

Sustainability for the Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

Contents

Contents	1
Minister's Foreword	3
Who we are	5
Our Vision	6
Strategic Risks	8
Four Strategic Priorities drive our work	10
10 Goals underpin our Strategic Priorities	11
DAERA Renewal Plan and Green Growth Framework	13
Six principles that inform how we (DAERA) act	14

Sustainability for the Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050



“ Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone. ”



Minister's Foreword

I am pleased to present Sustainability for Our Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050 which frames our strategic priorities for the next 3 decades.

DAERA's purpose is 'Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.'

I want sustainability to be at the heart of everything we do in DAERA, taking a partnership approach with business and communities, supporting them to look after the environment and to be its custodian for future generations.

This sustainable approach creates a healthy environment to live in, which will underpin a healthy population and stimulate healthy economic rural communities.

The next 3 decades will bring unforeseen events which will present us with challenges as well as opportunities to reimagine our future landscape. We will continue to grow from such events and capitalise on developments in science and technology to adopt more innovative ways of working, improve sustainability, find new ways to communicate and learn whilst maximising the global opportunities provided. A healthy and resilient natural world underpins economic prosperity and my Department will actively seek the co-operation of others to work together to develop future policies which maximize the benefits to people who live and work here.

DAERA is currently leading on the Executive's overarching multi-decade Green Growth Strategy and Delivery Framework for Northern Ireland, which is aiming to transform our society towards net zero by 2050, protect and enhance our environment and sustainably grow our economy through improved efficiency which will in turn help more business become more profitable.

Through transition from the EU we will ensure that targeted funding support is made available for our farming communities recognising the role they play in protecting our shared environment through sustainable food production.

A world class food sector is central to the health of our economy and our people. My Department will invest in Research and Development and embrace advances in science and technology to drive sustainable innovations in food manufacturing and animal and plant health.



Sustainability for the Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050

We will seek out and support new global market opportunities for our agri-food, fishing and forestry industries. In collaboration with our farming community, we will enhance food production and co-design solutions to challenges we face in the future. A healthy population depends on access to a healthy diet and a healthy, enjoyable environment.

My Department will continue to champion our rural communities, ensuring that the needs and challenges they face are properly considered and addressed to their benefit and to the benefit of people living in Northern Ireland.

Finally we all have a part to play in creating long term social and economic benefits.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edwin Poots', written in a cursive style.

Edwin Poots MLA,

Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs.

Who we are



* Figures as of 29/3/2021.

Our Vision

What we do and how we do it impacts on the lives and needs of our current and future generations. Long term planning is essential to influence and deliver the necessary protection and enhancement of our natural wealth and to ensure its long term future for those generations who will inherit it from us. A key part of this is through continuing to support rural communities to thrive by stimulating the economy and supporting the food, farming, fishing and forestry industries to face the future with confidence.

DAERA's vision is underpinned by our purpose of 'Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone'. We will deliver this by improving the quality of our natural environment and growing our agri-food, fishing and forestry sectors in a more sustainable way.

Our mission for the next 3 decades and beyond is to promote sustainable economic growth whilst restoring and enhancing our environment for the next generation. Supported by robust science as our evidence base, we will continue to ensure the competitive development of the agri-food, fishing and forestry sectors of the Northern Ireland economy, having regard for the need of the consumers, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

Enhancing our environment matters, as a healthy environment is interlinked with our health and wellbeing.



Sustainability for the Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050

By understanding the value of our natural capital and having a healthy and resilient natural world we underpin public health and our economic prosperity. We now have a better understanding that economic growth should not come at the cost of environmental degradation. The responsibility lies with us all to protect and improve the quality of our natural environment and our role in achieving this will include education, incentivisation and regulation.

