



# Discussion Document on a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill



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Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
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# Discussion Document on a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill

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## Contents

Abbreviations . . . . .	5
Ministerial Foreword . . . . .	6
Executive Summary . . . . .	9
1 Introduction . . . . .	12
1.1 Background . . . . .	12
1.2 Climate Change - A High Priority Status . . . . .	12
1.4 Political and legal context - EU, UK, Scotland, Wales and Ireland . . . . .	14
1.5 Political and legal context - Northern Ireland . . . . .	15
2 Northern Ireland - Current performance . . . . .	17
2.1 Green House Gas Inventory . . . . .	17
2.2 Greenhouse Gas Projection Statistics . . . . .	18
2.3 Comparison of UK and Northern Ireland Performance . . . . .	18
2.4 Carbon sequestration current performance and future initiatives . . . . .	19
3 Current Climate Change Framework. . . . .	22
3.1 Legislative Context. . . . .	22
3.2 Policy Context . . . . .	22
4 Rationale for Northern Ireland legislation . . . . .	24
5 Options for Development of a Climate Change Bill. . . . .	27
5.1 Introduction . . . . .	27
5.2 Background to Option 1 and 2 Reduction Targets . . . . .	27
5.3 Long Term Targets . . . . .	28
5.4 Option 1 . . . . .	31
5.5 Option 2 . . . . .	31

6 Elements of a Climate Change Bill . . . . .	34
6.1 Introduction . . . . .	34
6.2 Future proofing: Setting targets and emerging scientific evidence considerations. . . . .	34
6.3 Carbon Budgets . . . . .	35
6.4 Reporting Powers & Duties . . . . .	36
6.5 Independent advisory body. . . . .	38
7 How to Respond . . . . .	39
8. Publication of Responses. . . . .	40
8.1 Confidentiality . . . . .	40
8.2 Data Protection . . . . .	40
Appendix 1 - Discussion Document Questions . . . . .	42
Appendix 2 - Key National And International Legislative and Policy Frameworks Overview. . . . .	45

## Abbreviations

CCC	Committee on Climate Change.
COP26	The 26th annual Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.
FGWG CC	Future Generations Working Group on Climate Change, formerly known as The Cross Departmental Working Group on Climate Change, chaired by the DAERA Minister.
GHG	Greenhouse Gases, the six main one being carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydro fluorocarbons, per fluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride.
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service.
PfG	Programme for Government.
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals.
YOCA	Year of Climate Action.
UK	United Kingdom.

## Ministerial Foreword



Climate change is a defining crisis of our time on a global and national scale. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C has been clear that to tackle climate change and to offset or minimise the detrimental impacts from climate change the world cannot continue with a 'business as usual' approach.

Northern Ireland is not immune to the severity of the impacts from a changing climate, and in February 2020 the Northern Ireland Assembly declared a 'Climate Change Emergency'. Northern Ireland must also play its part in the global effort to tackle climate change. Therefore we too must not continue with 'a business as usual approach'. This need for change is even more amplified

by our global economy going through an unprecedented transformation associated with both concerns around climate change and also Covid-19. As we plan our recovery from the effects of this pandemic, it is essential that we adopt a sustainable approach and address climate change.

I firmly believe tackling climate change should be viewed not just as an environmental challenge, but also as an economic opportunity. It is an investment in the now and in our future. In tackling climate change we cannot be complacent and we all must work towards making businesses and society more resilient, sustainable and resource efficient. Improving resource efficiency will not only green the economy but will deliver economic opportunities and growth, improved productivity and profitability, and ensure local businesses remain competitive in the global market.

In June 2020 I launched my ambitious and bold roadmap for a 'Green Growth' recovery from Covid-19. My concept for a Green Growth approach for Northern Ireland recommends economic renewal that recognises the importance of our environment and advocates a pathway to a sustainable future, as part of the recovery from Covid-19. This is crucial to both our pandemic recovery and to transforming Northern Ireland into a greener, low-carbon and high-value economy.

My Department is leading in the development of a multi-decade Green Growth Strategy and Delivery Framework for Northern Ireland, in partnership with other Departments, Local Government and stakeholders from across the business and voluntary sectors. The outcome will be a framework of programmes which will help deliver a resilient recovery through a greener, low carbon and circular economy for Northern Ireland. The Delivery Framework will consist of a range of programmes which together contribute to the key environmental and climate change targets and commitments in the Programme for Government and New Decade New Approach. Some, like 'Forests for our Future', I have already set in motion and other foundation programmes will be established in tandem with the strategy. 'Forests for Our Future' aims at planting 18 million trees to create 9,000 hectares of new woodland over the next decade. The programme has commenced

and includes working across Government Departments and Councils, encouraging and supporting public and private landowners, communities and individuals to plant trees to help meet the UK Government net-zero carbon target. In addition, it will provide opportunities for economic growth, enhancement of biodiversity, and enable more people to improve their health and wellbeing through access to woodland.

My Department is delivering a £23 million programme to provide financial assistance to local government to improve recycling services and facilities in order to improve recycle quality and increase recycling rates to support a low carbon, circular economy. To date, seven projects have been supported with a total value of £3.5 million. The Carrier Bag Levy was introduced in Northern Ireland in April 2013 and is the most extensive within the UK. The primary objective is to influence customer behaviour and reduce the number of bags in circulation. We continue to see progress in reducing overall bag usage and from our most recently published statistics, there has been a reduction of 13.9% from the previous year. Since implementation of the levy, there has been in excess of 1.5 billion bags removed from circulation throughout Northern Ireland and my Department are currently considering ways to reduce this further.

We have seen progress in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, with the latest emission statistics published in June 2020 confirming a decrease of 20% in Northern Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions compared to the base year (1990). However we can do more, and we must do more to reduce our emissions.

We should not underestimate the challenges ahead of us. The UK Government has recently legislated an ambitious target for the UK to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2050, which Northern Ireland must contribute to, under the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The UK Climate Change Committee will publish its recommendations on the level of the Sixth Carbon Budget in December 2020. Their advice will inform the UK Governments setting of the Sixth Carbon Budget in early 2021, which will enshrine in legislation for the first time a trajectory to meeting the new net zero target. To ensure a Northern Ireland equitable contribution to the net zero target, we will require an all-sector approach across Northern Ireland. This will require all of Government, Local Government, private sector, communities and individuals working together to achieve the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions needed, whilst ensuring a just transition to a low carbon economy society.

In my view, actions are what deliver real results. These actions can be strengthened through the introduction of Northern Ireland climate change legislation that is evidence-based. By being evidence-based, the legislation can be tailored for Northern Ireland's specific circumstances and needs, helping to drive and shape future policies and initiatives with climate change at their core, and delivering on our greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments. I believe this informed approach will provide a framework to help Northern Ireland, across all sectors, to mitigate and adapt to the most harmful aspects of climate change, while delivering a low carbon, more sustainable economy, increasing employment and productivity. Well informed legislation will drive

# Discussion Document on a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill

a change in attitudes and action to reduce emissions, while addressing the concerns of the wider public, consumers, global Governments and markets.

This discussion paper seeks your views on policy options for a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill. I would encourage you to consider this document carefully and take an active role in shaping our approach to the development of a Bill.

I will use the findings from this discussion document, along with expert advice and updates which I have requested from the expert UK Climate Change Committee (on Northern Ireland's equitable contribution to the net zero target), to develop my proposals for a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill to be taken forward to the Executive for their agreement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edwin Poots'.

**Edwin Poots MLA**

*Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs*



## Executive Summary

Climate change is at the forefront of public concern, and in February 2020 the Northern Ireland Assembly declared a 'Climate Change Emergency'.

Currently there is no specific Northern Ireland climate change legislation, unlike the rest of the UK. The legal framework for Northern Ireland tackling the causes of climate change (mitigation) and responding to its impacts (adaptation) is set out under the UK Climate Change Act 2008. In June 2019, the UK strengthened its existing laws on climate change by amending the Climate Change Act 2008 committing the UK, as a whole, to achieve an ambitious target of 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 2050 relative to 1990 levels. Five yearly carbon budgets are also set by the Act, and each budget provides a five-year, statutory cap on total GHG emissions, which should not be exceeded, in order to meet the UK's emission reduction commitments. Northern Ireland contributes to the UK GHG reduction targets and to 'carbon budgets' under the UK Climate Change Act 2008.

Northern Ireland's New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) agreement states; *'the Executive will introduce legislation and targets for reducing carbon emissions in line with the Paris Climate Change Accord'*.<sup>1</sup> Under the Climate Change section of the NDNA at Appendix 2 it states; *'The Executive should bring forward a Climate Change Act to give environmental targets a strong legal underpinning'*. A motion was passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly in June 2020 to introduce Northern Ireland climate change legislation within 3 months.

This document sets out and analyses options for Northern Ireland specific climate change legislation. Analysis provided takes into consideration whether each option would deliver on the commitments made in the NDNA, and aims to assess the level of achievability of those options in Northern Ireland due to its unique characteristics. This document also seeks your views on options through a series of questions. Your views are also sought on some of the potential elements which could be included in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill through a series of additional questions.

