

Report on	Consultation on Northern Ireland's 2030 & 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets
Date of Meeting	10 th October 2023
Reporting Officer	Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director: Environmental Services
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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 seek approval for a proposed response to a public consultation on Northern Ireland's 2030 & 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets & First Three Carbon Budgets.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive have published a consultation on N Ireland's 2030 and 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets.
2.2	DAERA is required to prepare regulations on carbon budgets and interim targets guided by advice from the Climate Change Committee (CCC). A carbon budget represents the total amount of emissions that may be emitted during a five-year period, measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. The first budgetary period is 2023-2027 and every five years thereafter. The CCC is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008. Its purpose is to advise the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets and to report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.
2.3	The consultation seeks feedback on the proposed first three carbon budgets for 2023-2027, 2028-2032 and 2033-2037, as well on the interim targets that should be set for 2030 and 2040 for reductions in greenhouse gases. DAERA is also seeking views through the consultation on the CCC's recommended Path to Net Zero for Northern Ireland and is keen to hear from individuals, businesses, communities, and other organisations from across Northern Ireland.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 received Royal Assent in June 2022. It sets emissions reduction targets that Northern Ireland must comply with

legally, including achieving Net Zero emissions by 2050. Other key requirements of the Act include:

- Producing a system of carbon budgeting;
- The setting of 2030 and 2040 emissions reduction targets;
- Producing five-year Climate Action Plans to set out the policies and proposals that Northern Ireland departments will implement to meet a carbon budget;
- Establishing a Just Transition Commission for Northern Ireland and an office for a Northern Ireland Climate Commissioner;
- Setting regulations in regard to climate change reporting duties by public bodies and a Just Transition Fund for Agriculture; and
- Establishing a system of reporting and statements against targets and carbon budgets.

3.2 The advice from the CCC published in March 2023 recommends that targets consistent with the 2050 Net Zero target would be:

- A 48% emissions reduction by 2030 (2030 target) against the baseline the current target in the Act; and
- A 77% emissions reduction by 2040 (2040 target) against the baseline.

The CCC has recommended these targets on the basis of its Path to a Net Zero for Northern Ireland analysis undertaken to highlight how Northern Ireland might reach the 2050 Net Zero target in the Act. The recommended targets are therefore considered by the CCC to be consistent with the 2050 Net Zero target.

3.3 The CCC, in its advice to Northern Ireland in March 2023, recommended that, in order to keep emissions consistent with the 2050 Net Zero target, the first three carbon budgets should be set as follows:

- The first carbon budget (2023 – 2027) to be set at a level that has a 33% average annual reduction;
- The second carbon budget (2028 – 2032) to be set at a level that has a 48% average annual reduction; and
- The third carbon budget (2033 – 2037) to be set at a level that has a 62% average annual reduction.

3.4 A consultation on the above targets is running for 16 weeks from 21st June to 11th October 2023 and the full document can be accessed using the below link:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/carbonbudget>

As part of the consultation process a local government stakeholder consultation event was held at Loughry College on 3rd August which Council officers attended.

3.5 The consultation set outs the following actions required, as a minimum, to achieve the CCC's updated Balanced Pathway for Northern Ireland:

3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decarbonising electricity generation whilst meeting rising demand; ○ New car/van sales to be zero-emissions in the first half of the 2030s; ○ All new heating appliances to be zero-carbon by 2033, and by 2030 for properties off the gas grid, with a substantial improvement in the energy efficiency of buildings; ○ A reduction in livestock numbers by almost a third and the widespread adoption of low-carbon farming practices; and ○ Significant increase in peatland restoration and afforestation <p>A proposed consultation response for Mid Ulster District Council, incorporating comments from Sustainable Northern Ireland (SNI), has been prepared and is attached as an appendix. This confirms the Council broadly supports the targets and carbon budgets recommended by the CCC albeit with some concerns expressed in relation to both the agricultural and waste management sectors. The proposed response highlights the rural nature of the Mid Ulster district and the importance of agriculture and the agri-foods industry to our local economy. The proposed response does not support the reduction in livestock numbers but rather the introduction of technological and efficiency improvements, such as the widespread use of feed additives, in order to reduce methane emissions and also promote growth. The response also reiterates the need for support from the NI Executive and the UK Government to support a “just transition” to net zero.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>The consultation has no financial considerations at this time, however, meeting the proposed targets / carbon budgets will almost certainly result in additional costs to Council in all of its functions through required changes to fleet, building improvements, energy efficiency, land use and renewable energy projects.</p> <p>Human: None</p> <p>Risk Management: None</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: None</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: None</p>

5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to consider and approve the proposed consultation response.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Carbon Budget Consultation Document
6.2	Proposed MUDC consultation response to Carbon Budgets Consultation