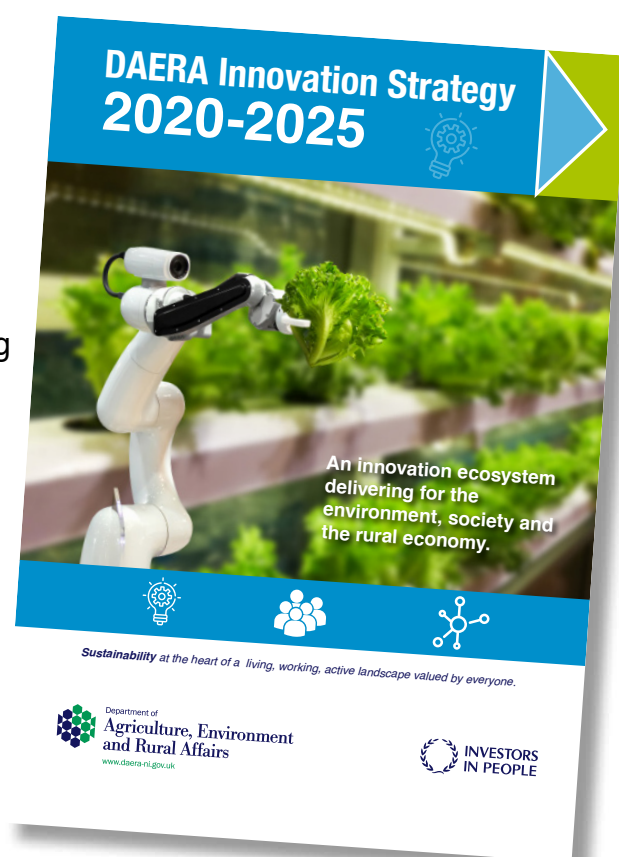
The UK Government has set a target that the UK will be carbon neutral by 2050. DAERA will support the achievement of this target through the Green Growth agenda along with growing a sustainable economy through greater productivity, innovation and capacity.

We will support our farming communities in continuing their role as custodians of our land and enhance the vital role they play in maintaining the long term health of our countryside. Through exploring the use of new technologies we will help increase productivity in a sensitive manner that does not degrade our natural environment. We want our farmers to have confidence in their future whilst delivering multiple public benefits.

Our agri-food sector is critical for the economy and environment, and it affects everyone in the country. We will focus on ensuring the continued supply of food and drink, and making sure our domestic industry grows through increased competitiveness and resilience. We will invest in science and technology to drive sustainable innovations in food manufacturing and processing and work with others to develop a Food Strategy Framework for NI to build a world class food sector that will continue to be central to the health of the people who live and work here and our economy.

We will encourage and develop circular economy models in our agri-food sectors, educate the people living in Northern Ireland and we will be a model exemplar in reducing the impacts of single use plastic.

In our vision we will strive for a green, healthy and sustainably prosperous future for all people living in Northern Ireland and we will work collaboratively with all organisations and the NI public to achieve this.



Strategic Risks

In developing our strategic plan to 2050, we need to understand the strategic risks we may face over this period and how they will impact on our ability to deliver. Our risk and resilience model will help us to reduce the threats and exploit the opportunities to maximise delivery on the outcomes of this strategy.

	<p>Food Security: The opportunity exists to ensure food security through effective marketing of our products and funding of sustainable land management practices and providing solutions on our food supply presented by climate change.</p> <p>We will design and implement policies which deliver a more productive, profitable and sustainable farming sector.</p>
	<p>Climate Change: A climate emergency has been declared by the UK Parliament and by the Northern Ireland Assembly.</p> <p>We are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and the effect of this on our resources.</p> <p>DAERA has the opportunity to lead the way on climate change mitigation and can be a model exemplar to other departments.</p> <p>We will mitigate against climate change through the implementation of the Forest for our Future programme.</p>
	<p>New Legislation: It is anticipated that there will be significant new legislation aimed at improving water and air quality, climate change mitigation and standards on how we achieve them.</p> <p>We will continually monitor and inform the introduction of new legislation and reflect it in our policies and procedures.</p>
	<p>Demographic change: The population of Northern Ireland is projected to increase by 8% by 2041 with the over 65 age bracket increasing to 25% of the population.</p> <p>This will result in shifts to the urban/rural split and re-profiling of our rural communities.</p> <p>DAERA will help our farming sector meet the future with confidence and continue to be a champion of our rural communities.</p>

Sustainability for the Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050



Fourth Industrial revolution: The digital revolution is shaping how we live and work.