**Section 1** gives an update on the priority status of climate change within public and political agendas on a national and international level. It also gives an overview of the current key international agreements and law, and upcoming key global events for tackling climate change and its impacts. This section also provides an update to the political and legal context in tackling climate change in the UK, UK Devolved Administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), EU and Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> "New Decade, New Approach", January 2020, page 8, viewed 21 September 2020 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/856998/2020-01-08\\_a\\_new\\_decade\\_\\_a\\_new\\_approach.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade__a_new_approach.pdf)

- Section 2** provides an update on the status of Northern Ireland's current performance in reducing GHG emissions, the sequestration status and the status of Northern Ireland's GHG projection statistics going forward. It also provides a comparison of emissions reduction performance between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK while highlighting that different factors, unique to Northern Ireland and other areas UK, can make those comparisons difficult.
- Section 3** sets out Northern Ireland's current legal and policy framework for tackling the causes of climate change (reducing GHG emissions i.e. climate change mitigation) and addressing its impacts (adapting to the effects of climate change i.e. climate change adaptation). The section also highlights the responsibilities of all Northern Ireland Civil Service Departments, all Northern Ireland sectors and individuals to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Section 4** provides a rationale for the introduction of 'Northern Ireland specific' climate change legislation.
- Section 5** sets out and analyses the options (i.e. pathways) which could be taken to address Climate Change in Northern Ireland, with associated questions for you to consider and provide your response. The two options considered within this section are:
- **Option 1:** Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target of net zero emissions in Northern Ireland by 2050 (long term target does not consider expert climate change advice); and
  - **Option 2:** Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target for Northern Ireland by 2050, the long term target is an equitable contribution to achieving UK-wide Net Zero by 2050 (long term target considers expert climate change advice).
- Section 6** introduces and considers some of the additional elements which could be included in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill. Potential elements considered in this section include: 'Future Proofing targets' 'Carbon Budgets', 'Reporting Powers by Public Bodies' and 'Independent advisory body on Climate Change'. This section also sets associated questions for you to consider and provide your response.
- Section 7** of this document provides information on how you should respond to this discussion document; and
- Section 8** provides information on Confidentiality of Responses.
- Appendix 1** provides a consolidated list of questions from within the main body of the discussion document for your ease of review when considering and responding to these questions.
- Appendix 2** sets out the main provisions of some of the key climate change legislation for UK, UK Devolved Administrations and Ireland. It also sets out EU Policy Framework/ Strategies including GHG emission reduction targets.

## Timing & Next steps

This discussion document exercise will be open for comments for eight<sup>2</sup> weeks, starting on **Tuesday 8th December 2020** and closing on **Monday 1st February 2021**. The consultation period will run for eight weeks in order to inform and facilitate the development of a Climate Change Bill, with the aim of delivering its legislative passage within the term of the current Assembly mandate which ends in March 2022.

In parallel with this discussion document exercise, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Minister Edwin Poots MLA, has requested the independent expert UK Climate Change Committee to clarify Northern Ireland's equitable contribution to meeting the UK net zero emissions reduction by 2050 target set out in the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The Committee intends to provide a response to the DAERA Minister's request after their publication of their advice on the UK's 6th Carbon Budget in December 2020. The Committee will also provide a further advice regarding a Northern Ireland Climate Change Act at that stage.

Minister Poots intends to use the findings from this discussion paper, along with the expert advice and updates requested from the expert UK Climate Change Committee to develop proposals for a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill, to take forward to the Northern Ireland Executive for their agreement.

Once these proposals have been developed, impact assessments and/or screening exercises (e.g. for Regulatory Impacts, Equality Impacts etc.) for a Northern Climate Change Bill will be fully considered and carried out appropriately. As such, the assessments and screening outcomes are not available for the purposes of this discussion document.

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<sup>2</sup> A Fresh Start - The Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan, viewed 18 November 2020  
<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/publications/fresh-start-stormont-agreement-and-implementation-plan>

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The legal framework for Northern Ireland tackling the causes of climate change (mitigation) and responding to its impacts (adaptation) is set out under the UK Climate Change Act 2008. Currently there is no specific Northern Ireland climate change legislation, unlike the rest of the UK.

This paper is a discussion document regarding the development of policy proposals for a Northern Ireland specific Climate Change Bill. Climate change legislation is primarily used to set ambitious but legally binding greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets; strengthen the institutional framework; impose climate change duties on public bodies and to establish clear and regular accountability to legislatures. This discussion document is your opportunity to give your views on the issues raised. It is important that this is an inclusive process and that we all work together to develop a Bill that is ambitious yet achievable, but most of all, a Bill that is appropriate to the needs of the people of Northern Ireland. The unique characteristics of Northern Ireland's economy and society determines both our vulnerability to climate change and the profile of our emissions.

The aim of a proposed Climate Change Bill will be to establish a long-term structure to drive greater efforts and actions to reduce GHG emissions and to manage the just transition towards a low carbon Northern Ireland whilst helping to ensure that Northern Ireland is better prepared to adapt to the impacts of unavoidable climate change. It will also underpin the Executive's Green Growth Strategy and Delivery Framework.

### 1.2 Climate Change - A High Priority Status

The public and political platform has changed somewhat, from previous periods of considering climate change legislation in Northern Ireland, with climate change issues now being a high priority status on international and national political and public agendas. An update on these current positions are outlined below.

### 1.3 Responding to the Climate Change Emergency

#### **Paris Agreement**

In 2015, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Paris Agreement<sup>3</sup>, 197 countries including the UK committed to limiting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. The Agreement provides an enhanced transparency global framework for action on the causes of

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, 215. 'The Paris Agreement' viewed 20 August 2020, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>.

climate change (mitigation action). The Agreement also aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change, through appropriate financial flows, new technology and enhanced capacity-building frameworks.

## Conference of the Parties

The 26th annual Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26) will be hosted by the UK Government and is due to take place in Glasgow between 1st and 12th November 2021. Italy will host pre-COP26 events. This conference is considered significant as 2020 is effectively when the Paris Agreement comes into effect and it is also the year when Parties to the Paris Agreement are expected to put forward enhanced or updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The UK Government is keen that the momentum gained arising from the changes during Covid-19 will spark a clean, green recovery and lead the way towards an effective UK contribution to COP26. DAERA will co-ordinate the Northern Ireland contribution to COP26 and the associated Year of Climate Action (YOCA). COP26 and YOCA are focusing on driving action towards reducing global emissions, a zero carbon society, enhancing biodiversity, reducing pollution to our land, water and air and adapting effectively to climate change. These goals are also in line with the current NI Programme for Government (PFG) Outcome 2 commitment of “We live and work sustainably, protecting the environment”.

There are well recognised interlinkages between climate change and biodiversity loss. The 15th Conference of the Parties for the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-15) also takes place next year (17-30 May 2021 in China), which will set the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and targets. This has provided the opportunity to align measures to address these dual challenges. Areas of mutual interest include nature recovery, nature-based solutions and sustainable agriculture to build both climate and ecological resilience and deliver against the net zero target.

## United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, world leaders agreed to 17 Global Goals (officially known as the Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs). Goal 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. It is intrinsically linked to all 16 of the other Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>4</sup>.

## Public Context

Greta Thunberg is a globally influential climate change activist and has emerged as a spokesperson for her peers (the youth generation) on climate change issues. Pre-covid-19, she inspired and mobilised an international movement of school students to take regular school strikes under the umbrella title of ‘Fridays for Future’ across the globe including in other parts of the UK

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Assembly, 2015. ‘Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts’, viewed 21 September 2020, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change/>

and Northern Ireland. At the same time she and many other citizens across the world demanded stronger and immediate action by world leaders to tackle climate change.

The Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency's Northern Ireland Environmental report published in 2020<sup>5</sup> found that climate change was the biggest environmental concern for households in Northern Ireland in 2019/20.

## 1.4 Political and legal context - EU, UK, Scotland, Wales and Ireland

### Climate emergency declarations

After consideration of scientific evidence and the increased public call for action, the UK Government declared a climate emergency on 1st May 2019, Wales declared a climate emergency on 29th April 2019, and Scotland declared the same on the 14th May 2019. By November 2019, the European Parliament had done the same, and in addition more than 11,000 scientists jointly declared that Earth is clearly and unequivocally facing a climate emergency (Ripple *et al.*, 2020)<sup>6</sup>.

### Raised ambitious emission reduction targets

The table in **Appendix 2** sets out the main provisions of some of the key climate change legislation for UK, Devolved Administrations and Ireland. It also sets out EU Policy Framework/Strategies including GHG emission reduction targets. The following is an update on the UK, Scotland and Wales legal and ambitious GHG reduction targets.

### UK

In June 2019, the UK Parliament enshrined into law the 'net zero target' also known as the 'UK net zero target', which commits the UK to reduce emissions by at least 100 per cent below 1990 levels, by 2050. Although the Act sets no specific targets for Northern Ireland, England, Scotland or Wales all UK countries are legally required to contribute to required emission reductions to meet UK net zero. This world-leading target when met, will bring to an end the UK's contribution to rising global temperatures<sup>7</sup>, and will deliver on the UK commitments to the Paris Agreement 2015 (Paris Agreement is discussed below).

