

<b>Report on</b>	Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland A Public Discussion Document November 2020
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Fiona McClements, Head of Environmental Health

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members on the Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland; A Public Discussion Document November 2020. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has launched this discussion document in advance of developing the first Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland.
1.2	This document is intended to provoke discussion towards policy options that could contribute to meeting the challenges associated with achieving the following Outcomes of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Outcomes Delivery Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome 2 'We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment';</li> <li>• Outcome 4 'We enjoy long, healthy, active lives'; and</li> <li>• Outcome 12 'We give our children and young people the best start in life.'</li> </ul>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Discussion Document presents evidence and research on a range of ambient air pollutants. It also outlines the current policy and legislation and the measures currently in place to control air pollution.
2.2	It outlines the serious health impacts of air pollution underpinned by scientific research and discusses a range of important topics that impact on our air quality such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Agricultural Emissions</li> <li>• Industrial Emissions</li> <li>• Local Air Quality Management</li> </ul>
2.3	The Discussion Document poses questions around pollutant source activities, with the aim of promoting discussion and the exchange of ideas. Views from stakeholders will guide the development of policy options, which will be presented in the final Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland in 2021.
2.4	The closing date for responses is 5pm on 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2021.

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>Clean air is vital for human health and our natural environment. Increasingly, research is showing us that the effects of air pollution on human health are more complex and widespread than previously thought. In Northern Ireland, we face similar issues with air pollution to the rest of the UK and Europe - most notably, levels of nitrogen dioxide found in urban centres, arising principally from road traffic, in particular, diesel engines. In addition to this, we have problems with emissions from household heating and from agriculture. Northern Ireland has not had its own dedicated Clean Air Strategy before now. There is, however, increasing recognition that existing air quality policy and frameworks are not delivering the expected improvements in air quality.</p>
3.2	<p>There is a wide range of policy options set out in this public discussion document. They are based on research, on examples of best practice elsewhere, and on the understanding of the air quality problems in Northern Ireland.</p>
3.3	<p>Chapter 1 in this document looks at air quality in Northern Ireland and the levels of pollutants that are monitored. It examines the health impacts of air pollution and looks at trends in the levels of air pollutants here.</p>
3.4	<p>Chapter 2 looks at air pollution from road transport. The levels of nitrogen dioxide pollutant that are measured come primarily from road traffic.</p>
3.5	<p>Chapter 3 examines air pollution from household burning of solid fuel, which takes place to a greater extent in urban areas of Northern Ireland when compared with similar areas in the rest of the UK. Levels of particular pollutants monitored here show that solid fuel burning presents air pollution risks in urban centres. In addition, solid fuel burning is a major contributor to winter pollution episodes.</p>
3.6	<p>Chapter 4 deals with agricultural emissions. The agriculture sector in Northern Ireland produces high levels of ammonia, an air pollutant that can damage sensitive habitats, as well as contribute to levels of fine particulate matter.</p>
3.7	<p>Chapter 5 considers emissions from industry, and the regulatory regimes that are currently in place to limit them.</p>
3.8	<p>Chapter 6 looks at the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) system. This system was set up in the early 2000s, and supports councils in their review of air quality.</p>
3.9	<p>Finally, Chapter 7 looks at how we might increase the effectiveness of our communications, which relate to both the impacts of air pollution, as well as the actions that individuals can take to reduce air pollution.</p>
3.10	<p>Appendix 1 of this report lists the 39 questions posed to stakeholders and suggested responses. These will guide the development of policy options to be presented in the final Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland in 2021.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	Financial: There will be no immediate financial implication to the Council.
	Human: There should be no human cost to the Council from this report.
	Risk Management: No additional risk management implications.
<b>4.2</b>	<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	That members consider the draft responses to the Clean Air Strategy for N Ireland discussion document outlined in Appendix 1 and if agreed return to the Department of Agriculture , Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) by the closing date of 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2021.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 – Consultation suggested response.
6.2	Appendix 2 – Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland November 2020 A Public Discussion Document.
6.3	Appendix 3 – Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland November 2020 A Public Discussion Document – Abridged Version.