

Waste Prevention Programme 2026

“From Waste to Worth”

Waste Prevention Programme 2026



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

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From Waste to Worth

1. Introduction

1.1 What is Waste Prevention?

Waste prevention means stopping waste from being created in the first place. Waste prevention can be achieved by: reducing the amount of material used; extending the life of products; avoiding unnecessary consumption and waste generation and changing how products are designed and made.

It aligns with the principles of the circular economy, which seeks to design out waste and decouple economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation.

1.2 The Waste Hierarchy

The “Waste Hierarchy” is a legally binding hierarchy, introduced in the European Waste Framework Directive (WFD) [2008/98/EC] which establishes an order of preference for actions in sustainable waste management. If properly implemented, it minimises the amount of waste generated and improves the overall waste management process.:

1. **Prevention** – Stop waste before it starts. This means using fewer materials and making products that last longer.
2. **Reuse** – Use things again. Instead of throwing items away, find ways to use them again—like repairing or donating.
3. **Recycling** – Turn old materials into new products. This helps save resources but still uses energy.
4. **Recovery** – Get energy from waste. Some waste can be burned to produce energy, but this is less ideal.
5. **Disposal** – Throwing waste away. This includes landfill and incineration without energy recovery. It’s the least preferred option.



Figure 1

The goal is to reduce the amount of waste we create and to handle it in the most sustainable way possible.

1.3 Circular Economy

A circular economy is an economic model that aims to eliminate waste and keep resources in use for as long as possible. Unlike the traditional "make-use-dispose" linear model, the circular economy focuses on designing products and systems that use fewer raw materials, generate less waste, encourage reuse, repair & recycling and promote sustainable production and consumption. The benefits include reducing environmental impact, supporting innovation and green jobs, building resilience in supply chains and helping meet climate and sustainability goals.

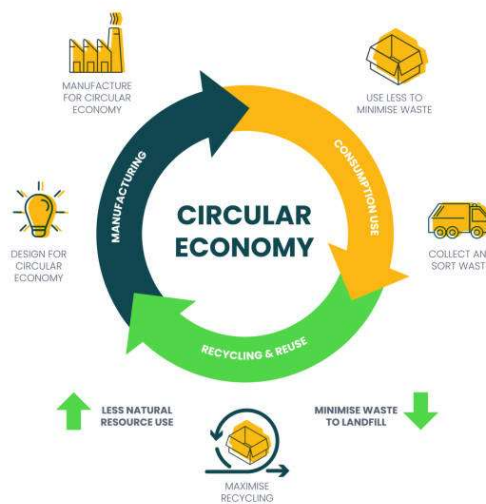


Figure 2

Waste prevention is an essential component of an effective circular economy. It both helps prevent waste from having a negative impact on the environment and health and directs it to more efficient uses. The actions required to move toward a more circular economy are twofold. In the first instance, resource consumption must be reduced in order help eliminate the use of virgin materials and to support our finite biosphere. Secondly, any waste that is generated must be used in a resource efficient manner.

This can be achieved in a number of ways. Encouragement and education to create a culture that values its resources is of high importance, as well as making information about how to reduce waste and resource consumption, how to reuse and how to repair easy to access. There is a responsibility for producers to undertake building waste prevention into design and alternative business models must be implemented to enable the success of circularity. Eco-design is important to help achieve this, as well as the introduction of producer

responsibility schemes. As well as creating new opportunities for growth, a more circular economy can:

- reduce waste;
- help create 'green' jobs;
- drive greater resource productivity;
- deliver a more competitive economy;
- position Northern Ireland to better address emerging resource security and scarcity issues in the future;
- help reduce the environmental impacts of our production and consumption.

2. Review of the 2019 Waste Prevention Programme – 'Stopping Waste in its Tracks'

The legal requirements for waste prevention in Northern Ireland are primarily governed by the Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 (SR 2011/127)¹, which transpose the EU Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC) into domestic law. These regulations establish a statutory framework for developing and implementing waste prevention programmes and enforcing the waste hierarchy.

Core requirements include:

Establishment of a Waste Prevention Programme

Northern Ireland is legally required to maintain a Waste Prevention Programme, which must be reviewed at least every six years.

- **Assess Existing Measures**
Evaluate current national waste prevention actions and their effectiveness.
- **Define National Objectives**
Set clear measurable goals for waste prevention tailored to national context.
- **Evaluate Strategy Suitability**
Ensure strategies are appropriate for inclusion in the Programme.
- **Promote Product Reuse**
Take measures to encourage reuse of products and materials.
- **Support Reuse and Repair Networks**
Facilitate the development of reuse and repair infrastructure and services.

¹ Northern Ireland Statutory Rules 2011 No. 127 [The Waste Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2011](#)

- **Public Procurement Criteria**
Integrate reuse and waste prevention principles into public procurement policies.
- **Set Benchmarks**
Establish qualitative or quantitative benchmarks to assess waste prevention measures.
- **Adopt Targets and Indicators**
Use indicators and targets to monitor progress and evaluate success.
- **Apply the Waste Hierarchy**
Prioritise prevention, followed by reuse, recycling, recovery, and disposal.
- **Ensure Environmental and Health Protection**
Waste must be managed without harming human health or the environment.
- **Implement Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**
Producers must take responsibility for the lifecycle of their products, especially at end-of-life.