5 Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency, 2020. 'Northern Ireland Statistics Report', viewed 21 September 2020, <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-environmental-statistics-report-2020>

6 William J Ripple, Christopher Wolf, Thomas M Newsome, Phoebe Barnard, William R Moomaw, 2020. 'BioScience, World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency', Volume 70, Issue 1, January 2020, pages 8-12, viewed 21 September 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biz088>

7 Climate Change Committee 2019, 'Net Zero The UK's contribution to stopping global warming', page 8, viewed 21 September 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf>

## Scotland

In 2019, Scotland legislated emissions reduction targets, based on recommendations from the UK Climate Change Committee ('CCC'), an independent expert advisory committee to the UK Government<sup>8</sup>. These targets aim to achieve net zero GHG emissions by 2045 (also known as the Scottish net zero target), and to increase the interim targets for 2020 (to at least 56% reduction from baseline levels), 2030 (to a 75% reduction from baseline levels) and 2040 (to a 90% reduction).

## Wales

In 2019, the Welsh Government accepted a target recommended by the CCC, to achieve at least a 95% reduction in GHG emissions by 2050. The target is expected to be made law by the Welsh Government in due course. The Welsh Government is currently working with the CCC and others to identify how Wales might go beyond the level of 95% emissions reductions by 2050.

## 1.5 Political and legal context - Northern Ireland

### Raised ambitious emission reduction targets

Northern Ireland does not have Northern Ireland specific Climate Change legislation, however the UK Climate Change Act 2008 extends to Northern Ireland. Although the Act sets no specific emission reductions target for Northern Ireland, it is implicit that Northern Ireland contributes to the UK net zero target.

Carbon budgets were introduced in the UK under the UK Climate Change Act 2008. Each carbon budget provides a five-year, statutory cap on total GHG emissions, which should not be exceeded, in order to meet the UK's long term emission reduction commitments within the Act. The CCC's 2015 advice on the 5th carbon budget contained an assessment of Northern Ireland's fair contribution to the legislated limit on UK GHG emissions, in the period 2028-32. Northern Ireland's contribution to the 5th UK Carbon Budget requires emissions reductions of at least 35% against 1990 levels by 2030.

In light of the UK net zero target, the DAERA Minister, Edwin Poots MLA, has written to the CCC for advice on quantifying Northern Ireland's equitable contribution to the target, to ensure that Northern Ireland's GHG emission targets are credible and evidence-based. The CCC's advice on this will be provided after they publish their advice to the UK Government on the 6th Carbon Budget in December 2020.

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<sup>8</sup> The UK Climate Change Committee (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.

## Climate Emergency

A Climate Emergency was declared in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 3rd February 2020.

## New Decade: New Approach Agreement

The Northern Ireland Assembly was reconvened in January 2020 with all the main political parties in Northern Ireland endorsing the 'New Decade, New Approach' (NDNA) agreement.<sup>9</sup> The NDNA agreement states; 'the Executive will introduce legislation and targets for reducing carbon emissions in line with the Paris Climate Change Accord'. Under the Climate Change section of the NDNA at Appendix 2 it states; 'The Executive should bring forward a Climate Change Act to give environmental targets a strong legal underpinning'.

## Northern Ireland Assembly Motion

On 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 a non-legally-binding motion was passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly on climate change, on the 'Introduction of a Climate Change Act within 3 months'.

## All-Party Group on Climate Change

An All-Party Group on Climate Change has been set up under the Northern Ireland Assembly, with the purpose to work to ensure:

- the Executive and Department Ministers take account of climate change in Government policy;
- Northern Ireland's carbon emissions are reduced; and
- any targets set in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill are met.

This group has met on several occasions and updates regarding the progress of a Climate Change Bill are high on their agenda.

<sup>9</sup> "New Decade, New Approach", viewed 26 September 2020, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/856998/2020-01-08\\_a\\_new\\_decade\\_\\_a\\_new\\_approach.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade__a_new_approach.pdf)



## 2 Northern Ireland - Current performance

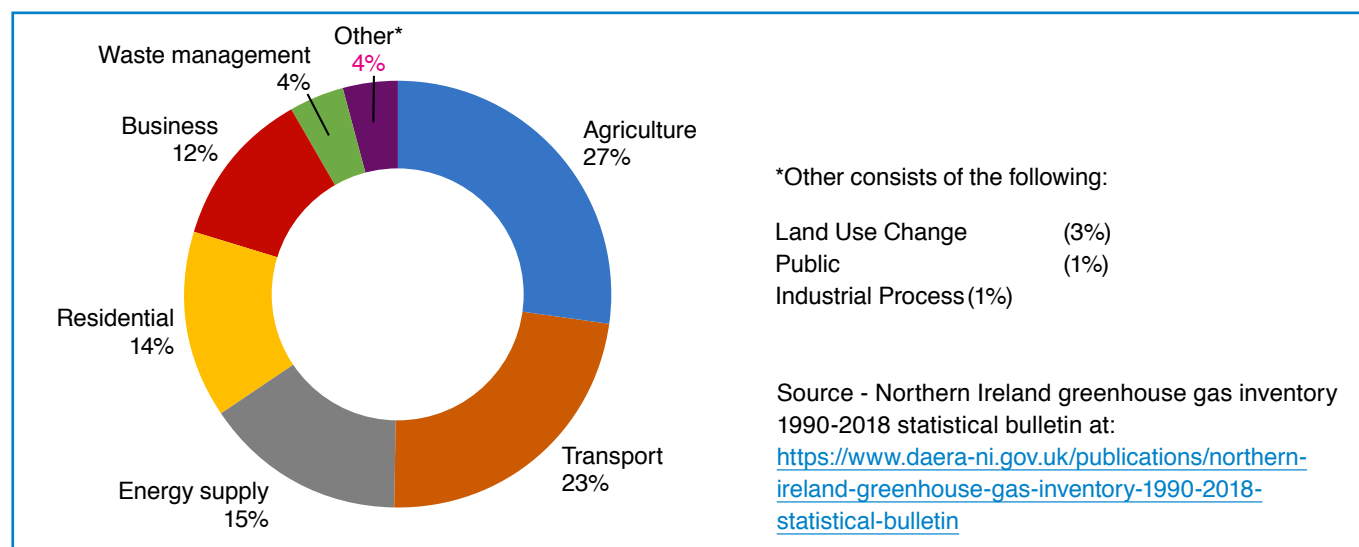
### 2.1 Green House Gas Inventory

Statistical analysis of climate change is based on international standards to support consistency and enable comparison. The UK's statistics are contained in the UK GHG inventory.

The latest GHG inventory published in June 2020<sup>10</sup>, based on 2018 figures for Northern Ireland, noted that:

- In 2018, Northern Ireland's GHG emissions were estimated to be 19.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. This was a decrease of 2% compared with 2017.
- The longer term trend showed a decrease of 20% compared to the base year (1990).
- The largest sectors in terms of emissions in 2018 were agriculture (27%), transport (23%) and energy supply (15%). Most sectors showed a decreasing trend since the base year (see figure 1).
- The largest decreases, in terms of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, were in the energy supply, waste management and residential sectors. These were driven by improvements in energy efficiency, fuel switching from coal to natural gas, which became available in the late 1990s, and the introduction of methane capture and oxidation systems in landfill management.
- Northern Ireland accounted for 4.3% of UK GHG emissions in 2018.

**Figure 1: Greenhouse gas emissions by gas type in Northern Ireland in 2018.**



<sup>10</sup> Northern Ireland Statistics Agency 2020, 'Northern Ireland Green House Gas Emissions 2018', viewed 21 September 2020 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/NI%20Greenhouse%20Gas%20Statistics%201990-2018%20-%20Report%20-%28web%20version%29.pdf>

## 2.2 Greenhouse Gas Projection Statistics

The most recent Northern Ireland GHG projection statistics, which are based on the 2017 UK GHG inventory data for Northern Ireland, found that GHG emissions in Northern Ireland are expected to reduce by 37% between 1990 and 2030 to 15 Metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e)<sup>11</sup>. MtCO<sub>2</sub>e is the unit of measurement in this tool. The unit “CO<sub>2</sub>e” represents an amount of a GHG whose atmospheric impact has been standardised to that of one unit mass of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), based on the global warming potential of the gas.

The data in the UK GHG inventory data for Northern Ireland and the GHG projection statistics are updated in January of each year.

Also, the 6<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget will set out a pathway to how the UK, as a whole, will meet the UK net zero and it is expected Northern Ireland contributions will be more ambitious and challenging going forward.

## 2.3 Comparison of UK and Northern Ireland Performance

In total, the UK reduced emissions by 43% between the base year and 2018. England and Scotland reduced emissions by 46% and 45% respectively. Wales and Northern Ireland reduced emissions by 31% and 20% respectively.

Although it should be noted that it is difficult to compare emission reduction performance between countries, due to uncertainty surrounding GHG reduction estimates and due to variances in the sector make-up of GHG emissions between countries. The Northern Ireland economy for example is structured differently to the UK as a whole, and the balance of GHG emissions across sectors is therefore different (see table 1).

