

<b>Report on</b>	Consultation on Climate Change Reporting
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director, Environmental Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Karl McGowan, Waste and Sustainable Development Manager

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>  If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To seek approval for a proposed response to a consultation on Climate Change Reporting by Public Bodies.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>The Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is currently consulting on developing future regulations that will place climate change reporting duties on specified public bodies, including Councils. These regulations are required to be made under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022.</p> <p>Public bodies have a significant role to play in helping to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reductions which Northern Ireland needs to make, and indeed are now required by law. They are also key in helping Northern Ireland to be climate-adaptable and resilient both for now and for future generations. Reporting by public bodies can help them increase their contribution to Northern Ireland both tackling the causes of climate change and adapting to its impacts. Reporting can do this by driving and informing more rapid and effective action by such bodies.</p> <p>This consultation aims to build on information already gathered by DAERA during pre-consultation to help shape and inform the development of the upcoming regulations. The consultation also aims to gather views on any potential future support a specified public body might need to help them deliver on their climate change reporting duties.</p> <p>DAERA is encouraging all public bodies, interested organisations, groups, and individuals to provide their views on this consultation. The views gathered will help achieve the aim of developing well-informed regulations that will enable a fit-for-purpose climate change reporting regime for specified public bodies in Northern Ireland.</p>

	<p>This public consultation was launched on the 31<sup>st</sup> March with an initial deadline of the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2023. However, due to the Local Government elections in May an extension was granted to Councils until the 30<sup>th</sup> June to submit their responses.</p> <p>The full consultation can be accessed using the following link:</p> <p><a href="https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-climate-change-reporting-by-specified-public-bodies-developing-new-regulations">https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-climate-change-reporting-by-specified-public-bodies-developing-new-regulations</a></p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 ('the Act') received Royal Assent on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022. This Act sets out Northern Ireland's framework for tackling climate change and reducing emissions, by setting (among other things) challenging targets on Northern Ireland departments to deliver net zero emissions in Northern Ireland by the year 2050.</p>
3.2	<p>Section 42 of the Act recognises the important role of public bodies in tackling climate change, as it requires DAERA to make new regulations which will set a requirement for specified public bodies to report on climate change. The Act requires these regulations to come into operation by 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023.</p>
3.3	<p>A full copy of the proposed consultation response is attached as appendix. However a summary of the main keys points and implications is given below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid Ulster District Council agrees with the UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) best practice recommendation that public bodies should report on their climate change adaptation efforts every five years. This time frame provides a sufficient period between reports and a regular opportunity to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, reporting every five years considers the resources and capacity constraints faced by public bodies since reporting on adaptation can be complex and resource-intensive and may burden public bodies unnecessarily. Also, the positive impacts of climate change adaptation can vary depending on the specific adaptation measure. In some cases, an immediate result can be visible, however, other adaptation measures may take longer to show measurable results.</li> <li>• The first adaptation report should be made available by March 2025, as recommended by the CCC.</li> <li>• Mid Ulster District Council agrees with the CCC on the point that mitigation reporting should happen more frequently than adaptation reporting because there is a need for more frequent updates on progress towards meeting NI and overall UK emissions reduction targets. It is proposed to report every three years which allows for regular updates on progress and provides enough time for significant changes in emissions trends to be observed. Furthermore, data on emissions, which must include Scope 3 emissions, within an interval of three years can be collected and analysed correctly to identify key strategic changes in policy and other factors.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first mitigation report should be made available by October 2026 with data collection commencing from October 2023.</li> <li>• Data collection on emissions should be provided on a financial year basis.</li> <li>• The introduction of climate change reporting duties on public bodies will be resource-intensive in terms of staff time, expertise, data collection and analysis. This involves allocating additional resources to sustainability / climate change teams and the involvement of external experts and organisations to support the process. Additional funding provided by the Department would greatly assist public bodies here to make progress on climate action, especially those smaller organisations with less resources.</li> </ul>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
4.1	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<p>Financial:</p> <p>The consultation/response does not detail financial considerations at this time, however, the future climate change reporting requirements will almost certainly result in significant additional costs to Council in terms of staff time, external consultancy / expertise, data collection and analysis which will need resourced.</p>
	Human: As above
	Risk Management: Climate Change reporting will be a future legal requirement
4.2	<b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b>
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None
	Rural Needs Implications: None
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	Members are asked to approve the proposed consultation response as detailed.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Climate Change Reporting by Specified Public Bodies - Consultation Response