terminated immediately by agreement of all Parties.

13.4 Upon termination of a Recipient Council's participation in this Agreement:

13.4.1 the Registrar shall cease to disclose Shared Data to that Recipient Council; and

13.4.2 that Recipient Council shall, subject to any legal obligation to retain records, securely delete or destroy all Shared Data in its possession or control, and shall confirm such deletion or destruction in writing to the Registrar within thirty (30) days of termination.

13.4.3 Clauses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 15 shall survive termination of this Agreement.

14 **GENERAL**

14.1 This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Parties in relation to its subject matter and supersedes all previous agreements and understandings between the Parties relating to its subject matter.

14.2 Each Party shall bear its own costs in connection with the negotiation, preparation and performance of this Agreement.

14.3 No failure or delay by any Party in exercising any right under this Agreement shall operate as a waiver of that right.

14.4 If any provision of this Agreement is held to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

14.5 Nothing in this Agreement shall create any rights enforceable by any person who is not a Party to this Agreement.

15 **GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION**

15.1 This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of Northern Ireland.

15.2 The Parties submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Northern Ireland in relation to any dispute arising out of or in connection with this Agreement.

EXECUTED as an agreement on the date first written above.

SCHEDULE 1

RECIPIENT COUNCILS

No.	Council Name	Address	Primary Contact Name, Title and Email Address
1	Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	[•]	[•]
2	Ards and North Down Borough Council	[•]	[•]
3	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	[•]	[•]
4	Belfast City Council	[•]	[•]
5	Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	[•]	[•]
6	Derry City and Strabane District Council	[•]	[•]
7	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	[•]	[•]
8	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	[•]	[•]
9	Mid Ulster District Council	[•]	[•]
10	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	[•]	[•]

SCHEDULE 2

CATEGORIES OF SHARED DATA

The following categories of personal data may be shared by the Registrar with Recipient Councils under this Agreement, in accordance with regulation 9 of the Regulations. These categories reflect only the Non-Public Data provided by landlords under regulation 3 and Schedule 1 of the Regulations which is not included in the Public Register. Information included in the Public Register is identified separately below for reference and is not Shared Data for the purposes of this Agreement. Where a category or data field appears in both a public and non-public context, only the non-public element disclosed under regulation 9 shall be treated as Shared Data and governed by this Agreement.

Category	Description	Source
Landlord Identity	Full name of the landlord where this is disclosed as part of Non-Public Data under regulation 9, including where required to identify or distinguish the landlord in connection with other non-public information requested for a Statutory Purpose. For the avoidance of doubt, landlord names included in the Public Register are not Shared Data.	Schedule 1, para 1. (a)
Landlord Address	Address of the landlord (where the landlord is a natural person)	Schedule 1, para 1. (d)
Landlord Contact Details	Telephone number (including mobile), fax number and email address of the landlord	Schedule 1, para 1. (d)
Landlord Date of Birth	Date of birth of the landlord (where the landlord is a natural person)	Schedule 1, para 1. (f)
Company Information	Where the landlord is a company, the company registration number of the landlord	Schedule 1, para 1. (h)
Property Details	Address of each dwelling let by the landlord	Schedule 1, para 1. (c)
Agent Information	Where an agent is appointed: name, address, telephone number, fax number and email address (to the extent not included in the Public Register)	Schedule 1, para 1. (b)

For the avoidance of doubt, the following information is included in the Public Register and is publicly available. It is included in this Schedule for reference only and is not Shared Data for the purposes of this Agreement unless a non-public element of the same category is separately disclosed under regulation 9 for a Statutory Purpose:

Category	Description	Source
Landlord Names	Names of each registered landlord	Schedule 2, para 1. (a)
Registration Numbers	Registration numbers of each registered landlord	Schedule 2, para 1. (b)

Agent Contact Details	Full name and contact details of any agent appointed by a registered landlord	Schedule 2, para 1. (c)
-----------------------	---	-------------------------

DRAFT

SCHEDULE 3

INFORMATION SHARING PROTOCOL

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Information Sharing Protocol (the "**Protocol**") sets out the operational procedures for requesting, disclosing and using Shared Data under the Data Sharing Agreement to which this Protocol is annexed.
- 1.2 All requests for Shared Data and all disclosures of Shared Data shall be made in accordance with this Protocol.

2 REQUESTING SHARED DATA

- 2.1 Requests for Shared Data may only be made by an Authorised Officer of a Recipient Council.
- 2.2 Requests shall be submitted via:
 - 2.2.1 the secure portal maintained by the Registrar; or
 - 2.2.2 where the portal is unavailable or where more data is required to adhere to and comply with Statutory Purposes, by email to landlordregistrationni@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk. Each request submitted through the secure portal maintained by the Registrar shall require the Authorised Officer to select the reason for the request from a list of options made available in a drop-down menu. Where the Authorised Officer selects "other", they must provide a legitimate reason for the request. Any such request shall be subject to review by the Registrar before any Shared Data is disclosed to the relevant Authorised Officer, to ensure that the proposed disclosure is in accordance with Clause 3 of this Agreement.
- 2.3 Each emailed request shall include:
 - 2.3.1 the name and contact details of the Authorised Officer making the request;
 - 2.3.2 confirmation of the Authorised Officer's current authorisation status;
 - 2.3.3 the specific categories of Shared Data requested;
 - 2.3.4 the identity of the landlord(s) or property/properties to which the request relates;
 - 2.3.5 the Statutory Purpose for which the Shared Data is required, specifying the relevant provision of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 or Article 54 of the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978; and
 - 2.3.6 a declaration that the request is made for the Statutory Purpose specified and that the Shared Data will be processed in accordance with the Data Sharing Agreement and Data Protection Law.
- 2.4 The Registrar shall verify that the emailed request is made by a current Authorised Officer listed on the relevant Recipient Council's register of Authorised Officers before processing the request.

3 DISCLOSURE OF SHARED DATA

- 3.1 For all emailed requests, the Registrar shall respond to valid requests within five (5) working days of receipt, or such shorter period as may be agreed for urgent enforcement matters.
- 3.2 For all requests made via the secure portal, provided that the information requested is available, the Authorised Officer will receive the requested information immediately. In the event that the requested

information is not available, the Authorised Officer should contact the Registrar at landlordregistrationni@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk to discuss the request further.

- 3.3 Shared Data shall be disclosed only through the secure portal or by email. Shared Data shall not be transmitted by unencrypted email, post or other insecure means.
- 3.4 The Registrar shall apply data minimisation principles and shall disclose only the Shared Data that is necessary for the Statutory Purpose specified in the request.
- 3.5 Each emailed disclosure shall be logged by the Registrar, while disclosures made via the secure portal shall be automatically logged, recording:
 - 3.5.1 the date and time of disclosure;
 - 3.5.2 the identity of the Authorised Officer to whom disclosure was made;
 - 3.5.3 the categories of Shared Data disclosed;
 - 3.5.4 the Statutory Purpose specified; and

4 USE OF SHARED DATA

- 4.1 Shared Data shall be used only for the Statutory Purpose specified in the request. Use for any other purpose is prohibited unless:
 - 4.1.1 such use is required by law; or
 - 4.1.2 such use is compatible with the original Statutory Purpose and is necessary for the exercise of the Recipient Council's functions under the relevant housing legislation.
- 4.2 Shared Data shall be accessed only by:
 - 4.2.1 the Authorised Officer who made the request; and
 - 4.2.2 other personnel of the Recipient Council who require access for the Statutory Purpose and who are bound by appropriate confidentiality obligations.
- 4.3 Shared Data shall not be disclosed to any third party except where such disclosure is required by law or is necessary for and compatible with the Statutory Purpose.
- 4.4 Shared Data shall be stored securely and separately from other council data where practicable, with access limited to those who require it for the Statutory Purpose.

5 RETENTION AND DELETION

- 5.1 Shared Data shall be retained only for as long as necessary for the Statutory Purpose for which it was obtained.
- 5.2 Where the Statutory Purpose has been fulfilled or the Shared Data is no longer required, it shall be securely deleted or destroyed within ninety (90) days.
- 5.3 Each Recipient Council shall maintain a record of the retention period applied to Shared Data and the date of its deletion or destruction.

6 **ACCURACY**

- 6.1 Authorised Officers shall take reasonable steps to verify the accuracy of Shared Data before relying on it for enforcement purposes.
- 6.2 Where an Authorised Officer becomes aware that Shared Data is inaccurate or out of date, they shall notify the Registrar promptly to enable the Register to be updated.

7 **SECURITY INCIDENTS**

- 7.1 Any actual or suspected Personal Data Breach affecting Shared Data shall be reported immediately to the Recipient Council's Data Protection Officer and to the Registrar's designated contact at dataprotection@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk.
- 7.2 The reporting officer shall provide all available information about the incident, including the nature of the data affected, the circumstances of the breach and any remedial action taken.

8 **TRAINING AND AWARENESS**

- 8.1 Each Recipient Council shall ensure that all Authorised Officers receive training on this Protocol, the Data Sharing Agreement, the Regulations and Data Protection Law before being granted access to Shared Data.
- 8.2 Refresher training shall be provided at least annually.

9 **REVIEW**

- 9.1 This Protocol shall be reviewed annually by the Parties or more frequently if required by changes to the Regulations or Data Protection Law.

SCHEDULE 4

AUTHORISED OFFICER AUTHORISATION TEMPLATE

AUTHORISATION OF AUTHORISED OFFICER

LANDLORD REGISTRATION SCHEME (NORTHERN IRELAND)

Pursuant to regulation 9 of the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and the Data Sharing Agreement dated [●] 2026

RECIPIENT COUNCIL: [Insert name of district council]

AUTHORISATION BY AUTHORISING OFFICER:

I confirm that I am authorised to make this appointment on behalf of [insert name of council] and that the above-named officer requires access to Shared Data for the Statutory Purposes in the course of their duties.

Full Name	Signature	Date

DETAILS OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS:

Full Name	Job Title	Department	Contact Email

STATUTORY PURPOSES:

The above-named officers are hereby authorised to request and receive information held by the Registrar and not included in the Public Register for the purpose of enabling or assisting [insert name of council] to exercise its functions under:

- (a) the provisions of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006; and
- (b) Article 54 of the Rent (Northern Ireland) Order 1978,

as permitted by regulation 9(a) of the Landlord Registration Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

CONDITIONS OF AUTHORISATION:

The Authorised Officer shall:

- 1 Process all Shared Data received from the Registrar only for the Statutory Purposes specified above.
- 2 Comply with the Data Sharing Agreement dated [●] 2026, the Information Sharing Protocol annexed thereto, and all applicable Data Protection Law.
- 3 Maintain the confidentiality and security of all Shared Data and not disclose it to any unauthorised person.

- 4 Not use Shared Data for any collateral or incompatible purpose.
- 5 Complete all required training before accessing Shared Data and attend annual refresher training.
- 6 Report immediately any actual or suspected Personal Data Breach to the Council's Data Protection Officer and to the Registrar.
- 7 Notify the Authorising Officer if they cease to require access to Shared Data for the Statutory Purposes.

PERIOD OF AUTHORISATION:

This authorisation shall take effect on [●] and shall remain in force until:

- (a) revoked in writing by the Authorising Officer;
- (b) until the Authorised Officer ceases to hold a role requiring access to Shared Data for the Statutory Purposes; or
- (c) until otherwise amended or replaced following the annual review of Authorised Officers carried out by each Recipient Council. Each Recipient Council shall ensure that the list of Authorised Officers is reviewed at least annually by that council prior to being sent to LRSNI for action.

DECLARATION BY AUTHORISED OFFICER:

I confirm that I have read and understood the Data Sharing Agreement, the Information Sharing Protocol and the conditions of this authorisation. I agree to comply with all requirements set out therein and to process Shared Data only for the Statutory Purposes.

Signature:	
Print Name:	[●]
Contact Number	
Date:	[●]

RECORD OF AUTHORISATION:

Date of Authorisation	Authorised By	Date Change Made
[●]	[●]	[●]

REVOCATION (to be completed when authorisation is revoked):

Date of Revocation	Reason for Revocation	Revoked By	Date Change Made
[●]	[●]	[●]	[●]

Committee:	Environment & Sustainability
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Request to Waive Cemetery Fees

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	A request has been received by the Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning Service Unit from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in relation to Rifleman George Bradshaw. Rifleman Bradshaw is buried in Blaris Old Burial Ground in an unmarked grave which has now been granted war grave status.
1.2	The Commonwealth War Graves Commission is seeking permission to erect a standard pattern war grave headstone in Irish Blue Limestone identical to the others in the Burial Ground. Should permission be granted, they will carry out a three-month search for the next of kin using their social media channels. If close enough relatives are found, they will have a say on the epitaph at the bottom of the headstone.
1.3	The Commonwealth War Graves Commission has requested that, given the nature of the request, the council consider waiving any fees that are applicable. The current fee for erection of a memorial headstone is £135 for a resident and £260 for a non-resident.
1.4	The new headstone will be manufactured and erected by the Commission and may take up to two years to be produced and erected- the method fully complies with National Association of Cemetery Masons /British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons standards as well as the “Blue Book” for memorial masons.
1.5	The Commission has advised that all such commemorations in Northern Ireland are inspected cleaned and repaired, if necessary, on a two-year cycle. Furthermore, they have an active Countrywide volunteer programme called “Eyes On Hands On” where their graves are visited twice a year and their condition reported.
1.6	Neighbouring councils have been contacted and those that replied were familiar with the War Graves commission and had waived fees for any similar request.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that the committee: • agrees the request by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to waive the applicable fees.
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> £260 as fee for non-resident to erect a headstone.

4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	N/A
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	N/A
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out.	

Appendices:	N/A
--------------------	-----

Committee:	Environment & Sustainability
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Toy Safety Regulations - Call for Evidence

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	The Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is seeking views on UK Toy Safety, the new Toy Safety Regulation (EU) 2025/2509, and key considerations as they review and potentially update the regulations that apply in Great Britain.
1.2	In 2023 the EU proposed the new Toy Safety Regulation (EU) 2025/2509. This regulation entered into force on 1 January 2026 and will fully apply from 1 August 2030, at which point the existing Toys Directive will be repealed. Under the terms of the Windsor Framework the new regulation will apply in Northern Ireland.
1.3	The UK Government is considering the EU's reforms, any issues associated with the continued recognition of the new EU product requirements for toys, and the implementation of a similar approach in GB.
1.4	Many of the OPSS objectives for product safety reform also feature in the EU's Toy Safety Regulation ensuring toys are safe for children while supporting innovation and trade. Areas under review include chemical safety, digital product passports, online marketplace obligations, and emerging risks associated with connected or AI-enabled toys.
1.5	The government acknowledges that from a trade perspective, continuing to recognise EU product requirements would reduce friction for UK manufacturers selling into the EU and for those seeking to import products into GB. Taking a similar approach across the UK to the EU Toy Safety Regulation would also mean the rules for placing a product on the market in GB are aligned with those which apply to products in Northern Ireland.
1.6	This call for evidence seeks views on the following: • The potential benefits and costs of taking a similar approach to the EU's toy safety legislation across the UK • The potential benefits and costs of continuing recognition of EU toys requirements, including the CE marking • How risks to consumers may be changing, including from chemicals, artificial intelligence, and online marketplaces • The practicalities and impacts of any future regulatory changes

1.7	The Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning Service Unit is responsible for enforcing Consumer Safety Regulations and is responding to the consultation specifically regarding its legal remit.	
1.8	A draft consultation response was developed collaboratively by Consumer Safety Officers from all 11 Northern Ireland councils. Comments were invited from Members and incorporated into the final council response (attached as Appendix 2 EH).	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
2.1	It is recommended that committee: approves the response to the consultation thereby enabling the council to respond before the closing date of 6 October 2026.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
3.1	It is unknown at this stage whether financial support will be provided to support councils' advisory and enforcement activities.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	

Appendices:	Appendix 2 EH – Response - Toy Safety Regulations: Call for Evidence
--------------------	---

Call for Evidence – Toy Safety Regulation Response LCCC

Question 1: What factors should be considered if the UK were to continue its recognition of new EU product requirements for toys, including the CE marking?

1. What practicalities or wider issues might continued recognition of EU product requirements for toys involve?

In the opinion of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, continued recognition of EU product requirements would support greater consistency in toy safety requirements across Northern Ireland and Great Britain and help reduce some of the complexity associated with enforcing differing product safety regimes across the UK. This approach would minimise unnecessary regulatory divergence, making it easier to identify compliant products and determine applicable safety obligations.

It is our understanding that the EU Toy Safety Regulation is intended to strengthen toy safety standards through enhanced controls on harmful substances and the introduction of a Digital Product Passport (DPP). From this Council's perspective, these measures have the potential to improve consumer protection and support enforcement activity, particularly in relation to imported products and toys sold through online marketplaces. However, consideration needs to be given to the following:

- Providing clarity for enforcement authorities and economic operators regarding applicable requirements. Clear guidance and enforcement regulations must be provided by the Office of Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) to support effective enforcement and supporting consistency across different parts of the UK.
- Practical, detailed guidance outlining the new requirements should be developed for economic operators in all stages of the supply chain to assist with understanding and compliance.
- To avoid future divergence, OPSS must consider and communicate any future amendments to EU toy safety legislation in a timely manner that supports effective enforcement.
- The owners of online marketplaces must be more accountable to ensure that only compliant and safe toys are made available to consumers.
- Any new chemical safety requirements should complement existing REACH and CLP-related legislation, and the enforcement mechanism for these should be clear.
- The Council supports measures that contribute to the protection of public health and the environment from harmful chemicals, while encouraging the development of safer products.

2. What practicalities (including additional costs or cost savings, or administrative activities) might this involve for economic operators and traders?

As regulators within a market surveillance authority, the Council is not in a position to comment in detail on the costs, savings or administrative burdens that may arise for businesses.

3. Overall, would you be in favour of continued recognition of the EU's toys requirements?

Yes, from the perspective of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, continued recognition of EU toy safety requirements would help support regulatory consistency across the UK and minimise divergence between the arrangements applying in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

4. What would you see as the benefits of this approach?

In the opinion of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, the potential benefits include:

- Consistent enforcement of toy safety requirements across the UK market through reduced regulatory divergence between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. This will assist enforcement authorities when assessing compliance.
- Improved opportunities for national coordinated market surveillance activity.
- Less confusion for consumers and economic operators regarding applicable conformity markings and safety requirements.
- Enhanced protection from harmful chemicals through closer alignment with REACH and CLP requirements.
- Improved product traceability and access to compliance information through the Digital Product Passport.
- A potential reduction in the availability of unsafe and non-compliant toys, particularly those sold through online marketplaces.

5. What would be the result if we were not to continue recognising EU product requirements in the new EU Toy Safety Regulation 2025/2509 for goods placed on the market in GB?

In the opinion of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, failure to continue recognition of the regulation will lead to increased divergence between the regulatory arrangements applicable in Northern Ireland and those in Great Britain.

In our view, if the Regulation were not recognised in Great Britain, some of the potential benefits relating to enhanced chemical safety requirements, Digital Product Passports, strengthened online marketplace obligations and improved market surveillance arrangements may not be realised.

Should the UK choose not to recognise the proposed Regulation, businesses may find themselves operating within arrangements that are not fully aligned with either the EU or GB market, creating additional complexity for businesses, consumers and enforcement authorities.

Question 2

1. What practicalities or wider issues might these new toy safety measures involve if adopted across the UK?

In the opinion of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council practical considerations for enforcement officers include:

- The need for an easily accessible, well-resourced testing laboratory, which is accredited to carry out all the required testing (including allergen and chemical analysis).
- The difficulties for Councils when accessing and sharing information due to concerns regarding potential breaches of GDPR. This will only be exacerbated with new online and AI requirements. However there is an essential need for collaborative working with all the relevant statutory bodies across the UK, with easy access required to systems that enable information sharing between District Councils, or a legislative provision included to permit the sharing of information within and between relevant statutory authorities.
- The provision of swift and relevant intelligence in an effort to be aware of and respond to technology and online systems, which tend to develop more rapidly than regulation can be updated.
- Being aware of managing expectations around competency and capacity, especially with advances in technology, allergen awareness, AI etc, given market surveillance activities are already limited by resource.
- A requirement for OPSS to remain aware of Northern Ireland's distinct regulatory and enforcement landscape, and the challenges faced in liaising with a competent authority that does not have a dedicated local resource or physical presence to address needs as they arise.

In the opinion of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, wider issues include:

- Ensuring consistent application of legislative requirements across all UK jurisdictions.
- Providing clear and appropriate guidance and transition arrangements for enforcement authorities and economic operators.
- Ensuring enforcement authorities have access to the information, training and resources necessary to carry out their functions effectively.
- Facilitating information-sharing arrangements that support product safety investigations and corrective actions.
- Implementing the Digital Product Passport framework in a manner that enables all relevant stakeholders to access and utilise compliance information effectively.
- Supporting compliance with enhanced chemical safety requirements that align with existing REACH and CLP frameworks.
- Ensuring online marketplaces understand and comply with any additional safety responsibilities and are accountable for the products they supply.

It is our understanding that the proposed legislation takes the form of a Regulation, allowing for direct and consistent application across EU Member States, including Northern Ireland. In our view, adoption of a comparable approach across the UK would promote greater consistency of requirements and enforcement practices.

2. What practicalities might this involve for economic operators and traders?

As regulators within a market surveillance authority, we do not consider ourselves best placed to comment in detail on operational or financial impacts for businesses.

In our view, the main practical implication for economic operators will be understanding and complying with the revised requirements under the new framework, particularly the enhanced chemical safety provisions and Digital Product Passport obligations.

3. What additional costs or cost savings, or additional administrative activities, would be incurred from these changes?

As regulators within a market surveillance authority, we do not consider ourselves best placed to comment in detail on operational or financial impacts for businesses.

4. Overall, would you be in favour of legislation to introduce similar measures?

In principle, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council would support measures that maintain a high level of toy safety while promoting regulatory consistency across the UK and reducing unnecessary divergence between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

5. What would you see as the benefits of introducing the same approach?

In the opinion of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, potential benefits include:

- A more consistent regulatory framework across the UK.
- Greater clarity for enforcement authorities.
- Simplified enforcement and compliance assessment.
- Reduced risk of regulatory divergence between Northern Ireland and Great Britain
- Consistent consumer protection standards.
- Improved cooperation and information-sharing between enforcement bodies.
- Better protection of children from harmful chemicals.
- Increased product traceability through Digital Product Passports.
- Improved controls relating to imported products and toys sold through online marketplaces.
- Enhanced consumer confidence in toy safety.

6. Would there be an impact on your business operations or any unintended consequences if a similar approach was not introduced across the UK?

From an enforcement perspective, we consider that differing regulatory requirements between Northern Ireland and Great Britain would increase complexity when determining the applicable legal requirements and assessing compliance. As a District Council we need to consider the impact this will have on limited and competing resources.

In our opinion, failure to introduce a similar approach will also increase divergence from the regulatory framework applicable in Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework, making enforcement activities, business compliance and consumer understanding more challenging.

7. How might introducing the same approach in the UK impact on your organisation's innovation and growth prospects?

As regulators within a market surveillance authority, we do not consider ourselves best placed to comment in detail on innovative and growth prospects.

Question 3

1. What opportunities are there to achieve lower administrative burdens or administrative savings?

As regulators within a market surveillance authority, we are not in a position to quantify or assess administrative costs or savings incurred by businesses.

2. Are there any other ways that regulation of toys in the UK could be improved to reduce the burden of regulation on businesses?

While this authority is not best placed to comment directly on regulatory burdens experienced by businesses, from an enforcement perspective we consider that the introduction of a requirement for all economic operators to register with their Local Authority / District Council for Product Safety, similar to current legal requirements for food businesses, would assist with more effective businesses support and engagement.

It would also improve communication of new legislative requirements, and support more effective coordination and communication between regulatory authorities based on the Home Authority arrangements when offering advice and guidance to the relevant businesses.

Overall, in the opinion of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, maintaining a high level of toy safety while supporting regulatory consistency across the UK should be a key consideration in the development of future toy safety legislation. From our enforcement perspective, minimising unnecessary divergence between Great Britain and Northern Ireland would assist effective market surveillance, provide greater clarity for businesses and consumers, and support local authorities in fulfilling their statutory enforcement responsibilities.

Committee:	Environment & Sustainability
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Consultation: Fireworks and Pyrotechnics in the UK

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	The Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is seeking views on the regulation of pyrotechnics and fireworks in the UK.
1.2	Industry figures suggest around 20 million people take part in fireworks activities at home each year. While notifications received from market surveillance authorities regarding the safety of pyrotechnics are rare, especially in relation to other consumer products, fireworks and pyrotechnics carry a safety risk of injury and fire when misused and can pose significant safety hazards in communities.
1.3	Their use has become a growing concern, as seen from public complaints, parliamentary debates, and petitions calling for stronger controls due to the negative impacts on neighbourhood safety, vulnerable people, and animals.
1.4	The consultation proposes reforms to fireworks legislation, focused on the key harms associated with their misuse, noise, and contribution to antisocial behaviour – whilst still allowing individuals to enjoy fireworks safely and responsibly for important community and cultural celebrations.
1.5	The consultation is seeking views on implementing these changes across all four nations of the UK – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
1.6	OPSS is seeking views on proposals to: • Restrict the availability of noisier fireworks to the general public, with louder products only available to professional users. • Add products deemed to be carrying unacceptable risks to the list of existing banned pyrotechnic products set out in regulation 33 of the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015 (as amended). • Review the regulations for fireworks and pyrotechnic products currently classified as lower risk to better reflect the different levels of risk they pose.
1.7	The Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning Service Unit is responsible for enforcing Consumer Safety Regulations and is responding to the consultation specifically regarding its legal remit.
1.8	A response has been developed collaboratively by Consumer Safety Officers from all 11 Northern Ireland Councils. Comments from Members were incorporated into the final council response (attached as Appendix 3 EH).

2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
2.1	It is recommended that committee: • approves the response to the consultation thereby enabling the council to respond before the closing date of 7 October 2026.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
3.1	It is unknown at this stage whether financial support will be provided to support councils' advisory and enforcement activities.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	

Appendices:	Appendix 3 EH –Fireworks and pyrotechnics in the UK Consultation response
--------------------	--



Department for
Business & Trade



Office for Product
Safety & Standards

Consultation: fireworks and pyrotechnics in the UK

Response form

Introduction

Fireworks are enjoyed by many for celebrations and cultural events. However, their use has become a growing concern, as seen from public complaints, parliamentary debates, and petitions calling for stronger controls due to the negative impacts on neighbourhood safety, vulnerable people, and animals.

This consultation explores these issues, in support of the UK Government's Safer Streets Mission to tackle anti-social behaviour. The goal is to find an approach that preserves the enjoyment of fireworks for celebrations while preventing harm and distress to others.

Why are we consulting

Before making any changes to fireworks regulations, we are seeking views on our proposals to ensure we receive all relevant evidence and perspectives. This will allow us to refine the policy to reduce unintended consequences and maximise the potential benefits. We are seeking views on proposals to:

- restrict the availability of noisier fireworks to the general public, with louder products only available to professional users.
- add products deemed to be carrying unacceptable risks to the list of existing banned pyrotechnic products set out in regulation 33 of the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015 (as amended)
- review the regulations for fireworks and pyrotechnic products currently classified as lower risk to better reflect the different levels of risk they pose

Please complete this form and return to:

fireworksconsultation@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Consultation Closes: 23:59 on 7 October 2026

Confidentiality and data protection

DBT is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your information. Details on how we collect and process your personal data in accordance with data protection legislation when you respond to one of our public consultations are provided in the Confidentiality and data protection section of the [consultation document](#).

You can also read the [Public consultations privacy notice](#). Wherever possible please avoid including any additional personal data in free-text responses beyond that which has been requested or which you consider it necessary for DBT to be aware of.

Your Details	
1. Your name	Environmental Manager
2. Your email address	ehhealth@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk
3. Are you responding:	
As an individual? Please go to 'Consultation Questions'	
On behalf of an organisation? Please continue	✓
4. Name of organisation	Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council
5. Number of employees	
1 to 9	
10 to 49	
50 to 249	
250 or more	✓
6. Type of organisation	
Business	
Trade Association	
Test House or Laboratory	
Consumer Body	
Charity, community or campaign group	
NHS or healthcare organisations	
Local Authority and Trading Standards	✓
Fire and Rescue Service, police or security	
Devolved Government or Government Body	
Other (Please specify)	

Consultation Questions	
1. Are there any other particular F2 and F3 fireworks products that you think the general public should not be allowed to buy? Please state which products and give your reasons.	
Products:	N/A
You can provide reasons in the space below.	
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council advises that, in Northern Ireland, Category F2 and F3 fireworks cannot be purchased by members of the public over the counter in the same way they can in many parts of Great Britain. Anyone wishing to purchase, possess, or use these categories of fireworks must hold a valid fireworks licence issued by the Department of Justice. Category F2 and F3 fireworks may only be sold by licensed retailers.	
2. If more products are added to the regulation 33 banned list, what consequences might there be for consumers, industry, enforcement authorities, professional users, and others? Please give your reasons	
You can list consequences and provide reasons in the space below.	
In Northern Ireland, the consequences of adding further products to the Regulation 33 prohibited list should be considered alongside the existing controls under the Explosives (Fireworks) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002. Under these Regulations, most fireworks may only be purchased, possessed and used by individuals who hold a valid fireworks licence issued by the Department of Justice. As public access to fireworks in Northern Ireland is already more restricted than Great Britain, the direct impact of additional product prohibitions on lawful consumers may be comparatively limited. For consumers, the principal benefit would be increased protection from products that are most likely to cause injury, nuisance, anti-social behaviour, distress to vulnerable people and animals, or property damage. A possible adverse consequence is that some individuals may seek to obtain prohibited items through illegal sources including unlicensed sellers, online marketplaces, using cross-border routes or informal supply networks. This is already a concern in Northern Ireland, and any expansion of the prohibited list should be accompanied by robust public awareness campaigns, and intelligence-led enforcement. As regulators within a market surveillance authority, the Council is not in a position to comment in detail on the costs, savings or administrative burdens that may arise for businesses, however for industry, including importers, distributors and Department of Justice registered retailers operating in Northern Ireland, the introduction of additional prohibited products may result in increased costs. These impacts may be felt most by seasonal retailers and smaller businesses. However, a clearer prohibited products list could also provide benefits for reputable businesses, reducing ambiguity, supporting consistent advice to licence holders, and helping to prevent unsafe or non-compliant products entering the legitimate Northern Ireland market. For enforcement authorities, the impact would be mixed. A clearer list of prohibited products could assist District Councils, Trading Standards, the Department of Justice, PSNI and other relevant agencies in identifying and taking action where prohibited products are found. It may also support greater consistency in advice provided to retailers, licence applicants and the public.	

However, the addition of further prohibited products may enforcement requirement. This could include a greater need for inspections, test purchasing exercises, intelligence gathering and sharing, online monitoring, product seizure, safe storage and disposal of fireworks, and investigations into illegal sales.

This is particularly relevant in Northern Ireland, where unlawful possession or use of fireworks can occur outside the licensing system and may involve products obtained from unregistered or illegal sources.

3. Do you agree that regulation 33(1)(g) should be amended to make explicit that a firework comprising more than one shot tube is banned from sale to the general public? Please give your reasons.

Agree	✓
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	

You can provide reasons in the space below.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agrees that regulation 33(1)(g) should be amended to make it explicit that a firework comprising more than one shot tube is prohibited from sale to the public. Clear wording would reduce ambiguity for suppliers, retailers, licence applicants and enforcement authorities, and would assist in providing consistent advice for businesses and the members of the public on which products may lawfully be supplied.

This is particularly relevant in Northern Ireland, where most fireworks may only be purchased, possessed and used under a valid fireworks licence issued by the Department of Justice. Retailers must be registered and may only supply fireworks in accordance with that licensing framework. Making the prohibition explicit would help ensure that the existence of a fireworks licence is not misunderstood or interpreted as permitting access to multi-shot tube products, where such products are intended to be unavailable for public supply.

From an enforcement perspective, explicit wording would assist District Councils, Trading Standards, the Department of Justice, PSNI and other relevant agencies by providing greater clarity on the types of products that must not be supplied to members of the public.

It would also support more consistent checks of retailers, investigations into illegal supply, and public messaging around fireworks safety.

Multi-shot tube products can present greater risks where they are misused, used in inappropriate locations, or obtained outside the licensing system. A clear prohibition would therefore support public safety, reduce nuisance and anti-social behaviour, and help protect vulnerable individuals, animals and property.

4. Do you agree that the age limit for purchasing Christmas crackers should be removed? Please give your reasons.	
Agree	✓
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	
You can provide reasons in the space below.	
Under the Windsor Framework, the EU age limit of 12 years for the purchase of Christmas crackers would continue to apply in Northern Ireland. Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council agrees that the age restriction on the purchase of Christmas crackers should be removed. In practice, Christmas crackers are a low-risk seasonal product and are widely used in family, hospitality, school, community and workplace settings. Removing the specific age restriction would be a proportionate measure that reflects the relatively low risk posed and would reduce unnecessary regulatory complexity for retailers and consumers. The council considers that removing the age restriction should not affect existing product safety requirements. Christmas crackers placed on the Northern Ireland market should continue to comply with the relevant product safety, labelling and conformity requirements. Retailers, importers and suppliers should still ensure that products are safe, correctly labelled and suitable for normal consumer use.	
5. Are there any other specific F1 and P1 pyrotechnics that should have their regulatory requirements increased or decreased? Please state which products, what regulatory requirements you think they should have and give your reasons.	
Products:	Marine/Distress flares, smoke canisters
You can provide reasons in the space below.	
Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council considers that increased regulatory requirements should apply to certain pyrotechnics, particularly marine distress flares and smoke canisters, due to the significant risks they can pose to public safety when misused. Marine distress flares and smoke canisters are designed to generate intense heat, bright light or dense smoke. Many of these products can burn at extremely high temperatures, are difficult to extinguish using water and generate toxic fumes. They are of particular concern as they are frequently smuggled into sports grounds, concerts and events with large gatherings, where they can create significant safety hazards to persons and crowd management. Any such measures should be supported by effective enforcement, appropriate penalties for unlawful possession or use, and public awareness initiatives to ensure that these products are used only for their intended emergency purposes.	