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<sup>11</sup> DAERA, 2020, Northern Ireland Greenhouse Gas Projections Update Based on 2017 Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Viewed on 21 September 2020 <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/ghg-projections-report.pdf>

**Table 1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector**

Northern Ireland (NI) and UK; 2018

Sector	NI		UK	
	MtCO <sub>2</sub> e	% of total	MtCO <sub>2</sub> e	% of total
Agriculture	5.3	27	45.4	10
Business	2.4	12	79.0	18
Energy supply	2.9	15	104.9	23
Industrial process	0.2	1	10.2	2
Land use change	0.5	3	-10.3	-2
Public	0.2	1	8.0	2
Residential	2.7	14	69.1	15
Transport	4.5	23	124.4	28
Waste management	0.8	4	20.7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>451.5</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Northern Ireland greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2018<sup>12</sup>

## 2.4 Carbon sequestration current performance and future initiatives

Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) is the only National Communication Sector<sup>13</sup> which includes areas providing sequestration of GHGs. The sector as a whole contributed 3% of total NI emissions in 2018, 0.5 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e from a total of 19.4 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e. A breakdown of all emissions within Northern Ireland's LULUCF is shown in the table 2.

<sup>12</sup> Table sourced from DAERA Statisticians 2020, with data sourced from Northern Ireland greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2018 statistical bulletin at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-greenhouse-gas-inventory-1990-2018-statistical-bulletin>

<sup>13</sup> The UK submits a National Communication (NC) document to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that provides a summary of UK trends in emissions and removals as well as details of action to address climate change issues, including commentary regarding progress towards emission reduction targets. The sectors are just the broad sources from which emissions are reported against, e.g. Agriculture, Transport etc. The last one was provided in 2017 and can be found via the link below: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/19603845\\_United%20Kingdom-NC7-BR3-1-gbr%20NC7%20and%20BR3%20with%20Annexes%20%281%29.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/19603845_United%20Kingdom-NC7-BR3-1-gbr%20NC7%20and%20BR3%20with%20Annexes%20%281%29.pdf)

**Table 2: Breakdown of all emissions within Northern Ireland’s Land use, land use change and forestry**

LULUCF sub sector	1990* (KtCO <sub>2</sub> e)	2018* (KtCO <sub>2</sub> e)	% change 1990-2018
Indirect nitrous oxide emissions	29.7	31.0	5%
Forestland	-555.4	-593.2	7%
Cropland	1,414.3	1,108.4	-22%
Grassland	-1,138.4	-1,127.3	-1%
Wetlands	151.4	101.4	-33%
Settlements	600.3	1,097.8	83%
Harvested Wood Products	-113.2	-103.3	-9%
<b>Total emissions (KtCO<sub>2</sub>e)</b>	<b>388.6</b>	<b>514.8</b>	<b>32%</b>

\*Please note that data are rounded.

Source: Northern Ireland greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2018<sup>14</sup>

Currently, three LULUCF sub sectors provide a ‘carbon sink’ function in Northern Ireland. These are profiled below using unit of measurement ‘MtCO<sub>2</sub>e’.

## 1. Forestland

### Current performance

Forestland was a sink of 0.59 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2018, this was an increase of 7% since 1990 when the sink was 0.56 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e.

## 2. Grassland

### Current performance

Grassland was a sink of 1.13 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2018, similar to the 1.14 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e sink in 1990 for this category.

## 3. Harvested Wood Products (HWP)

### Current performance

HWP was a sink of 0.10 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2018, similar to a sink of 0.11 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 1990 this category.

<sup>14</sup> Table sourced from DAERA Statisticians 2020, with data sourced from Northern Ireland greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2018 statistical bulletin at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-greenhouse-gas-inventory-1990-2018-statistical-bulletin>

Natural based carbon sequestration initiatives are being implemented and planned by DAERA, such as:

- Tree planting is one of the most reliable ways to directly sequester carbon from the atmosphere that is currently available. DAERA Minister Edwin Poots, MLA has launched the 'Forests for Our Future' programme, in March 2020, which aims to plant 18 million trees to create 9,000 hectares of new woodland over the next decade to help meet the UK Government net-zero carbon target. Planting new woodland will also help provide opportunities for economic growth, enhancement for biodiversity, and enable more people to improve their health and wellbeing through access to woodland.
- Healthy peatlands in good condition not only store carbon but can actively sequester atmospheric carbon in perpetuity. DAERA currently supports remediation of peatland habitats through the Environmental Farming Scheme, through appropriate grazing, scrub removal and other conservation measures. The Department is also supporting the development of Conservation Management Plans for protected peatland habitats and the roll out of targeted peatland restoration through the INTERREG VA programme, in partnership with local landowners.
- Officials are currently scoping a range of nature recovery initiatives, including a potential peatland restoration programme to supplement current provision and provide for more bespoke, landscape-scale restoration efforts. This will be designed to deliver the Department's dual objectives to deliver net zero and to restore and enhance biodiversity.

## 3 Current Climate Change Framework

### 3.1 Legislative Context

Northern Ireland does not have specific climate change legislation; however, the UK Climate Change Act 2008 extends to Northern Ireland. The main provisions of the UK Climate Change Act 2008 (including for Northern Ireland), are set out in [Appendix 2](#).

Northern Ireland's role in meeting the requirements of the Act is as follows:

- a) Contribute to meeting UK net zero targets.
- b) Develop and maintain links to other UK administrations and the independent CCC.
- c) Provide Northern Ireland input to the CCC annual progress report and the UK Government response to the CCC recommendations.
- d) Production of Northern Ireland GHG emissions inventories.
- e) Developing and implementing climate change adaptation policy including development of a Northern Ireland Adaptation Programme.
- f) Providing input to EU and UK policy developments.

### 3.2 Policy Context

Responsibility for climate change in Northern Ireland, which includes tackling the causes of climate change and adapting to its impacts, is a collective responsibility for everyone and all sectors of Northern Ireland.

Government has a leading and integral part to play in both effective climate change mitigation and adaptation. Tackling climate change and addressing its impacts is cross-cutting in Northern Ireland, with all Government Departments bearing a collective responsibility for taking forward climate change action in their respective areas of responsibility.

DAERA lead on a co-ordinated NICS-wide response to climate change under the UK Climate Change Act 2008. In addition, DAERA report on GHG emissions as an indicator under Outcome 2 of the current draft PFG.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Outcome 2 is "We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment." Under Outcome 2, Indicator 29 is a reduction of 1% per year in emissions to 2021, or reduction of 1 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e (5%) by March 2021.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS)-wide response to climate change is currently implemented through the DAERA-led cross-Departmental working group called the 'Future Generations Working Group on Climate Change' (FGWG CC). DAERA are also leading on development of a draft cross-Departmental GHG Emissions Reductions Plan through this group. The plan will set out how the Northern Ireland Government intend to reduce emissions in the following GHG emission sectors: agriculture; energy; transport; business; residential; land use change; public; waste management; and industrial processes. The plan once drafted and agreed by the group will be submitted to the Northern Ireland Executive for their agreement.

DAERA through the FGWG CC also lead on the development of the 5 yearly cross-Departmental Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme, as required under the UK Climate Change Act 2008, with the most recent programme being published in September 2019.<sup>16</sup> The adaptation programme sets out mainly Government's response to priority risks identified for Northern Ireland.

All Departments across the whole of Government promote policies to reduce climate change, given the interconnected nature of the environment. There are a number of Northern Ireland strategies and proposed strategies that take into account climate change. For example, DAERA is currently developing an Environment Strategy which covers climate change.

DAERA is also leading on development of the Executive's Green Growth Strategy and Delivery Framework - in partnership with other Departments, Local Government and stakeholders from across the business and voluntary and community sectors. Its aim is to *transform our society toward net zero by 2050, protect and enhance our environment and sustainably grow our economy*. The Department for the Economy is also developing new Energy, Economy and Skills strategies and a Circular Economy Strategic Framework. The Department for Infrastructure has responsibility for transport, infrastructure and flood management strategies and policies.

In developing the Green Growth Strategy and Delivery Framework, a holistic approach is required across Departments. DAERA has been engaging with other Departments including Economy and Infrastructure with a view to aligning their relevant policies and strategies under the Green Growth umbrella. Transport and energy have huge roles to play in the economy reaching net zero with opportunities being explored around clean energy, hydrogen, renewables and geothermal heat involving a number of industry partners.

<sup>16</sup> DAERA, 2019, 'Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme', viewed 21 September 2020, <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-climate-change-adaptation-programme>

## 4 Rationale for Northern Ireland legislation

While Northern Ireland's GHG emissions, and therefore the impact that reductions can have from a global perspective, are relatively small, at 4.3% of UK emissions and 0.04% globally (estimated by DAERA statisticians using data sourced from the World Resources Institute on total 'world GHG emissions'<sup>17</sup>), there are strong benefits for the introduction of domestic Climate Change Legislation.

Northern Ireland Climate Change legislation would:

- be a cornerstone to a response to the declarations of a climate emergency by the UK and Northern Ireland;
- legally underpin requirements for delivering international agreements and policies (e.g. Paris Agreement);
- deliver requirements of the NDNA agreement in regard to climate change legislation;
- be an incremental legal tool in building climate change resilience within Northern Ireland;
- underpin the Northern Ireland Executive's Green Growth Strategy and delivery Framework; and
- drive forward a local low carbon, circular economy.

The UK Government's rationale for introducing the UK Climate Change Act 2008 (see below) is equally valid for Northern Ireland, perhaps even more so due to our greater reliance on fossil fuels for heating and transport and higher levels of fuel poverty. Furthermore, it could be argued that Northern Ireland is extremely well placed to take advantage of the opportunities that will accrue from the promotion of renewable energy technology and, indeed, other green technologies.