With ever increasing challenges on sustainability and natural environment we will look to science and technology through our Green Growth Strategy to continually seek innovative and sustainable solutions.

We will continue to be mindful of the threat of cyber-attacks as well as the potential to be left behind in such a fast moving environment.



Funding: Having the right level of funding, in the right place at the right time will be vital to ensuring that the Department achieves its purpose.

Following COVID-19 there will be ever increasing pressure on public resources coupled with securing funding post EU Exit.

We need to ensure we maximise funding available and be innovative and challenging in order to maximise outcomes.



EU Exit: The opportunity now exists to help shape our future as we transition from the EU Exit.

DAERA will collaboratively work to address the range of issues facing the Department including Common Frameworks, legislation and stakeholder engagement to support delivery of services after EU Exit Transition by the Department, its Agencies and its Arms' Length Bodies.



World Health: DAERA's aims to capitalise on lessons learnt from pandemics/ outbreaks and to inform our approach to future pandemics to ensure a one health ethos in mitigating against the impacts of these occurrences.

Four Strategic Priorities drive our work

Success for DAERA and the people living in Northern Ireland will see us deliver on the Department's purpose of 'sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone'. In delivering on this purpose we will aim to act on the four key Strategic Priorities of the Department.



Economic Growth

To enhance our food, forestry, fishery and farming sectors using efficient and environmentally sustainable models which support economic growth.



Natural Environment

To protect and enhance our natural environment now and for future generations whilst advocating its value to and wellbeing for all.



Rural Communities

To champion thriving rural communities that contribute to prosperity and wellbeing.



Exemplar Organisation

To be an exemplar, people focused organisation, committed to making a difference for the people we serve.

10 goals underpin our Strategic Priorities



1. Sustainable farming and food

We will reform the farming and agri-food sectors supporting them to become more productive, sustainable and profitable through funding and promoting resource efficiency.

Underpinning this will be our championing of sound environmental practices and high animal welfare standards. We will work collaboratively with industry to grow using science, R&D, innovation and education to increase responsiveness, stimulate efficiencies and minimise waste throughout the food chain leading to increased resilience and ensuring a continued supply of food.



2. Thriving, Resilient rural economies and communities

We will endeavour to be a champion to the needs and challenges facing our rural communities and businesses, ensuring resilience is embedded in long term investment decisions.

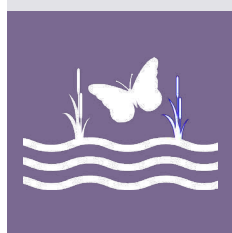
We will work collectively to develop and showcase the tourism opportunities of our wonderful environment and NI's world class food and drink production.



3. Healthy seas and oceans

We will continue to develop an environmentally responsible and sustainable fisheries sector, enabling our fishing industry to fish sustainably and ensure fair access to fishing waters going forward, in turn boosting our local economy and benefiting our coastal communities.

We will drive down our use of plastics and mitigate the impact of these on our marine environment.



4. Pure air, clean rivers and a resilient water supply

We will make our air healthier to breathe through our Clean Air Strategy and by delivering new approaches to tackling all sources of air pollution.

We will develop a Water Strategy to prevent and mitigate against pollutants impacting on our water supply, and we will work with farmers on catchment-based approaches to water management.



5. Climate change

We will confront the existential crisis represented by climate change.