6. Do you agree the decibel level of fireworks consumers use should be lowered? Choose one of the following options:	
No, the maximum noise limit for fireworks should remain at 120 dB (A,imp)	
Yes, to 110 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately half)	
Yes, to 100 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately three-quarters)	
Yes, to 90 dB (A,imp) (reducing perceived loudness by approximately seven-eighths)	✓
Don't know	
7. What might be the positive impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.	
You can provide your answer and explanation in the space below.	
Reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the public in Northern Ireland could have significant positive impacts for residents, animals and local communities. While fireworks are already subject to stricter controls in Northern Ireland through the fireworks licensing system, noise from both lawful private use and illegal or informal use can still cause considerable distress. Unexpected firework activity, particularly in residential areas can lead to fear and sleep disturbance for local residence. A reduction in the maximum permitted noise level would lessen the intensity of sudden explosive bangs, and could therefore reduce nuisance, fear and sleep disturbance for people living nearby. A reduction to 110 or 100 dB is unlikely to have a material benefit which would outweigh the regulatory requirements to enforce this change. At 110 or 100 dB there is still a strong likelihood of human startle and disturbance where such fireworks are set off in a residential environment and particularly when the ignition is unexpected and not part of a display. Given the sensitivity of animals to such sounds 110 or 100 dB is not going to prevent adverse impacts. Therefore, we recommend that the limit is set to 90 dB so that any such change can have noticeable beneficial effect. It is also noted that professional displays will remain 'louder'. In Northern Ireland, a reduction in the maximum decibel level of fireworks would complement the existing licensing regime by helping to ensure that those products available to the general public are less harmful to neighbours, vulnerable residents, livestock, pets and wildlife. The measure would be most effective if introduced alongside clear guidance from the Department of Justice on licensing requirements, advice and support for retailers, public awareness campaigns promoting good practice in use, and continued enforcement action against illegal supply.	

8. What might be the negative impacts of reducing the maximum decibel level of fireworks available to the general public? Please explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

You can provide your answer and explanation in the space below.

The main impact for lawful consumers is likely to be a reduction in product choice. In Northern Ireland, consumers must already hold a valid fireworks licence to buy, possess and use most fireworks, and only the fireworks listed on the licence may be purchased. The introduction of a maximum lower noise limit could result in some products currently available through registered retailers no longer being available for sale for licensed private use. It may also require updates to licence applications and retailer guidance.

There may likewise be implications for registered fireworks retailers, importers and suppliers operating within Northern Ireland. Businesses may need lead-in time to identify affected stock, amend product ranges, source alternative compliant lower-noise products, update staff training and ensure that products supplied to licence holders comply with revised requirements. Seasonal businesses may be particularly affected if changes are introduced shortly before Halloween and New Year, when stock is often ordered well in advance. Where lower-noise products are more expensive or less readily available, additional costs may be passed on to consumers or may reduce the viability of some lawful sales.

A further consideration is the potential for displacement into illegal supply channels. If consumers perceive the lawful licensed market as limited, some may seek higher-noise fireworks through unregistered sellers, online marketplaces, or cross-border informal supply. This could undermine the intended safety benefits, as illegally supplied products may not meet relevant safety standards, may be incorrectly labelled, poorly stored and transported, and may be unsuitable for domestic use.

Professional display operators may experience increased demand if higher-noise products become restricted to professional use, which could be positive for organised displays but may also create capacity, cost and scheduling pressures around peak periods.

Community groups, sports clubs and local event organisers in Northern Ireland may face increased costs if displays move from licensed private use to professional displays. For some organisations, particularly those operating with limited budgets, the additional expense may affect the viability of holding lawful community celebrations or encourage smaller informal displays if professional provision is not affordable or available, potentially reducing compliance with the intended regulatory framework.

There may also be enforcement implications arising from the introduction of a revised maximum decibel limit. District Councils, Trading Standards, the Department of Justice, PSNI and other agencies would require clear technical guidance on how the revised decibel limit will be measured, recorded and enforced. Short-lived firework noise can be difficult to investigate after the event, and evidence from animal welfare organisations has noted that the nature of firework noise can make it difficult to locate the source. If the rule is not simple to understand and enforce, there may be inconsistent advice to businesses and the public.

Finally, the benefits for animals and vulnerable people may be reduced if the public assumes that "low noise" means "silent" or harmless. Animal welfare bodies note that there are no truly silent fireworks and that bright flashes and unpredictability can still cause distress. Therefore, any reduction in decibel limits should be accompanied by clear public messaging, retailer advice, continued promotion of organised displays and alternatives where appropriate, and strong action against illegal supply. On balance, the negative impacts appear manageable if there is a suitable lead-in period, clear guidance

and coordinated enforcement across Northern Ireland.

It should be noted that it is not practically possible to measure the noise from a firework in 'field conditions' and that all enforcement of a maximum noise level will have to be achieved through a retail offence checked by compliance statements and, if necessary, testing. Testing will be required to be undertaken in controlled conditions and will incur costs to the enforcing authority.

9. How much lead in time would businesses need to prepare for the changes proposed in this consultation and why? Please state a lead in time in months or years, and explain your answer, providing evidence where possible.

Lead in time in months or years:

12 months aligning with buying times for Halloween

You can provide your explanation in the space below.

Businesses would require sufficient time to understand and implement any revised legal requirements. This may include reviewing product lines, update procurement arrangements, training staff, amending sales procedures, and ensuring that only compliant products are supplied to licence holders.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council considers that a minimum transition period of 12 months would be appropriate. Fireworks are a seasonal product and the main retail period in Northern Ireland is the period leading up to Halloween. Stock is likely to be ordered well in advance, and a shorter implementation period could leave businesses with products that can no longer be lawfully sold. A 12-month lead-in period would allow businesses to run down existing lawful stock, source alternatives such as lower-noise fireworks, update supplier contracts and avoid introducing changes immediately before the busiest sales period.

A shorter lead-in period could increase the risk of non-compliance, wasted stock, inconsistent advice and displacement into illegal supply. A reasonable transition period assist reputable businesses to adapt, while allowing District Councils, Trading Standards, PSNI sufficient time to prepare consistent public messaging and enforcement activity.

10. What other things should we consider when setting a lead in time? You may wish to reference the impact on people who buy fireworks, enforcement bodies, police or the general public.

You can provide your answer in the space below.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council notes that the existing regulatory framework for fireworks in Northern Ireland is significantly more restrictive than that which applies in much of Great Britain. In Northern Ireland, the purchase, possession and use of most fireworks is subject to a licensing regime administered by the Department of Justice, whereas access to fireworks is generally less restricted elsewhere in Great Britain.

In considering any further restrictions on the sale or use of fireworks, OPSS may wish to examine incident, injury and enforcement data from Northern Ireland and compare it with equivalent data from Great Britain. Such analysis could provide a useful benchmark for assessing the effectiveness of stricter regulatory controls and determining whether additional restrictions are likely to deliver measurable safety benefits.

Please email this response form to: fireworksconsultation@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Committee:	Environment & Sustainability
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Consultation: Tobacco and Vapes: Packaging, Appearance and Display

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	This consultation seeks views on proposed reforms which will be implemented by the Tobacco and Vapes Act, which received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026.
1.2	The Act bans the advertising and sponsorship of vaping and nicotine products. It also provides powers to further restrict these products from being deliberately marketed and promoted to appeal to children. Introducing restrictions on packaging, flavours and display in shops will contribute to the prevention of the next generation becoming addicted to nicotine.
1.3	The Act provides powers to introduce a licensing scheme for the retail sale of tobacco, vapes and nicotine products. In Northern Ireland, the Department of Health is planning to extend its tobacco retailers register to include retailers of vapes and other nicotine products as an interim measure before consulting on a licensing scheme.
1.4	The Act strengthens product safety requirements for vapes and vaping products, including the introduction of a new product registration scheme in the UK.
1.5	The Department of Health & Social Care is seeking comments on the following proposed reforms: • New packaging requirements & how to restrict the packaging of these products to prevent use by different groups of people. It also seeks views on proposals to restrict flavour descriptors for vaping and other nicotine products. • New restrictions on vape and heated tobacco device appearance, including restrictions on: • colours, images and branding • digital screens on devices • devices imitating other products • New restrictions on where products can be displayed in shops, including restrictions on where shops across the UK can display: • herbal smoking products • cigarette papers • heated and other tobacco-related devices • vaping and nicotine products

1.6	These proposals are intended to reduce the appeal of the products referred to in this paper.	
1.7	The Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning Service Unit is responsible for enforcing Consumer Safety Regulations, and Tobacco Product Regulations and is responding to the consultation specifically regarding its legal remit.	
1.8	Subject to the outcome of this consultation, the Secretary of State for Health will then use powers under Part 5 of the Tobacco and Vapes Act to make regulations on packaging and devices.	
1.9	A consultation response was developed collaboratively by Consumer Safety Officers from all 11 Northern Ireland councils which is attached at Appendix 4 EH . Comments from the committee were incorporated into the final council response.	
1.10	In summary, the response is strongly supportive of the proposals relating to restrictions on the display, packaging, shape, promotional features, and design of nicotine and vaping products. These measures will help reduce their attractiveness and appeal, particularly among children and young people, and support wider public health objectives aimed at preventing uptake and encouraging cessation.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
2.1	It is recommended that the committee: • approves the response to the consultation thereby enabling the council to respond before the closing date of 2 October 2026.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
3.1	It is unknown at this stage whether financial support will be provided to support councils' advisory and enforcement activities.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	

Appendices:

Appendix 4 EH – Consultation: Tobacco and Vapes: Packaging, appearance and display LCCC response

Consultation on Tobacco and Vapes - Packaging Appearance and Display – LCCC Response

Tobacco and vapes: packaging, appearance and display – Consultation Response

About you

Questions for everyone

In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

- An individual sharing my personal views and experiences
- An individual sharing my professional views
- **On behalf of an organisation**

Do you have any direct or indirect links to, or receive funding from, the tobacco industry?

- Yes
- **No**

Questions for people responding on behalf of an organisation

What is the size of your organisation? (Optional)

- Small (0 to 49 employees)
- Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- **Large (250 or more employees)**

Where does your organisation operate or provide services? Select all that apply. (Optional)

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- **Northern Ireland**
- The whole of the UK
- Outside the UK

Please provide the name of the organisation you are responding on behalf of. (Optional)

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

Questions for people sharing their professional views and those responding on behalf of an organisation

What is the main area or focus of your work? (Optional)

- Academic
- Advocacy
- Distribution
- Education
- Emergency services
- Enforcement agencies
- Healthcare

- Hospitality
- Justice system
- Legal
- **Local government**
- National government
- Production or manufacturing
- Retail
- Social care
- Wholesale
- Other, please specify

Do you work for, or are you providing views on behalf of, any of the following? Select all that apply.

- Manufacturer or producer of a tobacco product
- Manufacturer or producer of a vape or nicotine product
- Importer of a tobacco product
- Importer of a vape or nicotine product
- Distributor of a tobacco product
- Distributor of a vape or nicotine product
- Retailer of a tobacco product
- Retailer of a vape or nicotine product

Or:

- **None of the above**

Tobacco packaging

Proposals for further plain packaging requirements

We propose to introduce plain packaging requirements for:

- all tobacco products (including but not limited to cigars, cigarillos, pipe tobacco, waterpipe tobacco, smokeless and heated tobacco)
- heated tobacco devices
- herbal smoking products
- cigarette papers

These requirements would broadly align with existing requirements for cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco.

An overview of the existing requirements for cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco is set out below.

Colour

Pantone 448C (drab dark brown) colour with a matt finish.

Branding

Brand name permitted once each on front, top and bottom of pack. It must:

- be in a centred position
- be in Pantone Cool Gray 2 C
- be in Helvetica font size 14 point or less
- have only the first letter capitalised

The variant name must follow the same requirements other than to be size 10 point or less and positioned immediately below the brand name.

No promotional images or logos, additional colours or markings are allowed.

Shape

Specified packaging shapes. For cigarettes this is cuboid only and for hand-rolling tobacco this is cuboid, cylindrical or pouch.

Packaging materials

Specified packaging materials. For cigarettes this is carton or soft material only.

Minimum size

20 pack for cigarettes, 30 grams for hand-rolling tobacco.

Some products may require specific plain packaging requirements, for example hand-rolling tobacco pouches are permitted to have a re-sealable sticker and cigarette packets have a lining. If we proceed with the policy, we will engage further on the details of the plain packaging measures for specific products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for all tobacco products? This does not include cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco which already have strict plain packaging requirements.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for heated tobacco devices?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for herbal smoking products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the plain packaging requirements outlined above for cigarette papers?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing your views on which tobacco products plain packaging requirements should or should not be introduced for, or specific elements of our proposals which you agree or disagree with. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

Lisburn & Castlereagh City believes that all tobacco products should be subject to the same requirements, as each poses a public health risk. Aligning these requirements will reinforce the message that all tobacco products are harmful and should therefore be regulated consistently.

Plain packaging requirements should apply to all tobacco products, as this will help reduce their appeal to children, young people, and those seeking to quit smoking. It will also help ensure that health warnings are clear and impactful, while reducing opportunities for the tobacco industry to use packaging as a form of advertising.

Heated tobacco products contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and associated with a range of harmful health effects. We therefore support measures that can reduce uptake and assist those who wish to quit. In addition, plain packaging for heated tobacco devices may make product safety information more visible and prominent, supporting compliance checks and improving user awareness of safety information.

Herbal smoking products are not a safe alternative to tobacco smoking. Applying plain packaging requirements will help prevent any perception that these products are less harmful and ensure that they cannot be promoted as such.

Cigarette papers should also be included, as this will prevent tobacco companies from using them as a marketing tool.

Text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices and cigarette papers

We propose to introduce text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices and cigarette papers. All tobacco products and herbal smoking products already have these warnings. The wording of warnings will reflect the harms of using each product.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce text health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce text health warnings on the packaging of cigarette papers?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that health warnings should be included on the packaging of heated tobacco products, as it is vital that users are aware of the potential health risks associated with their use. Given the increasing range of tobacco products on the market, consumers may not fully understand the potential health risks posed by heated tobacco products. Clear health warnings are therefore necessary to improve awareness and support informed decision-making.

We agree that health warnings on cigarette papers should be introduced to ensure a consistent approach across all tobacco-related products. These warnings would help educate smokers about the associated risks, encourage them to quit, and deter children and young people from starting to smoke.

Consideration should be given to ensuring that any health warnings on packaging do not compromise the visibility of required safety information for electronic devices, including mandatory CE markings and traceability requirements for heated tobacco devices. Any new requirements should therefore ensure that sufficient space remains available for all essential regulatory information.

It would also be beneficial to provide clarity regarding the provision of dual-language requirements, particularly in Northern Ireland, where both Irish and English are recognised as official languages.

Picture health warnings on the packaging of more products and devices

All smoked tobacco products currently require picture health warnings, excluding individually wrapped cigars and cigarillos, and packs of large cigars that weigh more than 3 grams each. These products only require text warnings on their packaging.

Smokeless tobacco products, heated tobacco devices and herbal smoking products currently do not have picture health warnings.

We propose to introduce picture warnings on the packaging of:

- all tobacco products (including all cigars and cigarillos, smokeless tobacco and heated tobacco)
- heated tobacco devices
- herbal smoking products

We do not propose including picture warnings for cigarette papers due to the typically smaller size of the packaging.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce picture health warnings on the packaging of all tobacco products? This builds on requirements that are already in place for most tobacco products.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce picture health warnings on the packaging of heated tobacco devices?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce picture health warnings on the packaging of herbal smoking products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that picture health warnings should not be required on the packaging of cigarette papers? We do not propose including picture health warnings on cigarette papers due to the small size of the packaging.

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing your views on which tobacco products health warning requirements should or should not be introduced for. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that picture health warnings should be introduced on the packaging of all tobacco products and herbal smoking products. Picture warnings are more likely to be noticed than text-only warnings and are a cost-effective way of educating smokers about the associated health risks. Graphic visual warnings may also help prevent children and young people from starting to smoke and encourage those who wish to quit.

Where possible, combining picture health warnings with accompanying text is likely to strengthen the overall impact of the message.

Some marketing of herbal smoking products has sought to portray them as a safer alternative to traditional smoking. Introducing picture health warnings would help ensure both current and potential future users are better informed about the health risks.

If health warnings are to be introduced, they should not be to the detriment of the required safety warnings for electronic devices, including the mandatory CE Markings and traceability requirements on the packaging of heated tobacco devices. Any new requirements should therefore ensure that sufficient space remains for all essential regulatory information.

Pack inserts in packaging for all tobacco and herbal smoking products and heated tobacco devices

Quit themed pack inserts will soon be introduced for cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco following previous consultation. We propose to also include quit themed pack inserts in the packaging of:

- all tobacco products (including products such as such as cigars, cigarillos, pipe tobacco, waterpipe tobacco and smokeless and heated tobacco)
- heated tobacco devices
- herbal smoking products

We do not propose including pack inserts in cigarette papers due to the small size of the packaging.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce pack inserts for all tobacco products? This does not include cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco which we are addressing separately to this consultation.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce pack inserts for heated tobacco devices?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce pack inserts for herbal smoking products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that pack inserts should not be required in the packaging of cigarette papers? We do not propose including pack inserts for cigarette papers due to the small size of the packaging.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on specific tobacco products for which you do or do not think pack inserts should apply. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that pack inserts should be introduced, where practical, for all tobacco products. They are a cost-effective method of delivering quit-focused messages and promoting smoking cessation at the point when the product is about to be used. Pack inserts have been introduced in several countries, including Canada and Australia, during periods in which smoking prevalence has declined.

We also agree that pack inserts should be included with heated tobacco products and herbal smoking products. These products are not risk-free, and it is important that users receive the same cessation advice and motivational quit messages as users of other tobacco products.

We agree that providing pack inserts for cigarette papers may be impractical due to size constraints. Consideration may therefore need to be given to alternative labelling requirements for separate components, such as electronic heating devices, tobacco sticks, heat sticks, refill products, or other consumables.

In addition, pack inserts may support consumer understanding of product risks and help set appropriate expectations regarding use. However, any such requirements should not compromise the provision of essential product information contained within accompanying documentation for heated tobacco devices, including safety instructions, warnings, CE markings, and traceability information.

Time allowed to implement new packaging requirements

If and when new requirements are introduced, manufacturers will need time to update their packaging to comply. Retailers may also need time to sell old stock that does not comply with new law.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose that a minimum notice period of 12 months would be enough. This would mean all products covered by our tobacco packaging proposals would need to comply with any new requirements by the end of a 12-month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposed implementation period of no less than 12 months (from when the detail of any new requirements is clear)?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree?
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups. Please reference any evidence that you have considered to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We believe that an implementation period of no longer than 12 months from the date the requirements are introduced is necessary. This would provide manufacturers with sufficient time to update packaging and sell through existing stock. Any extension beyond what is reasonably required should be carefully considered, as a prolonged implementation period may undermine the importance of the new requirements and the associated public health benefits. Given advances in technology, it should not take long for new production lines to be introduced, and new compliant packaging produced that meets the requirements.

Consideration could be given to an additional six-month grace/transition period for retailers to allow them to sell through lawful transitional stock.

Heated tobacco device appearance

Restricting the colour and finish of heated tobacco devices

We propose to restrict the colour of heated tobacco devices to Pantone 448C (drab dark brown) with an opaque matt finish. Pantone 448C is the same colour as cigarette and hand-rolling tobacco packaging.

Restricting the colour of the device in this way would also prevent certain aesthetic features on the device, such as the presence of cosmetic lights.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the colour of heated tobacco devices to Pantone 448C (drab dark brown) with an opaque matt finish?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that heated tobacco devices should be banned from having cosmetic lights? This will not apply to functional lights, like those that indicate charge level.

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether restricting heated tobacco devices to an alternative colour may be more effective, or whether technical exemptions are required. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We believe that the packaging of all tobacco products should be restricted and standardised to reinforce the message that none of these products have been proven to be safe. The use of colours and lights should be restricted to reduce opportunities for marketing and minimise their appeal to children and young people. Clear and comprehensive guidance should be provided to ensure that manufacturers fully understand what is permitted, while supporting consistent interpretation, compliance, and enforcement of the legislation.

We agree that restricting the colour of heated tobacco devices would align them with other tobacco products and may help raise consumer awareness of the associated health risks. For these devices, required product, safety, and traceability information must continue to be included. Standardising the colour of the device could also improve the visibility and consistency of safety markings and risk information, helping consumers to identify key information more easily.

We agree on a ban of cosmetic lights on these devices. Products must comply with the relevant product safety legislation and should not imitate food or other items that may appeal to children and young people. Legislation should also prevent product features or endorsements that could mislead consumers about the risks associated with use. Cosmetic lighting features may imitate other consumer products, such as gaming devices, creating confusion about the nature of the product and potentially undermining health warnings, consumer understanding of the associated risks, and the safe use of the device.

Restricting branding, imagery and artwork on heated tobacco devices

We propose to ban heated tobacco devices from having images or artwork on them, except for any image that is a regulatory requirement, such as required warnings.

We also propose to limit branding to a single brand name, which would be subject to a set font, size and colour on the device.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict all branding, imagery and artwork on heated tobacco devices?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on which of the proposed restrictions you do or do not think should apply. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that the branding, imagery and artwork on heated tobacco devices should be restricted to reduce opportunities for marketing and, in particular, the appeal of the products to children and young people. Such measures could deliver public health benefits by preventing children and young people from starting to smoke and supporting those wanting to quit. Clear and comprehensive guidance should be provided to ensure that manufacturers fully understand what is permitted, while supporting effective consistent interpretation, compliance and enforcement of the legislation.

This could also simplify the appearance of the device, and subject to device size, may allow required safety warnings for electronic devices, and the mandatory CE Markings and traceability requirements to be more easily seen. However complicated artwork can be difficult to duplicate and counterfeit, and while this may assist with enforcement, restricted branding may make it more difficult for consumers to distinguish between devices and identify compatible consumables and accessories. A requirement for clear product identification of electrical devices helps to promote safer use.

Restricting digital screens on heated tobacco devices

We propose that digital screens on heated tobacco devices are restricted to only display safety and status information, such as battery levels.

Do you agree or disagree that digital screens on heated tobacco devices should be restricted to only the display of safety and status information such as battery level, and be greyscale in colour (black, white and grey only)?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments if you think there should be any exemptions to this proposal. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that the digital screens on heated tobacco devices should be restricted to prevent these being used for marketing purposes. This could help reduce the appeal to both current users and children and young people, thereby supporting efforts to reduce their use and uptake.

Digital displays should be restricted to functional, safety and device status information and should not be used for promotional or branding purposes. Also, subject to the device size, a screen size could compete for space with mandatory product and safety information required on the device. However, for consumer safety, colour displays can provide important benefits by highlighting warnings, maintenance requirements, battery conditions and device faults more clearly than monochrome displays. The use of limited colours for these purposes may improve consumer understanding and support the safe operation of the device.

Stopping heated tobacco devices imitating other products

We propose to limit the potential appeal of heated tobacco devices by stopping them from looking like other products, such as drink bottles and game devices.

This proposal aligns with the restrictions we are proposing for vape devices. It will ensure that heated tobacco devices do not appear more attractive than vapes.

Do you agree or disagree that heated tobacco devices should not be permitted to mimic the design of other products and items? The objective of this proposal is to limit the appeal or attractiveness of heated tobacco devices.

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments if you think there should be any exemptions to this proposal. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that heated tobacco devices should not mimic the design of other products. Products must be compliant with EU General Product Safety regulations in that they must not imitate food. Legislation should prevent product endorsements that mislead consumers about the risks of using products that imitate other consumer goods (games devices) and create confusion about the manufacturer, or undermines health warnings and consumer understanding of safe use and risks of the product.

From a consumer safety perspective, requirements that prevent products from being designed to resemble toys, food, cosmetics or other everyday consumer goods would help reduce confusion about the nature of the product and its associated risks. Such measures may also help prevent accidental handling or misuse, particularly by children and other vulnerable groups.

Time allowed to implement new device requirements

If and when new requirements are introduced, manufacturers will need time to ensure their devices are compliant. Retailers may also need time to sell old stock that does not comply with new law.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose that a minimum notice period of 12 months would be enough. This would mean heated tobacco devices would need to comply with any new requirements by the end of a 12-month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposed implementation period of no less than 12 months (from when the detail of any new requirements is clear)?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups. Please reference any evidence that you have considered to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We believe that an implementation period of no longer than 12 months from the date requirements are introduced is necessary. This will allow manufacturers to adapt and sell through existing stock. Any extension beyond what is necessary should be carefully considered as prolonged implementation may undermine the importance of the new requirements and the public health benefits. With advances in technology, it should not take long for new production lines to be introduced, and new packaging produced to meet the requirements.

Consideration could be given to an additional 6-month grace/transition period for retailers to allow them to sell through any lawful transitional stock.

Vaping and nicotine product packaging and flavour descriptors

Definition of vaping products

Throughout this section, we refer to 'vaping products'. This includes vapes, as well as other vape components and refill containers sold separately from the device.

Restricting the colour on packaging for all vaping and nicotine products

We propose that the packaging for vaping and nicotine products should be white.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the colour of packaging of all vaping products to white?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the colour of packaging of all nicotine products to white?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that the packaging for vapes and nicotine products should be plain and simple to reduce their attractiveness, particularly among image conscious children and young people. Introducing a uniform white packaging requirement would help ensure that manufacturers clearly understand the requirements and ensure that the legislation is easily enforceable.

Colour restrictions can help reduce the risk of packaging resembling sweets, confectionery or other consumer goods, while safety information and health warnings may be displayed more prominently. However, packaging of vape components (contains e-liquid), requires safety warnings and symbols under the Classification of Labelling and Packaging legislation must be considered to ensure warning symbols remain visible and compliant – i.e. in circumstances where warnings are specifically required to appear on a white or yellow background. Therefore, the standardised colour

could potentially improve the visibility and consistency of safety markings and risk information, helping consumers recognise key information more easily.

Restricting imagery, branding, text and other promotional features

We propose that the packaging for all vaping and nicotine products should not include imagery, and that all text on the packaging, including any branding or brand names, should be in a standard colour, font and typeface.

There should be no other promotional features on the outside or inside of packs or attached to the packaging, such as links to social media accounts or any feature that suggests a financial benefit, such as vouchers or discounts.

We recognise that there may be a case to allow packaging of vaping products to display a picture of the product contained inside (for example, a mouthpiece). We welcome views on whether any limited exemptions may be appropriate in the free text box.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the restrictions to imagery, branding, text and promotional features outlined above for the packaging of all vaping products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce the restrictions to imagery, branding, text and promotional features outlined above for the packaging of all nicotine products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, your views on whether there should be any exemptions or further restrictions. You may also indicate any elements of the proposal you disagree with and why, or elements you feel could be further strengthened. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We believe that packaging for vape and nicotine products should be standardised in terms of size, colour and appearance, with all imagery removed and no marketing or promotional elements permitted. Such measures will help reduce the appeal and attractiveness of these products, particularly to children and young people and support those wanting to quit.

If any exemptions are permitted to allow pictures of the products on vape packaging the wording of the legislation should be clear to ensure that manufacturers are aware what is permitted and to support consistent and effective enforcement.

We agree in principle on the restrictions for vape and nicotine products packaging, providing this is not to the detriment of safety warnings for nicotine (as designated under the Classification, Labelling and Packaging legislation), electronic devices which are subject to CE Marking or traceability requirements as required under Market Surveillance Regulations (NI) 2021.

Harmonised packaging standards across the market should require clear and prominent product identification, safety information and user instructions. Also, include information such as nicotine strength, product compatibility, battery specifications and relevant safety warnings so that consumers can make informed purchasing and usage decisions. Simplifying the packaging should

allow this safety information and warnings to be more visible. However, it is noted complicated artwork can be difficult to duplicate and counterfeit.

Restricting the shape, materials and safety features of packaging for all vaping and nicotine products

We propose that packaging used for vaping and nicotine products should use uniform shapes. For example, the packaging for devices or coils should use a similar shape, such as a rectangular cuboid, depending on their dimensions.

We also propose that manufacturers should not use materials that enhance a product's appeal, such as:

- glossy plastics
- holographic foils
- other tactile features, for example fuzzy or velvety materials

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all vaping products should have uniform shapes, and that there should be restrictions on materials and finishes that can enhance appeal?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all nicotine products should have uniform shapes, and that there should be restrictions on materials and finishes that can enhance appeal?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Vapes are already required to have child-resistant and tamper-evident packaging. We propose to introduce this requirement for all vaping and nicotine products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all vaping products should be both child-resistant and tamper-evident?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that packaging for all nicotine products should be both child-resistant and tamper-evident?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, indicating any elements of the proposal that you disagree with and why, if there are elements that you feel could be further strengthened or other features that should be included. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree with any proposals such as restricting the shape, finish etc of any nicotine or vape product that will help reduce their attractiveness and appeal, particularly among children and young people. This could also provide a consistent approach that minimises consumer confusion and avoids potential misuse.

In addition, both nicotine and vape products should have child-resistant and tamper-evident packaging. This will help ensure the safety of the product and make counterfeit products more difficult to produce and easier to identify.

This would also support consumer protection, create clear user expectations and help ensure a consistent level of product safety across the market. A uniform approach may also reduce the likelihood of products being designed to resemble other consumer goods, helping to minimise consumer confusion and potential misuse. However, regulations should ensure that safety markings, warnings and user information remain clear and prominent so that consumers receive consistent risk information. Packaging should also include appropriate traceability information, such as serial numbers, batch numbers and manufacturer details, to support compliance checks.

Restricting flavour descriptions on vaping and nicotine products packaging

Single lead flavour

We propose to restrict flavour descriptors on the packaging for vaping and nicotine products to a single, recognised flavour name, like apple or strawberry. This would include restricting hyphenated or combined flavour names, such as blueberry-apple.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict flavour descriptors on the packaging of all vaping products to a single lead flavour?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict flavour descriptors on the packaging of all nicotine products to a single lead flavour?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Concept, sensory, food and drink categories

We also propose restricting any concept or sensory words from being used to describe a flavour.

A concept name refers to any flavour name that does not directly describe a recognisable food, drink or natural flavour. Instead, the word conveys a mood, an idea, a brand or even a number or codename, rather than describing an actual flavour. This could include flavour names such as:

- 'Unicorn Dream'
- 'DC100'

A sensory name refers to a recognisable taste, smell or sensation experienced when using a vape or nicotine product, such as 'Mint Blast'.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that concept and sensory flavour descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all vaping products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that concept and sensory flavour descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all nicotine products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

We also propose restricting descriptor names of certain food and drink categories that appeal to children and young people. This includes flavours like:

- confectionery and sweets (such as 'Chocolate', 'Candy' and 'Bubblegum')
- desserts and cakes (such as 'Brownie' and 'Cheesecake')
- alcohol and other drinks (such as 'Cola')

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that confectionery, sweets, dessert and cake name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all vaping products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that confectionery, sweets, dessert and cake name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all nicotine products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that alcohol and drink name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all vaping products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal that alcohol and drink name descriptors should be restricted on the packaging of all nicotine products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, your views on any elements of the proposal that you disagree with and why, or any flavour names that you believe should or should not be restricted. You may also wish to comment on whether there should be any differences in how these restrictions apply to vaping and nicotine products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We strongly support any measures that would reduce the appeal of vape and nicotine products to children and young people. Restricting both the name and packaging to prevent the use of descriptors that are designed to attract people to buy could help reduce uptake and support those wanting to quit. A single lead flavour should be permitted to identify the flavour while alcohol descriptors and other terms that may enhance appeal should be prohibited.

The wording of the legislation would need to be carefully considered to ensure that it is clear, comprehensive and not open to interpretation or exploitation. Manufacturers should not be able to circumvent the intent of the legislation through the use of alternative words or descriptors that could be used in marketing to appeal to children and young people. Clear guidance should therefore be provided for both manufacturers and enforcement authorities to support consistent understanding, application and enforcement.

To avoid misleading the consumer the terminology needs to be clearly defined and there needs to be clear and consistent standards that can be understood by both the consumer and enforcement officers. While we appreciate this intention enforcement of such restrictions will be difficult without a clear mechanism for testing or analysis to compare flavours with those described. It is difficult to see how enforcement of this could be undertaken and by whom.