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<sup>17</sup> Estimates of Northern Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions form part of the UK greenhouse gas inventory and are compiled in adherence to guidelines set out by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UK returns are compiled by Ricardo Energy on behalf of Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, with DAERA statisticians quality assuring the NI component. However, as currently only 44 countries report to the UNFCCC on an annual basis, and in the absence of a definitive figure for global emissions produced by UNFCCC, consultants from Ricardo Energy recommended that a 'global' CO<sub>2</sub>e figure be sourced from the World Resources Institute (WRI) at <https://www.wri.org/blog/2020/02/greenhouse-gas-emissions-by-country-sector>. Using data from the Climatewatch CAIT tool at [https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ghg-emissions?end\\_year=2016&start\\_year=1990](https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ghg-emissions?end_year=2016&start_year=1990), it was estimated that global greenhouse gas emissions in 2016, stood at 49.4 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e (i.e. 49,400 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e). In 2016, NI greenhouse gas emissions were estimated at 20.6 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e from data provided in [NI greenhouse gas inventory 2018](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-greenhouse-gas-inventory-1990-2018-statistical-bulletin) at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-greenhouse-gas-inventory-1990-2018-statistical-bulletin>. Thus, using the WRI figure of 49,400 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e as a denominator, estimates of NI share of global emissions are estimated at 0.04%.



The UK Government's stated rationale for introducing a UK Climate Change Act 2008 was to:

- demonstrate leadership by example to help foster collective international action;
- create a clear and coherent framework to enable the UK to meet domestic and international commitments;
- provide greater clarity and certainty for UK industry, households and individuals to effectively plan for and invest in a low carbon economy;
- maximise social and economic benefits and minimise costs to the UK as we pursue these goals; and
- help the UK towards being better adapted to the impacts of unavoidable climate change.

When considering the desirability of introducing a Climate Change Bill to the Northern Ireland Assembly, in October 2015, the then Department of Environment Minister sought independent advice from the CCC to provide an update on a CCC report produced in 2011 on the 'appropriateness of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Act'.<sup>18</sup>

Findings of the updated report published in 2016,<sup>19</sup> which may still be valid now, state that:

- a) Legislation may provide the Executive with greater clarity: about longer-term requirements, and greater accountability to meet required emission reductions. It may help to galvanise action.
- b) Locally-led and designed legislation may be more appropriate to circumstances in Northern Ireland: though carbon budgets / targets need to be supported by a sufficient degree of clarity over the policies to achieve them if they are to provide confidence to make investments.
- c) If targets are legislated the aim should be to reflect circumstances specific to Northern Ireland (costs and opportunities), not simply to take a pro-rata proportion of the UK target.
- d) There are uncertainties over agriculture emissions. The most appropriate option would be to set targets now, but allow flexibility to revise these as uncertainties are reduced.

<sup>18</sup> The Climate Change Committee 2011, 'The appropriateness of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Act - Northern Ireland Report', viewed 18 August 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/the-appropriateness-of-a-northern-ireland-climate-change-act-northern-ireland-report/>

<sup>19</sup> The Climate Change Committee 2016, 'The appropriateness of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Act - Northern Ireland Report (2015 update)', viewed 18 August 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/the-appropriateness-of-a-northern-ireland-climate-change-act/>

The CCC concluded within this report that the range of circumstances that are unique to Northern Ireland suggest that local legislation is appropriate. The benefits of specific legislation only outweigh the costs if it is possible to pass local legislation without adding undue additional costs onto the Northern Ireland Executive, Ministries or the wider economy.

The aim of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill would be to create a framework addressing multiple aspects and issues of both climate change mitigation and adaptation in a holistic, overarching manner in order to deliver our commitments to the Paris Agreement and to the UK's net zero emission target.

### **The rationale for introducing a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill is to:**

- demonstrate political and moral leadership;
- create a clear and coherent basis for managing the just transition to a low carbon economy through Green Growth;
- create a clear and coherent framework for managing the just transition to a low carbon economy;
- maximise social and economic benefits of new technologies;
- provide greater direction for the private and public sectors to plan for investment; and
- help Northern Ireland to adapt and be better prepared for the impacts of unavoidable climate change.

## 5 Options for Development of a Climate Change Bill

### 5.1 Introduction

There are a range of options that need to be considered regarding the introduction of Northern Ireland specific legislation.

The Department has developed and discussed two high level options within this section regarding the introduction of Northern Ireland specific Climate Change legislation. The two options are as follows:

- **Option 1:** Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target of net zero emissions in Northern Ireland by 2050 (long term target does not consider expert climate change advice).
- **Option 2:** Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target for Northern Ireland by 2050, the long term target is an equitable contribution to achieving UK-wide Net Zero by 2050 (long term target considers expert climate change advice).

The two options are considered and analysed below.

### 5.2 Background to Option 1 and 2 Reduction Targets

Option 1 and 2 are similar to the approach taken in Scotland, with the development of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill to complement the UK Climate Change Act 2008, and the addition of proposals which set a framework, and drive action, to reduce GHG emissions.

The main differences between Options 1 and 2 are as follows:

- Option 1's long term GHG emission reduction target would not be evidence-based unlike in Option 2. It would not take into consideration expert independent advice and evidence on, for example, Northern Ireland's unique local characteristics which would impact Northern Ireland's capability of achieving that particular long term target.
- Option 2's long term GHG emission reduction target would be evidence based, in that it will take into consideration independent expert advice and evidence, which will include for example:
  - i. consideration of the likely capability of Northern Ireland to meet that particular target due to its unique local characteristics/profile; and
  - ii. ensuring that the target set is in line with delivering commitments to the Paris Agreement through an equitable contribution to the UK net zero.

Some examples of these ‘characteristics’ unique to Northern Ireland referred to in the bullet points above, are highlighted in this section (Section 5.3.) below, under the heading of ‘Climate Change Committee’s advice for Northern Ireland’.

Both options would contain interim and long term targets, covering, as a minimum, the six main GHGs - carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydro fluorocarbons, per fluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride, with opportunity to add further GHGs, which would be consistent with the approach taken in legislation in the rest of the UK.

## 5.3 Long Term Targets

**UK position:** The UK Climate Change Act 2008 established a long-term target for the reduction of UK GHG emissions by 100% (compared to a 1990 baseline) to be achieved by 2050, known as the ‘UK net zero target’. While the UK Devolved Administrations should contribute to achieving the UK target, no specific targets for the Devolved Administrations are set in the Climate Change Act.

**Scotland position:** Amongst the Devolved Administrations the Scottish Government has taken the lead by introducing its own Climate Change Act in 2009, which was amended in 2019 so as to set a new ambitious long-term target of achieving a 100% reduction in GHG emissions by 2045 (known as the ‘Scottish net zero’) against a 1990 baseline.

**Climate Change Committee’s advice for Northern Ireland:** The CCC has identified within their report ‘Net Zero: The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming’, published in 2019, that getting to UK net zero will incur huge costs and that different UK regions will find getting to net zero GHG emissions more achievable than others.<sup>20</sup> This is why, within this Report, the CCC recommended different emission reduction targets for other UK Administrations, in their contribution to UK net zero.

The CCC have also stated that Northern Ireland has unique local characteristics that bring different opportunities and challenges for decarbonisation compared to the rest of the UK<sup>21</sup>. These unique local Northern Ireland characteristics and reasons include (but are not limited to):

1. a smaller number of power stations;
2. greater economic reliance on the agricultural sector;
3. more dispersed rural communities leading to impacts with regard to, for example, transport;
4. greater reliance on oil for heating; and
5. a land border with another EU member state.

<sup>20</sup> Climate Change Committee 2019, ‘Net Zero The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming’, viewed 21 September 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> The Committee on Climate Change 2019, ‘Reducing Emissions in Northern Ireland’, viewed 21 September 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Reducing-emissions-in-Northern-Ireland-CCC.pdf>

Current evidence and advice from the CCC also is that for Northern Ireland, the “earliest credible year for net zero GHG emissions [would be] Post-2050”.<sup>22</sup>

## Interim target

In addition to the long-term target set out above, the UK and Scottish Climate Change Acts also contain interim GHG emission reduction targets. These interim targets serve to drive action to reduce emissions so to deliver the long term emission reduction targets.

**UK position:** Carbon budgets were introduced in the UK under the Climate Change Act 2008. Each carbon budget provides a five-year, statutory cap on total GHG emissions, which should not be exceeded, and which serve as stepping stones in order to meet the UK’s emission reduction targets under the UK Climate Change Act 2008.

In the case of the current and 5th Carbon Budget under the UK Climate Change Act 2008, an interim target of a 57% reduction in GHG emissions by 2032 compared to 1990 levels is set for the UK to achieve. This target will be revised by the 6th Carbon Budget when published by UK Government in 2021 under the UK Climate Change Act 2008 and which will take into consideration commitments to reach the UK net zero target.