We will introduce a carbon reduction metric and further develop research on current mitigation practices in line with the Executive's new Energy Strategy for a fair and just transition to a zero carbon society and to the immediate and longer term impacts of climate change. We will work to restore nature's ability to mitigate for, and adapt to, climate change.



6. Safeguarding our natural wealth

We will adopt natural capital approaches and look afresh at how we protect and enhance the beauty of our distinctive landscapes. We will work to address the key drivers of biodiversity loss and support nature recovery. We will identify and put in practice innovative ways to improve biodiversity and to protect our unique landscapes and ecosystems.



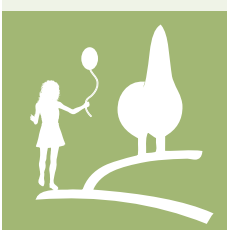
7. Resource efficiency and waste reduction

We will continue to focus on the reduction of waste, including the elimination of plastic pollution and promote more sustainable and efficient use of our resources. We will innovate to promote sustainable and efficient use of our renewable natural resources, such as fish and timber.



8. Protecting the health of our animals and plants

We will work to maintain our high standards for Animal and Plant Health maintaining secure imports to reduce the impacts of disease and invasive species. By doing so we recognise how animals and plants sustain and enhance our health, wealth and well being.



9. Health and wellbeing for all

We will focus on using and enhancing our natural resources to improve the health and wellbeing for all of Northern Ireland. We will encourage people to spend more time in nature. We will work collectively to develop and showcase the tourism opportunities of our wonderful environment and NI's world class food and drink production.



10. Exemplar organisation

We will continue to be a well led, high performing, outcome focused, inclusive and diverse organisation. We will continually strive to collaboratively make a positive difference to the daily lives of the people living in Northern Ireland by reducing administrative burdens on our customers and delivering a better service.

DAERA Renewal Plan and Green Growth Framework



Our economy will change substantially over the next 3 decades, largely driven by technological advances and the UK Government's commitment to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2050. This will mean big changes in how we operate.

Green Growth embraces the Climate Change Committee's recommendations for the pathway to Net Zero and means transforming and growing our economy while protecting our natural assets. It requires an overarching Executive framework, designed to address the global climate crisis and our local environment challenges. It will achieve this by linking together all the relevant areas of policy and delivery to maintain a clear and long term focus. In doing so, it will enable Northern Ireland to play a lead role in an economic and social revolution which will happen over the next thirty years.

Economies will transition to low or no carbon models and with less waste, productivity and innovation will increase and people will benefit from more sustainable and equal societies with a greater connection to the natural world. Seas, air, water and land will again have an opportunity to recover and flourish, together with the incredible life that they sustain.

Green Growth reflects far reaching social and economic changes arising from a renewed perspective on what society values, acceptance of new ways of working and a recognition of the need for locally resilient economic models in the context of an inter-connected world.

A key consideration of Green Growth is the importance that a healthy and sustainable environment plays in food security and the long term productive capacity of the food, farming, fishing and forestry sectors and their resilience. An industry with a responsive, integrated and efficient supply chain ensures that agricultural activity is properly focused on delivering market demands, thereby minimising wasted effort and resources, further increasing its sustainability and resilience.

The framework will provide the strategic context for research and development, innovation, capital support, investment and competition that can give rise to new sources of economic growth, while using science for solutions in building resilient ecosystems. Over the next 3 decades we will stimulate and support new approaches, working collectively to create the conditions in which people, businesses and the environment work in harmony to grow a strong, sustainable economy through greater productivity, innovation and capacity.

Six principles that inform how we (DAERA) act

1	Led by evidence, and a clarity of purpose.
2	We will push the boundaries and nurture new ideas.
3	We will deliver for our wide range of customers.
4	We will encourage people to make the right choices and be accountable for their response.
5	We will collaboratively work across all sectors.
6	We are building an exemplar, people focused organisation.



Sustainability for the Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.