Product information on and inside vaping and nicotine products packaging

We propose that the packaging of all vaping and nicotine products should have:

- a full list of ingredients, including flavour agents
- expiration details
- an age restriction symbol, for example a crossed-out 18 symbol
- a standardised display of nicotine strength, for example in milligrams, millilitres or as a percentage
- nicotine delivery per puff or pouch, where relevant

We also propose that relevant products should have a nicotine warning label on the front and back of the packaging. For example, this warning could say 'This product contains nicotine which is a highly addictive substance'. Packaging should also have clear instructions on appropriate waste disposal.

Where applicable, we propose that certain products have an instruction leaflet to inform users of any appropriate warnings and the adverse effects of nicotine.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to require the consumer information listed above on and inside the packaging of all vaping products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to require the consumer information listed above on and inside the packaging of all nicotine products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on any elements of the proposal that you disagree with and why, if there are areas that you feel could be further strengthened or areas that have been missed and should be included. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that consumer information provided on and within the packaging of vaping and nicotine products strengthens the current approach to consumer protection. Such information helps consumers make informed purchasing decisions, understand product hazards, follow safe usage instructions, and avoid misuse. Information requirements for both the exterior and interior packaging should be clearly defined and applied consistently across the market.

Clear traceability information should also remain prominent on product packaging. Challenges can arise where enforcement officers are required to open packaging or break seals in order to verify product information. This can create additional burdens for retailers through damaged stock, increased handling requirements, and potential product wastage.

Time allowed to implement new packaging requirements

If and when new requirements are introduced, manufacturers will need time to update their packaging to be compliant. Retailers may also need time to sell old stock that does not comply with the new law.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose a minimum notice period of 12 months would be enough. This would mean all products in scope of our vaping and nicotine product packaging proposals would need to comply with any new regulatory requirements by the end of a 12-month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposed implementation period of no less than 12 months (from when the detail of any new requirements is clear)?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups. Please reference any evidence that you have considered to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We believe that an implementation period of no longer than 12 months from the date the requirements are introduced is necessary. This would provide manufacturers with sufficient time to update packaging and sell through existing stock. Any extension beyond what is reasonably required should be carefully considered, as a prolonged implementation period may undermine the importance of the new requirements and the associated public health benefits. Given advances in technology, it should not take long for new production lines to be introduced, and new compliant packaging produced that meets the requirements.

Consideration could be given to an additional six-month grace/transition period for retailers to allow them to sell through lawful transitional stock.

Clear guidance, commencement dates and evidence requirements for enforcement officers is essential to distinguish lawful transitional stock from non-compliant products and assure consistent enforcement of the legislation throughout the UK.

Appropriate resources must also be made available to enforcement officers to manage the transition effectively and to provide information and guidance to businesses and consumers. A 12-month implementation period would allow enforcement authorities sufficient time to prepare guidance, deliver training, and develop a compliance work programme.

Vape device appearance

Restricting the colour and finish of vapes

We propose restricting the colour of vape devices, including all visible parts, to:

- white, black or grey, with only one of those colours per device
- a matt finish
- no variation in shades or opacity

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to limit the colour of a vaping device (including all visible parts) to white, black or grey with a matt finish?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that vape devices should be banned from having cosmetic lights? This would not apply to functional lights, such as those that indicate charge level.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether you think no restrictions should apply, if you think only a subset of the proposed colours should be allowed or if you think alternative colours should be allowed. Equally, you may want to highlight technical exemptions that should be considered. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that vaping devices should be restricted to plain, standardised colours with a matt finish. There is no functional need for devices to have brightly coloured designs or cosmetic lighting features. Restricting the appearance of these devices will help reduce their appeal to children and young people, discourage uptake, and support those who wish to quit.

Standardising the colour and finish of vaping devices helps shift consumers' focus away from aesthetic appeal and encourages purchasing decisions based on product information rather than appearance. Permitting only a subset of colours will reduce the likelihood of their appearance undermining health and safety information, by improving the visibility of regulatory markings and warnings.

Colour restrictions may also reduce the risk of vaping devices resembling sweets, confectionery, or other consumer products that appeal to children and young people. In addition, safety information and health warnings may be displayed more prominently. Standardising the colour of devices could therefore improve the visibility and consistency of safety markings and risk information, helping consumers to identify and understand key information more easily.

We support a ban on cosmetic lights on these devices, as such features may imitate other consumer products, such as gaming devices, and create confusion about the nature of the product. They may also undermine health warnings and reduce consumers' understanding of the risks associated with use and the safe operation of the device.

Restricting branding, imagery, and artwork on vapes

We propose that vapes are banned from having images or artwork, except for where these may be a legal requirement, such as warnings.

We also propose that branding should be limited to a single brand name, which would be subject to a set font, size and colour on the device. This aligns with the restrictions we are proposing for heated tobacco devices.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict all branding, imagery and artwork on vapes?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether you think none or only some of the proposed restrictions should apply. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that branding, imagery and artwork should not be permitted on vapes. Such features have been used by manufacturers to increase product appeal and to portray vaping as fashionable or desirable, particularly among children and young people. Restricting these marketing elements will help reduce the appeal of vaping products to both current and potential users, including children and young people, thereby supporting efforts to reduce uptake and use.

From a consumer safety perspective, a simplified device appearance may, subject to the size of the device, improve the visibility of required safety information for electronic devices, including mandatory CE markings and traceability requirements. However, it should be recognised that complex artwork and branding can be more difficult to replicate and may assist consumers in identifying counterfeit products.

In addition, restrictions on branding may make it more difficult for consumers to distinguish between devices and identify compatible consumables and accessories. Consideration should therefore be given to ensuring that standardised requirements still allow for clear product identification. This will help promote the safe use of vaping devices while supporting the overall objectives of the legislation.

Restricting the digital screens on vapes

We propose that digital screens on vapes are prohibited, except for screens which display safety and status information such as battery and liquid levels.

Do you agree or disagree that digital screens on vapes should be restricted to only the display of safety and status information such as battery level, and be greyscale in colour (black, white and grey only)? This would not include lights that indicate status information, such as when the device is being recharged.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments if you think there should be any exemptions to this proposal. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that the digital screens on vapes should be restricted to prevent these being used for marketing purposes. This could help reduce the appeal to both current users and children and young people, thereby supporting efforts to reduce their use and uptake.

Digital displays should be restricted to functional, safety and device status information and should not be used for promotional or branding purposes. Also, subject to the device size, a screen size could compete for space with mandatory product and safety information required on the device. However, for consumer safety, colour displays can provide important benefits by highlighting warnings, maintenance requirements, battery conditions and device faults more clearly than monochrome displays. The use of limited colours for these purposes may improve consumer understanding and support the safe operation of the device.

Stopping vapes imitating other products

Currently vapes can and do copy the design of other products, such as highlighter pens, refillable water bottles and game devices.

We propose to limit the potential appeal of vapes by stopping them from looking like other products.

Do you agree or disagree that vapes should not be permitted to mimic the design of other products and items? The objective of this proposal is to limit the appeal or attractiveness of vapes.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments if you think there should be any exemptions to this proposal. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that prohibiting vapes from imitating other products aligns with the proposed restrictions for heated tobacco devices and supports a consistent regulatory approach across the market.

Legislation relating to products that imitate food already exists under the EU General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988. However, consideration should be given to ensuring that equivalent provisions can be effectively applied to vapes and vaping products. Legislation should also prevent product designs, features, or endorsements that may mislead consumers about the risks associated with use. Products that imitate other consumer goods, such as gaming devices, may create confusion about the nature of the product and its manufacturer, while also undermining health warnings and consumers' understanding of the associated risks and safe use requirements.

From a consumer safety perspective, requirements that prevent products from being designed to resemble toys, food, cosmetics, or other everyday consumer goods would help reduce confusion about the nature of the product and its associated risks. Such measures may also help prevent accidental handling, use, or misuse, particularly by children and other vulnerable groups.

Time allowed to implement new device requirements

If and when new requirements are introduced, manufacturers will need time to ensure their devices are compliant. Retailers may also need time to sell old stock that does not comply with new law.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose that a minimum notice period of 12 months would be enough. This would mean all vapes would need to comply with any new regulatory requirements by the end of a 12 month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposed implementation period of no less than 12 months (from when the detail of any new requirements is clear)?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups. Please reference any evidence that you have considered to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We believe that an implementation period of no longer than 12 months from the date the requirements are introduced is necessary. This would provide manufacturers with sufficient time to update packaging and sell through existing stock. Any extension beyond what is reasonably required should be carefully considered, as a prolonged implementation period may undermine the importance of the new requirements and the associated public health benefits. Given advances in technology, it should not take long for new production lines to be introduced, and new compliant packaging produced that meets the requirements.

Consideration could be given to an additional six-month grace/transition period for retailers to allow them to sell through lawful transitional stock.

Clear guidance, commencement dates and evidence requirements for enforcement officers is essential to distinguish lawful transitional stock from non-compliant products and assure consistent enforcement of the legislation throughout the UK.

Appropriate resources must also be made available to enforcement officers to manage the transition effectively and to provide information and guidance to businesses and consumers. A 12-month implementation period would allow enforcement authorities sufficient time to prepare guidance, deliver training, and develop a compliance work programme.

Retail display

Requested temporary and incidental displays in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Under existing legislation, tobacco products cannot be displayed inside or outside most shops across the UK. However, tobacco products can be shown to a customer following a request. The request must be by a person who is of the legal age of sale in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We call this a 'requested temporary display' in this consultation.

Requested temporary displays enable informed purchasing decisions. As a result of a requested temporary display, other people nearby may also incidentally see these products. Current legislation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland also makes allowances for:

- restocking
- staff training
- pricing
- display unit maintenance

We call this 'incidental display' in this consultation.

Restricting the retail display of cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Tobacco products

We propose that the requested temporary display of all tobacco products should only be allowed from behind a sales counter, and not another location within a retail setting.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to introduce a legal requirement that the requested temporary display of all tobacco products must take place from behind a sales counter?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products

We propose that most of the restrictions and allowances that apply to the display of tobacco products should apply to cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products too.

This includes:

- restricting the display of these products outside of all retail settings and inside the majority of retail settings
- providing allowances enabling display unit restocking, maintenance, pricing, staff training and requested temporary displays
- permitting the same maximum visible areas (1.5 square meters)

We also propose that the requested temporary display of these products should only be allowed from behind a sales counter, and not another location within a retail setting in the same way as we are proposing to make this a legal requirement for tobacco products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of cigarette papers? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of heated and other tobacco-related devices? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of herbal smoking products? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that it should be a legal requirement for all requested temporary displays of tobacco products to be presented behind a sales counter. This would help ensure that access to such displays is controlled by retail staff and that the products are viewed only by the customer requesting them. It would also provide clarity regarding the rules governing temporary displays and support consistent enforcement. In addition, this approach may help prevent retailers from attempting to circumvent the restrictions by creating promotional displays or stands in other areas of the shop that are not subject to staff supervision.

We believe that all tobacco products and related accessories should be subject to the same display restrictions. Cigarette papers are widely sold, including in premises that do not sell cigarettes or other tobacco products. Restricting their visibility would help reduce their accessibility, appeal, and potential for impulse purchases. This may support those who wish to quit smoking and help prevent children and young people from starting to smoke.

We believe that herbal smoking products, heated tobacco devices, and other tobacco-related devices should be subject to display restrictions and sold only from behind a counter. Introducing consistent restrictions across all tobacco products would reinforce the message that these products are not risk-free. This would also help prevent the normalisation of smoking-related behaviours and reduce the potential for such products to act as a gateway to cigarette smoking.

It is vital that all such products are subject to the same restrictions in order to minimise opportunities for impulse purchases and reduce their accessibility and appeal, particularly among children and young people.

Retail display of prices for cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Retailers can display prices for tobacco products in 3 formats:

- a single price list that can be permanently on display at each point of sale, but must be text-only and subject to size and font requirements
- a picture price list that can include product images and can only be shown in response to a request by a person who is of the legal age of sale
- small price labels that can be placed on the covered shelf or on the display unit where the product is kept, pending sale

We propose to apply the same price display principles to:

- cigarette papers
- all tobacco-related devices, including heated tobacco devices
- herbal smoking products

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for cigarette papers?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for all tobacco-related devices including heated tobacco devices?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for herbal smoking products?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that the display of price lists for cigarette papers should be restricted in line with the current requirements for tobacco products. We also support extending these restrictions to price lists for herbal smoking products and tobacco-related devices, including heated tobacco devices to ensure a consistent approach for all smoking and tobacco related products

It is vital that size limits are not increased as price lists could easily become an alternative form of in store promotion.

In addition, we believe that there should be a restriction placed on retailers to ensure that price lists only show the current price and do not draw attention to price promotions or reductions.

Exemptions to display restrictions for tobacco products, cigarette papers, tobacco-related devices and herbal smoking products in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Across the UK, there are exemptions that allow for tobacco products and their prices to be on display inside certain premises. These premises include:

- relevant trade premises (those that are only accessible to people that work in the tobacco trade)
- specialist tobacconists
- bulk tobacconists (including duty-free tobacco areas)

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we propose to maintain current exemptions for tobacco products for relevant trade premises and specialist tobacconists.

If and when additional retail display restrictions are brought in, we also propose that relevant trade premises and specialist tobacconists will continue to be allowed to display the following products, and their prices:

- cigarette papers
- heated and other tobacco-related devices
- herbal smoking products

We propose to remove the bulk tobacconist exemption for tobacco products and to not replicate it for any other products in scope of this consultation, since it presents a situation where products may be visibly accessible to the public, including children and young people.

Display exemptions for trade premises

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of cigarette papers and their prices in relevant trade premises?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of tobacco-related devices, including heated tobacco devices, and their prices in relevant trade premises?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of herbal smoking products and their prices in relevant trade premises?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, why you think certain exemptions should or should not be considered as well as any additional exemptions you think are necessary. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that, for the purposes of those working within the trade, it is reasonable for cigarette papers, herbal smoking products, and tobacco-related devices, including heated tobacco devices, and their prices to be displayed in relevant trade premises, provided that access is restricted to persons aged 18 years and over.

Any exemption should apply only where access is restricted to individuals engaged in the tobacco trade and is not available to members of the general public.

Display exemptions for specialist tobacconists

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of cigarette papers and their prices inside specialist tobacconists?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of tobacco-related devices, including heated tobacco devices, and their prices inside specialist tobacconists?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of herbal smoking products and their prices inside specialist tobacconists?

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think proposed exemptions should or should not be considered as well as any additional exemptions you think are necessary. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that the display of cigarette papers, tobacco-related devices, including heated tobacco devices, herbal smoking products, and their prices should be permitted within specialist tobacconists, provided that access is restricted to persons aged 18 years and over.

No advertisements for these products should be visible from outside the premises. This should include price lists, as these could be used as a form of advertising, draw attention to promotions, and be visible to children and young people.

Restricting the visibility of such information from outside specialist tobacconists would support the overall objective of reducing the appeal and normalisation of smoking-related products, particularly among children and young people.

Display exemptions for bulk tobacconists

We propose to remove the bulk tobacconist exemption for tobacco products and their prices and to not replicate it for any other products in scope of this consultation. Keeping the exemption would mean children and young people may still be able to see these products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to remove and not replicate this exemption for all products in scope of this consultation?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. Where possible please include any information on any costs to bulk tobacconists associated with removing this exemption for tobacco products, including the number of businesses likely to be affected. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that bulk tobacconists should be subject to the same restrictions as other retail premises that sell tobacco products. It is important that these establishments do not become a loophole that undermines the intent of the regulations.

We also believe that the regulations should be extended to restrict access by persons under the age of 18. Such premises should be subject to age restrictions, with age verification required on entry.

Definition of vaping products

Throughout this section, we refer to 'vaping products'. This includes vapes, as well as other vape components and refill containers sold separately from the device.

Restricting the display of vaping and nicotine products across the UK

We propose that the display of vaping products and nicotine products is restricted.

We propose that the same allowances for temporary and incidental displays as we have proposed for most other products within scope of this consultation are applied across the UK. This includes a temporary requested display taking place behind a sales counter. This would make the maximum visible area permitted for a requested temporary display or incidental display:

- 1.5 square metres in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- 0.1 square metres in Scotland

We also propose that a requested temporary or incidental display of vaping or nicotine products must not result in the display of:

- tobacco products (and smoking-related products in Scotland)
- cigarette papers
- heated and other tobacco-related devices
- herbal smoking products

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of vaping products? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of nicotine products? This would include the requirement that their requested temporary display must take place from behind a sales counter.

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree that the requested temporary or incidental display of vaping and nicotine products should not result in the display of tobacco products (and smoking-related products in Scotland), cigarette papers, heated and other tobacco devices or herbal smoking products?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that any display of vaping and nicotine products should not result in the display of any other products. Each product category should be stored separately to ensure that no deliberate or inadvertent display occurs when a customer requests a particular product.

We support the removal of the display of vaping and nicotine products, as we believe this will reduce their attractiveness and visibility to children and young people, while also supporting those who wish to quit vaping or using nicotine products. In addition, restricting any temporary display to behind a sales counter would further strengthen these measures by ensuring that products are controlled by retail staff and visible only to the customer requesting them.

Display of prices of vaping and nicotine products across the UK

Across the UK, we propose to apply the same principles for the display of prices of tobacco products to:

- vaping products
- nicotine products

We propose that the price lists for vaping and nicotine products are permitted to also include nicotine strength and ingredients. This will help consumers make informed purchases.

We propose that separate price lists must be used for vaping and nicotine products and for tobacco products, for both permanently displayed price lists and picture prices lists, given vaping and nicotine products carry lower levels of harm than tobacco products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for vaping products, and allow for additional information on nicotine strength and ingredients?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree

- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to restrict the display of prices for nicotine products and allow for additional information on nicotine strength and ingredients?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. This could include, for example, sharing comments on why you think our proposed restrictions should or should not apply to certain types of products. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree with the proposal that price lists for vaping and nicotine products should be aligned with those permitted for tobacco products, with additional information on ingredients and nicotine strength also being allowed.

Exemptions to display restrictions of vaping and nicotine products across the UK

Across the UK, it is permitted to display tobacco products inside premises that are only accessible to people working in the tobacco trade as long as this is not visible to the public from the outside. We propose to have this exemption to allow for relevant trade premises to display vaping products and nicotine products.

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of vaping products in relevant trade premises?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to allow for the display of nicotine products in relevant trade premises?

- **Agree**

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answers. If you have comments on business exemptions to our display proposals, please include them here. This could include, for example, why you think certain exemptions should or should not be considered as well as any additional exemptions you think are necessary. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We agree that the display of vaping and nicotine products should be permitted in trade-only premises.

Allowing the display of these products within trade-only premises is reasonable, provided that access is restricted to individuals engaged in the trade and is not available to members of the general public.

Time allowed to implement all new display restrictions

If and when new requirements are introduced, retailers will need time to update their shops to comply with the necessary changes.

There should be a long enough notice period before new requirements come into force. This period would start from when the details of the new requirements are made clear. We have not yet decided what is the best way to share those details, but it could be, for example, in a government response to this consultation or when regulations are presented to the relevant national Parliament.

We propose that a minimum notice period of 6 months would be enough. This would mean the display of products in scope would need to comply with any new requirements by the end of a 6-month implementation period. However, a longer or shorter notice period may be needed, and we welcome views on this.

Do you agree with our proposal that there should be a minimum of 6 months' notice (from when the detail if any new requirements is clear)?

- **Agree**
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. This could include, for example, sharing comments on whether the proposed implementation period should be shorter or longer, or on implications that the proposed implementation period could have for manufacturers, retailers or other groups. Please reference any evidence that you have taken into account to support your response. (Optional, maximum 600 words. Please do not include any personal information in your response.)

We believe that six months is a reasonable period for retailers to implement the necessary changes to comply with the proposed display restrictions. The introduction of the display ban for tobacco products demonstrated that such changes can be implemented in a simple and cost-effective manner.

We do not consider a period longer than six months to be necessary. This timeframe balances the need to take prompt action to remove promotional displays that may encourage children and young people to start using these products, while also supporting those who wish to quit. It would also provide sufficient time for district councils to prepare for advisory and enforcement activities and for retailers to achieve compliance with the new requirements.

Consultation stage impact assessments

We have published consultation stage impact assessments alongside this consultation. The Scottish government, Welsh government and the Department of Health in Northern Ireland have also published impact assessments for proposals relating to retail display.

We would like to hear about any measurable impacts we have not considered in these initial impact assessments.

The data and evidence used in the impact assessments reflects the best available at the time of their completion in October 2025 (May 2026 for the impact assessment for Scotland and June 2026 for the impact assessments for Wales and Northern Ireland). Following this consultation, we will update the impact assessments as appropriate, including in consideration of information we gather through responses and any new data and evidence made available since their publication.

For each impact assessment, you will be asked the following questions. You can respond to as many questions and impact assessments as you want to.

For the retail display impact assessment, you can also respond about the impact assessments for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Please make it clear which one you're responding to.

If you have any evidence or data to inform the assumptions or estimates in the consultation stage impact assessment, please enter it in the relevant free text box.

Please do not include any personal information in your response.

Provide any evidence to inform our estimates in the impact assessment of the benefits of the proposed policy. For example, information on the impact that options will have on the number of people using products in scope and/or health benefits associated with any reduction in usage. (Optional, maximum 600 words)

Provide any evidence to inform our estimates in the impact assessment of the costs of the proposed policy. For example, information on profit margins for manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, and/or costs and process of product redesign. (Optional, maximum 600 words)

Specify any stakeholders that may be impacted by the proposed policy and/or costs and benefits that we have not identified in the impact assessment. (Optional, maximum 600 words)

Outline any potential unintended consequences of the proposed policy that we have not identified in the impact assessment. (Optional, maximum 600 words)

Provide any other comments to inform our assumptions or analysis in the impact assessment. (Optional, maximum 600 words)

File upload

If you would like to upload a document to support your submission, you will be able to do so. Please do not upload information that could identify you or another member of the public.

Committee:	Environment & Sustainability
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Consultation: Consultation on the Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

1.0

Background and Key Issues

1.1

This consultation (attached as **Appendix 5 EH**) seeks comments on proposed amendments to Northern Ireland air quality legislation relating to particulate matter, specifically PM10 and PM2.5, and to seek retrospective approval for the council’s response.

1.2

DAERA has launched a public consultation on the Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026. The consultation opened on 8 June 2026 and closed on 31 August 2026. The stated purpose is to tighten annual average particulate matter limits, targets and objectives for PM10 and PM2.5 across Northern Ireland, with compliance intended by 1 January 2028.

1.3

Particulate matter is a significant air pollutant with recognised public health impacts. PM10 refers to particles with a diameter of 10 micrometres or less, while PM2.5 refers to finer particles of 2.5 micrometres or less. PM2.5 is of particular concern because it can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream.

1.4

Attached at **Appendix 6 EH** is the response to the consultation document. The proposed Regulations would bring Northern Ireland’s particulate matter standards closer to the World Health Organization Air Quality Guideline interim target 4 levels. The principal proposed changes are summarised below.

1.5

Measure	Current Standard	Proposed Standard	Notes
PM2.5 annual limit value	25 µg/m³	10 µg/m³	Compliance intended by 1 January 2028
PM10 annual limit value	40 µg/m³	20 µg/m³	Compliance intended by 1 January 2028
PM2.5 target value	25 µg/m³	8 µg/m³	Strengthens long-term ambition for fine particulate matter
PM10 objective	40 µg/m³	20 µg/m³	Relevant to local air quality management responsibilities

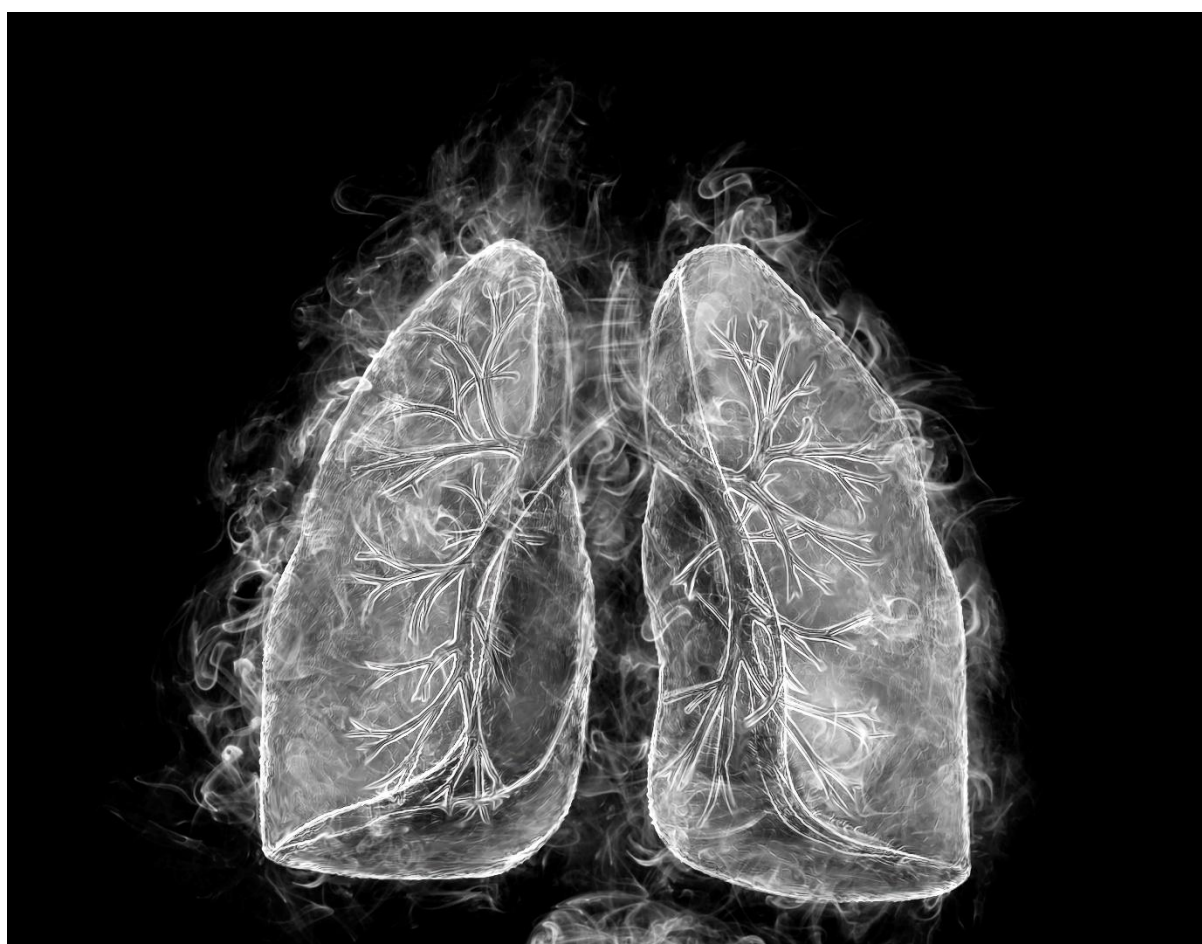
The draft Regulations also propose technical amendments, including updating the names of competent authorities, revoking the Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, and adding a new Schedule to clarify monitoring and assessment provisions.

1.6	Reducing particulate matter has the potential to support improved public health outcomes, particularly for children, older people and those with existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions. Measures that reduce PM10 and PM2.5 can also contribute to wider environmental and climate-related objectives where they encourage cleaner transport, reduced combustion emissions and better consideration of air quality in planning and development control.
1.7	Due to the timing of this consultation and the closing date of 31 August 2026, it was necessary to seek approval for the submission from Chair and Vice Chair of this committee. This enabled officers to make a response on behalf of LCCC and now seek retrospective approval at this meeting of the committee.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>
2.1	It is recommended that committee: retrospectively approve the response to the consultation which was submitted on behalf of the council prior to the closing date of 31 August 2026.

3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>
3.1	At present DAERA cover cost of all sampling equipment so it is anticipated that there may be further resource required if extra sampling locations are required.
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out? No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed? No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation

Appendices:	Appendix 5 EH – Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 Consultation Appendix 6 EH – Response to Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 Consultation
--------------------	--

Consultation on the Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 to tighten annual average particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) limits, targets and objectives in Northern Ireland



Alternative Formats

This document is also available on the DAERA website at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-draft-air-quality-amendment-regulations-northern-ireland-2026>

On request, you can request a copy of this document in other formats, such as:

- Paper Copy
- Large Print
- Braille
- Other Languages

To get a copy of this document in another format contact:

Air and Environmental Quality Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
1st Floor Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

E-mail: PM.Regulations@daera-ni.gov.uk

Tel: 028 9056 9835 and talk to one of the Consultation Team.

If you have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via Text Relay. Dial 18001 028 9056 9835

Contents

Executive Summary.....

4

Impact Assessments.....

6

Introduction.....

7

- Particulate matter and health impacts
- Modelled emissions of PM in Northern Ireland
- Current legislation in Northern Ireland
- World Health Organisation (WHO) global air quality guidelines

Proposals.....

12

- New annual average limit value, target value and objectives for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}
- Compliance with historical monitoring data
- Comparison with other jurisdictions
- Linkages with wider plans and strategies

How we will monitor compliance.....

16

Have your say.....

17

- How to respond to this consultation
- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Consultation questions

Next steps.....

22

Publication of responses.....

23

Annexes.....

25

- Annex A: The Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026
- Annex B: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations
- Annex C: Reference List

Executive Summary

Purpose and context

This consultation sets out proposed legislative amendments to strengthen air quality standards for particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) in Northern Ireland. The aim is to reduce harmful air pollution, protect public health, and align more closely with international (WHO) guidance and emerging standards across the UK and Ireland.

Rationale for change

Particulate matter is recognised as one of the most significant air pollutants affecting health in Northern Ireland. Fine particles (PM_{2.5}) are linked to respiratory and cardiovascular disease, cancer, and premature mortality. There is no safe level of exposure, and approximately 936 deaths annually in Northern Ireland are attributed to PM_{2.5}. Although emissions have declined since 2005 due to cleaner technologies and reduced solid fuel use, domestic combustion and transport remain key sources. Current legal limits are based on older EU-derived standards and are less stringent than modern WHO guidance.

Existing legislative framework

Ambient air quality in Northern Ireland is currently governed by:

- Air Quality Standards Regulations (NI) 2010 (limit and target values)
- Air Quality Regulations (NI) 2003 (objectives and competent authority duties)

Key proposals

The draft Regulations propose tighter annual average standards:

- **PM₁₀**
 - Limit value: reduced from 40 → 20 µg/m³
 - Objective: reduced from 40 → 20 µg/m³
- **PM_{2.5}**
 - Limit value: reduced from 25 → 10 µg/m³
 - Target value: reduced from 25 → 8 µg/m³

These changes would align Northern Ireland with **WHO Interim Target 4**, representing a significant step towards the long-term WHO Air Quality Guideline.

Additional administrative updates include:

- Updating names of competent authorities
- Revoking outdated 2003 amendment regulations
- Clarifying monitoring and assessment provisions

Deliverability and evidence

Analysis of monitoring data (2019–2024) indicates that:

- Most monitoring sites already comply with the proposed new standards
- Any exceedances are marginal
- Full compliance has been achieved in recent years (2023–2024) across all monitored sites

This suggests the proposed limits are achievable in the near term.

Policy alignment and strategic fit

The proposals would:

- Align Northern Ireland more closely with tightening standards in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland
- Support cross border consistency and address transboundary air pollution
- Respond to stakeholder support for WHO-aligned legally binding targets
- Support the NI Environmental Improvement Plan, draft Clean Air Strategy and draft Climate Action Plan

Implementation and compliance

The proposed compliance date is set for 1 January 2028. Compliance will be monitored through existing statutory reporting mechanisms and district council review processes, ensuring alignment with established governance frameworks. Annual air quality reports will continue to play a key role in tracking compliance over time and will provide an evidence base to inform ongoing policy development.

Impacts

Impact and screening assessments indicate:

- No significant equality, child rights, rural, or regulatory impacts requiring full assessment
- No disproportionate impact on rural communities

Consultation process

A 12-week public consultation will be conducted, during which stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback on the proposed limits, targets, and implementation timeline. The responses received through this process will be used to inform final policy decisions and guide the drafting of legislation before the regulations are formally laid before the Assembly.

Overall conclusion

The draft Regulations represent a tightening of air quality standards for particulate matter in Northern Ireland. They are evidence-based, achievable and aligned with international health guidance and regional policy trends. Adoption would mark an important step towards reducing air pollution-related health impacts and progressing towards long-term WHO guideline levels.

Impact Assessments

Equality & Disability

This policy has been screened in line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998⁽¹⁾, which requires public authorities to consider how their decisions might affect equality of opportunity and good relations for people of different ages, religions, political opinions, racial groups, genders, sexual orientations, marital or dependency status, and those with or without disabilities. The screening helps identify any potential impacts early in the process and ensures that equality is built into the development of the policy. The screening outcome and full screening form are available on the consultation website: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-draft-air-quality-amendment-regulations-northern-ireland-2026>. A full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is not considered necessary at this stage.

Rural Needs

A Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) has also been completed in line with the guidance on the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016⁽²⁾. This Act requires public authorities to give due regard to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services.

Child Rights

A Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) Screening has been completed for these Regulations to consider their effect on children and young people including their wellbeing, rights and access to opportunities. It has been determined that a full impact assessment will not be required.

Regulatory

A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) screening was completed by the Department. It was determined that it is unlikely that there will be any mandatory costs, savings or administrative burdens placed on NI businesses or the voluntary/community sector due to the implementation of these Regulations. For these reasons, a full RIA has been screened out.