**Scotland position:** In Scotland the interim targets are set for at least 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040 compared to 1990 levels under the amended Climate Change Scottish Act 2009 to achieve the Scottish net zero target by 2045.<sup>23</sup> However, unlike the UK as a whole which has the 5 yearly carbon budgets (discussed above), Scotland has set annual targets through secondary legislation under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 as amended. These annual targets are set in batches for the period 2010 to 2050, to reach Scotland’s emission reduction goals under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

**Northern Ireland:** It is not just the particular level of GHG emissions in a single year which affects climate change, rather it is the total amount emitted over a number of years, which remain in the atmosphere. The total emissions actually produced could vary widely as a result of the rate of progress (or trajectory) in achieving a specified reduction by a specified date.

<sup>22</sup> Climate Change Committee 2019, ‘Net Zero The UK’s contribution to stopping global warming’, p172, viewed 25th September 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Scottish Government, Climate Change, viewed 21 September 2020 <https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/reducing-emissions/>

The rationale for setting interim targets in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill is essentially twofold:

- i. atmospheric concentrations of GHGs depend on the total amounts emitted over a long period of time and hence the rate at which we reduce our GHG emissions is at least as important as emissions levels at specific points in time. Consequently, the later cuts are made, the greater they must be to achieve the same long-term goal, and so they will be more expensive to implement; and
- ii. setting interim targets gives businesses and investors better information and more certainty upon which they can base their investment decisions.

## Determination of Targets

**Determining the appropriate level of GHG emissions reduction is a complex matter. Any target set for Northern Ireland set needs to be informed by sound scientific and economic evidence based advice.**

In setting any interim or long term emission reduction targets for a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill, expert independent advice would be required, taking account of:

- a) Northern Ireland's unique economic, environmental and societal circumstances;
- b) scientific evidence; and
- c) international precedents.

Whatever level the GHG emission reduction target is set at within a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill, it must be challenging but achievable and appropriate to the characteristics of Northern Ireland's GHG emissions, while being in line with commitments set out in the Paris Agreement, by ensuring.

DAERA Minister Edwin Poots MLA, has sought the advice of the independent expert CCC on what would be an equitable contribution for Northern Ireland to the UK net zero target. Their advice will take into account the above points (a), (b) and (c). The CCC will provide a response to Minister Poots request, after the publication of their advice to the UK Government the UK's 6th Carbon Budget in December 2020. This advice from the CCC and the information collected from this discussion document exercise, will be used to help inform our decisions on setting targets for GHG emission reductions for Northern Ireland and the most suitable option.

Further analysis is required and will be carried out to provide insights into risks and impacts of reaching different emissions reductions targets. Consideration of the CCC advice referred to in this section will be a key part of that analysis process.

## 5.4 Option 1

**Option 1:** Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target of net zero emissions in Northern Ireland by 2050 (long term target does not consider expert climate change advice).

This option delivers on the requirements of the NDNA agreement for development of Northern Ireland Climate Change Legislation and targets for reducing carbon emissions in line with the 'Paris Climate Change Accord'.

This option would also ideally afford a good deal of freedom to the Northern Ireland Executive, to pursue local climate change policies over which it has complete control. A Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill would deliver a framework to suit our own Northern Ireland specific circumstances, helping to support current policies and initiatives, as well as driving and shaping future policies and initiatives.

The inclusion of targets in the Bill would follow the pattern set by the UK and Scottish Climate Change Acts of making a strong political statement of intent, demonstrating a commitment to long term sustainability and providing leadership to the public and private sector in support of investment decisions. It would provide a strong legal focus to efforts to reduce emissions.

However, the inclusion of a target which is not evidence-based would not follow the pattern set by the UK and Scottish Climate Change Acts. Option 1's long term GHG emission target will not take into consideration Northern Ireland's specific characteristics which may impact Northern Ireland's capability of achieving that target. Current evidence and advice from the CCC is that for Northern Ireland, the "earliest credible year for net zero GHG emissions [would be] Post-2050".<sup>24</sup> Whilst, as mentioned above, it would make a strong statement of intent, there would be risks and impacts associated with the likelihood of Northern Ireland being unable to meet a legal target which it has set for itself.

## 5.5 Option 2

**Option 2:** Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target for Northern Ireland by 2050, the long term target is an equitable contribution to achieving UK-wide Net Zero by 2050 (long term target considers expert climate change advice).

The Option 2 approach would develop a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill to complement the UK Climate Change Act 2008, with firm and challenging, but tailored emission reduction targets which contribute equitably to the UK Net Zero target by 2050.

<sup>24</sup> Climate Change Committee 2019, 'Net Zero The UK's contribution to stopping global warming', p172, viewed 25th September 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf>

The inclusion of evidence-based GHG emission reduction targets in the Bill would follow the pattern set by the UK and Scottish Climate Change Acts - in making a strong political statement of intent, demonstrating a commitment to long term sustainability and providing leadership to the public and private sector in support of investment decisions. It would provide a strong, credible legal focus towards efforts to reduce emissions.

The GHG emission reduction target(s) set by the Bill, including their level and timing, would take into consideration the independent expert advice from the CCC (due after CCC publishes its advice on the 6th Carbon Budget in December 2020) and which takes account of:

- (a) Northern Ireland's unique economic, environmental and societal circumstances;
- (b) scientific evidence; and
- (c) international precedents.

As with Option 1, this option (Option 2) delivers on the requirements of the NDNA agreement for development of Northern Ireland Climate Change Legislation and targets for reducing carbon emissions in line with the Paris Climate Change Accord. It also takes on board the CCC's advice that the range of circumstances that are unique to Northern Ireland suggest local legislation is appropriate.<sup>25</sup> This option would also ideally afford a good deal of freedom to the Northern Ireland Executive to pursue local climate change policies over which it has complete control.

Option 2's long term target for GHG emission target will be evidence-based as the setting of targets' levels and their timing will take into consideration independent expert climate change advice. This will include consideration of the likelihood of achievability of the target in Northern Ireland, while ensuring the targets set are in line with delivering commitments to the Paris Agreement accord.

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<sup>25</sup> Climate Change Committee 2016, 'The appropriateness of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Act (2015 update)', page 1, viewed on 20 August 2020 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CCC-2015-update-to-the-appropriateness-of-a-Northern-Ireland-Climate-Change-Act.pdf>



**We would welcome your responses to Questions 1-2.**

**Question 1: Which of the following high level options do you think is appropriate for Northern Ireland to take forward?**

- Option 1: Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target of net zero emissions in Northern Ireland by 2050 (long term target does not consider expert climate change advice).
- Option 2: Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target for Northern Ireland by 2050, the long term target is an equitable contribution to achieving UK-wide Net Zero by 2050 (long term target considers expert climate change advice).

**Question 2: Do you have any opinions on what would be the most important criteria to be considered when setting or updating long term and interim emission reduction targets?**

## 6 Elements of a Climate Change Bill

### 6.1 Introduction

To properly develop proposals for a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill, consideration needs to be given to what it should contain, the level of ambition and most importantly how best it can serve the needs of Northern Ireland. Inclusion and ambition of GHG emission reductions are discussed in the above Section 5 (Options for Northern Ireland's Development of a Climate Change Bill).

In this section (Section 6), some other potential elements of a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill are discussed, namely 'Future Proofing targets', 'Carbon Budgets', 'Reporting Powers by Public Bodies' and an 'Independent advisory body'. It should be noted, that there are many 'other elements' and 'permutations of elements' which will be required to be considered for inclusion in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill, than what is discussed below. These other elements are not covered for purposes of this discussion document but will be considered at a later policy development stage.

### 6.2 Future proofing: Setting targets and emerging scientific evidence considerations

Global and national climate change policy is typically informed by assessing the potential of each GHG to cause global warming in relation to a given weight of CO<sub>2</sub>, so all GHG emissions are measured as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e). These metrics currently used for the calculations are set by obligations under international reporting standards<sup>26</sup>. However there is international debate and ongoing consideration about the adequacy of this approach.

GHGs warm the Earth by absorbing energy and slowing the rate at which the energy escapes to space; they act like a blanket insulating the Earth. A broad range of greenhouse gases with varying lifetimes contribute to global climate change<sup>27</sup>. The global warming impact and therefore the contribution of these different GHGs to climate change can vary.

<sup>26</sup> The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) set global reporting standards for measurements of GHGs; any potential updates are set out in IPCC Assessment Reports, which then need to be considered and approved by the Conference of the Parties (COP), before any changes to reporting metrics can be implemented.

<sup>27</sup> [Persistence of climate changes due to a range of greenhouse gases](#); Susan Solomon, John S. Daniel, Todd J. Sanford, Daniel M. Murphy, Gian-Kasper Plattner, Reto Knutti, Pierre Friedlingstein Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2010 Oct 26; 107(43): 18354-18359. Published online 11 October 2011.

Two different distinct types of GHG emissions have been identified<sup>28</sup>:

1. Long-lived “stock pollutants” like carbon dioxide, remain in the atmosphere for centuries, accumulating in concentration as long as emissions continue and causing more and more warming.
2. Short-lived “flow pollutants” like methane degrade much more rapidly. As long as these emissions remain constant or decrease, their overall concentration and warming effect remains roughly constant or be reduced, over a relatively short period of time.

Internationally, there is ongoing debate and scientific validation regarding best practice in measuring GHG emissions. One such discussion involves whether a dual approach to long and short lived pollutants would better inform the development of global and national climate policies. It is proposed to more effectively support achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. A dual approach could potentially look at setting separate but coherent emissions targets for long- and short-lived pollutants within a two-pronged approach to climate policy.

