

Report on	Consultation on the Draft Circular Economy Strategy for NI
Date of Meeting	14 th March 2023
Reporting Officer	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director - Environmental Services
Contact Officer	Karl McGowan, Waste and Sustainable Development Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform members on a public consultation for a draft Circular Economy Strategy.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Northern Ireland is committed to moving towards a more circular economy, the aim of which is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the use of Earth's resources that cannot be replenished; • Switch to materials that can be reused and fuels that can be produced over and over; • Cut down substantially on waste generated; • Hold on to products and materials for as long as possible. <p>Businesses, organisations and industries need to embrace the opportunities and benefits of a circular economy so that waste is 'designed out' of how we live - those who can do so first will have a competitive advantage.</p> <p>A circular economy is achieved by designing products smartly with their whole life cycle in mind, re-using and repairing to extend their useful life, and then when their life is deemed over, remanufacturing to create new products from old.</p> <p>The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has published a consultation on this, the purpose of which, is to ascertain if they have accurately assessed the situation and if their proposals are right to kick start the transition to a truly Circular Economy.</p> <p>The consultation document sets out Northern Ireland's vision to create an 'innovative, inclusive and competitive economy, with responsible production and consumption at its core'.</p> <p>The feedback will inform the final Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland and help to shape the design, remit and function of future delivery. This public</p>

	<p>consultation is being lead by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and can be accessed using the following link:</p> <p>https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/dfef/draft-circular-economy-public-consultation/</p>
3.0	Main Report
<p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p>The draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland (NI) is intended as a starting point for making the transition from the current linear economy to a circular economy. It aims to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vision, a target and direction of travel for what can be achieved with the right investment and commitment across government, business and society; • The creation of new economic opportunities to increase innovation through investment in research and development, skills and education to scale up Northern Ireland’s low carbon resource efficient economy. <p>The main points in the Circular Economy Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource management is a vital element of NI’s Circular Economy proposal, as evidenced by two of the Circular Economy proposed indicators namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased recycling; and ○ Increased reuse and repair enterprises. • Circular Economy principles will need to be embedded in all aspects of how local authorities operate for it to succeed, not just in waste management collection and disposal tasks but in other aspects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable procurement; ○ Business cases which consider whole life cost analysis. • The drive to a Circular Economy will be underpinned by key policy drivers such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Return Schemes (DRS) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The packaging sector will seek to increase use of secondary materials and make changes to design to increase recycling and reuse potential; ○ A move away from single use plastics. • Behavioural change is crucial in moving away from a linear economy to a circular one, and within the Northern Ireland context, the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) will lead in nudging people and citizens to ‘think circular’. • Regulation, legislation and enforcement are key to the success of embedding a Circular Economy model.
<p>3.3</p>	<p>Given the consultation closes on 20th March a consultation response has been prepared for submission prior to that date. A full copy of the proposed response is included in the attached appendix however a summary of the main points for the Council is provided below.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid Ulster District Council fully supports the route map towards a circular economy within Northern Ireland and firmly believes that there is scope for the waste management sector to be a key driver in its implementation and development. • It is already evident how some of the current policy drivers, including EPR for packaging, DRS and consistency of collections, can help promote the transition to a circular economy model. • The move towards a circular economy will take time and the correct legislation, policies and procedures will have to be written and carefully considered. • The Council believes that changes required of Local Authorities need to be fully funded. Therefore, any additional requirements must be fully costed and Local Authorities remunerated for any increased costs.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial:</p> <p>The consultation has no financial considerations at this time, however, the movement to a more circular economy will almost certainly result in additional costs to Council in areas such as waste management and green procurement.</p>
	Human: None
	Risk Management: None
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None
	Rural Needs Implications: None
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to note the content of this report and approve the consultation response.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland - Consultation Response