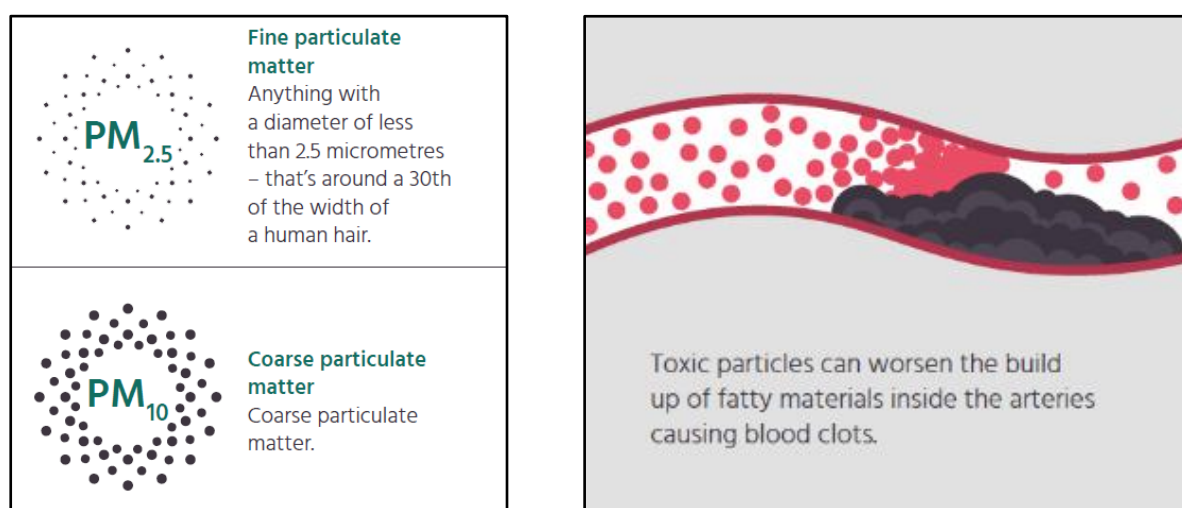
Introduction

Particulate matter and health impacts

According to the Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG), Particulate matter (PM) is the term used to describe condensed phase (solid or liquid) particles suspended in the atmosphere⁽³⁾. It comprises primary components (directly emitted) and secondary components (formed in the atmosphere). PM derives from both anthropogenic (such as fuel combustion and transport) and natural sources (such as sea spray and Saharan dust).

PM₁₀ are particles with a diameter less than 10 µg and PM_{2.5} are fine particles less than 2.5 µg.

Figure 1: Illustration of particulate matter size ⁽⁴⁾

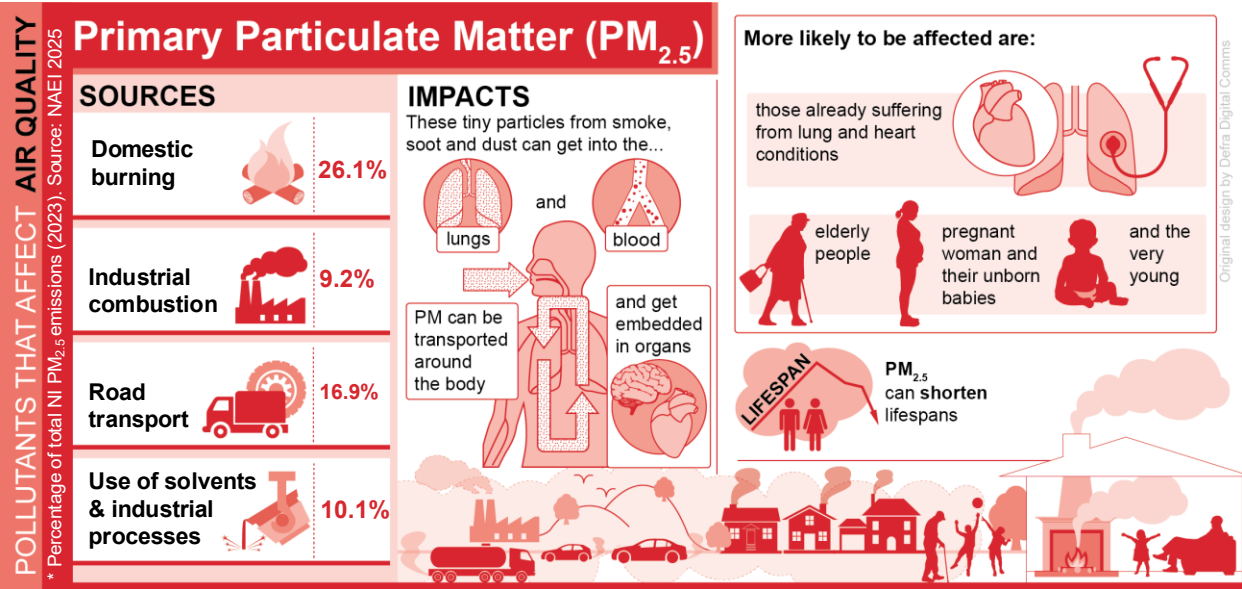


The potential impact on human health of PM is well established. PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ can act directly as a respiratory irritant in the airways, and for PM_{2.5} in particular, because of the small size of these particles, they may cross from the lungs into the bloodstream, where they can have more indirect systemic effects, such as increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has also classified ambient outdoor pollution, including PM_{2.5} as a Group 1 human carcinogen⁽⁵⁾. The carcinogenic potential extends beyond respiratory implications, affecting various organs, including the digestive tract, breast, and prostate. Long-term exposure to PM_{2.5} is associated with increased cancer mortality, with specific risks identified for different cancer types⁽⁶⁾. **There is no safe level of PM.**

In a report from the British and Irish Heart Foundation Northern Ireland released in 2023, Air Pollution and Mortality on the Island of Ireland, reports that 936 deaths in Northern Ireland annually were attributed to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) air

pollution, with 314 of these deaths being attributed to circulatory diseases ⁽⁷⁾. Based on these figures more must be done to save lives through improving our air quality.

Figure 2: Percentages of Particulate Matter (PM) emissions in Northern Ireland from different sources 2023 (Source: NAEI 2025)

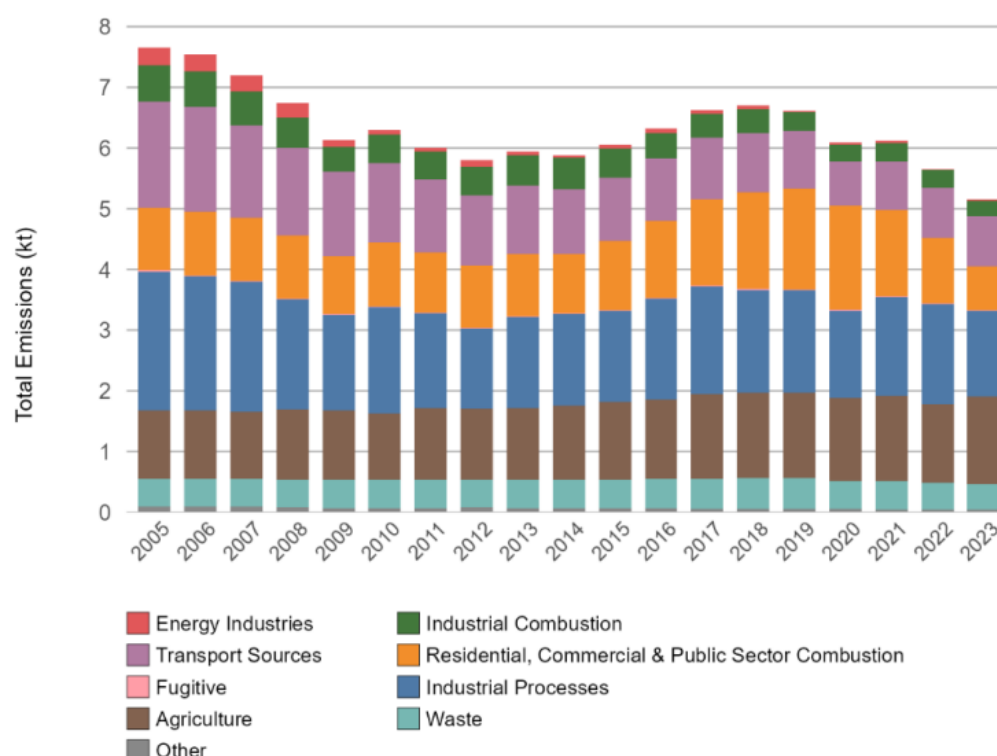


Modelled emissions of PM in Northern Ireland

PM_{2.5} emissions: The transport fleet has gradually decreased due to more stringent exhaust emissions standards over time. The phasing out of coal and the better technologies and stricter regulation for industrial combustion and energy production also decreased PM_{2.5} emissions. In recent years, the increased uptake of electric vehicles has helped to reduce tailpipe PM_{2.5} emissions.

Between 2022 and 2023, PM_{2.5} emissions fell by 15%, largely driven by a 35% reduction in emissions from domestic stationary combustion, reflecting lower solid fuel use in homes. While PM_{2.5} has many sources, combustion, particularly domestic burning remains more significant than industrial processes ⁽⁸⁾.

Figure 3: PM_{2.5} Emissions in Northern Ireland 2005-2023 (published September 2025) ⁽⁸⁾

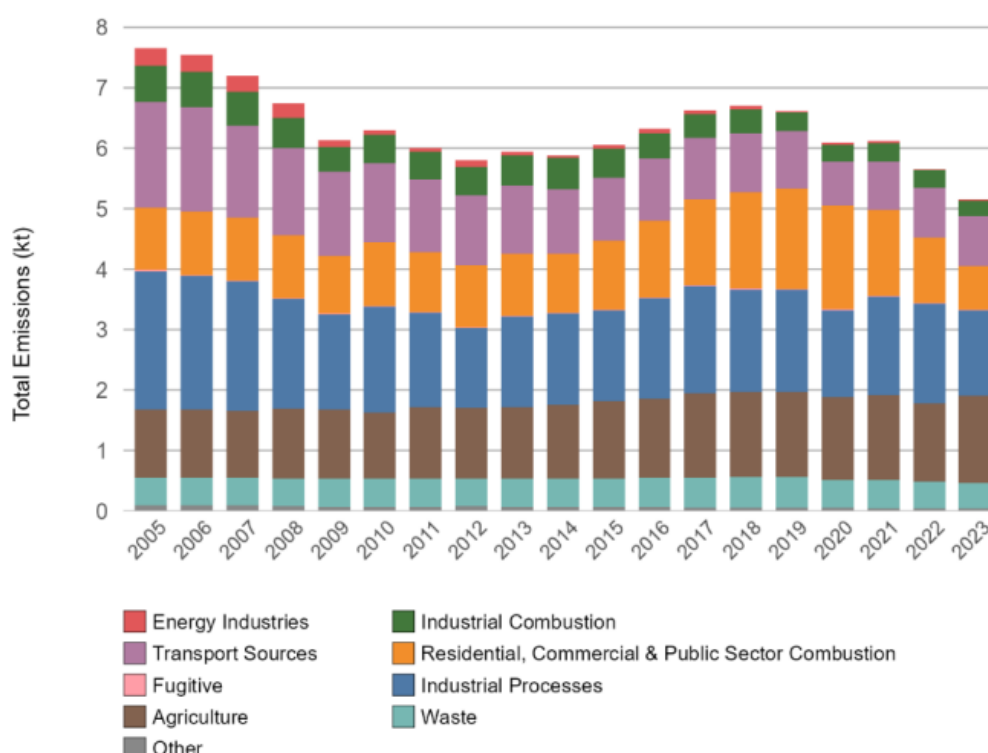


PM₁₀ emissions: While industrial processes were historically the largest source of PM₁₀, agriculture was the main contributor in 2023. Agriculture produces 97% of current ammonia emissions. Ammonia can persist for a long time in the atmosphere and be transported for long distances. It can react with other air pollutants like nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide to form ammonium aerosols, which are precursors for particulate matter, such as PM₁₀ (and also PM_{2.5}) ⁽⁹⁾.

The overall decrease in PM₁₀ emissions from 2005 is primarily driven by a reduction in emissions from vehicles due to the successive introduction of tighter emission standards over time, while non-exhaust PM₁₀ emissions from vehicles have been increasing due to increasing traffic activity. It should be noted that the decrease in emissions in 2020 is likely due to travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in reduced traffic volumes.

In recent years, emissions from residential, commercial & public sector combustion have primarily increased, driven by increased wood fuel use in the residential sector. These two trends offset one another meaning that there have been fluctuations in the trend of PM₁₀ emissions across the time series.

Figure 4: PM₁₀ Emissions in Northern Ireland 2005-2023 (published September 2025) ⁽⁸⁾



Current legislation in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland ambient levels of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are regulated by the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 ⁽¹⁰⁾, as amended. These Regulations transpose Directive 2008/50/EC on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe ⁽¹¹⁾ and are now part of retained EU legislation. The 2010 Regulations set out limit values and target values for ambient concentrations for a range of pollutants, including PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}.

- **Schedule 2 of the Regulations prescribes an annual average limit value of 40 µg/m³ for PM₁₀ and 25 µg/m³ for PM_{2.5}.**
- **Schedule 3 of the Regulations further prescribes an annual average target value of 25 µg/m³ for PM_{2.5}.**

Northern Ireland departments have a duty to ensure that levels of pollutants do not exceed the limit values set out in Schedule 2. They must also ensure that all necessary measures not entailing disproportionate costs are taken to ensure that concentrations of pollutants do not exceed the target values in Schedule 3. Currently the limit and target value for PM_{2.5} in legislation are the same, which is currently ineffective and therefore a tighter target value is being proposed. There is no target value in the Regulations for PM₁₀.

Part III of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 ⁽¹²⁾ requires district councils to review the quality of air within their area. This review requires an assessment to be made as to whether air quality standards and objectives from the Regulations are being

achieved, or likely to be achieved. The objectives are prescribed by The Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 ⁽¹³⁾ at Regulation 3 and in the Schedule respectively.

- **The Schedule of the Regulations prescribes an annual average objective of 40 µg/m³ for PM₁₀. There is no objective set for PM_{2.5}.**

World Health Organisation (WHO) global air quality guidelines

The WHO global air quality guidelines - Particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide ⁽¹⁴⁾, which was published on 22nd September 2021, sets recommended targets for air quality.

Exceedance of the air quality guideline (AQG) levels is associated with risks to public health. These guidelines are not legally binding standards. However, they do provide WHO Member States with an evidence-informed tool that can be used to inform legislation and policy. Ultimately, the goal of these guidelines is to provide guidance to help reduce levels of air pollutants in order to decrease the health burden resulting from exposure to air pollution worldwide.

In the 2021 guideline update, recommendations on AQG levels are formulated, together with interim targets for pollutants including PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀. The WHO has not specified dates or timelines as to when these interim targets should be met but has indicated that they should be used as a guide for reduction efforts towards the ultimate and timely achievement of the AQG levels.

The WHO global air quality interim targets are graduated from 1 to 4 with ‘1’ being a challenging but attainable target, and ‘4’ being a much higher standard. The ultimate target is the AQG level, which is a highly ambitious, aspirational target.

Table 1: WHO Air Quality Guideline (AQG) levels and Interim Targets for Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

Pollutant	Averaging time	Interim target				AQG
		1	2	3	4	
PM ₁₀ µg/m ³	Annual	70	50	30	20	15
PM _{2.5} µg/m ³	Annual	35	25	15	10	5

There was very strong support voiced for legally binding limits based on the WHO 2021 guidelines for particulate matter in the responses to the Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland public Discussion Document ⁽¹⁵⁾ (CASDD) along with a recognition of the ‘no safe level’ approach to air pollution. Key health stakeholders are also calling for implementation of these limits.

NOTE: Links to all references within this document can be found at Annex C.

Proposals

New annual average limit value, target value and objectives for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}

As PM is considered to be the pollutant with the biggest risk to health in Northern Ireland, DAERA is seeking to lay the Regulations at Annex A which will amend the annual average limit values, target values and objectives for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} in the 2010 and 2003 Regulations as set out in Table 2:

Table 2: Comparison of current and proposed new annual average PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} limits, objectives and targets

	Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010				Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003	
Pollutant	Annual average limit value (µg/m ³)		Annual average target value (µg/m ³)		Annual average objective value (µg/m ³)	
	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
PM ₁₀	40	20	N/A	N/A	40	20
PM _{2.5}	25	10	25	8	N/A	N/A

These proposed new standards would align Northern Ireland with **interim target 4** of the WHO guideline levels and would put us on a path to achieve the AQG levels in the future. In order to ensure Competent Authorities are required to meet the air quality objectives within the 2003 regulations on an ongoing basis the definition of “Relevant Period” has been amended. Annual average objectives will need to be achieved each calendar year with the first year being 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2027. To ensure consistency and provide a lead in time, all of the new annual average limits, targets and objectives will have an intended compliance date of 1 January 2028.

It is recognised that further policy interventions are needed before even stricter standards are brought in. Implementing these proposed standards are seen as a first step and would also put Northern Ireland more in line with the rest of the UK and Ireland who have adopted or are considering tighter restrictions for PM as outlined in page 14.

In addition to amending standards for PM, a number of other amendments are included in the Regulations as a means to tidy up the statute book:

- The names for the competent authorities in the 2003 Regulations will be amended to reflect their current names.

- The Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 will be revoked.
- A new Schedule has been added clarifying monitoring and assessment provisions currently contained within Directive 2008/50/EC on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe.

Compliance with historical monitoring data

Analysis of air quality monitoring site data ⁽¹⁶⁾ shows that Northern Ireland has been compliant with the proposed new limits, targets and objectives for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ at most sites since 2019. This is clear evidence that Northern Ireland can meet and maintain these standards going forward.

Table 3: Number of NI PM_{2.5} monitoring sites meeting the proposed new limit and target values based on 2019-2024 air quality data annual average data

Year	Proposed new annual average limit value (10 ug/m ³)	Proposed new annual average target value (8 ug/m ³)
2019 (3 sites total)	2	1
2020 (3 sites total)	3	3
2021 (5 sites total)	5	5
2022 (8 sites total)	7	5
2023 (9 sites total)	9	9
2024 (10 sites total)	10	10

For the few instances where compliance was not achieved at monitoring sites, the annual average limits for PM_{2.5} were only marginally above these.

Table 4: Number of NI PM₁₀ monitoring sites meeting the proposed new limit and objective values based on 2019-2024 air quality data annual mean data

Year	Proposed new annual average limit value/objective (20 ug/m ³)
2019 (11 sites total)	11
2020 (11 sites total)	11
2021 (12 sites total)	12
2022 (11 sites total)	11
2023 (12 sites total)	12
2024 (13 sites total)	13

Comparison with other jurisdictions

Ireland and all jurisdictions in the UK have committed to or are currently considering implementing tighter annual average PM standards as demonstrated in Table 5. Implementing these new limits, targets and objectives for PM in Northern Ireland would enable greater alignment with neighbouring countries, reduce divergence and help to tackle transboundary air pollution.

Table 5: Comparing particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) annual mean limit, target and objective values in Northern Ireland, Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales:

Country	PM _{2.5} Annual Mean Limit, Target or Objective (ug/m ³)	Equivalent WHO target/guideline level	Date to be achieved	PM ₁₀ Annual Mean Limit, Target or Objective (ug/m ³)	Equivalent WHO target/guideline level	Date to be achieved
Northern Ireland	25	Interim target 2	Existing commitment	40	-	Existing commitment
England	12	-	31 st January 2028	40	-	Existing commitment
	10	Interim target 4	31 st December 2040			
Scotland	10	Interim target 4	Existing commitment	18	-	Existing commitment
Wales	25	Interim target 2	Existing commitment	40	-	Existing commitment
	10*	Interim target 4	31 st December 2035			
Ireland	15	Interim target 3	31 st December 2026	30	Interim target 3	31 st December 2026
	10	Interim target 4	31 st December 2030	20	Interim target 4	31 st December 2030
	5	Air quality guideline	31 st December 2040	15	Air quality guideline	31 st December 2040

*Currently being considered following a recent public consultation <https://www.gov.wales/fine-particulate-matter-air-quality-targets>

NOTE: Links to all references within this document can be found at Annex C.

Linkages with wider plans and strategies

Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland: The development of these regulations to tighten PM standards will form a key action within the draft Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. The draft Strategy and associated impact assessments are at an advanced stage of finalisation and it is intended that it will be issued for public consultation in late summer/early autumn 2026.

***Environmental Improvement Plan (EiP) for Northern Ireland* ⁽¹⁷⁾:** Under the EiP a specific indicator has been developed for air quality, which considers annual mean urban background levels of PM_{2.5} (µg/m³) at five sites across NI. The EiP Annual Progress Report will assess this indicator to determine if air pollution levels are falling and therefore delivering environmental improvements. These regulations will help to support driving down PM_{2.5} emissions.

***Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2023-2027* ⁽¹⁸⁾:** The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 requires that climate action plans include targets for air quality. The draft CAP sets the requirement for DAERA to consult on these new annual average PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} limits, targets and objectives. As PM and CO₂ often share the same combustion sources (fossil fuels, vehicles, industry) these new PM standards have the potential to contribute to Northern Ireland's first carbon budget, given the duty of Competent Authorities listed within air quality legislation to fulfill their role in achieving these new standards by 1 January 2028.

How we will monitor compliance.

DAERA has a statutory requirement under the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 to publish an annual report on a range of pollutants monitored in Northern Ireland (including PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). This report is required to highlight details of all the cases where levels of pollutants have exceeded limit, values, target values and objectives.

Under the 2010 Regulations Northern Ireland Departments have a duty to ensure that the limit values are not exceeded and must ensure that all necessary measures not entailing disproportionate costs are taken to ensure that target values are not exceeded. In addition to this The Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 require district councils to review the quality of air within their area. The reviews must consider the current and likely future air quality and assess whether the air quality objectives are being met or are likely to be achieved within the relevant period. These Regulations also list a number of other Relevant Authorities in Northern Ireland, with important air quality responsibilities.

The Department will ensure that these annual reports continue to be produced to ensure compliance with these new limits, targets and objectives to inform the public, government and wider air quality community in Northern Ireland. These reports can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/reports>

Have your say

How to respond to this consultation

This consultation seeks to gather your views on the proposed Regulations through a series of questions. These are provided in full within this document and are also available via the Citizen Space online platform. We encourage you to respond to this consultation document directly through the online survey.

This consultation will run for a 12-week period from 8 June 2026 to 31 August 2026. Early responses are encouraged but all responses should arrive no later than 11.59 pm on 31 August 2026.

We would request you consider responding to this consultation document either directly through the online survey which is accessible from the link below or via email to the email address below, however we also accept postal returns.

Please note extensions to provide responses to DAERA outside of the 12-week consultation period cannot be granted.

You can respond in one of the following ways:

- **Online Survey**

You are encouraged, wherever possible, to provide your responses to this consultation online via Citizen Space

<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/admin/daera/consultation-draft-air-quality-amendment-regs>

- **By Email**

You can submit your completed response by emailing the consultation team at: PM.Regulations@daera-ni.gov.uk

Email responses are limited to 1500 characters per question to mirror the requirements being set on Citizen Space. Email responses may take significantly longer to process than online submissions, so we encourage you to use the Citizen Space online survey.

- **By Post**

Postal responses are limited to 1500 characters per question to mirror the requirements being set on Citizen Space. Please be aware that postal responses will take longer to receive and process and so we encourage you to use the Citizen Space online survey. Please allow adequate time for delivery.

Responses can be posted to:

Air and Environmental Quality Branch

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
1st Floor Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast
BT3 9ED

Guidance is provided on the 'Confidentiality of Responses under the Freedom of Information Act 2000', at page 23 below, for your reference.

If you require any further information, contact 028 9056 9835.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Guidance is provided on your privacy and confidentiality on our website for your reference - [DAERA Privacy Statement](#)

Also, if you require any further information, please contact a member of the team on 028 9056 9835 or by emailing PM.Regulations@daera-ni.gov.uk

By responding to this consultation, your response, and all other responses to this consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances.

Consultation Questions

About you

1. *What is your name?*
2. *What is your email address?*
3. *What is your home postcode?*
4. *Please tell us if you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please confirm the name of the organization and you have the authority to respond on behalf of the organisation.*
 - Individual
 - Organisation
5. *Please indicate if you are happy for your response to be published.*
 - Yes
 - No
6. *If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please indicate if you are content for the name of the organisation to be associated with your response.*
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not Applicable

Proposed new annual average limits, targets and objectives for particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}).

7. *To what extent do you agree with the proposed new annual average limit value of 20 µg/m³ for PM₁₀?*
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question. (1500 character limit).

8. *To what extent do you agree with the proposed new annual average objective of 20 µg/m³ for PM₁₀?*
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share reason for views or any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

9. *To what extent do you agree with the proposed new annual average limit value of 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for $\text{PM}_{2.5}$?*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

10. *To what extent do you agree with the proposed new annual average target value of 8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for $\text{PM}_{2.5}$?*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

11. *To what extent do you agree with the proposed compliance date of 1 January 2028 for these new limit values, target values and objectives for PM_{10} and $\text{PM}_{2.5}$?*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

Impact Assessments

12. *Do you agree or disagree with the conclusions of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)?*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

13. *Do you agree or disagree with the conclusions of the Equality and Disability screening?*

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

Additional comments

14. *Do you have any additional comments you wish to raise with regards to the draft Regulations or consultation documents? (1500 character limit).*

Next Steps

Following the closure of the consultation, all feedback will be analysed and used to review the proposals. A summary of responses will be published on the DAERA website. DAERA will review all responses using a range of qualitative and quantitative analysis tools.

Recommendations will then be submitted to Minister Muir, who will consider the consultation responses before the Regulations are laid in the Northern Ireland Assembly by Negative Resolution with a view to coming into operation on 1 January 2028.

The Equality Impact Assessment, Child Rights Impact Assessment Rural Needs Impact Assessment and Regulatory Impact Assessment will also be reviewed following consideration of consultation responses.

Publication of Responses

The Air and Environmental Quality Branch is leading the consultation on behalf of DAERA. A summary of responses will be published following the closing date for receipt of views. Your response, and all other responses to this publication, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. 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 stakeholder engagement 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, namely, DAERA in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a stakeholder engagement exercise. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential information supplied to it in response to a stakeholder engagement exercise. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this stakeholder engagement exercise, including information about your identity, should be made public or be treated as confidential. This means that information provided by you in response to this consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public, please include an explanation in your response.

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; and

- 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.

Annex A: The Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. XX

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - - xx 2026
Coming into operation In accordance with regulation
1(2) and (3)

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs(a) makes these Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 15(1), (2), and 15(5) of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002(b).

In accordance with Article 15(6) of that Order the Department has consulted with—

- (a) such competent authorities as it considers appropriate;
- (b) such bodies or persons appearing to it to be representative of the interests of industry as it considers appropriate; and
- (c) such other bodies or persons as it considers appropriate.

Citation and commencement

- 1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 and shall come into operation as provided by paragraphs (2) and (3).
- (2) Part I shall come into operation on 1 January 2027.
- (3) Part II shall come into operation on 1 January 2028.

Part I

Amendment of the Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003

- 2.—(1) The Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003(c) are amended as follows.
- (2) In regulation 2, in column 1 of the Table, in each place the words occur, for—
- (a) “Department for Regional Development” substitute “Department for Infrastructure”;
 - (b) “Department for Social Development” substitute “Department for Communities”;
 - (c) “Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment” substitute “Department for the Economy”;

(a) See S.R. 2016 No. 76
(b) S.I. 2002/3153 (NI 7)
(c) S.R. 2003 No. 342

- (d) “Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety” substitute “Department of Health”;
- (e) “Department of the Environment” substitute “Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs”;
- (f) “Northern Ireland Authority for Energy Regulation” substitute “Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation”.

(3) In regulation 3(2), for “the period beginning with the date on which these Regulations come into operation and ending on the date set out in the third column of the Table in the Schedule which relates to that objective” substitute “a period of 12 months, the first such period being the period beginning with 1 January 2027 and ending with 31 December 2027, and subsequent relevant periods being periods of 12 months beginning with the day after the end of the previous relevant period.”

(4) In regulation 4(1) omit “by no later than the date set out in the third column of that Table for that substance and level”.

(5) In the Schedule, for the table substitute the following table—

<i>“Pollutant</i>	<i>Air Quality objective levels*</i>
Benzene	3.25µg/m ³ when expressed as a running annual mean
1,3-butadiene	2.25µg/m ³ when expressed as a running annual mean
Carbon monoxide	10mg/m ³ when expressed as a maximum daily running 8 hour mean
Lead	0.25µg /m ³ when expressed as an annual mean
Nitrogen dioxide	200µg/m ³ when expressed as a 1 hour mean, not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year
	40µg/m ³ when expressed as an annual mean
Sulphur dioxide	350µg/m ³ when expressed as a 1 hour mean, not to be exceeded more than 24 times a year
	125µg/m ³ when expressed as a 24 hour mean, not to be exceeded more than 3 times a year
	266µg/m ³ when expressed as a 15 minute mean, not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year
Particles (PM ₁₀)	50µg/m ³ when expressed as a 24 hour mean, not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year
	20µg/m ³ when expressed as an annual mean”.

(*) µg/m³: micrograms per cubic metre

Revocation

- 3. The Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 are revoked.

Part II

Amendment of the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010

- 4.(1)The Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010(a) are amended as follows.
- (2) In regulation 6(1) for “Annex II of the Directive” substitute “Section A of SCHEDULE 9”.

(a) S.R. [2010 No. 188](#)

(3) In regulation 6(3) for “Annex II to the Directive” substitute “Section B of SCHEDULE 9”.

(4) In regulation 11(1) for “Section 1 of Annex II to Council Directive 2004/107/EC” substitute “Section A of SCHEDULE 9”.

(5) In regulation 11(3) for “Section II of Annex II to Council Directive 2004/107/EC” substitute “Section B of SCHEDULE 9”.

(6) In Schedule 2—

(a) in the table for PM₁₀ in the second column opposite calendar year for “40 µg/m³” substitute “20 µg/m³”.

(b) for the table for PM_{2.5} substitute the following table—

“**PM_{2.5}**

<i>Averaging Period</i>	<i>Limit Value</i>
Calendar year	10 µg/m ³ ”.

(7) In Schedule 3, in the table for “PM_{2.5}” for “25 µg/m³” substitute “8 µg/m³”.

(8) After Schedule 8 insert Schedule 9 which is set out in the Schedule.

SCHEDULE

“SCHEDULE 9 regulation 4(7)

Determination of requirements for assessment of concentrations of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen, particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), lead, benzene, carbon monoxide, arsenic, cadmium, nickel and benzo(a)pyrene in ambient air within a zone or agglomeration

A. Upper and lower assessment thresholds

The following upper and lower assessment thresholds will apply:

1. Sulphur dioxide

	Health protection	Vegetation protection
Upper assessment threshold	60 % of 24-hour limit value (75 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 3 times in any calendar year)	60 % of winter critical level (12 µg/m ³)
Lower assessment threshold	40 % of 24-hour limit value (50 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than three times in any calendar year)	40 % of winter critical level (8 µg/m ³)

2. Nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen

	Hourly limit value for the protection of human health (NO ₂)	Annual limit value for the protection of human health (NO ₂)	Annual critical level for the protection of vegetation and natural ecosystems (NO _x)
Upper assessment threshold	70 % of limit value (140 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 18 times in any calendar year)	80 % of limit value (32 µg/m ³)	80 % of critical level (24 µg/m ³)
Lower assessment threshold	50 % of limit value (100 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 18 times in any calendar year)	65 % of limit value (26 µg/m ³)	65 % of critical level (19.5 µg/m ³)

3. Particulate matter (PM₁₀/PM_{2.5})

	24-hour average PM ₁₀	Annual average PM ₁₀	Annual average PM _{2.5} (a)
Upper assessment threshold	70 % of limit value (35 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times in any calendar year)	70 % of limit value (14 µg/m ³)	70 % of limit value (7 µg/m ³)

Lower assessment threshold	50 % of limit value (25 µg/m ³ , not to be exceeded more than 35 times in any calendar year)	50 % of limit value (10 µg/m ³)	50 % of limit value (5 µg/m ³)
----------------------------	---	---	--

^(a) The upper assessment threshold and the lower assessment threshold for PM_{2.5} do not apply to the measurements to assess compliance with the PM_{2.5} exposure reduction target for the protection of human health.

4. Lead

	Annual average
Upper assessment threshold	70 % of limit value (0.35 µg/m ³)
Lower assessment threshold	50 % of limit value (0.25 µg/m ³)

5. Benzene

	Annual average
Upper assessment threshold	70 % of limit value (3.5 µg/m ³)
Lower assessment threshold	40 % of limit value (2 µg/m ³)

6. Carbon monoxide

	Annual average
Upper assessment threshold	70 % of limit value (7 mg/m ³)
Lower assessment threshold	50 % of limit value (5 mg/m ³)

7. Arsenic, cadmium, nickel and benzo(a)pyrene

	Arsenic	Cadmium	Nickel	B(a)P
Upper assessment threshold in percent of the target value	60 % (3,6 ng/m ³)	60 % (3 ng/m ³)	70 % (14 ng/m ³)	60 % (0.6 ng/m ³)
Lower assessment threshold in percent of the target value	40 % (2,4 ng/m ³)	40 % (2 ng/m ³)	50 % (10 ng/m ³)	40 % (0.4 ng/m ³)

B. Determination of exceedances of upper and lower assessment thresholds

Exceedances of upper and lower assessment thresholds shall be determined on the basis of concentrations during the previous five years where sufficient data are available. An assessment threshold shall be deemed to have been exceeded if it has been exceeded during at least three separate years out of those previous five years.