Whatever decision is made on short lived pollutants and longer lived pollutants, we do know that climate change understanding and science is continually evolving and improving. Our climate change policy, and any targets we set within that, needs to be informed and kept fit for purpose by taking into consideration the best available, up to date and sound climate change science.

**We would welcome your responses to Question 3.**

**Question 3. Do you think flexibility should be built into the Bill, to allow consideration of new emerging evidence and science on climate change (such as for example on long lived and short lived pollutants) when setting emission reduction targets?**

## 6.3 Carbon Budgets

**UK position:** As discussed in Section 5.3 above, carbon budgets were introduced in the UK under the 2008 UK Climate Change Act. Each carbon budget provides a five-year, statutory cap on total GHG emissions, which should not be exceeded. These statutory GHG emission caps serve as stepping stones in order to meet the UK’s emission reduction targets. Carbon budgets are set by UK Parliament normally in consideration of the advice of from the CCC. The budgets are set 12 years ahead of time to provide sufficient long-term guidance to investors. After a carbon budget has been set, the UK Government is mandated under the UK Climate Change Act 2008 to define, as soon as practical, its strategy for meeting that budget.

**Scotland position:** The Climate Change (Scotland Act) 2009 as amended requires Scottish Ministers to set annual targets in secondary legislation in batches for the period 2010 to 2050. After setting each batch of annual targets, the Climate Change (Scotland Act) 2009 requires Ministers

<sup>28</sup> Oxford Martin School, New methane emissions metric proposed for climate change policy, viewed 19 November 2020 <https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/news/2018-news-climate-pollutants-gwp/>

to produce a plan outlining specific policies and proposals ('Report on Policies and Proposals') for meeting those targets, and describing how these policies and proposals contribute to the Act's statutory interim and long term GHG emission reduction targets.

**Northern Ireland:** A Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill could include a duty to set a statutory cap within carbon budgets on the total GHGs that can be emitted in Northern Ireland, over a specified periods of five years. These statutory carbon budget caps on GHG emissions could be used as a means of setting interim GHG emission reduction targets.

Carbon budgets in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill would need to be consistent with meeting any long term 2050 target whilst ensuring that Northern Ireland remains competitive in a global economic market.

A 5 year carbon budget, if set within Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill, would require independent expert advice which would take into account a number of factors such as latest climate change scientific evidence and relevant international developments (such as the Paris Agreement), cost effectiveness of the proposed path and its impact on competitiveness, fuel poverty and the fiscal balance.

**We would welcome your responses to Questions 4-5.**

**Question 4. Do you agree that a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill should include a duty for 5 yearly carbon budgets to set a statutory cap (interim emission reduction targets) on total greenhouse gases that can be emitted in Northern Ireland?**

## 6.4 Reporting Powers & Duties

Both the UK Climate Change Act 2008 and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 contain provision for reporting duties on adaptation measures by public bodies. The UK Climate Change Act 2008 contains no provision for public bodies to report on measures taken to reduce GHG emissions, known as mitigation, unlike the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. These positions are further explained below.

**UK position on adaptation:** The reporting duties under the UK Climate Change Act 2008 give the Secretary of State the power to direct reporting authorities (organisations with functions of a public nature and statutory undertakers) to prepare reports detailing:

- the current and future predicted impacts of climate change on their organisations;
- proposals for adapting to climate change; and
- an assessment of progress towards implementing the policies and proposals set out in previous reports.

# Discussion Document on a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill

This is known as the ‘Adaptation Reporting Power’. The reporting by public bodies under the UK Climate Change Act 2008 is carried out on a voluntary basis.

**Scotland position on mitigation and adaptation:** The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 as amended, through its secondary legislation, requires public bodies to prepare and publish annual reports on compliance with ‘climate change duties’. These duties include:

- contribution to the delivery of mitigation targets;
- delivery of programmes for adaptation; and
- sustainability.

Not all public bodies are required to report every year, only those public bodies which are defined as the “major players”.

**Northern Ireland:** Directing reporting authorities to report under an Adaptation Reporting Power within a Northern Ireland Bill makes it mandatory for them to respond. This ensures that organisations undertake the exercise to report, however it runs the risk of introducing an unnecessary regulatory burden if the process is not helpful to them. If the process is perceived to be unhelpful, organisations may adopt a ‘tick-box mentality’ of reporting, which will undermine the effectiveness of reporting.

If climate change (adaptation and mitigation) reporting duties for public bodies were introduced in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill, consideration would be required, of how widely the duty should be applied, and whether the requirement would be voluntary or not.

If the duty to report was applied to all public bodies and statutory undertakers in Northern Ireland, this could cover a large number of small organisations. The Department’s view would be that it would be disproportionately onerous to place a reporting duty on all of them.

**We would welcome your responses to Questions 5-6.**

**Question 5. Should provision for reporting on adaptation measures by ‘major player’ public bodies be included in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill?**

**Question 6. Should provision for reporting on mitigation measures by ‘major player’ public bodies be included in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill?**

## 6.5 Independent advisory body

A Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill could necessitate the provision of independent advice and a challenge function.

These roles could be provided through one of the following options:

- (a) the continued provision of this function by the UK Committee on Climate Change, which currently advises all Governments within the United Kingdom;
- (b) the creation of a separate Northern Ireland Committee on Climate Change to carry out such functions as necessary in order to ensure that the Northern Ireland Executive receives advice which is best suited for the needs of Northern Ireland i.e. to add local detail to the advice already provided by the UK Committee on Climate Change. This creates an additional or supplementary channel of independent expert advice and strikes a good balance between providing additional accountability, while ensuring the Executive is able to make decisions based on their own priorities; or
- (c) allowing an existing Northern Ireland public body to carry out this function, although it is unlikely that the high-quality expertise required, to provide advice on reducing emissions while protecting the economy, is held by any one public body in Northern Ireland.

Provision would have to be made in the Climate Change Bill for options (b) and (c) to allow the Executive to legislate for these options if required.

In comparison The Climate Change (Scotland) Act made provision to set up a separate body for Scotland but to date it has continued to avail of the expertise of the UK CCC.

**We would welcome your responses to Questions 7-9.**

**Question 7. In addition to continuing to avail of the expertise of the UK Climate Change Committee, should we also include provision in the Bill, for an independent Northern Ireland advisory body on climate change?**

**Question 8. Do you have any other comments in respect of the issues raised in this discussion document?**

**Question 9. Are there any important issues you feel have not been adequately covered at this early discussion stage?**

## 7 How to Respond

There are several ways in which you can share your responses, all are set out below. Early responses are encouraged but all responses should arrive no later than: **Monday 1st February 2021.**

### **Please complete the survey online if you can.**

This would greatly assist us with timely processing of the large volume of responses expected, as staff access to Departmental resources and buildings are impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This will also support our ongoing efforts to reduce the environmental impact of the production of consultation papers.

### **Online Survey**

The primary response method for this Consultation is through the online survey on the [Citizen Space Hub](#), in order to make the exercise as accessible and efficient as possible.

You can also access the online survey from the relevant DAERA consultation webpage: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/climatechangediscussion>

### **By Email**

If a large volume of email responses is received, they may take significantly longer to process than online responses. You can obtain a response template by emailing the Climate Change Unit at: [climatechangediscussion@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:climatechangediscussion@daera-ni.gov.uk)

### **By Post**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic DAERA staff have limited access to the Klondyke Building in Belfast. Therefore please be aware that postal responses may significantly take longer to process.

Climate Change Legislation Team  
Environmental Policy Division  
2nd Floor, Klondyke Building  
1 Cromac Avenue  
Gasworks Business Park  
Belfast BT7 2JA

## 8. Publication of Responses

### 8.1 Confidentiality

The Department will 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 and they will give you 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.

### 8.2 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 General Data Protection Regulation.

### 8.3 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.



# Discussion Document on a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill

For further information about confidentiality of responses, please contact the Information Commissioner's Office:

Tel: (028) 9027 8757

Email: [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

## Appendix 1 - Discussion Document Questions

The questions are listed here for your ease of reference only.

**Please provide your answers online, if possible.**

Whichever route you choose for your response, please help us to process the responses quickly, by keeping your comments as concise as possible.

First, please tell us a little '**About You**', to help us analyse the responses.

**(Optional) What is your name?**

**(Optional) What is your email address?**

Are you representing an organisation, or are these your personal views?

Personal response

Business or organisation (Please tell us what trade or sector you operate in)

**What is your age?**

Under 18    18-29    30-39    40-49    50-59    60-69    70-79    Over 80

**Are you based in Northern Ireland?**

Yes - my main home or headquarters is in Northern Ireland

No - but I regularly visit or do business in Northern Ireland

No - I have no personal or business connections in Northern Ireland

**Question 1: Which of the following high level options do you think is appropriate for Northern Ireland to take forward?**

- Option 1: Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target of net zero emissions in Northern Ireland by 2050 (long term target does not consider expert climate change advice)
- Option 2: Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill setting interim emission reduction targets and a long term target for Northern Ireland by 2050, the long term target is an equitable contribution to achieving UK-wide Net Zero by 2050 (long term target considers expert climate change advice)
- Not sure / No opinion

**Question 2:** Do you have any opinions on what would be the most important criteria to be considered when setting or updating long term and interim emission reduction targets?