Where fewer than five years' data are available the Department may combine measurement campaigns of short duration during the period of the year and at locations likely to be typical of the highest pollution levels with results obtained from information from emission inventories and modelling to determine exceedances of the upper and lower assessment thresholds.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations are made in exercise of the powers under Article 15(1), (2) and (5) of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002.

These Regulations make amendments to air quality secondary legislation in Northern Ireland.

Regulation 2 makes amendments to the Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003. It inserts the current names of Competent Authorities. It amends the definition of relevant period so that the ‘relevant period’ is a period of 12 months beginning with 1st January and ending with 31st December each year. It amends the annual average of PM₁₀ and 1 hour mean for sulphur dioxide.

Regulation 3 revokes the Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

Regulation 4 makes amendments to the Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 to update the limit value for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} and updates the target value for PM_{2.5}. It also adds in a new Schedule outlining the upper and lower assessment thresholds of pollutants and determination of their exceedances.

Annex B: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Anthropogenic	Caused by humans or their activities
AQEG	Air Quality Expert Group
Carbon Budget	Sets a limit on the maximum amount of greenhouse gas emissions that can be produced over a five-year period.
Carcinogen	A substance that causes cancer
Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) Screening	The initial, preliminary stage of a structured evaluation process that determines if a proposed policy, law, or budget decision significantly impacts children's rights. It helps decide whether a full, in-depth CRIA is required, focusing on mitigating negative effects and aligning with the UN Convention on Rights of a Child (UNCRC).
Citizen Space	An online consultation platform used by the Northern Ireland Civil Service to host public consultations. It allows individuals and organisations to view, participate in, and respond to government surveys and policy proposals. The platform supports transparency and public engagement in decision-making processes.
Climate Action Plan (CAP)	Policies and proposals to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions within the associated Carbon Budget period and the actions to enable this to happen.
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
District Council	11 single-tier local government bodies responsible for local services.
Emissions	An amount of a substance that is produced and sent out into the air that is harmful to the environment.
Environmental Improvement Plan (EiP)	A statutory, long-term blueprint developed by DAERA to protect, restore, and improve the natural environment.
Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)	A structured process used by public authorities in Northern Ireland to assess whether a proposed policy, strategy or decision is likely to have an adverse impact on people from the Section 75 equality groups. It is carried out in line with the statutory duties set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which require public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and good relations.
Limit value	Concentrations of pollutants that must not be exceeded
NI	Northern Ireland
Objective	Concentrations of pollutants not to be exceeded within the defined relevant period. Requirement for district councils to designate air quality management areas and develop action plans in pursuit of achieving prescribed objectives.
Particulate matter (PM)	Condensed phase (solid or liquid) particles suspended in the atmosphere.
PM₁₀	Particles with a diameter less than 10 µg

PM_{2.5}	Particles with a diameter less than 2.5 µg
Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) screening	A preliminary, fast-track process used by policymakers to determine if a proposed regulation or policy requires a full, in-depth impact assessment. It helps determine if a policy will cause significant, direct, or indirect costs or savings for businesses, the public sector, or voluntary organisations.
Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)	A mandatory, structured process, required under the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 ensuring public authorities consider the social and economic needs of rural communities when developing policies, plans, or public services. It focuses on reducing isolation, inequality, and improving access to services.
Target Value	Concentrations of pollutants that should not be exceeded by ensuring all necessary measures not entailing disproportionate costs are applied.
µg	A microgram is a metric unit of mass equal to one-millionth of a gram or one-thousandth of a milligram.
µg/m³	Micrograms per cubic meter is the standard unit for measuring air pollutant concentrations, such as particulate matter, representing the mass (µg) of a pollutant in a given volume (m ³) of air.
WHO	WHO World Health Organisation

Annex C: Reference List

1	The Northern Ireland Act 1998
2	The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
3	Air Quality Expert Group - Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) in the UK
4	British and Irish Heart Foundation - Air Pollution and Mortality on the Island of Ireland Summary
5	International Agency for Research on Cancer - Press Release No 221
6	Breath of Danger: Unveiling PM_{2.5}'s Stealthy Impact on Cancer Risks
7	British and Irish Heart Foundation - Air Pollution and Mortality on the Island of Ireland Report
8	Air Pollutant Inventories for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2005-2023
9	Draft Ammonia Strategy Consultation
10	The Air Quality Standards Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
11	Directive 2008/50/EC on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe
12	The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
13	Air Quality Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003
14	WHO global air quality guidelines - Particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀), ozone, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide
15	A Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland – Public Discussion Document
16	Air quality NI data selector
17	Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland
18	Northern Ireland's draft Climate Action Plan 2023-2027

For further information:

DAERA

Air and Environmental Quality Branch

Clare House

303 Airport Road West

Belfast

BT3 9ED

Email: PM.Regulations@daera-ni.gov.uk

Website: www.airqualityni.co.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard



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

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
 agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'
**Fairmin, Environment
 an' Kintra Matthers**

Draft Response to DAERA consultation on the Draft Air Quality (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

Consultation Questions

About you

1. What is your name?

Donal McLaughlin, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

2. What is your email address?

ehhealth@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

3. What is your home postcode?

N/A

4. Please tell us if you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please confirm the name of the organization and you have the authority to respond on behalf of the organisation.

- Organisation

5. Please indicate if you are happy for your response to be published.

- Yes

6. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please indicate if you are content for the name of the organisation to be associated with your response.

- Yes

Proposed new annual average limits, targets and objectives for particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}).

7. To what extent do you agree with the proposed new annual average limit value of 20 µgm⁻³ for PM₁₀?

- Strongly agree

• **Agree**

- Neutral

- Disagree

- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question. (1,500 character limit).

Council notes that DAERA propose to adopt an annual mean limit value of $20 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ for PM_{10} to be achieved by 1 January 2028; equivalent to interim target 4 of the *WHO global air quality guidelines*. Responsibility for achieving the proposed annual mean limit value will fall to government Departments.

In considering the proposed $20 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ annual mean limit value for PM_{10} , Council has referred to Defra background air pollution mapping provided to inform LAQM functions. The Annual Mean Concentration for PM_{10} for LCCC in 2025 was $11.7 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

In order to achieve the $20 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ annual mean limit value, actions may be required by government Departments to address both local and background emission sources, with a likely emphasis on background sources.

8. To what extent do you agree with the proposed new annual average objective of $20 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ for PM_{10} ?

- Strongly agree
- **Agree**
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share reason for views or any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1,500 character limit).

Further to our response to question 7, Council notes that DAERA are proposing to establish an annual average objective of $20 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ for PM_{10} to be achieved by 1 January 2028; equivalent to interim target 4 of the *2021 WHO global air quality guidelines*. Responsibility for pursuit of this PM_{10} annual mean objective will fall to district councils and competent authorities.

Council would reiterate its comments made in response to Q7 concerning the appreciable contribution from background pollution sources to monitored PM_{10} levels and as a consequence, Council's, and indeed competent authorities' abilities to mitigate the impact of these distant background sources will be dependent on new government policies to address both local and background emission sources, with a likely emphasis on background sources.

9. To what extent do you agree with the proposed new annual average limit value of $10 \mu\text{gm}^{-3}$ for $\text{PM}_{2.5}$?

- Strongly agree
- **Agree**
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

The Council acknowledges the significant health impacts associated with PM_{2.5} and therefore welcomes the proposed tightening of the annual mean limit value to 10 µgm⁻³. Council notes that responsibility for achieving the annual mean limit value will fall to government Departments.

Council would again highlight the significant contribution from background emission sources to monitored PM_{2.5} concentrations within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

10. To what extent do you agree with the proposed new annual average target value of 8 µgm⁻³ for PM_{2.5}?

- Strongly agree
- **Agree**
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500-character limit).

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council acknowledges the significant human health impacts associated with PM_{2.5} and therefore welcomes the proposed tightening of the PM_{2.5} annual mean target value. Council notes that DAERA have proposed a new annual mean target value of 8 µgm⁻³ for PM_{2.5}; a welcome and significant reduction of 17 µgm⁻³ from the previous annual mean target value of 25 µgm⁻³ and 2 µgm⁻³ less than the proposed 10 µgm⁻³ annual mean limit value; acknowledging that a '*target value*' is a level fixed with the aim of avoiding, preventing or reducing harmful effects on human health and / or the environment as a whole, to be attained where possible over a given period.

Council notes that the annual mean target value is to be achieved by government Departments.

Council would once again refer to its previous comments concerning the contribution of background sources to concentrations of PM_{2.5} across the LCCC area and the impact that such PM_{2.5} background sources may consequently have on the ability of government Departments to achieve the proposed 8 µgm⁻³ annual mean target value within Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area.

Therefore, as previously highlighted, additional policy and mitigation measures that will be necessary in order to achieve the proposed annual mean target value of 8 µgm⁻³ for PM_{2.5}.

11. To what extent do you agree with the proposed compliance date of 1 January 2028 for these new limit values, target values and objectives for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- **Strongly disagree**

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

Council notes that the revised annual average objectives are to be achieved each calendar year, with a first compliance year of 2027. To ensure consistency and a lead in time, annual average standards are to have a compliance date of 1 January 2028. Proposed amendments to the existing particulate matter standards are to be made in late 2026.

As the first compliance year is 2027, with a compliance date of 1 January 2028, DAERA are advised that the first formal assessment of 2027 monitoring data will be via the 2028 Progress Report. It is unclear therefore why DAERA have indicated that a compliance date of 1 January 2028 provides an appropriate 'lead in' time. Moreover, the consultation document highlights that other administrations that have adopted strengthened PM_{2.5} standards have adopted compliance dates of up to 2040.

In setting a PM_{2.5} target for England, Defra published evidence reports that included trajectories for various target level scenarios. The trajectories were modelled for emission reduction scenarios and a target baseline to provide a timeline for 2025, 2030, 2040 & 2050, which was then used to inform the likely dates for target achievability. It is unclear if DAERA have undertaken a comparable particulate matter achievability assessment for NI. It is recommended, however, that dates for achieving strengthened NI particulate matter standards should be informed by an equivalently robust scientific trajectory assessment.

Council considers, therefore, that 1 January 2028 is an unrealistic compliance date, in terms of strategies and policies that will need to be developed and mitigation actions that may need to be taken by Departments and councils to achieve, or be in pursuit of new limit values, target values and objectives for PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}.

Impact Assessments

12. Do you agree or disagree with the conclusions of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- **Neutral**
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

N/A

13. Do you agree or disagree with the conclusions of the Equality and Disability screening?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- **Neutral**
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please share any further views or suggestions you have in relation to this question (1500 character limit).

N/A

Additional comments

14. Do you have any additional comments you wish to raise with regards to the draft Regulations or consultation documents? (1,500 character limit).

- Council notes that DAERA consulted on a NI *Clean Air Strategy* in 2020, but no Strategy has yet been published, despite consultation into tightened PM standards.
- In delivering LAQM functions, AQ officers will refer to LAQM.TG22. Assessment tools provided in TG22 may require revisions to reflect the new PM₁₀ annual mean objective. TG22 is also utilised by consultants for assessing PM impacts associated with developments.
- Whilst Council recognises the importance of good air quality and associated benefits to health, we are strongly of the view that the legislative framework underpinning the NI LAQM regime urgently requires additional amendments, alongside the introduction of a clear and ambitious policy direction from key government Departments to deliver necessary positive changes. We would reiterate that PM emissions may be transboundary in source and nature.

Committee:	Environment & Sustainability
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Consultation: Proposed Animal Welfare Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland 2026

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	The Consultation (see attached as Appendix 7 EH), which closed on 29 June 2026, sought comments on proposed amendments to Animal Welfare Policy in Northern Ireland.
1.2	There are 5 main proposals to highlight the need to modernise several elements of the existing animal welfare framework, to ensure it continues to reflect best practice, supports responsible animal ownership, and responds to emerging challenges. • Regulation of Rescue and Rehoming Organisations • Dog Licensing Fees • Aversive Training Devices • Strengthening Microchipping requirements for dogs • Call for evidence on microchipping of pet cats
1.3	<u>Regulation of Rescue and Rehoming Organisations</u> Rescue and rehoming organisations currently operate without formal regulatory oversight. It is proposed that councils should take on this role through present Animal welfare/dog control roles for premises with rehoming of more than 5 animals within a 12-month period, or cares for 8 or more animals (or 5 or more dogs). They will be required to obtain a licence from the relevant council and must meet the associated licence conditions.
1.4	<u>Dog Licensing Fees</u> Dog licensing was introduced in Northern Ireland in 1983 to enhance public safety and dog control, monitor the dog population and promote responsible dog ownership. The last change to annual dog licence fees was in 2011. Fees for annual licences are: • £12.50 for a single dog; • £32 for a block licence (for 3 or more dogs kept at the same place) and • £5 for concessionary licences. • People who receive income-related benefits, or who have had their dog neutered, may pay a reduced £5 fee. • Anyone aged 65 or over may obtain a free licence for their first or only dog. • Assistance dogs and police dogs do not need a licence.

- 1.5 Councils now spend more on running the licensing system and providing dog warden services than they collect through licence fees. The current fees are very low compared to the overall cost of owning a dog. Increasing the fees will give councils additional financial resources to deliver dog control services, which will benefit dog owners and the wider public.
- 1.6 The proposed fees are:
- £18.50 for a single dog licence – therefore generating an additional £6 per licence, per annum.
 - £47.50 for a block licence – therefore generating an additional £15.50 per licence, per annum.
 - Concessionary licences will remain available, and it is proposed to also apply an inflationary increase to the fee bringing it to £7.50 (an additional £2.50 per licence, per annum).
 - Licence exemptions for assistance and police dogs will remain, and
 - Anyone aged 65 or over will continue to receive a free licence for their first or only dog.
- 1.7 **Aversive Training Devices**
- The Department proposes to ban the use of handheld e-collars, choke collars, and prong collars on cats and dogs in Northern Ireland. It is considered that these aversive training devices present the highest risk of deliberate misuse and direct harm to animal welfare. Electronic containment fence systems and spray collars were considered as part of this proposal. While both rely on aversive stimuli and have raised concerns about welfare impacts, they are assessed as presenting a lower risk of deliberate misuse and direct harm than handheld e-collars, choke collars and prong collars.
- 1.8 **Strengthening Microchipping Requirements for Dogs**
- Microchipping was introduced under The Dogs (Licensing and Identification) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 to help identify dogs and their owners more easily, improve traceability, and support enforcement of dog laws. A dog must be microchipped for the licence to be valid.
- 1.9 The Department proposes to:
- Make it an offence for dog owners to not update ownership details on microchip databases, such as a change of address, within a specified time (i.e. 14 days).
 - Requirement for owners/keepers to declare that they are also the breeder of the dog, to enable database providers to record breeder details where the breeder is also the keeper of the dog; and
 - Require all owners/keepers to microchip their dogs, by 8 weeks of age.
- 1.10 **Call for Evidence on Microchipping of Pet Cats**
- The Department is gathering views, evidence, and information on whether microchipping of pet (owned) cats should be considered in Northern Ireland.
- Council are neutral on this matter as we do not deal with cats and believe that this role should sit with animal welfare charities such as Cats Protection.

1.11	Due to the timing of the Consultation and the closing date of 30 June 2026, it was necessary to seek approval for the submission from Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee and the Chief Executive under Delegated Authority. This enabled officers to make a response on behalf of LCCC and now seek retrospective approval.
1.12	The response submitted by Council officers is attached at Appendix 8 EH .
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that the committee: retrospectively approves the response to the consultation which was submitted on behalf of the council prior to the closing date of 30 June 2026.

3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	N/A	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	

Appendices:	Appendix 7 EH – Animal Welfare Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland 2026 Consultation Appendix 8 EH – Response to Consultation on Proposed Animal Welfare Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland 2026
--------------------	---



Consultation on proposed animal welfare policy reforms in Northern Ireland



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: [Consultations | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

On request, we can arrange to provide other formats of this document:

- Paper Copy
- Large Print
- Braille
- Other Languages

To request a copy of this document in another format, please contact:

Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch
 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
 Jubilee House
 111 Ballykelly Road
 Ballykelly
 Limavady
 BT49 9HP

Or alternatively, by:

Email: animalwelfarepolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk

Contents

Ministerial Foreword.....	3
Executive Summary.....	5
Chapter 1: Introduction	7
Chapter 2: Background	9
Chapter 3: Proposals.....	10
1. Regulation of Rescue and Rehoming Organisations	10
2. Dog Licence Fees.....	17
3. Aversive training devices	19
4. Strengthening Microchipping requirements for dogs	22
5. Call for Evidence on microchipping of pet cats.....	24
Chapter 4: Impact Assessments and Next Steps.....	27
Impact Assessments	27
Next Steps	27
Chapter 5: How to Respond and When	28
Responses.....	28
Closing date.....	28
Confidentiality	29
Appendix 1: List of Consultees.....	30

Ministerial Foreword

My [Animal Welfare Pathway](#), which I published in May 2025, is recognition that advancing and strengthening animal welfare is a key priority for me and my Department.

As such, I have already taken forward a series of key reforms where change is clearly needed - reforms that should deliver meaningful improvements and increase protections for all our animals.

To date, I have introduced new pet theft laws; facilitated legal parity with the rest of the UK by agreeing that CCTV coverage be made mandatory in all areas of slaughterhouses where animals are kept; appointed an expert advisory group to bring forward recommendations on how dog breeding should be regulated here; and announced new rules on the sale and supply of puppies and kittens. Some of these initiatives are well embedded or on the cusp of being implemented.

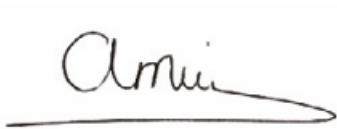
As these reforms continue, I want to now progress work on the remaining elements of the Pathway. I am conscious that the end of this Assembly term is fast approaching, so I am keen to seek views on the proposals contained within this consultation which will help to determine what the next steps are for these important proposals, and what can be achieved in the time that is left in this shortened mandate.

The proposals within this consultation complement and build upon identified areas for reform as outlined in the Pathway, and have the potential to create a strong, cohesive package of measures that can enhance and protect the welfare of all animals and dogs and cats, in particular.

However, I cannot deliver change to animal welfare alone. I am acutely aware that many of the proposals I am advocating require collaboration and partnership working, especially with councils. I also realise the weight of public expectation that councils face when new policies are announced. However, when I held my roundtable discussions, it was made clear to me

that standing still or doing nothing was not an option. A shared commitment and collective action will be needed for lasting change to take place.

I encourage everyone with an interest in animal welfare to take part in this consultation. Together, despite the complexities and constraints, we can take meaningful and proactive steps to further enhance and protect the welfare of all animals in Northern Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Muir', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Andrew Muir MLA

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Executive Summary

In 2024–25, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (the Department) engaged in a number of roundtable stakeholders' sessions with key partners including local councils, veterinary associations, agricultural organisations, and animal welfare charities to identify priority areas where welfare protections could be strengthened. This engagement highlighted the need to modernise several elements of the existing animal welfare framework to ensure it continues to reflect best practice, supports responsible animal ownership, and responds to emerging challenges. Following those discussions, Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Minister, Andrew Muir, MLA, set out the priority areas for reform, as published in the [Animal Welfare Pathway- Advancing Animal Welfare in Northern Ireland 2025-27](#).

This consultation seeks views on proposed changes across four policy areas in addition to asking for feedback as part of a call for evidence on cat microchipping.

Regulation of rescue and rehoming organisations

Rescue and rehoming organisations currently operate without formal regulatory oversight. The Department is proposing the introduction of a licensing regime to set uniform welfare standards, enhance transparency and accountability, thereby strengthening public confidence and protecting animal welfare. The contributions made by this sector are highly valued and consequently, the proposed measures are intended to be proportionate, ensuring compliance with animal welfare standards without introducing excessive bureaucratic burdens.

Dog licence fees

The Department proposes an inflationary increase for licence fees to ensure that they remain appropriate, proportionate and reflective of councils' enforcement and administrative resource requirements.

Ban on specified aversive training devices

The Department is proposing to ban the use of electronic shock collars, choke collars and prong collars, as these aversive training devices pose the greatest risk of misuse resulting in pain, fear or distress. The use of containment fences or boundary systems will not be impacted.

Strengthening microchipping requirements for dogs

The Department proposes to enhance existing dog microchipping standards to require all dogs to be microchipped by eight weeks of age; to record breeder details where the breeder is also the keeper of the dog; and for keepers to update the database provider of any changes within 14 days. This will help ensure more consistent and accurate identification of dogs which will also support traceability.

Call for evidence on microchipping of cats

There has been a growing call for the microchipping of cats to be made mandatory, as the presence of a microchip can improve reunification rates for lost and stray animals and strengthen owner accountability. The Department is seeking evidence on the advantages and disadvantages around compulsory cat microchipping, if this change was to be enacted in Northern Ireland.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is seeking views on the proposals as outlined above, which aim to enhance the welfare protections for companion animals. These proposals include regulation of rescue and rehoming organisations; banning specific aversive training devices; and enhancements to the current microchipping requirements for dogs. It also seeks evidence to inform future decisions around the mandatory microchipping of pet cats and feedback on a proposal to increase dog licence fees, which have not been uplifted since 2011.

The Department aims to supplement existing legislation or policy proposals which will deter the exploitation of animals through illegal breeding, selling, or providing pet services. These proposals will support the Department's previous announcements to:

- [regulate the sale and supply of puppies and kittens](#);
- review dog breeding regulations;
- mandate the use of CCTV in slaughterhouses; and
- promote responsible dog ownership and animal welfare.

The consultation is aimed at anyone who has an interest in animal welfare: stakeholders who work within the animal welfare sector; councils, which have responsibility for enforcement for companion animal welfare; the public; and any person or organisation involved in animal rescue and rehoming. The list of consultees (**Appendix 1**) is not meant to be exhaustive, and responses are welcomed from anyone with an interest in, or views on, the matters covered by this consultation paper.

The consultation paper is divided into five chapters. Chapter two provides the context for companion animal welfare in Northern Ireland and the current legal protections afforded to them. Chapter three details the Department's proposals and sets out a series of questions on these proposals. Chapter four provides information on the Equality Impact Assessments, Rural Needs Impact Assessments, and Regulatory Impact Assessment exercises conducted. The Department welcomes any comments that consultees might have on any of these exercises. Chapter five outlines how to respond.

Councils

The Department has engaged with district councils, as the enforcement bodies for non-farmed animal welfare and dog control via the stakeholder engagement sessions and through regular meetings and forums. This consultation now sets out the proposed policies and specifically welcomes detailed feedback, including any additional or alternative suggestions from councils to further inform final policy decisions.

After consultation, the Department recognises that if legislation is enacted to support some proposals, councils may gain updated statutory powers. The Department considers that councils are best placed to assess the impacts on its animal welfare service and detailed feedback is sought to refine the Regulatory Impact Assessments. As a matter of course, the Department remains committed to engaging with councils to address any challenges identified.

Next steps

The consultation is being conducted using the online survey tool Citizen Space and will commence on **05 May 2026**. It will run for eight weeks closing on **30 June 2026**.

Following analysis of feedback received, the Department will publish a summary of the responses. Subject to the nature of those responses and following Minister's consideration, the Department will then take the steps to introduce legislation to give effect to the proposals. Please note that responses from groups will be considered as one response.

Evidence provided in relation to mandatory microchipping of pet cats will be used to inform a way forward.

Chapter 2: Background

The Department has statutory responsibilities for the welfare of farmed animals under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. District councils play a central role as the Act gives them statutory responsibility for enforcing non-farmed animal welfare legislation, alongside the Police Service of Northern Ireland which has responsibility for enforcement in relation to animal fighting.

The Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 specifies that animal owners or keepers have a legal duty of care to ensure their animals' welfare needs are met. Under this Act the five needs of animals were enshrined in law: a suitable environment; a suitable diet; the need to exhibit normal behaviour patterns; the need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease. The 2011 Act also made unnecessary suffering a criminal offence and provided the ability to impose a custodial sentence of up to five years where a person is found guilty of this offence, which was a UK first. The 2011 Act paved the way for regulations to protect animals from mutilations, regulate dog breeding and make specific protections for our service animals.

Chapter 3: Proposals

1. Regulation of Rescue and Rehoming Organisations

Rescue and rehoming organisations provide a crucial service for animals throughout Northern Ireland. Many prospective pet owners opt to adopt their companion animals from rescue centres rather than purchasing them from breeders or pet shops.

These organisations deliver vital support for pets in need by ensuring they are cared for and by striving to ensure pets are rehomed with the right families, helping to secure a brighter future for each animal.

Current situation

Rescue and rehoming organisations in Northern Ireland are not subject to any regulatory requirements, unlike pet shops, dog breeding premises or boarding establishments, which must be inspected and licensed. In addition, there are no binding, uniform minimum standards governing how animals are kept or looked after when in the care of this sector. Nor is there a definitive register on the number of individuals or organisations which are rescuing and rehoming animals.

Need for change

While most of these are run by persons with the best interests of the animals at heart, there may be occasions when rescue and rehoming organisations lack the necessary skills, or space to properly care for the animals entrusted to them. Additionally, there is nothing to deter dishonest individuals in profiting from rehoming pets, and from situations arising where there are poor animal welfare practices.

Introducing new regulation could:

- help ensure that all organisations meet consistent, appropriate welfare standards;
- provide reassurance to the public and adopters about the quality of care animals receive;

- prevent individuals from misusing “rehoming” as a cover for unlicensed animal sales;
- help reduce the risk of disease entering Northern Ireland through imported animals; and
- improve transparency and accountability across the sector

The aim of any potential new system would be to support responsible organisations, improve welfare protections, and ensure suitable oversight where risks exist.

The Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH), a representative body for dog and cat rescue and rehoming organisations across the UK, has established minimum welfare and operation standards. However, membership of ADCH is voluntary and only seven organisations based in Northern Ireland currently hold membership.

Position in other jurisdictions

Scotland is currently the only part of the UK to regulate the rescue and rehoming sector. Since 2021, organisations that rescue or rehome animals, or operate animal welfare establishments, must hold a licence. The Scottish system focuses on ensuring that animals have:

- suitable accommodation
- a safe and appropriate environment
- a proper diet
- staffing and facilities appropriate to the number of animals kept

Scotland’s approach is designed to be flexible and avoid unnecessary prescription while still ensuring high welfare standards.

European Requirements

Two pieces of European legislation are of significance to rescue and rehoming organisations.

Animal Health Law (AHL) requires organisations that move animals to other European Union (EU) member states to be approved by the competent authority. Approval includes meeting standards for biosecurity, isolation facilities, cleanliness and record-keeping.

The second is a proposed Regulation on the Welfare and Traceability of Cats and Dogs. The legislation currently progressing through final approval stages will require animal shelters to register with the authorities, ensure staff have appropriate training, provide regular veterinary oversight, meet welfare and enrichment needs, and ensure adopters receive relevant health information.

Proposal

The Department considers that it is necessary to introduce minimum welfare standards for animals in the care of rescue and rehoming organisations across Northern Ireland. This would align with the approach to other animal related businesses and organisations, such as pet shops and animal boarding establishments.

A rescue and rehoming organisation which rehomes more than five animals within a 12-month period, or cares for eight or more animals (or five or more dogs) will be required to obtain a licence from the relevant council and must meet the associated licence conditions set out in the section below.

Additionally, all licensed organisations will be listed in a public register. The establishment of a register would increase trust in the sector, accountability, deter rogue operators and promote consistency and good practice across all organisations.

Applications will be processed and annual physical inspections performed by local councils with the fee for licence application set by the councils. Councils would also be required to publish a register of licensed centres. Veterinary practices and council-run dog pounds are outside the scope of the proposed regime.

The proposal is intended to be proportionate, ensuring animal welfare is safeguarded whilst not placing unfair or unattainable regulatory burdens on smaller rescue and rehoming organisations.

Charities that are already operating at a high standard will be relatively unaffected by the regulations; rather, regulation will help to highlight organisations that do not meet established standards and prevent rogue traders, puppy farms and puppy smugglers from masquerading as rehoming organisations.

Licence Conditions

The proposed licence conditions are based on the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) standards and broadly mirror those in place in Scotland. If, following this public consultation, a decision is made to bring forward legislation to implement this proposal, detailed guidance would be produced to assist with implementation.

General

- The licence must always be clearly displayed at the premises. If the licence-holder has a website, the site must clearly show the licence-holder's name, licence number, and the issuing licensing authority.
- The licence-holder must maintain all required records in a form that inspectors can readily view; if stored electronically they must be legible and accessible.
- The organisation must receive a visit by a veterinarian at least once a year, for the purpose of advising the operator on animal welfare.
- The organisation must keep appropriate records, as specified, for a period of five years.

Animal Numbers

- The total number of animals kept at any time must not exceed the maximum that is reasonable taking into account the facilities and numbers of employed staff and volunteers on the premises.

Staffing

- There must be a sufficient number of competent staff or volunteers. Staff must be able to recognise normal behaviour for the species in their care, and to identify signs of disease, distress, injury or abnormal behaviour.
- Volunteers may only carry out tasks for which they have been trained. A written training policy for all staff and volunteers must be in place.

Environment / Establishment

- An establishment must provide an environment which is suitable for the species kept and their condition, so that they can express their natural behaviours, have access to water, light and ventilation as needed.
- Animals must be kept in housing that minimises stress, including stress from other animals or the public. If members of public can view or contact animals, appropriate signage must discourage disturbance.
- Dangerous wild animals (if held) must be kept in secure, lockable housing suitable to the species.
- Establishments must be kept clean and disinfected to prevent diseases.
- Establishments should have appropriate, self-contained isolation facilities for the care of sick, injured or potentially infectious animals.

Suitable Diet

- Feeding must be appropriate to the species (quality, quantity, frequency), water must be fresh and clean.
- Feed and water containers must be cleanable or disposable; feed preparation (if done on-site) must be hygienic.

Enrichment / Handling / Protection from suffering, injury and disease

- Active and effective environmental enrichment must be provided to the animals in both inside and outside environments.
- Animals must not be left unattended in conditions that are likely to cause distress.
- Resources (space, food, water, shelter) must be provided so as to minimise competition or dominance.

Rehoming

- The licence-holder must keep a register covering all animals held at the establishment.
- For animals kept in groups (where individual tracking isn't practicable, e.g. some small mammals), group-level records are acceptable.
- For rehoming animals such as dogs, cats or horses, adverts must include a photo and, where known, the animal's age. The licence number and issuing authority must be recorded.
- When animals are offered for rehoming/supply, the adopter must be provided with information about care, husbandry, and veterinary care; a suitably trained person must be available to provide advice; and the prospective new keeper must be given known details of the animal (age, sex, vet history).

Wild Animals

- Where a wildlife rescue is to be released, this may only be done if the release area is suitable for the species; and the animal is capable of feeding and surviving independently.

Question 1

Do you agree that all rescue and rehoming organisations that rehome more than five animals annually should be inspected and licensed?

Question 2

Do you agree that all rescue and rehoming organisations that care for eight or more animals (or five or more dogs) should be inspected and licensed?

Question 3

Do you agree with the licence conditions as proposed?

2. Dog Licence Fees

Dog licensing was introduced in Northern Ireland in 1983 to enhance public safety and dog control, monitor the dog population and promote responsible dog ownership. Anyone who keeps a dog must have a valid licence from their local council. Councils also enforce the law. It is illegal to keep an unlicensed dog, and you can be fined up to £1,000.

Current fees

The last change to dog licence fees was in 2011. Fees are: £12.50 for a single dog; £32 for a block licence (for three or more dogs kept at the same place) and £5 for concessionary licences. People who receive income-related benefits, or who have had their dog neutered, may pay a reduced £5 fee. Anyone aged 65 or over may obtain a free licence for their first or only dog. Assistance dogs and police dogs do not need a licence.

Need for change

Councils now spend more on running the licensing system and providing dog warden services than they collect through licence fees. The current fees are very low compared to the overall cost of owning a dog. Raising the fees will give councils more resources to deliver dog control services, which benefits dog owners and the wider public.

Proposed new fees

The Department proposes to update the legislation to apply an inflationary increase to dog licence fees.

The proposed fees are:

- £18.50 for a single dog licence
- £47.50 for a block licence

Concessionary licences will remain available, and it is proposed to also apply an inflationary increase to the fee bringing it to £7.50. Licence exemptions for assistance and police dogs will remain, and anyone aged 65 or over will continue to receive a free licence for their first or only dog.

Question 4

Do you agree with the proposed inflationary increase across all categories of dog licence fees as set out above?

3. Aversive training devices

Aversive training devices aim to stop unwanted animal behaviours by associating them with discomfort, pain, or fear. These devices may cause physical or psychological harm and are most often used on dogs and cats.

Current situation

The use of aversive training devices is not prohibited in Northern Ireland, but animals wearing these devices are protected by the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This means people can use such devices as long as they do not cause unnecessary suffering to the animal. For instance, setting the device's signal too high could result in unnecessary suffering, which would be a violation of the 2011 Act.

The Department's Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs recommends that only positive reward-based training should be used, and potentially painful or frightening training methods such as e-collars should be avoided.

Handheld remote-controlled electronic collars are used as remote training devices for dogs. They operate by delivering an electric stimulus through metal contact points on a collar, activated via a handheld transmitter.



While intended to deter unwanted behaviours by creating an association between the behaviour and the stimulus, these devices raise significant welfare concerns. Some models can deliver shocks of up to 6,000 volts for prolonged periods, which can cause pain and distress

Choke collars operate by tightening a metal chain or linked rings around the neck when pulled, so that the discomfort discourages the dog from pulling over time. The perceived benefits of their use such as immediate correction to behaviour and perception that they offer increased control over large or strong dogs are outweighed by the high risk of tracheal compression, thyroid damage, ocular pressure, and cervical spine injury.



Prong collars, also known as pinch collars, consist of interlinked prongs that apply pressure around a dog's neck when tension is placed on the lead. This design discourages pulling by tightening as the dog pulls, gradually teaching the dog to stop. The pressure is distributed evenly around the neck rather than focused solely on the trachea. These collars can provide rapid suppression of strong pulling and offer increased control, particularly for large or powerful dogs.



There have been calls, both nationally and UK-wide, from groups such as the British Veterinary Association and the Dogs Trust, to prohibit the use of aversive training devices, and in particular electric shock collars, due to animal welfare concerns.

Proposal

The Department proposes to ban the use of handheld e-collars, choke collars, and prong collars on cats and dogs in Northern Ireland. It is considered that these aversive training devices present the highest risk of deliberate misuse and direct harm to animal welfare.

Electronic containment fence systems and spray collars were considered as part of this proposal. While both rely on aversive stimuli and have raised concerns about welfare

impacts, they are assessed as presenting a lower risk of deliberate misuse and direct harm than handheld e-collars, choke collars and prong collars.

Therefore, it is proposed that these types of devices would not be banned. Their use would, however, continue to be subject to the general protections afforded under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

Question 5

Do you agree that the use of handheld remote controlled electric shock collars (e-collars) on dogs and cats should be banned?

Question 6

Do you agree that the use of choke collars on dogs and cats should be banned?

Question 7

Do you agree that the use of prong collars on dogs and cats should be banned?

4. Strengthening Microchipping requirements for dogs

Microchipping was introduced under The Dogs (Licensing and Identification) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 to help identify dogs and their owners more easily, improve traceability, and support enforcement of dog laws. A dog must be microchipped for the licence to be valid. The microchip number is registered on a database along with the owner's contact details and information about the dog, making it easier to reunite lost dogs with their owners and ensure responsible ownership.

Current requirements

Under current legislation, there are three options for when a dog should be microchipped:

- puppies that remain with their mother should be microchipped by six months old;
- puppies that are kept under a block licence, or under a licence to keep a dog breeding establishment, must be microchipped before eight weeks; and
- dogs must be microchipped before a keeper can receive a dog licence, and before their sale or transfer.

Currently, a veterinary surgeon, or someone who has received instruction on how to implant a microchip, may implant a microchip. The person who conducted the microchipping must notify the database operator of the details within seven days and if the keeper's name, address or telephone number changes, the keeper must notify the operator of the database with the latest information, as soon as reasonably practicable.

At present, databases in Northern Ireland are required to record the microchip number, the keeper's details (name, address and telephone number) and details about the dog (breed, sex, colour, distinguishing marks; and date of birth/estimated year of birth).

Need for change

The Department has received calls for the strengthening of microchipping requirements for dogs from a wide range of stakeholders and for various reasons; including improving tools

available to enforcement officers, increasing transparency regarding origins of the dogs, shining a light on breeders and breeding practices, and placing more robust requirements on microchip implanters, dog owners, and database providers.

Proposal

The Department proposes to:

- make it an offence for dog owners to not update ownership details on microchip databases, such as a change of address, within a specified time (i.e. 14 days).
- requirement for owners/keepers to declare that they are also the breeder of the dog, to enable database providers to record breeder details where the breeder is also the keeper of the dog; and
- require all owners/keepers to microchip their dogs, by eight weeks of age.

Question 8

Do you agree that owners be required to update any changes onto the relevant microchip databases within a specified time, such as 14 days?

Question 9

Do you agree that the owner must indicate if they are / are not the breeder of the dog?

Question 10

Do you agree that all dogs should be microchipped before they are older than eight weeks?

5. Call for Evidence on microchipping of pet cats

The Department is gathering views, evidence, and information on whether microchipping of pet (owned) cats should be considered in Northern Ireland.

This Call for Evidence is intended to gather information to help assess:

- whether mandatory microchipping of cats would improve animal welfare and responsible ownership;
- what benefits such a requirement could deliver;
- what risks, barriers, costs or unintended consequences might arise; and,
- what concerns stakeholders may have, including practical, ethical or enforcement-related issues.

Currently in Northern Ireland, cats are not legally required to be microchipped. Microchipping is already required for dogs, and when a dog is found, the microchip can be read with a scanner and the registered keeper identified. We want to understand whether microchipping could bring any benefits for cat welfare and traceability, and responsible ownership, and the issues or concerns that might need to be considered before any decisions are made.

The Department welcomes evidence from all interested parties and respondents are encouraged to provide evidence, including data, research, case studies, practical experience or any impacts on specific groups. All information provided will be analysed to inform the way forward for any future policy proposals, which when finalised, will be subject to public consultation.

Question 1

Do you keep, or own, one or more cats?

If yes, go to question 2. If no, go to question 3.

Question 2

Is your cat microchipped?

I have one cat, it is microchipped

I have one cat, it is not microchipped

I have more than one cat, none are microchipped

I have more than one cat, some are microchipped

I have more than one cat, all are microchipped

Question 3

What benefits, if any, do you think microchipping of pet cats could bring?

Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Question 4

What challenges, if any, do you think microchipping of pet cats could bring?

Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Question 5

What do you think might present a barrier for cat owners to microchip their pet cats?

Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Question 6

Are there any other challenges that should be considered, in relation to mandatory microchipping of pet cats?

Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Question 7

Are there any other challenges, including for any other type of cats, which should be considered?

Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Question 8

Is there anything else you would like DAERA to consider on this issue?

Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Chapter 4: Impact Assessments and Next Steps

Impact Assessments

Equality and Rural Needs Assessments

Equality and Rural Needs assessments have been carried out for each of the proposals within this consultation to consider potential impacts. We welcome any comments or views you may have in respect of our assessments; responses can be made through Citizen Space or by emailing. Copies of these assessments are available online at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations>.

Regulatory Impact Assessment

Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA) have been carried out for each of the proposals within the consultation to consider the potential impacts. We welcome any comments or views you may have in respect of the RIAs; responses can be made through Citizen Space or by emailing animalwelfarepolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk. A copy of the assessment is available online at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation>.

Please note that the impact assessments are collated within one document for each policy proposal.

Next Steps

Following analysis of the responses received, the Department will consider and publish a summary of the responses. Subject to the nature of those responses and Ministerial consideration, the Department will then take the steps to introduce the necessary legislation on the proposals within this consultation document. Please note that responses from groups will be considered as one response.

Chapter 5: How to Respond and When

Responses

You can respond to this consultation online by accessing the consultation at the following link: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations.

If you wish to respond in writing, you can request a copy of the written response template by e-mailing animalwelfarepolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk.

Written responses should be sent to:

E-mail: animalwelfarepolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk
 Postal address: Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch
 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
 Jubilee House
 111 Ballykelly Road
 Ballykelly
 Limavady
 BT49 9HP

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.

Closing date

Responses should be submitted by **30 June 2026**.

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.

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 be 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, except in very particular circumstances. Please note, if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, it will not 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 2018, and the Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. 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 Commissioner's Office (see its website at: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/>).

Appendix 1: List of Consultees

This consultation document will be sent to statutory consultees and the following organisations:

- Almost Home Animal Rescue NI
- Animal Connexions
- Animal Health and Welfare NI (AHWNI)
- Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH)
- Association of Veterinary Surgeons Practising in Northern Ireland (AVSPNI)
- Assisi Animal Sanctuary
- Belfast Harbour Police
- Belfast International Airport Constabulary
- Benvardin Kennels
- British Veterinary Association Northern Ireland
- Bright eyes animal sanctuary
- Canine Breeders Northern Ireland
- Causeway Coast Dog Rescue
- Cats Protection
- Clara cat Neutering Omagh
- Corran Kennels
- Crosskennan Lane Animal Sanctuary
- Dogs Trust
- Dooletter Wildlife Rescue
- Drumbonaway Kennels
- Foyle Wildlife Rescue
- Friends of Rescue
- Graces Foster Dogs
- Grovehill Animal Trust
- Husky Salvation
- K9 Search & Rescue NI
- Lost Paws NI

- Mid Antrim Animal Sanctuary
- Millvale Animal Sanctuary
- Naturewatch Foundation
- NI Exotic Sanctuary
- North Coast Cat Rescue
- Northern Ireland Veterinary Association (NIVA)
- Nutt's Corner Boarding Kennels
- Paws and People
- People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA)
- Pet FBI Rescue
- Play for Strays
- Rainbow Animal Shelter
- Rainbow Rehoming Centre
- Rosies Trust
- St Columb's Animal Rescue & Rehoming
- The Barn Animal Rescue
- The Doghouse Sanctuary
- The Kennel Club
- The Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG)
- Ulster Farmers Union (UFU)
- Ulster Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (USPCA)
- Vet NI
- 7th Heaven Animal Rescue

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Animal Welfare
Jubilee House
111 Ballykelly Road
Ballykelly
Limavady
BT49 9HP

Email: animalwelfarepolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk



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

An Róinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Deapairtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

DRAFT RESPONSE

172

Consultation on Proposed Animal Welfare Policy Reforms in Northern Ireland Written Response Template

About you

Q1. What is your name?

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

Q2. What is your email address?

ehealth@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Q3. Are the views and opinions in your response personal or expressed on behalf of an organisation?

Organisation

If the views and opinions expressed are on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of the organisation below.

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

Q4. Please indicate if you are happy for your response to be published.

Yes

Q5. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please indicate if you are content for the name of the organisation to be associated with your response.

Yes

POLICY PROPOSALS

The consultation seeks views on proposed changes across four key policy areas:

- the regulation of rescue and rehoming organisations;
- an inflationary increase in dog licence fees;
- a ban on specific aversive training devices; and
- strengthened microchipping requirements for dogs.

In addition, the consultation includes a call for evidence on the mandatory microchipping of pet cats.

Full details of the proposals and the relevant consultation questions are set out in the consultation document. Respondents may choose to comment on any or all of the policy areas outlined above.

REGULATION OF RESCUE AND REHOMING ORGANISATIONS

Q6. Do you agree that all rescue and rehoming organisations that rehome more than five animals annually should be inspected and licensed?

Yes

Comments

The Council supports the policy principles and objectives of improving animal welfare standards and addressing gaps in the current unregulated rescue and rehoming sector. There is however a concern regards the number in the threshold that it is set to low and thus could create a burden on the enforcement sector for the councils. The concern lies with the risk presented in capturing small scale rehoming activity that does not present the same risk as larger scale operations.

Another aspect to consider is that there is increased welfare needs associated with rescue animals, which can include many different species or animals including farmed or wild animals.

The Council has one Animal Welfare Officer split between two districts namely, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, and Ards and North Down Borough Council. This service is currently operating in a financially constrained manner due to the withdrawal of funding by DAERA, whilst trying to prioritise the exponential workload imposed upon it.

The Environmental Wardens (Dog Wardens) are operating at capacity with current workload and the additional duties associated with XL Bullys which has significantly increased the workload, not less considering the challenging circumstances associated with this legislation. This legislation was introduced recently with no forward funding for ongoing costs.

The council continues to be concerned about the additional responsibilities that may be imposed upon enforcement regarding not having dedicated funding and support from DAERA. With this in mind, the council would not be in favour of becoming the enforcement authority.

Q7. Do you agree that all rescue and rehoming organisations that **care for eight or more animals (or five or more dogs) should be inspected and licensed?**

Yes

Comments

The Council agrees with the principle and objectives in relation to the proposed requirements.

However, where the threshold is set, further clarity is required on these matters

1. Definition of rescue and rehoming
2. Foster care arrangements
3. Threshold for when licensing would be applicable.

Q8. Do you agree with the proposed licence conditions, as listed in the consultation document?

Yes

Comments

Council welcomes the proposed conditions, but it may be wise to consider the proportionality in line with smaller organisations or home-from-home rescue.

With regard to conditions, the council agrees that licences should be displayed in premises, the 5-year retention period is also agreed.

Annual veterinary visit in line with animal welfare safeguards is also agreed.

Animal's numbers and term "must not exceed maximum that is reasonable" this is open to interpretation and requires clarity.

With regards staffing, most are volunteers and it must be recognised that the monetary value of training these staff going forward may be unreasonable due to the staff turnaround at these facilities.

In relation to Environment and purpose built. Additional clarification will be required with regards to smaller organisations and how they would comply with regulations.

Agree with diet and that it is positive. The Enrichment and handling is also positive and agreeable.

Impact Assessments

Q9. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Regulation of Rescue and Rehoming Organisations, and its conclusions, or any additional information regarding impacts/costs?

Yes

Comments

The council agrees that Rescue and Rehoming Organisations should be Regulated. This will help to improve animal welfare standards throughout these organisations. However, there must be an effective approach by the department, which would expect a direct funding system implemented to absorb any extra cost. There has been no engagement with local government regarding staffing costs, training, inspections and prospective budget implications.

Another concerning aspect would be the consideration of the amount species held at these establishments and specialist knowledge that would be needed by officers when carrying out duties. The expertise that would be held with current officers would not cover the species of animals that are held at certain facilities. Further training would have to be provided to officers and the cost implications of this is a further significant concern of council.

Q10. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Rural Needs Impact Assessment or the Equality and Disability Screening for the Regulation of Rescue and Rehoming Organisations, and their conclusions?

Yes

Comments

Rescue and rehoming organisations in rural areas may be affected by challenges in meeting standards. There should be engagement from the department to help provide support and guidance for smaller facilities.

DOG LICENCE FEES

Q11. Do you agree with the proposed inflationary increase across all categories of dog licence fees as set out in the consultation document?

Yes

Comments

Council supports the proposed inflation to increases. It is important to note that it still falls short of full cost recovery.

The income from dog licensing does not cover the cost of the service. The current fees continue to remain low with many licences being concessionary. Council recommends removing the concessionary fee as administration fees outweigh the cost of the licence. However, it is acknowledged that the council is also aware that an increased cost in licensing may discourage licences to be obtained at all.

Impact Assessments

Q12. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Regulatory Impact Assessment for the proposed increase in Dog Licence Fees, including its conclusions, or any additional information regarding impacts/costs?

Yes

Comments

The Council agrees to the inflationary increase. The council is satisfied that the proposed increase is proportionate when considered in the overall costs. Although the increase is expected to provide an uplift in income, it will not fully meet the increasing demand for, and costs associated with the delivery of service. The provision of the service is operationally demanding and costly to deliver, with service demand continuing to grow. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of the licences are issued under concessionary arrangements, generating limited or no income. This reduces the overall level of cost recovery and contributes to the ongoing subsidy required to support the service.

Q13. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Rural Needs Impact Assessment or the Equality and Disability Screening for the proposed increase in Dog Licence Fees, and their conclusions?

No

Comments

BAN ON SPECIFIC AVERSIVE TRAINING DEVICES

Q14. Do you agree that the use of handheld remote controlled electric shock collars (e-collars) on dogs and cats should be banned?

Yes

Comments

The Council strongly supports the prohibition of handheld, remote controlled electric shock collars (e-collars) for the use on cats and dogs. However, it should be considered that the effectiveness of the proposed legislation will depend on the availability of appropriate and proportionate enforcement powers. It should be recommended that the legislation includes restrictions on the sale and supply of such devices, powers for the authorised officers to seize prohibited equipment and devices, and the introduction of fixed penalty notices to address non-compliance. Without these provisions, enforcement may prove challenging in practice.

Q15. Do you agree that the use of choke collars on dogs and cats should be banned?

Yes

Comments

The Council supports a ban on the use of choke collars on dogs at cats. It considers this is an important measure to promote animal welfare. As a local authority, we recognise that there may be very limited exceptional circumstances where their use could be considered necessary. If any exemptions are introduced, they should be clearly defined in legislation and accompanied by robust safeguards, guidance, and oversight arrangements to ensure their use is justified, proportionate, and applied only in genuinely exceptional cases.

Q16. Do you agree that the use of prong collars on dogs and cats should be banned?

Yes

Comments

Council entirely supports the ban on the use of these collars on cats and dogs. The council also acknowledges that there may be rare and exceptional circumstances relating to the training of dogs in which the use of such devices could be deemed necessary. Should any exemptions be considered they should be clearly defined and set out in legislation, with their use clearly defined and strictly permitted in specified circumstances.

Impact Assessments

Q17. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Regulatory Impact Assessment for the proposed Ban on Specific Aversive Training Devices, including its conclusions, or any additional information regarding impacts/costs?

Yes

Comments

Council recognises that Option 3B represents the most proportionate and operationally practical approach currently available. However, effective enforcement is likely to present significant challenges in the absence of supporting legislative provisions, including powers relating to Fixed Penalty Notices and seizure.

In particular, the lack of authority to seize prohibited devices where an offence has been identified would substantially limit the effectiveness of enforcement activity. Furthermore, the absence of controls relating to the sale and supply of such devices may weaken the overall impact and enforceability of any prohibition on their use.

Accordingly, Council considers that the introduction of additional enforcement mechanisms and supporting legislative measures will be essential to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of any proposed restrictions.

Q18. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Rural Needs Impact Assessment or the Equality and Disability Screening for the proposed Ban on Specific Aversive Training Devices, and their conclusions?

No

STRENGTHENING MICROCHIPPING REQUIREMENTS FOR DOGS

Q19. Do you agree that owners should be required to update any changes onto the relevant microchip databases within a specified time, such as 14 days?

Yes

Council does not consider that there is a direct enforcement role for local authorities in relation to any such requirement.

However, Council considers that a 14-day notification period may be unnecessarily restrictive and could create an avoidable enforcement burden for councils.

Responsibility for maintaining accurate records should remain with the owner and should not create unnecessary administrative burden or bureaucracy. In addition, the introduction of an arbitrary statutory timeframe may prove impractical and difficult to enforce in practice, potentially resulting in inconsistent, disproportionate and costly enforcement action in respect of relatively minor offences, particularly in the absence of provision for Fixed Penalty Notices.

Q20. Do you agree that the owner must indicate if they are / are not the breeder of the dog?

Yes

Comments

Council has no objection to this requirement; however, it does not consider that there is a direct enforcement role for councils in this regard. Council's view is that responsibility should rest with the implanter to record and provide breeder information, where known, at the point of microchipping.

It is also acknowledged by council that, where breeder details are recorded on a microchip database, such information may remain linked as a secondary contact. This may assist councils, rescue organisations and rehoming centres in tracing the original breeder in circumstances where a dog has been found and the registered owner cannot be contacted.

Q21. Do you agree that all dogs should be microchipped before they are older than eight weeks?

Yes

Comments

Council has no objection to this requirement; however, it does not consider that there is a direct enforcement role for councils in this regard. Councils already require and record microchip information as part of the dog licensing application process and are responsible for enforcing compliance with existing dog licensing requirements.

While Council agrees that all dogs should be microchipped and registered by the age of eight weeks, it recognises that there may be circumstances where this is not feasible. For example, in cases involving particularly small breeds, existing health conditions, or where implantation may result in an adverse effect, it may not be appropriate to implant a microchip at that stage.

Council therefore considers that appropriate exemptions should remain in place to accommodate such circumstances, with any exemption criteria developed in consultation with the Northern Ireland Veterinary Association.

Impact Assessments

Q22. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Regulatory Impact Assessment for Strengthening Microchipping Requirements for dogs, including its conclusions, or any additional information regarding impacts/costs?

Yes

Comments

Council supports the strengthening of microchipping requirements and recognises the wider benefits that such measures may bring in terms of improved traceability, enhanced breeding regulation and the promotion of responsible dog ownership.

The consultation indicates that a substantial number of dogs in Northern Ireland may currently be un-microchipped. Consequently, councils could face significant enforcement pressures in relation to offences associated with failure to microchip dogs or failure to update records within prescribed timescales.

Council does not consider that there is a direct enforcement role for councils in relation to these requirements. However, should the Department propose that councils undertake enforcement activity in this area, this would have significant financial and resource implications, particularly given the estimated 180,000 un-microchipped dogs currently within Northern Ireland.

Consideration would also need to be given to how any enforcement regime would be structured in practice, including which authority would be responsible for enforcement, the powers available to authorised officers, and the mechanisms for dealing with non-compliance.

Q23. Do you have any comments to make in relation to the Rural Needs Impact Assessment or the Equality and Disability Screening for Strengthening Microchipping Requirements for dogs, and their conclusions?

No

Comments

None

CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON MICROCHIPPING OF CATS

Q24. Do you keep, or own, one or more cats?

No

If Yes, please answer Q25 below.

Q25. Is your cat microchipped?

- ☐ I have one cat, it is microchipped.
- ☐ I have one cat; it is not microchipped.
- ☐ I have more than one cat, none are microchipped.
- ☐ I have more than one cat, some are microchipped.
- ☐ I have more than one cat, all are microchipped.

Q26. What benefits, if any, do you think the microchipping of pet cats could bring?

Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Currently councils have no statutory role in relation to the ownership, traceability or identification of cats. Council acknowledges that the primary benefit of cat microchipping is enhanced traceability, particularly where a cat has been lost or stolen. In such circumstances, microchip records can assist in confirming ownership and facilitating the return of cats to their owners.

Council staff also frequently encounter deceased cats on roads and, where practicable, routinely scan for the presence of a microchip to identify and notify the owner. As microchips remain effective for the lifetime of the animal, their use may also contribute towards deterring pet theft and abandonment.

However, Council considers that these outcomes could potentially be achieved without the introduction of a mandatory statutory requirement for cat microchipping. In Council's view, a more proportionate approach would be to promote responsible cat ownership through DAERA-led education and awareness initiatives. Such initiatives could include promoting the welfare benefits associated with microchipping, neutering and vaccination.

Council further considers that animal welfare organisations, including Cats Protection and similar charities, are well placed to support the delivery of such awareness campaigns, supported through appropriate funding arrangements provided by DAERA and with support from councils where appropriate.

Q27. What challenges, if any, do you think the microchipping of pet cats could bring? Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Currently, councils have no statutory role in relation to the ownership, traceability or identification of cats, and this position should be fully considered in assessing the proportionality and practicality of any proposed enforcement responsibilities.

While Council acknowledges the potential benefits associated with the microchipping of pet cats, including improved traceability and increased opportunities for reunification with owners, several practical and enforcement-related challenges remain.

Council recognises concerns relating to potential implantation risks and the absence of a centralised microchip database. However, from a local government perspective, the key concern relates to the practicalities of enforcement and the ability to effectively encourage and secure compliance. The free-roaming nature of cats presents inherent difficulties in establishing ownership and, therefore, in determining whether enforcement action for non-compliance would be justified or proportionate.

Furthermore, the absence of proportionate enforcement measures, such as the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices, could result in an overreliance on more formal enforcement action for what may be regarded as a relatively minor offence. Under the proposed framework, councils may also face significant financial and resource implications associated with the investigation and prosecution of offences, particularly in the absence of alternative enforcement options.

Q28. What do you think might present a barrier for cat owners to microchip their pet cats? Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Council considers that the principal barriers to the implementation of mandatory cat microchipping are likely to relate to cost, convenience and owner perception, with some owners potentially viewing microchipping as an additional financial burden. Concerns may also arise regarding potential implantation risks, including microchip migration, complications during implantation.

Council also notes that the ongoing requirement for owners to maintain and update microchip records, including changes to contact details, may be viewed as burdensome by some individuals.

Q29. Are there any other challenges that should be considered, in relation to mandatory microchipping of pet cats? Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Yes

Council considers that the free-roaming nature of cats presents a significant challenge in terms of enforcement, as council officers do not routinely engage with roaming cats in the same manner as they do with stray dogs. This creates practical difficulties in establishing ownership and assessing compliance with any proposed mandatory microchipping requirements.

Council resources and enforcement budgets are already under significant pressure, with officers continuing to prioritise existing statutory duties relating to animal welfare and enforcement activity. Furthermore, as previously highlighted in relation to dogs, there is currently no single centralised database through which council officers can readily access microchip information. Consequently, considerable officer time may be required to search multiple databases in order to verify ownership details linked to a scanned microchip.

While Council acknowledges that microchipping may improve traceability and assist in reuniting lost cats with their owners, it questions whether the introduction of a mandatory statutory requirement would represent the most proportionate or effective approach. Council considers that many of the anticipated outcomes could instead be achieved through DAERA-led promotion of responsible cat ownership, including increased public awareness of the welfare benefits associated with microchipping, neutering and vaccination.

In Council's view, a collaborative and education-led approach, supported by engagement with animal welfare organisations and relevant stakeholders, would represent a more proportionate, practical and sustainable response than the immediate introduction of a regulatory enforcement regime for cat management.

We see no role for Councils in the enforcement of any mandatory microchipping of cat's requirement.

Q30. Are there any other challenges, including for any other type of cats, which should be considered? Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Council would welcome further clarity regarding any proposed exemptions applicable to cats other than companion or pet cats, including feral cats, farm cats and free-roaming unowned cats. Council considers that any requirement to microchip feral cats would be impractical and difficult to enforce, given the absence of a clear mechanism for distinguishing between feral, stray and unowned cats.

In such circumstances, Council considers that enforcement and compliance activity would present significant operational challenges. In relation to feral cat populations, Council supports the continued use of Trap–Neuter–Return (TNR) programmes delivered by relevant stakeholders, which are considered to provide more appropriate and beneficial animal welfare outcomes than mandatory microchipping requirements.

Council further considers that any proposed legislation should provide for appropriate exemptions where a cat has a medically certified health condition and microchipping is deemed unsuitable on veterinary grounds.

Q31. Is there anything else you would like DAERA to consider on this issue? Please provide any evidence, data or examples to support your views.

Council considers that the intended policy objectives could potentially be achieved without the introduction of a mandatory statutory requirement for cat microchipping, through the promotion of responsible cat ownership led by DAERA. This could include increased public awareness of the health and welfare benefits associated with microchipping, neutering and vaccination.

Council also notes that alternative approaches to improving traceability and promoting responsible ownership could include the use of visible identification measures, such as collars displaying owner contact details, tattooing, or voluntary local registration schemes.

Written responses should be sent to:

e-mail: animalwelfarepolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk
 Postal address: Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch
 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
 Jubilee House
 111 Ballykelly Road
 Ballykelly
 Limavady
 BT49 9HP

Committee:	Environment & Sustainability
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has launched a public consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland (attached as Appendix 9 EH). The consultation opened on 29 May 2026 and closed on 21 August 2026. The purpose is to review the Bathing Water Policy which tests bathing locations for water quality and provides that information to users.
1.2	DAERA wish to make sure: • Water is safe for people to swim in • Information is clear and easy to understand • That its systems to deliver this still work as swimming habits change
1.3	Within this framework there are presently 33 sites being tested across Northern Ireland. These are all at beach/coastal sites except for one at Reas Wood on Lough Neagh. The sites are generally excellent (26 in total) but the one site at Lough Neagh is generally poor.
1.4	Previously as the sites were only at beaches, there were only four councils involved but now DAERA is highlighting the change where we carry on open water swimming, especially in inland sites such as Lough Neagh and Lough Erne and the many smaller water bodies throughout NI. DAERA and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency currently monitor 450 river water bodies and 21 lake water bodies, but this does not include bacteriological testing which would be the prime concern to understand risk from open water swimming.
1.5	As part of this regime, there are 2 open water swimming sites in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Let's Go Hydro (LGH) in Carryduff and Moira Lakes, near Aghalee. The water for LGH comes from the Mourne, in line with its history as a NI Water reservoir, and Moira Lakes draws its water from a spring /aquifer to replenish its levels. Both these sites are therefore not subject to extraneous pollution or blue green algae.
1.6	Attached at Appendix 10 EH is the response submitted by council officers. The report confirms that under the current regime there are no Bathing Water sites in Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area; however, if the scheme was extended to inland sites where full body immersion bathing takes place, sites at Lets Go Hydro and Moira lakes could be included in a sampling and monitoring regime by NIEA.
1.7	Due to the timing of this consultation and the closing date of 21 August 2026, it was necessary to seek approval for submission of the response from Chair and Vice Chair of

	this committee and the Chief Executive under Delegated Authority. This allowed officers to make a response in advance of the closing date.
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>
2.1	It is recommended that committee: retrospectively approves the response to the consultation which was submitted on behalf of the Council prior to the closing date of 21 August 2026.

3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
	Councils will be responsible for ensuring up to date notices are available at each site so small resource will be required.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	

Appendices:	Appendix 9 EH – Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland Appendix 10 EH – Response to Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland
--------------------	---



Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

185

This document is also available on the DAERA website at:

www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-bathing-waters-policy-review-northern-ireland

On request, we can arrange to provide other formats of this document, such as:

- Paper Copy
- Large Print
- Braille
- Other Languages

To request an alternative format, please contact us:

Water Policy Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED

Email: waterpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk

Guidance is provided on the 'Confidentiality' of responses on Pages 29 and 30 for your reference.

Contents

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland	1
1. Ministerial Foreword	4
2. Setting the scene	5
2.1 Introduction and Purpose of this Consultation	5
2.2 Background and Legal Context	6
2.3 Existing Monitoring and Assessment	7
3. Consultation - Policy Proposals	11
4. How to Respond	29
4.1. Publication of Responses	29
5. Next Steps	31
Annex A Map of Identified Bathing Waters in Northern Ireland	32
Annex B Summary of Bathing Water Operator Responsibilities	33

1. Ministerial Foreword

As Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, I am pleased to present this consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland. This review reflects our ongoing commitment to safeguarding public health, enhancing water quality, and protecting our natural environment.

Northern Ireland's bathing waters are among our most precious natural assets. They provide recreational opportunities, support local economies and foster a vital connection between our communities and the environment.

In May 2025, I expanded the bathing water programme from twenty-six to thirty-three identified bathing water sites, adding seven new locations at Brompton Bay; Cushendall; Donaghadee; Drain's Bay; Portmuck; Rea's Wood; and Warrenpoint.

In recent years, we have seen encouraging improvements in bathing water quality, with twenty-four of our thirty-three sites meeting the 'Excellent' standard in 2025. This progress reflects sustained effort and the dedicated collaborative work of my department and partners across sectors, including particularly those councils and the National Trust which act as Bathing Water Operators, often dealing with challenges such as the risks associated with blue-green algae.

This review provides an opportunity to consider how the bathing water programme should continue to evolve. It takes account of evidence, stakeholder engagement, and the findings of the Office for Environmental Protection's (OEP) 2024 report on the implementation of Bathing Water Regulations and considers whether current policies and regulations remain sufficient. I particularly welcome the OEP's emphasis on a "source to sea" approach and agree that collaborative, catchment-based solutions are essential to sustaining and improving water quality.

The review also fulfils an action within the Environmental Improvement Plan agreed by the Executive in September 2024 and a measure in the third cycle River Basin Management Plan.

The review has been shaped and informed by input from councils, environmental organisations, water sports communities which have proved invaluable in informing the way forward. I am now keen to seek your views so that we can ensure that our final decisions on the way forward are robust and well-informed. I encourage everyone with an interest in bathing waters to respond to this consultation. Your views will help inform future policy and shape the bathing water programme for generations to come.



Andrew Muir, MLA

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

2. Setting the scene

2.1 Introduction and Purpose of this Consultation

Protecting and improving the quality of Northern Ireland's bathing waters is fundamental to safeguarding public health, supporting tourism, and preserving the natural environment.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) undertakes a review of bathing water sites at least every three years. The previous bathing waters review (2022–23) resulted in the identification of seven new bathing waters. Under the Environmental Improvement Plan agreed by the Executive in September 2024, the Department has committed to completing the next review by the end of 2026.

This consultation is seeking your views on potential changes to policy and legislation for bathing waters in Northern Ireland that are being considered by DAERA.

Why is a Review Needed Now?

Bathing and water based recreational activities are an integral part of life in Northern Ireland, contributing not only to physical wellbeing but also to positive mental health and wider community wellbeing. Since the Bathing Waters Monitoring Programme was introduced in the late 1980s, patterns of recreational use have changed. Northern Ireland's programme has expanded and stakeholder expectations have evolved, including growing interest in inland sites and year-round use. In addition, identified bathing waters and other bathing sites increasingly serve a broad range of recreational users from swimmers and paddleboarders to kayakers and walkers, and there is a need to ensure that our policy, monitoring, and management arrangements remain fit for purpose in a changing environmental and societal context.

This review reflects the need to align the core principles of the Bathing Waters Programme with River Basin Management Planning, while also considering emerging international public health guidance. By also recognising that public health is connected to the health of animals and of our environment, we are seeking to take a more joined-up approach to how we develop and deliver policies and programmes, making better use of the 'One Health' approach.

In 2025, twenty-four of our thirty-three identified bathing waters achieved the 'Excellent' standard. These were all coastal sites that achieved either good or moderate ecological status under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (NI) 2017 (the Water Framework Regulations). However, Rea's Wood at Lough Neagh was classified as poor status in 2025 meaning that there will be advice against bathing in the 2026 bathing season. Lough Neagh is also classified as poor ecological status under the Water Framework Regulations and it is highly likely that other inland waters that are failing to achieve good ecological status, in particular those classified as poor or bad ecological status, could present health risks to users.