- Yes
- Not sure / No opinion

**Question 3:** Do you think flexibility should be built into the Bill, to allow consideration of new emerging evidence and science on climate change (for example on long lived and short lived pollutants) when setting emission reduction targets?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / No opinion

**Question 4:** Do you agree that a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill should include a duty for 5 yearly carbon budgets to set a statutory cap (interim emission reduction targets) on total greenhouse gases that can be emitted in Northern Ireland?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / No opinion

**Question 5:** Should provision for reporting on adaptation measures by ‘major player’ public bodies be included in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill?

- Yes (which major player public bodies and why?)
- No
- Not sure / No opinion

**Question 6:** Should provision for reporting on mitigation measures by ‘major player’ public bodies be included in a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / No opinion

**Question 7.** In addition to continuing to avail of the expertise of the UK Climate Change Committee, should we also include provision in the Bill, for an independent Northern Ireland advisory body on climate change?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / No opinion

**Question 8.** Do you have any other comments in respect of the issues raised in this discussion document?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / No opinion

**Question 9.** Are there any important issues you feel have not been adequately covered at this early discussion stage?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / No opinion

## Appendix 2 - Key National And International Legislative and Policy Frameworks Overview

The following table sets out the main provisions of some of the key UK, Devolved Administrations and ROI climate change legislation and EU, Policy Framework/ Strategies. .

Climate Change Legislation - EU/ UK/ Devolved Administrations/ ROI Legal and Strategic Requirements		
Jurisdiction	Legislation/ Framework/Strategy	Key Provisions
EU	2030 Climate & Energy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The 2030 climate and energy framework sets three key targets for the year 2030:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 40% cuts in GHG emissions (from 1990 levels);</li> <li>• At least 27% share for renewable energy;</li> <li>• At least 27% improvement in energy efficiency.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	The EU Effort Sharing Decision (ESD)	<p>The framework was adopted by EU leaders in October 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Effort Sharing Decision (ESD) sets national GHG emission targets for Member States for each year between 2013 and 2020 in the sectors of the economy not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System.</li> </ul>
	Climate Action Regulation (CAR), (also known as the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR)) 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CAR is Europe's tool to reduce the climate impact of sectors not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). Covering 60% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, the law sets binding national emission reduction targets for the 2021-2030 period for sectors such as transport, buildings, agriculture and waste.</li> <li>- Through the 2050 long-term strategy the EU aims to be climate-neutral by 2050 - an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.</li> </ul>
	EU 2050 long-term strategy	<p>The pathways in the long-term strategy are based on 7 building blocks: increased energy efficiency; increased use of renewables; a clean and connected mobility system; a competitive circular economy industry; connected high-standard infrastructures; a boost in the bio-economy and natural carbon sinks; and the use of carbon capture and storage.</p>

# Discussion Document on a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill

Jurisdiction	Legislation/ Framework/Strategy	Key Provisions
	EU Adaptation Strategy	<p>The EU submitted its 2050 long-term strategy to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in March 2020.</p> <p>In 2013, the European Commission adopted an EU strategy on adaptation to climate change. The strategy aims to make Europe more climate-resilient. By taking a coherent approach and providing for improved coordination, it aims to enhance the preparedness and capacity of all governance levels to respond to the impacts of climate change. It focuses on three key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting action by Member States</li> <li>• ‘Climate-proofing’ action at EU level</li> <li>• Better informed decision-making by addressing gaps in knowledge about adaptation and further developing the European climate adaptation platform (Climate-ADAPT).</li> </ul>
UK (4 states)	UK Climate Change Act 2008; amended by the UK Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The UK Climate Change Act 2008 amended by the UK Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 places the following legal requirements for all of the UK: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GHG emission reductions target in UK of at least 100% below 1990 levels by 2050 *net zero target). The net zero target includes GHG emissions from the devolved administrations;</li> <li>• Interim GHG emission reduction targets of 34% reductions in GHG emissions by 2020;</li> <li>• Provisions for 5 year carbon budgets;</li> <li>• Provides for the establishment of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) and its powers;</li> <li>• Sets requirements for 5 yearly UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, 5 yearly National Adaptation Report in response to the risk assessment and adaptation reporting powers (a mandate giving the government the power to require ‘bodies in England and Wales with functions of a public nature’ and ‘statutory undertakers’ (e.g. water and energy utilities) to report on what they are doing to address the risks posed by climate change to their work);</li> <li>• Provides powers to establish trading schemes for the purpose of limiting greenhouse gas.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Discussion Document on a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill

Jurisdiction	Legislation/ Framework/Strategy	Key Provisions
Scotland	<p>UK Climate Change Act 2008</p> <p>The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In addition to commitments under the UK Climate Change Act 2008, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, commits Scotland to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of GHG emissions to net-zero by 2045 at the latest</li> <li>• Interim targets for GHG emissions’ reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, 90% by 2040</li> <li>• Annual reductions targets from 2021 to 2044 and reporting duties;</li> <li>• Duties on public bodies relating to climate change;</li> <li>• Powers to establish an advisory body (Scottish CCC);</li> <li>• Powers to establish a “citizens assembly” and set out functions to be exercised by that assembly</li> <li>• Provisions around emission accounting including carbon units and International carbon reporting practice and Nitrogen balance sheets.</li> <li>• Develop 5 yearly Scottish Climate change plans (plans for meeting Scotland’s emissions reductions targets)</li> <li>• Develop 5 yearly of a Scottish climate change adaptation programmes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Wales	<p>UK Climate Change Act 2008</p> <p>Environment (Wales) Act</p> <p>Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In addition to the UK wide requirements under the UK Climate Change Act 2008, The Environment (Wales) Act commits Wales to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing GHG emissions by at least 80% on 1990 levels by 2050;</li> <li>• Interim targets emissions targets for 2020, 2030 and 2040;</li> <li>• Set five yearly carbon budgets;</li> <li>• Powers to establish an advisory body (a Welsh CCC) take into account international agreements to limit increases in global average temperatures.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 supports carbon reduction at a national and local level. The Act requires public bodies, including the Welsh Government, to work to achieve all seven well-being goals, three of which specifically reference climate change.</li> </ul>

# Discussion Document on a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill

Jurisdiction	Legislation/ Framework/Strategy	Key Provisions
Northern Ireland	<p>UK Climate Change Act 2008</p> <p>Draft Programme for Government</p>	<p>- In addition to the UK wide requirements under the UK Climate Change Act 2008, the Act places an additional requirement for Northern Ireland to produce a 5 yearly climate change adaptation programme that addresses the latest climate change risks and opportunities.</p> <p>Draft Programme for Government, indicator reducing GHG emissions, under outcome 2 - We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment. The measurement for making a difference is a reduction of 1% per year in emissions to 2021 or 1 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e by 2021 (5%) until March 2021.</p>
Republic Of Ireland	<p>Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015</p> <p>The EU Effort Sharing Decision (ESD)</p> <p>Climate Action Regulation (CAR), (also known as the Effort Sharing Regulation) 2018</p>	<p>- The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets no explicit targets but obliges the State to “take into account any existing obligation of the State under the law of the European Union or any international agreement”.</li> <li>• Includes provision for a National Low Carbon roadmap including sectoral roadmaps AND a series of successive National Mitigation Plans (NMPs)</li> <li>• Includes provision for National Climate Change Adaptation Framework; and</li> <li>• Provides for the establishment of an Expert Advisory Body.</li> </ul> <p>Ireland’s National Policy position is to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2050 by 80% on 1990 levels across the Energy Generation, Built Environment and Transport sectors, with a goal of Climate neutrality in the Agriculture and Land-Use sector.</p> <p>Under the EU Effort Sharing Decision (ESD) Ireland is required to achieve 20% reduction of non-ETS sector emissions on 2005 levels with annual binding limits set for each year over the period 2013-2020.</p> <p>CAR sets a target of 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 2005 levels) by 2030 for Ireland for Transport, Buildings, Agriculture, Energy industries: not included in the ETS because they are not big enough to be included, Waste and certain Industrial processes.</p>



# Discussion Document on a Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill

Jurisdiction	Legislation/ Framework/Strategy	Key Provisions
	<p>General Scheme Climate Action Amendment Bill Jan 2020</p>	<p>General Scheme Climate Action Amendment Bill was launched in Jan 2020 - to work towards net zero commitments made by the EU when signing the Paris agreement and with the EU 2050 long-term strategy detailed above. The bill amends the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a 2050 emissions reduction target in law</li> <li>• Making the adoption of carbon budgets a legal requirement;</li> <li>• Strengthening the role of the Climate Action Council in recommending the appropriate climate budget and policies;</li> <li>• Requiring the Government to set a decarbonisation target range for each sector. The Minister with primary responsibility for each sector will be accountable for delivering the relevant actions to meet the sectoral target and for reporting annually on the delivery of their actions and the achievement of sectoral emission targets;</li> <li>• Giving the Oireachtas a central role in the setting of the carbon budget and overseeing progress to delivery;</li> <li>• Banning the sale of fossil fuel cars by 2030;</li> <li>• Establishing that the Climate Action Plan shall be updated annually, with actions in every sector.</li> </ul>

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