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

189

Scope of the review

This review looks at the existing policy and legislative framework governing bathing waters in Northern Ireland, including how sites are identified, monitored, and managed.

It seeks views on proposals to:

- improve communication with bathing water users,
- consider the length and flexibility of the bathing season,
- adopt a more risk-based monitoring approach,
- refine the criteria for identification,
- strengthen arrangements for candidate sites,
- review the automatic de-identification provision,
- ensure monitoring locations reflect actual use,
- and invite nominations for new sites.

The review also sets out other water quality monitoring carried out by DAERA to meet requirements of the Water Framework Regulations that can be used to inform public health advice.

To inform this consultation, DAERA has worked with the Department of Finance's Innovation & Consultancy Services (ICS) to develop and deliver a collaborative co-design approach for initial stakeholder involvement in this Bathing Waters Policy Review. A one-day workshop took place in November 2025. The primary goal of the workshop was to gather valuable insights from stakeholders on ways to enhance our bathing water programme and generate options. The report on the Co-Design Workshop is published on DAERA's website. This process proved to be invaluable in shaping this consultation document.

2.2 Background and Legal Context

Bathing water quality in Northern Ireland is regulated under the Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 (the Bathing Water Regulations), as amended, which transpose Directive 2006/7/EC concerning the management of bathing water quality. The Regulations set out how bathing waters are identified, monitored, classified and managed to protect and inform public health communications and protect the environment and manage pollution incidents.

The bathing season currently runs annually from 1 June to 15 September. During this period, DAERA carries out approximately weekly water quality monitoring at identified bathing waters and publishes the results to keep the public informed.

The Bathing Water Regulations have a requirement to achieve at least “sufficient” classification status at all bathing waters and, to take realistic and proportionate measures to increase the number of bathing waters meeting the ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ classifications. Where a bathing water is classified as ‘poor’, DAERA and the bathing water operator have a duty to issue advice against bathing.

The Bathing Water Regulations are complementary to The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 which provide a comprehensive framework for the protection, sustainable management, and improvement of rivers, lakes, groundwater and transitional and coastal waters. DAERA is currently consulting on Significant Water Management Issues to inform the development of the fourth cycle River Basin Management Plans. Measures to achieve objectives for bathing water protected areas must be included in River Basin Management Plans.

Currently Identified Bathing Waters

There are currently 33 identified bathing water sites in Northern Ireland - see [Annex A](#) for Map of Identified Bathing Waters. These include both coastal and one inland location.

2.3 Existing Monitoring and Assessment

Bathing Waters Monitoring and Assessment

DAERA monitors each identified bathing water to check whether it meets the required public health standards. The results help to determine water cleanliness and the public is informed by both annual classification and weekly updates.

DAERA establishes and publishes a bathing water profile for every identified bathing water site in Northern Ireland. This document provides key information about the location, including:

- the physical characteristics of the beach or inland site,
- potential sources of pollution,
- historical water quality results, and
- advice for the public about risks or conditions to be aware of.

These bathing water profiles are available on DAERA’s website ([2025 Bathing Water Profiles](#)).

Together, monitoring and the bathing water profile ensure that accurate, up to date information is available to protect public health and support informed choices by bathing water users.

The bathing water monitoring programme must, as a minimum:

- take and test/analyse at least four water samples from every bathing water during every bathing season;
- take the first such water sample for every bathing season shortly before the start of that season; and
- take water samples from every bathing water throughout the bathing season at regular intervals not exceeding one month.

In practice, the current monitoring programme aims to deliver:

- Weekly water testing for E. coli and intestinal enterococci at every bathing water during the bathing season
- Visual inspections for signs of pollution, including litter, algal blooms, and macroalgae
- Public reporting through the [Bathing Water Quality Dashboard](#), which provides colour-coded results and detailed information for each site

Bathing waters are classified into four categories:

- Excellent
- Good
- Sufficient
- Poor

The current classifications for Northern Ireland's bathing waters can be found on DAERA's website [About Bathing Water Quality | 2025 Classifications](#)

The analysis of bathing water samples is undertaken in accordance with the international standards that are required by the Bathing Water Regulations and the laboratory is accredited by UKAS. This ensures that the sample collection and analysis is robust. However, it is resource-intensive and any proposals to extend the bathing water programme must take into consideration the feasibility and affordability of increased sampling and analysis.

Monitoring Blue Green Algae (Cyanobacteria)

In comparison to the detail provided for monitoring E. coli and intestinal enterococci, The Bathing Water Regulations are not prescriptive about the requirements for monitoring blue green algae. It is for DAERA to determine the monitoring frequency that is necessary to enable the implementation of adequate management measures to prevent exposing bathers to health risks.

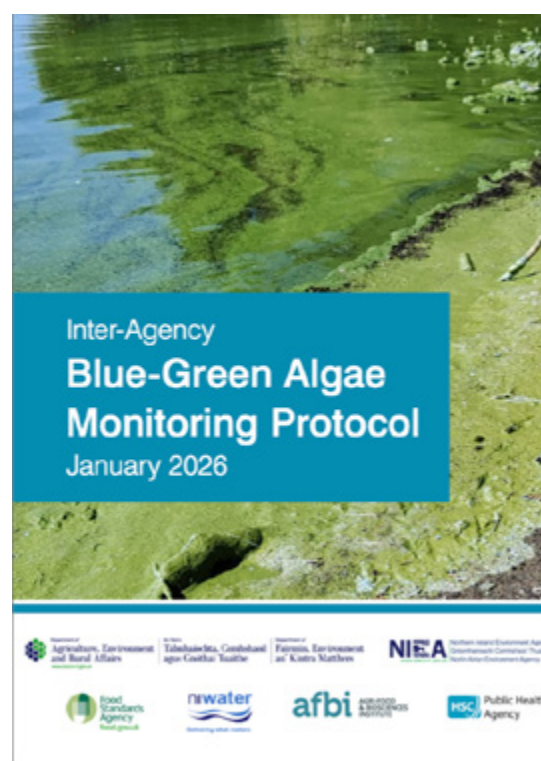
Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

192

While there has regularly been blue-green algae present in Lough Neagh, the algal blooms that were witnessed in 2023 presented a significant risk to public health. This was the same year that monitoring was initiated at Rea's Wood, Lough Neagh, the first freshwater site monitored as part of the bathing water programme in Northern Ireland. However, for each year from 2023-2025, 'advice against bathing' has had to be posted at Rea's Wood from approximately mid-July through to the autumn, due to a substantial presence of blue-green algae.

The occurrence of blue-green algae has resulted in expanded monitoring arrangements at any identified sites likely to be impacted. This has included Rea's Wood and the north coast.

DAERA led the development of a multi-agency Protocol for monitoring and decision-making around blue-green algae presence. This has recently been reviewed by the agencies involved and is based on World Health Organisation guidance.



[Inter-agency Blue-Green Algae Monitoring Protocol January 2026](#)

Other relevant water quality monitoring

DAERA and NIEA monitor 450 river water bodies, 21 lake water bodies and 25 transitional and coastal water bodies to provide an assessment of the surface water status and identify the pressures on each water body. This monitoring is undertaken to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Regulations, and while it does not include microbiological testing, it includes parameters such as Total Phosphorus, Chlorophyll and Cyanobacteria which the World Health Organisation recommends can be used to screen for potential risks to public health.

Nominating a New Bathing Water Site

To support greater transparency and consistency in how new bathing waters are identified in Northern Ireland, we are introducing a formal application process similar to the approach used in England. This includes the provision of a standardised application form, which accompanies this consultation, for proposing new nominated sites.

Applicants will be required to provide key evidence such as patterns of water use, information on local facilities, details of land ownership or permissions, and any relevant environmental considerations. This structured process will help ensure that proposals are assessed fairly, based on clear criteria, and that new designations are supported by robust and transparent information.

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

193

Pollution Reporting

Urgent or ongoing water pollution incidents should be reported to the water pollution hotline immediately any time, day or night on **0800 80 70 60**.

Non urgent water pollution issues can be reported to the following email address:

emergency-pollution@daera-ni.gov.uk

Suspected Blue Green Algae can be reported using the Bloomin' Algae App

You can download the app directly on **[Google Play](#)** or on the **[App Store](#)**.



For further
information and
guidance on the
Bloomin' Algae App
scan the QR code



3. Consultation - Policy Proposals

To achieve the aims of the Bathing Waters Policy Review, your views on the following areas are sought through this consultation:

1. How information is communicated to bathing water users.
2. Length of the bathing season.
3. A risk-based approach to bathing water monitoring.
4. Criteria for identification of bathing waters.
5. Monitoring of candidate sites.
6. Removal of automatic de-identification.
7. Ensuring monitored locations match usage.
8. Other stakeholder recommendations.

1: How information is communicated to bathing water users

We want your views on whether the current communication of bathing water quality information is sufficient and accessible for bathing water users.

Current position

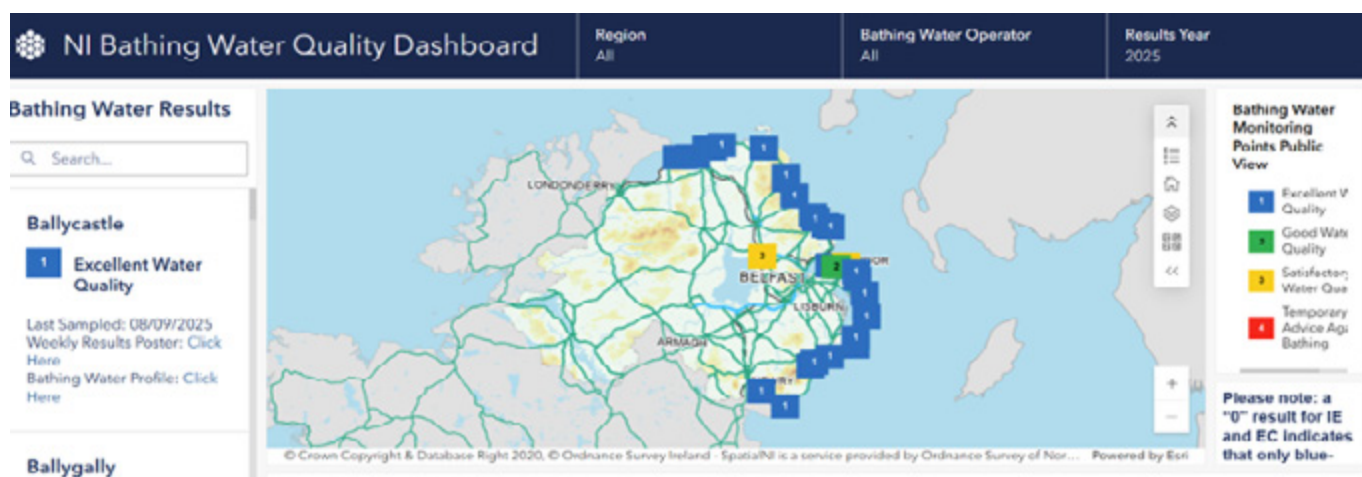
Bathing water operators are required to display public information during the bathing season in an easily accessible location near identified bathing waters. This is typically provided through a bathing water poster displayed on a site information board.

DAERA is also required to disseminate bathing water information actively and promptly using appropriate media and technologies. In July 2025, DAERA launched an interactive Bathing Water Quality Dashboard, bringing together information for all 33 identified bathing waters in Northern Ireland on a single online platform.

The dashboard provides weekly bathing water quality results, with updates issued as soon as possible and typically within 24 hours where a poor result or pollution incident occurs. It includes an interactive map, search and filter functions, and clear presentation of sampling results, with links to detailed Bathing Water Profiles. Temporary Advice Against Bathing notices are published as soon as information is available.

To support transparency, the dashboard includes clear information explaining that results are not provided in real time. Overall, the dashboard represents an important step in improving public access to bathing water information and supporting informed decision-making.

([NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard](#))



Proposal

DAERA and bathing water operators are exploring options to improve how information is made available. It has been proposed that new signage could include a Quick Response (QR) code linking users directly to online water quality information, consistent with approaches used elsewhere in the UK. Where a bathing water is classified as 'poor', a clear symbol would be displayed advising against bathing, along with information on sources of pollution and actions being taken to address this.

Risk forecasting is currently available for six 'at-risk' bathing waters via the SWIM NI app. Forecasting is precautionary in nature, and results broadly align with advice to avoid bathing for 48 hours after rainfall and at sites not classified as 'Excellent'. DAERA is continuing to improve its risk forecasting and is working with NI Water on a trial using Event and Duration Monitors at two vulnerable bathing water sites.



Consultation Questions:

Q1. Have you used the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard to make informed decisions about where and when to swim at identified bathing waters?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not aware of dashboard.

Q2. If yes, did you find the dashboard easy to use and understand?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please include any suggestions for how this could be further improved.

Q3. When do you usually check the water quality information for your preferred identified bathing water site? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ I check the information displayed at the site (e.g., notice boards, signage).
- ☐ I check the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard before deciding which bathing site to visit.
- ☐ I do not usually check water quality information.
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Q4. How would you prefer bathing water quality information to be communicated at an identified bathing water? (Select one option)

- ☐ Scan a QR code to obtain up to date information.
- ☐ I would prefer the notice board to be updated regularly with a poster as it is now.
- ☐ I would accept the notice board only being updated when a pollution incident or public health concern is identified, with a QR displayed to obtain the most recent results.
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

Q5. Do you have any suggestions on how risk forecasting could be improved?

Please explain your answer.

2: Length of the bathing season

DAERA is seeking views on whether the current bathing season, which runs from 1 June to 15 September, should be changed. The bathing season determines when bathing water monitoring and associated public health protections are put in place.

Current position

Northern Ireland's current bathing season aligns with that currently operating in Ireland and Scotland. England and Wales have a longer bathing season running from 15 May to 30 September.

There is evidence that bathing activity increasingly takes place outside the current season, particularly in late spring and early autumn. Extending the bathing season could therefore better reflect current patterns of use and provide more comprehensive protection for public health during periods when bathing activity remains high.

Since the completion of the 2022-23 Bathing Water Review in 2024, DAERA has been monitoring outside of the bathing season on a monthly basis. This is to inform the discussion on lengthening the season. To date, the data gathered has been displayed on the web but has not been used for classification purposes. A move to year-round monitoring may have implications for classification as wetter weather conditions and less sunlight may increase bacterial counts.

Proposal

The options being considered for extending the bathing season are:

- No change - keep as 1 June to 15 September.
- All year round.
- 1 April to 31 October.
- 1 November to 31 March (winter season only, ie, potentially at a selection of sites that are vulnerable to blue-green algae blooms during the period 1 April to 31 October).

DAERA is also exploring the potential for a more flexible approach to bathing season length, whereby different sites could have different season durations. This approach would allow bathing seasons to be tailored to local circumstances, taking account of site-specific usage patterns, environmental conditions, and risk factors. The proposal for bathing waters that are only monitored in the winter season is to explore whether waters that have algal blooms in warmer weather could still be safe for bathing during the winter season. We welcome your feedback to the questions below.

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

199

Consultation Questions:

Q6. Of the following options please indicate your preference for the bathing water season. (Select one option)

- ☐ No change - keep as 1 June to 15 September.
- ☐ All year round/no set dates for bathing season.
- ☐ 1 April to 31 October.

Q7. Do you think it would be useful to incorporate a winter-season only, i.e. from 1 November to 31 March, at a selection of sites that are vulnerable to blue-green algae blooms in the spring / summer / autumn?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

Q8. If you selected, all year round as your response to Question 6, i.e. there will be no set dates for the bathing season. Are you content with DAERA adopting a more flexible, site-specific monitoring timetable based on usage and risk throughout the year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

3: Bathing Water Monitoring

The Department is seeking your views on the potential to move towards a risk-based approach to bathing water monitoring.

Current approach

At present, DAERA monitors all identified bathing waters on twenty occasions during each bathing season. This approach ensures a robust dataset for classification purposes and public health protection.

Proposed approach

Evidence indicates that the current level of sampling may not be necessary to adequately assess water quality at all sites, particularly those that have demonstrated long-term stability and consistently high-quality classification results.

The Department is therefore seeking your views on whether monitoring could move towards a risk-based sampling model, whereby stable, consistently 'Excellent' bathing waters are monitored less frequently, but no less than the minimum legal requirement of one sample per month. While sites that are more variable or higher risk receive greater monitoring focus. Sampling effort would continue to be linked to bathing water classifications and risk profiles, ensuring that public health protection remains central to the approach.

Adopting this proposed risk-based approach could enable more strategic use of resources across both existing and potential new bathing water sites, while maintaining confidence in the monitoring programme and the information provided to the public. It could also support the proposed extension of the bathing season, as a risk-based approach would permit monitoring effort to be adjusted in a way that ensures resources are focused where they are most needed to protect public health, while maintaining appropriate coverage across the bathing water network.

Consultation Questions:

Q9. Do you agree with the proposal set out above to introduce a risk-based sampling approach?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer, including any risks or benefits you wish to highlight.

4: Criteria for identification of Bathing Waters

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the criteria used to determine if a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water should be reviewed, to ensure these remain appropriate and reflect current patterns of recreational water use.

How bathing waters are currently identified

Sites nominated for consideration as bathing waters are assessed through a staged evaluation process. Progression through this process depends on a number of factors, including whether there is a Bathing Water Operator willing to manage the site, whether the location is safe and accessible for monitoring, and whether there is sufficient evidence the site is used by a large number of bathers. The guide value used in Northern Ireland to define a “large” number of bathers at a site is 45 bathers on at least one occasion or 100 site users on at least two occasions.

Where nominated sites meet these criteria, these have been identified under the Bathing Water Regulations. Sites that do not fully meet the criteria, or which are assessed as lower priority at a particular point in time, may be retained for future consideration, allowing the Department to take account of changes in usage, management arrangements, or other relevant factors over time.

Proposed approach

The Department is seeking views on whether the existing criteria and assessment process remain fit for purpose, or whether changes could improve transparency, consistency, or the ability to reflect evolving recreational use of waters, while continuing to ensure effective public health protection.

Currently, sites are formally identified by an amendment to Schedule 1 of The Quality of Bathing Water (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008. An alternative approach used in the rest of the UK is to publish a list of sites to be monitored each year. This would allow for a more flexible approach to identification and de-identification of Northern Ireland bathing waters.

Under this proposal, DAERA would continue to seek applications for new bathing waters, but the identification would only require an updated publication and no longer require legislative amendments to Schedule 1.

DAERA is also considering whether the scope of the Bathing Waters programme should be expanded to reflect the wide variety of people who spend time on or near the water, including paddleboarders, kayakers, and others engaged in recreational activities.

This was discussed specifically at the stakeholder workshop in November 2025, along with the concept of risk and targeting resources towards the highest risk activities.

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

202

The World Health Organisation recognises that risks to health will depend on the degree of water contact and these may be classified as follows:

- No contact
- Incidental contact - recreational activity in which only the limbs are regularly wetted and greater contact (including swallowing water) is unusual (e.g. boating, fishing, wading).
- Whole-body contact - recreational activity in which the whole body or the face and trunk are frequently immersed, or the face is frequently wetted by spray, and where it is likely that some water will be swallowed (e.g. swimming, diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing).

The Bathing Water Directive was introduced to manage public health risks associated with bathing and this has been the focus of the Bathing Waters programme to date. However, there are other recreational activities that take place at existing bathing waters which benefit indirectly from the water quality monitoring and public information that is provided for bathers e.g. our most popular surf beaches on the North Antrim coast are also monitored as bathing waters and all 33 sites have had year-round monitoring since 2024.

DAERA has very limited information on other recreational activities that take place in waters that are not currently identified as bathing waters. DAERA is requesting information to understand the scale of the activities and whether they are taking place in waters where there may be a risk to public health.

Consultation Questions:

Q10. Do you think the current criteria used to determine whether a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water remains appropriate? (Criteria include evidence of high numbers of bathers, site safety and accessibility, and the presence of an operator.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

203

Q11. Should Northern Ireland adopt an approach similar to other UK regions where the list of bathing waters is published annually rather than amended through legislation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

Q12. Should the bathing water programme be extended to include other recreational activities that involve whole-body contact such as diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer.

Q13. Are you aware of any locations where recreational whole-body water contact activities occur that are not currently identified bathing waters?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

If yes, please list these locations and describe the activities taking place.

5: Monitoring of Candidate Sites

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the introduction of a more structured ‘pre-identification’ or ‘candidate site’ stage would be a useful approach for managing the identification of new bathing waters in the future.

How candidate sites have been monitored

Historically, bathing waters were formally identified before routine monitoring was initiated. However, during the 2022–23 Bathing Waters Review, a different approach was taken, whereby a number of sites were monitored in advance of formal identification. This provided additional evidence on water quality and site characteristics helping to inform subsequent decisions on identification.

Proposed approach

Building on this experience, DAERA is interested in views on whether the introduction of a more structured ‘pre-application’ or ‘candidate site’ stage would be a useful approach for managing bathing waters in the future. Under such an approach, selected sites could be monitored for a defined period before any decision is taken on formal identification.

This proposal would enable DAERA to take an evidence-based decision on whether it is feasible and affordable to achieve at least “sufficient” bathing water quality. If DAERA assessed that it would be infeasible or disproportionately expensive, permanent advice against bathing would be provided rather than identifying the site as a bathing water.

It is important to emphasise that, where permanent advice against bathing is applied, the requirements of the Water Framework Regulations would continue to apply to the water body. In such cases, River Basin Management Plans must still include appropriate measures aimed at achieving at least good surface water status in line with statutory objectives.

The potential benefits of this approach could include:

- ensures that public health information is available at popular sites that may meet the criteria for identification as bathing waters;
- avoids identifying sites where water quality presents a persistent or unacceptable risk, ensuring that public health messaging is accurate, proportionate and evidence-based;
- targets formal identification on sites where improvement is feasible and helps ensure that monitoring, regulatory and investment resources are focused where they can deliver the greatest public health and environmental benefit.
- provides evidence to support river basin management planning, including the identification of measures that may be needed to support the achievement of Good or Excellent water quality status at a site.

The Department is seeking views on whether this approach would improve transparency, support evidence-based decision-making and strengthen public health protection, as well as any challenges or risks that should be considered in adopting such a model. Your views are also sought on whether water quality testing should take place at sites that are being considered as candidate bathing waters, prior to any formal identification decision.



Consultation Questions:

Q14. Do you think DAERA should introduce a more structured ‘pre application’ or ‘candidate site’ stage for sites being considered as bathing waters? (This would allow selected sites to be monitored for a defined period before decisions on formal identification.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

Q15. Do you agree that monitoring candidate sites in advance of formal identification would improve transparency and public confidence in the decision making process?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

6: Removal of automatic de-identification

The Department is seeking your views on whether poor-performing identified bathing water sites should be reviewed on an individual basis rather than being automatically de-identified after five years.

Current Position

The Bathing Water Regulations provide that if an identified bathing water site is assessed as one for which it would be infeasible or disproportionately expensive to achieve at least “sufficient” bathing water status, a decision could be taken before the end of the 5-year period to de-identify the site and issue permanent advice against bathing.

In 2024, Defra and the Welsh Government consulted on reforms to the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 covering England and Wales, including proposals to remove the provision for automatic de-designation of bathing waters following five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification. The consultation recognised that improvements in bathing water quality often depend on complex environmental factors and infrastructure investment, which may require longer timeframes to deliver measurable outcomes.

As a result of that consultation, the Bathing Water (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2025 came into force in November 2025. These reforms replaced automatic de-designation with a case-by-case assessment by the relevant regulators, with decisions informed by evidence on whether it is feasible and proportionate to improve water quality at a site. This approach allows continued focus on improvement measures where there is a reasonable prospect of achieving better outcomes, rather than automatically removing identification status after a fixed period of poor classification.

Proposal

The automatic de-identification provision for an identified bathing water site has never been used in Northern Ireland, as no identified bathing water site has been classified as ‘poor’ for five consecutive years. The Department is however considering whether a similar case by case approach as set out above should be adopted in Northern Ireland. This would require the removal of the automatic de-identification following five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification and potentially replacing this with an option to extend the bathing water identification for a specified period to allow a bathing water to achieve at least “sufficient” classification.

This proposal recognises that the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and NI Water investment planning operate in 6-year cycles, with the 3rd cycle RBMP covering 2021-27 and NI Water’s PC21 covering up to March 2028. The Department and NI Water are already preparing for the fourth Cycle RBMP and PC28 respectively.

It would be highly unlikely for the necessary RBMP measures, including wastewater treatment infrastructure improvements, to be identified, developed and delivered for newly identified

bathing waters within the period 2028–2033. In such circumstances, it may be preferable to allow additional time for the development and implementation of improvement measures through the next RBMP and price control cycles, rather than requiring automatic de-identification of the bathing water after five years.

This proposal would introduce greater flexibility and enable better alignment with RBMP and PC cycles. It would allow a bathing water site to remain identified beyond five years where an evidence-based assessment shows that it is feasible and affordable to implement appropriate measures to achieve effective improvements in bathing water quality.

Your views are sought on whether a more flexible, evidence-based decision-making process would better support long-term water quality improvements and public health protection, while maintaining transparency and confidence in the bathing waters programme.

Consultation Questions:

Q16. Do you agree that the automatic de identification of bathing waters after five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification should be changed?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Q17. Do you agree that poor performing bathing waters should instead be reviewed on a case by case basis rather than automatically de identified after five years?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Q18. Do you think a more flexible, evidence based decision making process would better support long term water quality improvements?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland

209

Q19. Do you think this approach would strengthen or maintain public health protection at poor performing sites?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

Additional comments.

7: Ensuring monitored locations match actual usage

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the current bathing water monitoring locations accurately reflect where people are swimming at each identified bathing water site.

Current Position

The Department currently monitors 33 identified bathing water sites across Northern Ireland. Details of these sites and their monitoring locations are available at: [see Annex A for Map of Identified Bathing Waters](#).

The Department recognises that the popularity and use of bathing waters can change over time. Changes in access arrangements, the provision of new facilities, local coastal processes, or evolving recreational trends may result in bathers using different parts of a beach, river or shoreline than those originally identified for monitoring.

Proposal

We are therefore inviting respondents to review their local identified bathing water site and consider whether the current monitoring location reflects where most people now enter the water and swim. The information you provide will help ensure that monitoring remains representative, robust, and continues to provide accurate public health advice.

Further information on current monitoring locations can be found at: [2025 Bathing Water Profiles](#).

Consultation Questions:

Q20. Are the current monitoring locations for the 33 identified bathing waters appropriate?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure.

If not, please tell us the swimming location for your identified bathing water site.

8: Other stakeholder recommendations

The Department welcomes any additional stakeholder recommendations that could help to improve the effectiveness, transparency and long term sustainability of the bathing water programme.

You are invited to provide any additional recommendations you believe could support improvements to bathing water management, public health protection, environmental outcomes or user engagement. These may relate to operational practices, communication and information provision, monitoring approaches, partnership working, or any other relevant aspect of the bathing waters programme.

All responses will be considered as part of the overall review, alongside evidence gathered through earlier engagement and policy development work.

Consultation Questions:

Q21. Do you have any other recommendations for improving the bathing water programme that have not been raised in this consultation?

4. How to Respond

Responses to this consultation are invited via Citizen Space at: [Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#)

The online survey is quick and simple to complete. Please supplement your response with any relevant supporting information, evidence and/or analysis.

If you are unable to complete the survey online, please contact the team by email: waterpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk

We would encourage an online response in order to limit any environmental impact

Those affected: This is a public consultation, open to all who may have an interest and who wish to be part of improving the Bathing Waters Policy for Northern Ireland. It is hoped that many will take an interest in this consultation and provide feedback. All views are welcomed by the Department.

Duration: This consultation will run for a **period of 12 weeks**.

It will open at **12 noon on Friday 29 May 2026** and closes at **5pm on Friday 21 August 2026**.

4.1. Publication of Responses

Confidentiality of Consultations

The Department may 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 about 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 UK 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 as confidential information supplied to it 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:

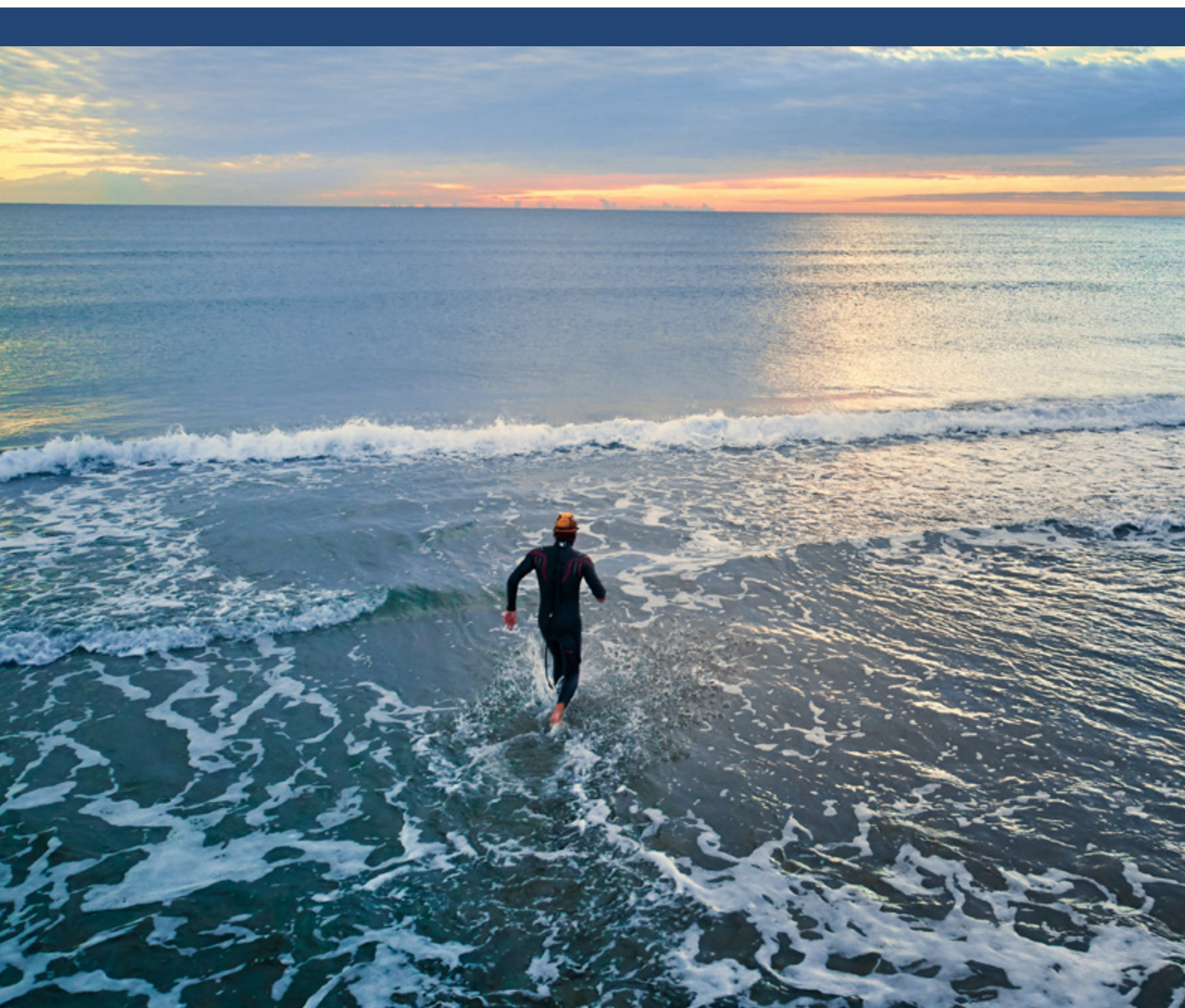
Tel: 0303 123 1113

Email: ni@ico.org.uk Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

5. Next Steps

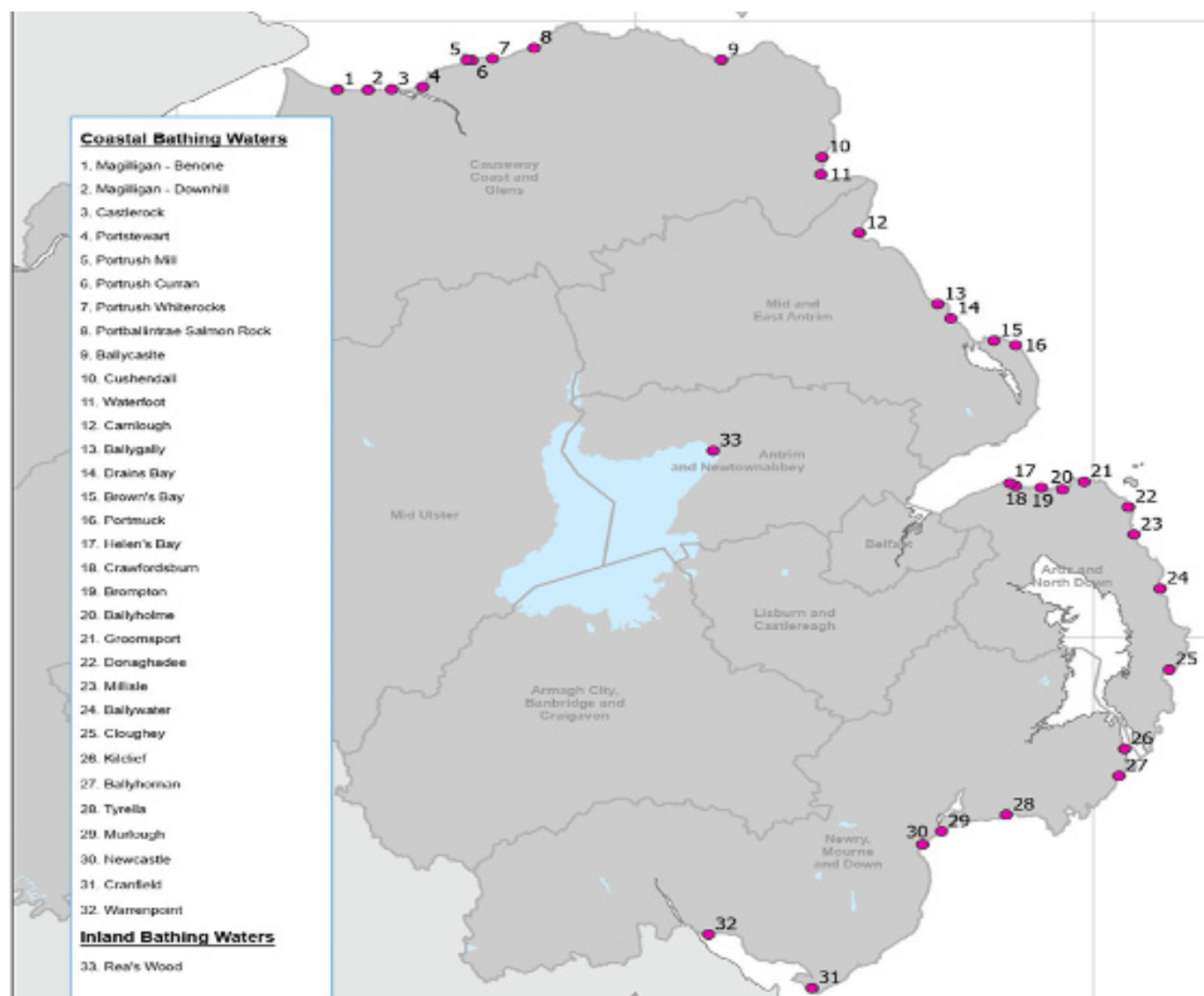
After the consultation closes, all responses will be carefully reviewed and analysed. Your feedback will help shape the Bathing Water Policy Review for Northern Ireland. The Department will use the evidence gathered to update the Review and develop a set of options for the Minister to consider.

We encourage everyone with an interest in bathing waters to participate in this important consultation and share their views. Your contribution is important in helping to inform future policy decisions.



Annex A

Map of Identified Bathing Waters in Northern Ireland Bathing Water Areas | DAERA Open Data



Annex B

Summary of Bathing Water Operator Responsibilities

The responsibilities placed on a Bathing Water Operator by the Quality of Bathing Water Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 are summarised below:

- Bathing Water Operators must ensure that signage at a bathing water includes the information set out in the guidance for Bathing Water Operators

When Bathing Water Operators become aware of pollution incidents/ abnormal situations/ exceptional weather events that could be considered a risk to human health they should:

- consult DAERA (Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs).
- inform DAERA's pollution hotline on 0800 807 060.
- take appropriate management measures to protect bathers' health.
- provide information to the public.
- where necessary, remove any waste.
- and, if necessary, issue temporary advice against bathing.

Where DAERA (the Department) has issued a notice requiring Bathing Water Operators to comply with the Bathing Water Regulations:

- comply with and implement the measures which are specified in the notice;
- provide the Department with any information it requires in carrying out its functions under the Bathing Water Regulations.
- display the current classification of the bathing water provided by DAERA and where appropriate, any advice against bathing.

Where a bathing water receives a poor classification:

- in the following bathing season, signs must display the appropriate classification and the symbol advising the public against bathing. Information must also be provided about why the site is not recommended for bathing.

Marine and Fisheries Division
Water Policy Branch
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED

Email: waterpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE®
We invest in people Standard

Consultation on the Bathing Waters Policy Review for Northern Ireland 21 August 2026

About you

1. What is your name?

Name

2. What is your e-mail address? (Please complete if you wish to receive a copy of your response)

E-mail

3. Are the views and opinions in your response personal or expressed on behalf of an organisation?

(Required)

Personal ☐

Organisation ☒

If the views and opinions expressed are on behalf of an organisation, please provide the name of the organisation below.

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council

There is a limit of 200 characters

4. Please indicate if you are happy for your response to be published.

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

5. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please indicate if you are content for the name of the organisation to be associated with your response.

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not applicable ☐

Consultation – Policy Proposals

To achieve the aims of the Bathing Waters Policy Review, your views on the following areas are sought through this consultation:

1. How information is communicated to bathing water users
2. Length of the bathing season
3. A risk-based approach to bathing water monitoring
4. Criteria for identification of bathing waters
5. Monitoring of candidate sites
6. Removal of automatic de-identification
7. Ensuring monitored locations match usage
8. Other stakeholder recommendations

1: How information is communicated to bathing water users

We want your views on whether the current communication of bathing water quality information is sufficient and accessible for bathing water users.

Current position

Bathing water operators are required to display public information during the bathing season in an easily accessible location near identified bathing waters. This is typically provided through a bathing water poster displayed on a site information board.

DAERA is also required to disseminate bathing water information actively and promptly using appropriate media and technologies. In July 2025, DAERA launched an interactive Bathing Water Quality Dashboard, bringing together information for all 33 identified bathing waters in Northern Ireland on a single online platform.

The dashboard provides weekly bathing water quality results, with updates issued as soon as possible and typically within 24 hours where a poor result or pollution incident occurs. It includes an interactive map, search and filter functions, and clear presentation of sampling results, with links to detailed Bathing Water Profiles. Temporary Advice Against Bathing notices are published as soon as information is available.

To support transparency, the dashboard includes clear information explaining that results are not provided in real time. Overall, the dashboard represents an important step in improving public access to bathing water information and supporting informed decision-making. ([NI Bathing Water Quality Dashboard](#))

Proposal

DAERA and bathing water operators are exploring options to improve how information is made available. It has been proposed that new signage could include a Quick Response (QR) code linking users directly to online water quality information, consistent with approaches used elsewhere in the UK. Where a bathing water is classified as 'poor', a clear symbol would be displayed advising against bathing, along with information on sources of pollution and actions being taken to address this.

Risk forecasting is currently available for six 'at-risk' bathing waters via the SWIM NI app. Forecasting is precautionary in nature, and results broadly align with advice to avoid bathing for 48 hours after rainfall and at sites not classified as 'Excellent'. DAERA is

continuing to improve its risk forecasting and is working with NI Water on a trial using Event and Duration Monitors at two vulnerable bathing water sites.

Q1. Have you used the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard to make informed decisions about where and when to swim at identified bathing waters?

(Required)

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not aware of dashboard ☒

Q2. If yes, did you find the dashboard easy to use and understand? Please include any suggestions for how this could be further improved

Yes ☐

No ☐

Local authority so do not use Dashboard

There is a limit of 200 characters

Q3. When do you usually check the water quality information for your preferred identified bathing water site? (Select all that apply)

(Required)

☐ Option 1 I check the information displayed at the site (e.g., notice boards, signage).

☐ Option 2 I check the DAERA Bathing Water Quality Dashboard before deciding which bathing site to visit.

☐ Option 3 I do not usually check water quality information.

☒ Option 4 Other

If "Other", please specify

We are an inland local authority and do not use Dashboard

Q4. How would you prefer bathing water quality information to be communicated at an identified bathing water? (Select one option)

(Required)

- ☐ Scan a QR code to obtain up to date information.
- ☐ I would prefer the notice board to be updated regularly with a poster as it is now.
- ☒ I would accept the notice board only being updated when a pollution incident or public health concern is identified, with a QR displayed to obtain the most recent results
- ☐ Not sure.

Please explain your answer (Required)

There is a limit of 200 characters

As a local authority we would believe that this is best option for a visitor to any water body in NI who wishes to swim in the relevant areas – similar to elsewhere in the UK and would therefore be familiar to some already, but also ensures that unsafe waters are clearly marked on site should any issues arise with QR code readability or access to a phone.

Q5. Do you have any suggestions on how risk forecasting could be improved?

Please explain your answer

Local factors (historical sampling data, Hydrology, Topography, Land Use, Industry, Historical Land Use, Weather Conditions, Seasonal Influences) at each bathing site must be included into any predictive modelling. Numerous statutory bodies will be involved in this ie. NIEA, Met Office, NI Water, DAERA, Env Health @ LA's, in order for the resulting predictive data to be as accurate as possible.

2: Length of the bathing season

DAERA is seeking views on whether the current bathing season, which runs from 1 June to 15 September, should be changed. The bathing season determines when bathing water monitoring and associated public health protections are put in place.

Current position

Northern Ireland's current bathing season aligns with that currently operating in Ireland and Scotland. England and Wales have a longer bathing season running from 15 May to 30 September.

There is evidence that bathing activity increasingly takes place outside the current season, particularly in late spring and early autumn. Extending the bathing season could therefore better reflect current patterns of use and provide more comprehensive protection for public health during periods when bathing activity remains high.

Since the completion of the 2022-23 Bathing Water Review in 2024, DAERA has been monitoring outside of the bathing season on a monthly basis. This is to inform the discussion on lengthening the season. To date, the data gathered has been displayed on the web but has not been used for classification purposes. A move to year-round monitoring may have implications for classification as wetter weather conditions and less sunlight may increase bacterial counts.

Proposal

The options being considered for extending the bathing season are:

- No change – keep as 1 June to 15 September
- All year round
- 1 April to 31 October
- 1 November to 31 March (winter season only, ie, potentially at a selection of sites that are vulnerable to blue-green algae blooms during the period 1 April to 31 October)

DAERA is also exploring the potential for a more flexible approach to bathing season length, whereby different sites could have different season durations. This approach

would allow bathing seasons to be tailored to local circumstances, taking account of site-specific usage patterns, environmental conditions, and risk factors. The proposal for bathing waters that are only monitored in the winter season is to explore whether waters that have algal blooms in warmer weather could still be safe for bathing during the winter season. We welcome your feedback to the questions that follow.

Q6. Of the following options please indicate your preference for the bathing water season. (Select one option)

(Required)

- ☐ Option 1 No change – keep as 1 June to 15 September
- ☐ Option 2 All year round/no set dates for bathing season
- ☒ Option 3 1 April to 31 October

Q7. Do you think it would be useful to incorporate a winter-season only, i.e. from 1 November to 31 March, at a selection of sites that are vulnerable to blue-green algae blooms in the spring / summer / autumn?

(Required)

Yes ☐

No ☐

Not sure ☒

Please explain your answer

There is a limit of 200 characters

This must be assessed locally as many groups have become established cold water bathers in many sites not presently tested.

Some of these sites are used by tri-athletes for year round training and yet they are not presently included in this regime.

Blue green algae should not be only indicator, as presently only one inland site is included that would show BGA presence. Local factors such as historical water quality data, topography, pollution sources and industrial / agricultural influences should be taken into account.

Q8. If you selected, all year round as your response to Question 11, i.e. there will be no set dates for the bathing season. Are you content with DAERA adopting a more flexible, site-specific monitoring timetable based on usage and risk throughout the year?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not applicable ☐

Happy for DAERA to monitor on risk based timetable as this may reduce monitoring frequency of high quality ocean sites and hopefully take in more poor quality inland swimming sites.

3: Bathing Water Monitoring

The Department is seeking your views on the potential to move towards a risk-based approach to bathing water monitoring.

Current approach

At present, DAERA monitors all identified bathing waters on twenty occasions during each bathing season. This approach ensures a robust dataset for classification purposes and public health protection.

Proposed approach

Evidence indicates that the current level of sampling may not be necessary to adequately assess water quality at all sites, particularly those that have demonstrated long-term stability and consistently high-quality classification results.

The Department is therefore seeking your views on whether monitoring could move towards a risk-based sampling model, whereby stable, consistently 'Excellent' bathing waters are monitored less frequently, but no less than the minimum legal requirement of one sample per month. While sites that are more variable or higher risk receive greater monitoring focus. Sampling effort would continue to be linked to bathing water classifications and risk profiles, ensuring that public health protection remains central to the approach.

Adopting this proposed risk-based approach could enable more strategic use of resources across both existing and potential new bathing water sites, while maintaining confidence in the monitoring programme and the information provided to the public. It could also support the proposed extension of the bathing season, as a risk-based approach would permit monitoring effort to be adjusted in a way that ensures resources are focused where they are most needed to protect public health, while maintaining appropriate coverage across the bathing water network.

Q9. Do you agree with the proposal set out above to introduce a risk-based sampling approach?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

This would be viewed as a good use of sampling resources if that resource can support better predictive modelling.

4: Criteria for identification of Bathing Waters

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the criteria used to determine if a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water should be reviewed, to ensure these remain appropriate and reflect current patterns of recreational water use.

How bathing waters are currently identified

Sites nominated for consideration as bathing waters are assessed through a staged evaluation process. Progression through this process depends on a number of factors, including whether there is a Bathing Water Operator willing to manage the site, whether the location is safe and accessible for monitoring, and whether there is sufficient evidence the site is used by a large number of bathers. The guide value used in Northern Ireland to define a “large” number of bathers at a site is 45 bathers on at least one occasion or 100 site users on at least two occasions.

Where nominated sites meet these criteria, these have been identified under the Bathing Water Regulations. Sites that do not fully meet the criteria, or which are assessed as lower priority at a particular point in time, may be retained for future consideration, allowing the Department to take account of changes in usage, management arrangements, or other relevant factors over time.

Proposed approach

The Department is seeking views on whether the existing criteria and assessment process remain fit for purpose, or whether changes could improve transparency, consistency, or the ability to reflect evolving recreational use of waters, while continuing to ensure effective public health protection.

Currently, sites are formally identified by an amendment to Schedule 1 of The Quality of Bathing Water (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008. An alternative approach used in the rest of the UK is to publish a list of sites to be monitored each year. This would allow for a more flexible approach to identification and de-identification of Northern Ireland bathing waters.

Under this proposal, DAERA would continue to seek applications for new bathing waters, but the identification would only require an updated publication and no longer

require legislative amendments to Schedule 1.

DAERA is also considering whether the scope of the Bathing Waters programme should be expanded to reflect the wide variety of people who spend time on or near the water, including paddleboarders, kayakers, and others engaged in recreational activities.

This was discussed specifically at the stakeholder workshop in November 2025, along with the concept of risk and targeting resources towards the highest risk activities.

The World Health Organisation recognises that risks to health will depend on the degree of water contact and these may be classified as follows:

- No contact
- Incidental contact – recreational activity in which only the limbs are regularly wetted and greater contact (including swallowing water) is unusual (e.g. boating, fishing, wading).
- Whole-body contact – recreational activity in which the whole body or the face and trunk are frequently immersed, or the face is frequently wetted by spray, and where it is likely that some water will be swallowed (e.g. swimming, diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing).

The Bathing Water Directive was introduced to manage public health risks associated with bathing and this has been the focus of the Bathing Waters programme to date. However, there are other recreational activities that take place at existing bathing waters which benefit indirectly from the water quality monitoring and public information that is provided for bathers e.g. our most popular surf beaches on the North Antrim coast are also monitored as bathing waters and all 33 sites have had year-round monitoring since 2024.

DAERA has very limited information on other recreational activities that take place in waters that are not currently identified as bathing waters. DAERA is requesting information to understand the scale of the activities and whether they are taking place in waters where there may be a risk to public health.

Q10. Do you think the current criteria used to determine whether a site qualifies for identification as a bathing water remains appropriate? (Criteria include evidence of high numbers of bathers, site safety and accessibility, and the presence of an operator.)

(Required)

Yes ☐

No ☒

Not sure ☐

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

There is a limit of 200 characters

The increase in inland cold water swimming as an activity means the criteria should be reassessed and should reflect current and predicted leisure trends.

A number of private and public leisure facilities based in open fresh water such as Moira lakes, numerous locations on Lough Neagh and Lough Erne, Lake Kilrea Water park, Craigavon Balancing lakes, Dunmurry dippers are used extensively all year long but no water quality information is available through this process.

Q11. Should Northern Ireland adopt an approach similar to other UK regions where the list of bathing waters is published annually rather than amended through legislation?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Please explain your answer.

There is a limit of 200 characters

This reduces administrative burden and makes the scheme more flexible.

Q12. Should the bathing water programme be extended to include other recreational activities that involve whole-body contact such as diving, surfing, sailboarding, kiteboarding, whitewater canoeing?

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Please explain your answer.

There is a limit of 200 characters

This makes sense as these categories of water users are at as much risk of poor bathing water quality, as swimmers but again this must be extended to include inland sites.

Q13. Are you aware of any locations where recreational whole-body water contact activities occur that are not currently identified bathing waters?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

If yes, please list these locations and describe the activities taking place.

Within LCCC we have 2 commercial sites where recreational whole-body water contact activities occur.

Lets Go Hydro

Moirs Lakes

5: Monitoring of Candidate Sites

DAERA is seeking your views on whether the introduction of a more structured ‘pre-identification’ or ‘candidate site’ stage would be a useful approach for managing the identification of new bathing waters in the future.

How candidate sites have been monitored

Historically, bathing waters were formally identified before routine monitoring was initiated. However, during the 2022–23 Bathing Waters Review, a different approach was taken, whereby a number of sites were monitored in advance of formal identification. This provided additional evidence on water quality and site characteristics helping to inform subsequent decisions on identification.

Proposed approach

Building on this experience, DAERA is interested in views on whether the introduction of a more structured ‘pre-application’ or ‘candidate site’ stage would be a useful approach for managing bathing waters in the future. Under such an approach, selected sites could be monitored for a defined period before any decision is taken on formal identification.

This proposal would enable DAERA to take an evidence-based decision on whether it is feasible and affordable to achieve at least “sufficient” bathing water quality. If DAERA assessed that it would be infeasible or disproportionately expensive, permanent advice against bathing would be provided rather than identifying the site as a bathing water.

It is important to emphasise that, where permanent advice against bathing is applied, the requirements of the Water Framework Regulations would continue to apply to the water body. In such cases, River Basin Management Plans must still include appropriate measures aimed at achieving at least good surface water status in line with statutory objectives.

The potential benefits of this approach could include:

- ensures that public health information is available at popular sites that may meet the criteria for identification as bathing waters;

- avoids identifying sites where water quality presents a persistent or unacceptable risk, ensuring that public health messaging is accurate, proportionate and evidence-based;
- targets formal identification on sites where improvement is feasible and helps ensure that monitoring, regulatory and investment resources are focused where they can deliver the greatest public health and environmental benefit.
- provides evidence to support river basin management planning, including the identification of measures that may be needed to support the achievement of Good or Excellent water quality status at a site.

The Department is seeking views on whether this approach would improve transparency, support evidence-based decision-making and strengthen public health protection, as well as any challenges or risks that should be considered in adopting such a model.

The Department is seeking views on whether this approach would improve transparency, support evidence-based decision-making and strengthen public health protection, as well as any challenges or risks that should be considered in adopting such a model. Your views are also sought on whether water quality testing should take place at sites that are being considered as candidate bathing waters, prior to any formal identification decision.

Q14. Do you think DAERA should introduce a more structured ‘pre application’ or ‘candidate site’ stage for sites being considered as bathing waters? (This would allow selected sites to be monitored for a defined period before decisions on formal identification.)

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Please explain the reasons for your answer.

There is a limit of 400 characters

This would be a good approach that would establish a base line for new sites and still inform public users and any associated operators about water quality impacting upon that usage.

There must be transparency, in regard to, criteria around site selection so that there is public confidence that unsuitable sites are adequately assessed and relevant information made available to potential users

Q15. Do you agree that monitoring candidate sites in advance of formal identification would improve transparency and public confidence in the decision making process?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

6: Removal of automatic de-identification

The Department is seeking your views on whether poor-performing identified bathing water sites should be reviewed on an individual basis rather than being automatically de-identified after five years.

Current Position

The Bathing Water Regulations provide that if an identified bathing water site is assessed as one for which it would be infeasible or disproportionately expensive to achieve at least “sufficient” bathing water status, a decision could be taken before the end of the 5-year period to de-identify the site and issue permanent advice against bathing.

In 2024, Defra and the Welsh Government consulted on reforms to the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 covering England and Wales, including proposals to remove the provision for automatic de-designation of bathing waters following five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification. The consultation recognised that improvements in bathing water quality often depend on complex environmental factors and infrastructure investment, which may require longer timeframes to deliver measurable outcomes.

As a result of that consultation, the Bathing Water (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2025 came into force in November 2025. These reforms replaced automatic de-designation with a case-by-case assessment by the relevant regulators, with decisions informed by evidence on whether it is feasible and proportionate to improve water quality at a site. This approach allows continued focus on improvement measures where there is a reasonable prospect of achieving better outcomes, rather than automatically removing identification status after a fixed period of poor classification.

Proposal

The automatic de-identification provision for an identified bathing water site has never been used in Northern Ireland, as no identified bathing water site has been classified as ‘poor’ for five consecutive years. The Department is however considering whether a similar case by case approach as set out above should be adopted in Northern Ireland. This would require the removal of the automatic de-identification following five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification and potentially replacing this with an option to

extend the bathing water identification for a specified period to allow a bathing water to achieve at least “sufficient” classification.

This proposal recognises that the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and NI Water investment planning operate in 6-year cycles, with the 3rd cycle RBMP covering 2021-27 and NI Water’s PC21 covering up to March 2028. The Department and NI Water are already preparing for the fourth Cycle RBMP and PC28 respectively.

It would be highly unlikely for the necessary RBMP measures, including wastewater treatment infrastructure improvements, to be identified, developed and delivered for newly identified bathing waters within the period 2028–2033. In such circumstances, it may be preferable to allow additional time for the development and implementation of improvement measures through the next RBMP and price control cycles, rather than requiring automatic de-identification of the bathing water after five years.

This proposal would introduce greater flexibility and enable better alignment with RBMP and PC cycles. It would allow a bathing water site to remain identified beyond five years where an evidence-based assessment shows that it is feasible and affordable to implement appropriate measures to achieve effective improvements in bathing water quality.

Your views are sought on whether a more flexible, evidence-based decision-making process would better support long-term water quality improvements and public health protection, while maintaining transparency and confidence in the bathing waters programme.

Q16. Do you agree that the automatic de identification of bathing waters after five consecutive years of ‘poor’ classification should be changed?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

Q17. Do you agree that poor performing bathing waters should instead be reviewed on a case by case basis rather than automatically de identified after five years?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

Q18. Do you think a more flexible, evidence based decision making process would better support long term water quality improvements?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not Sure ☐

Q19. Do you think this approach would strengthen or maintain public health protection at poor performing sites?

(Required)

Yes ☒

No ☐

Not sure ☐

Additional comments

These changes will require more engagement with public users and site operators around possible pollution sources and any improvement works in that area. There may also be situations that prohibition of public swimming in some sites may be required as in case of Lough Neagh Sites and others with BGA issue and/or extremely poor bacteriological quality. This would strengthen public health protection and improve transparency.

ons

accurately reflect where people are swimming at each identified bathing water site.

Current Position

The Department currently monitors 33 identified bathing water sites across Northern Ireland. Details of these sites and their monitoring locations are available at: **see Annex A** of the Consultation Document for Map of Identified Bathing Waters.

The Department recognises that the popularity and use of bathing waters can change over time. Changes in access arrangements, the provision of new facilities, local coastal processes, or evolving recreational trends may result in bathers using different parts of a beach, river or shoreline than those originally identified for monitoring.

Proposal

We are therefore inviting respondents to review their local identified bathing water site and consider whether the current monitoring location reflects where most people now enter the water and swim. The information you provide will help ensure that monitoring remains representative, robust, and continues to provide accurate public health advice.

Q20. Are the current monitoring locations for the 33 identified bathing waters appropriate?

(Required)

Yes ☐

No ☒

Not sure ☐

If not, please tell us the swimming location for your identified bathing water site.

As highlighted earlier there are many inland sites where full body immersion in open water occurs that are not included across NI.

8: Other stakeholder recommendations

The Department welcomes **any additional stakeholder recommendations** that could help to improve the effectiveness, transparency and long-term sustainability of the

bathing water programme.

You are invited to provide **any additional recommendations** you believe could support improvements to bathing water management, public health protection, environmental outcomes or user engagement. These may relate to operational practices, communication and information provision, monitoring approaches, partnership working, or any other relevant aspect of the bathing waters programme.

All responses will be considered as part of the overall review, alongside evidence gathered through earlier engagement and policy development work.

Q21. Do you have any other recommendations for improving the bathing water programme that have not been raised in this consultation?

Other Recommendations

The present system is based on 33 sites of which only one is an inland water at Reas Wood, Lough Neagh. The results to date have shown that water quality is very good at the coast but poor inland, so more emphasis must be applied to inland sites that are now being very frequently used eg other Lough Neagh sites and private sites as already mentioned.

While DAERA undertake sampling and analysis, LA staff will be required to attend sites, warn of immediate dangers, respond to information requests and liaise with communities on emerging issues. This creates additional staffing and public relations costs for councils, who may have limited control over factors contributing to poor water quality.

When you submit your response, you give us permission to analyse and include your responses in our results.

Information provided by respondents 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.

Committee:	Environment & Sustainability
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Consultation on Restricting Promotions of High Fat, Sugar and Salt Foods

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	The Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning Service Unit is responsible for the enforcement of Food Safety legislation and the regulations made under it. It will be responding to this consultation specifically regarding its legal remit.
1.2	Obesity remains a significant public health challenge in Northern Ireland and is associated with an increased risk of a range of serious health conditions.
1.3	The Department of Health's Healthy Futures obesity strategic framework identifies the food environment as an important factor in supporting healthier choices and reducing health inequalities. The proposed restrictions are intended to help create healthier retail environments by reducing exposure to promotions that encourage the purchase of high in fat, sugar and salt products.
1.4	The Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Northern Ireland and the Department of Health have launched a public consultation on proposals to introduce restrictions on the promotion of products high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS).
1.5	The consultation seeks views on proposals to restrict volume price promotions, such as multibuy offers, and the placement of HFSS products in prominent locations in stores and online to support healthier shopping environments and shift the balance of promotions to increase the affordability of healthier options.
1.6	Similar restrictions are already in place in England and Wales, and Scotland will be introducing similar restrictions in October 2026.
1.7	Key proposals include: • Restrict volume price promotions on HFSS products • Restrict the placement of HFSS products at prominent locations • Restrict free refills of sugar-sweetened soft drinks
1.8	Enforcement in Northern Ireland would be expected to be undertaken by local councils, consistent with arrangements for other food law controls. Two enforcement approaches are being considered: Option 1: Enforcement through improvement notices and criminal prosecution only Option 2: Explore the introduction of monetary sanctions as an alternative to criminal prosecution

1.9	The FSA considers that the proposals may have particular relevance for children and young people, who are more susceptible to marketing and promotional activity, and for communities experiencing higher levels of deprivation where evidence shows that rates of overweight and obesity are higher.	
1.10	Evidence obtained by FSA from England indicates that restricting the promotion of HFSS products can reduce calorie consumption and support improved population health outcomes.	
1.11	The draft consultation response has been developed collaboratively on behalf of the NI Food Managers Group which represents all 11 Northern Ireland councils.	
1.12	The consultation document and proposed draft response was circulated to Members on 20 August 2026. Members were asked to forward any comments to be included in the final response to the Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning Service Unit by Friday 4 September 2026. The final response will be tabled at committee on 7 October 2026.	
1.13	As the consultation closes on 21 October 2026, committee is requested to grant delegated authority to the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 7 October 2026 to approve the tabled response, thereby enabling the council to respond prior to the closing date.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u> It is recommended that the committee: grant delegated authority to the Environment and Sustainability Committee on 7 October 2026 to approve the draft response, thereby enabling the council to respond to this consultation before the closing date of 21 October 2026.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> It is unknown at this stage whether financial support will be provided to support Councils.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions <u>or</u> rationale why the screening was not carried out. Third Party / Central Government Legislation / Consultation	

Appendices:	None
--------------------	------

Committee:	Environment & Sustainability
Date:	2 September 2026
Report from:	Head of Service - Environmental Health, Risk and Emergency Planning

Item for:	Decision
Subject:	Proposed Caravan Licence Model Conditions 2026

1.0	<u>Background and Key Issues</u>
1.1	There are two holiday caravan sites within the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area, which are licensed in accordance with the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963. The Council has issued a caravan site licence for each premises, together with a set of licence conditions.
1.2	The Council's current licence conditions are based on the former model licence conditions for caravan sites and residential caravan sites issued in 1992 and 1994. The Department for Infrastructure published updated Model Licence Conditions 2025 for Residential Sites and Holiday Sites on 1 July 2025, replacing the earlier 1992 and 1994 model conditions. Under section 5 of the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963, councils must have regard to these model conditions when determining what conditions to attach to a site licence.
1.3	Following publication of the updated model conditions, the service has reviewed the Council's existing caravan site licence conditions to ensure they remain current, enforceable and consistent with the wider approach being adopted across Northern Ireland. Although the accompanying guidance notes that councils do not need to apply new conditions where existing conditions remain adequate, the service considers that a review is appropriate for a number of reasons. • The previous model licence conditions were issued over 30 years ago and do not fully reflect how caravan sites have developed over time. • The revised approach allows the council to align residential and holiday caravan site requirements within a single, updated framework. • The proposed update supports greater consistency across Northern Ireland. Draft local conditions have been developed in consultation with other councils through the Caravan Licensing Group Northern Ireland, with a focus on ensuring that conditions are reasonable, clear, precise, practical to enforce and sufficiently flexible to reflect future legislative or guidance changes.
1.5	Section 8 of the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963 gives the council power to alter the conditions attached to site licences. Before doing so, the Council must afford licence holders an opportunity to make representations. The service therefore proposes to write to licence holders to advise them of the proposed revised conditions and invite their comments. Any responses received will be considered before the conditions are finalised and issued. Section 8 also provides a right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.
1.6	This report seeks approval to consult on the proposed revised conditions for caravan sites within the Council area. The revised conditions are based on the Department for Infrastructure's Model Licence Conditions 2025 and are intended to modernise the

	Council's current arrangements, improve consistency, and strengthen clarity around matters such as fire safety, electrical safety and general site management.	
1.7	Following consultation, the feedback will be considered and committee advised accordingly before the revised conditions are brought into effect.	
2.0	<u>Recommendation</u>	
2.1	It is recommended that committee: • approves the proposed Caravan Licence Conditions 2026 for consultation with licence holders in accordance with the Caravans Act (Northern Ireland) 1963, as detailed in Appendix 11 EH, and • considers any feedback received at a future meeting of the committee before implementation.	
3.0	<u>Finance and Resource Implications</u>	
3.1	The proposed review and adoption of updated caravan licence conditions will be managed within existing service resources. Any consultation and implementation activity arising from the revised conditions will be undertaken as part of normal operational duties.	
3.2	There are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from this report. Any costs for operators would depend on the current level of compliance at individual sites.	
4.0	<u>Equality/Good Relations and Rural Needs Impact Assessments</u>	
4.1	Has an equality and good relations screening been carried out?	No
4.2	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out. The report relates to the proposed adoption of revised licence conditions arising from updated central government model conditions and associated consultation requirements. At this stage, no equality or good relations screening has been carried out as the report seeks approval to consult on the proposed conditions before any final decision is made.	
4.3	Has a Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) been completed?	No
4.4	Brief summary of the key issues identified and proposed mitigating actions or rationale why the screening was not carried out. The report seeks approval to consult on revised caravan licence conditions following publication of updated model conditions by central government. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has not been completed at this stage, as the current report relates to a proposed consultation process rather than implementation of a final policy position.	

Appendices:

Appendix 11 EH – Proposed amendments to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Caravan Site Licence Model Conditions

APPENDIX 1 EH

KEY PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Issue	Proposed Approach	Rationale
Electrical installations	Retain a requirement for inspection at three-year intervals.	Coastal and exposed locations can increase corrosion risk to electrical equipment and installations.
Emergency telephone provision	Require an emergency telephone only where mobile phone reception is poor.	This aligns with the updated model approach while retaining safeguards where communication may be unreliable.
Fencing and boundary treatments	Clarify requirements for holiday and residential parks, including restrictions on fencing around individual holiday caravans and controls on height and combustibility for residential pitch boundaries.	The aim is to reduce fire spread risk while allowing appropriate residential pitch demarcation.
Paddling pools and similar items	Prohibit unattended or retained water features such as paddling pools on caravan pitches.	Filled and unattended pools present a drowning risk, particularly to young children.
Tents and gazebos	Prohibit tents and gazebos except within dedicated camping or touring areas where permitted.	Combustible temporary structures can compromise separation distances and increase fire spread risk.
Barbecues, fire pits and chimineas	Prohibit open-flame leisure equipment on caravan pitches unless specifically authorised in designated safe areas.	Open flames, ash and embers increase fire risk around caravans and combustible materials.
Storage boxes	Retain existing controls on non-combustible construction, height and condition, and clarify restrictions on housing laundry appliances unless suitable outdoor electrical provision is in place.	This reduces fire, electrical and obstruction risks around caravans.
Play equipment	Restrict trampolines, slides, swings and similar equipment within	Large unsecured equipment can obstruct separation

	separation spaces or where they create safety, nuisance or access concerns.	spaces, reduce parking availability and create safety hazards.
Pets	Retain requirements that pets, where permitted, must be controlled and not allowed to roam, trespass or cause annoyance.	This supports amenity, safety and responsible site management.