The first Waste Prevention Programme for Northern Ireland – “The Road to Zero Waste”, was produced in 2013. This was reviewed in 2019 and revised as - “Stopping Waste in its Tracks”. This Programme contained 22 waste prevention actions, of which 21 have either been implemented or are ongoing (Annex A). The primary aim of the Programme was to reduce the generation of waste at its source in order to conserve resources, minimise environmental impact, and support a transition to a circular economy. This has been achieved through actions such as the creation of the Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN) which promotes the reduction of waste and building a more circular economy. Since incorporation, their members totalled carbon savings of over 126,000 tonnes, reused almost 23,000 tonnes of waste and generated a saving of nearly £45M. They now support 1,295 employees, 7,036 volunteers, totalling over 910K hours, and benefitting almost 1M people.

2.1 Legal Background to Waste Prevention

The revised Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC) is the principal legal instrument governing waste management across the European Union. It establishes the overarching framework for defining, handling, and regulating waste to protect human health and the environment.

Regulation 17 of the Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 introduced a legal duty to apply the waste hierarchy from 8 October 2011. This applies to all organisations that produce, handle or transfer waste such as councils, businesses, brokers and carriers.

There is a statutory requirement that the waste prevention programme is reviewed every six years. The review of the actions in Annex A of this document, fulfils this obligation.

Of the 22 action points listed, nine have been brought forward and updated for inclusion in this current programme.

2.2 Decoupling of Waste Generation and Economic Growth

Decoupling waste generation from economic growth means reducing the amount of waste produced even as the economy continues to grow. In Northern Ireland, this concept is central to the transition toward a circular economy. We can aim to achieve this by improving recycling systems, reducing food and packaging waste, and encouraging sustainable production and consumption. The goal is to ensure that economic development no longer leads to increased environmental harm.

Previous Waste Prevention Programmes in Northern Ireland have explicitly recognised the need to decouple waste generation from economic growth. The 2013 “Road to Zero Waste” and the 2019 “Stopping Waste in its Tracks” programmes emphasised that waste prevention is both environmentally and economically beneficial. These programmes promoted resource efficiency, reuse and repair networks, and behavioural change initiatives, all aimed at reducing waste without hindering economic activity.

The Carrier Bag Levy revenue has been used to support NIRN and DAERA funded third-sector projects that targeted food, plastics, and textiles. These additional DAERA funded programmes were designed to reduce consumption and waste while supporting local economies. The programmes also aligned with the Waste Hierarchy, placing prevention at the top, and supported the principles of a circular economy, which inherently seeks to decouple resource use from growth.

Figure 3 displays the relationship between economic growth and waste generation for the years 2002 – 2023, taking 2002 as the index year. Overall, Gross Value Added (GVA) per capita rose from £14,142 to £29,234 while there was a fall of waste arisings per capita from 603kg to 521kg.

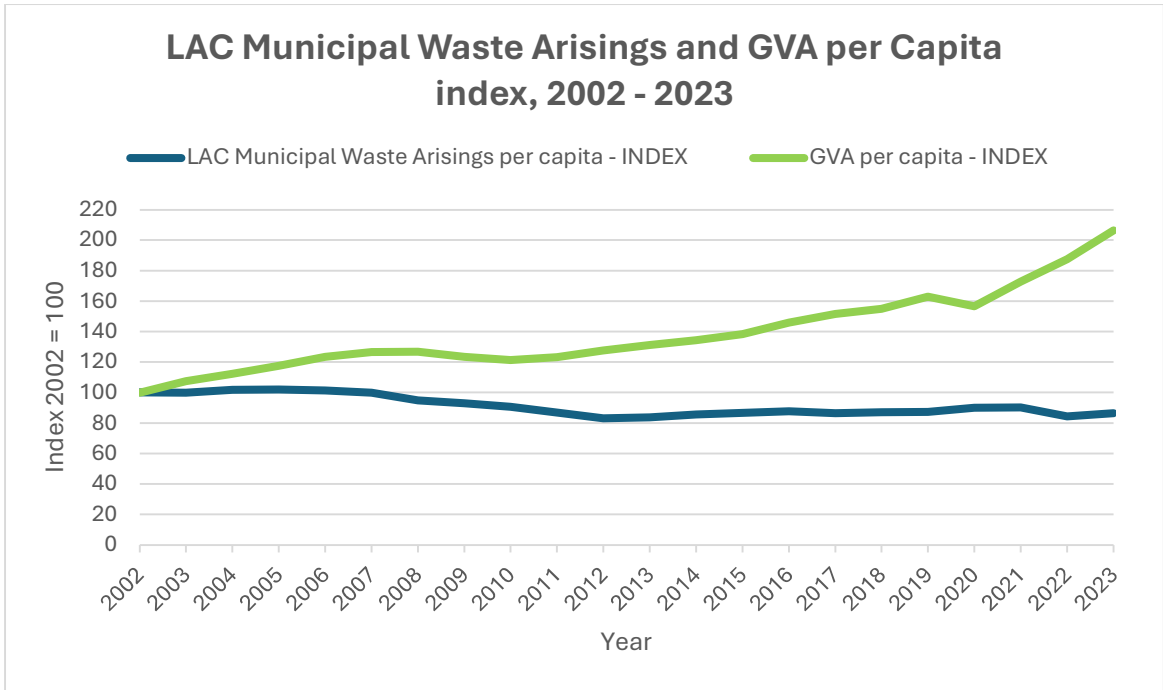


Figure 3

Figure 4 shows an index of the ratio of waste arisings against GVA taking 2002 as the base year with a value of 100. This shows that, for every unit of GVA produced, waste arisings per capita has decreased.

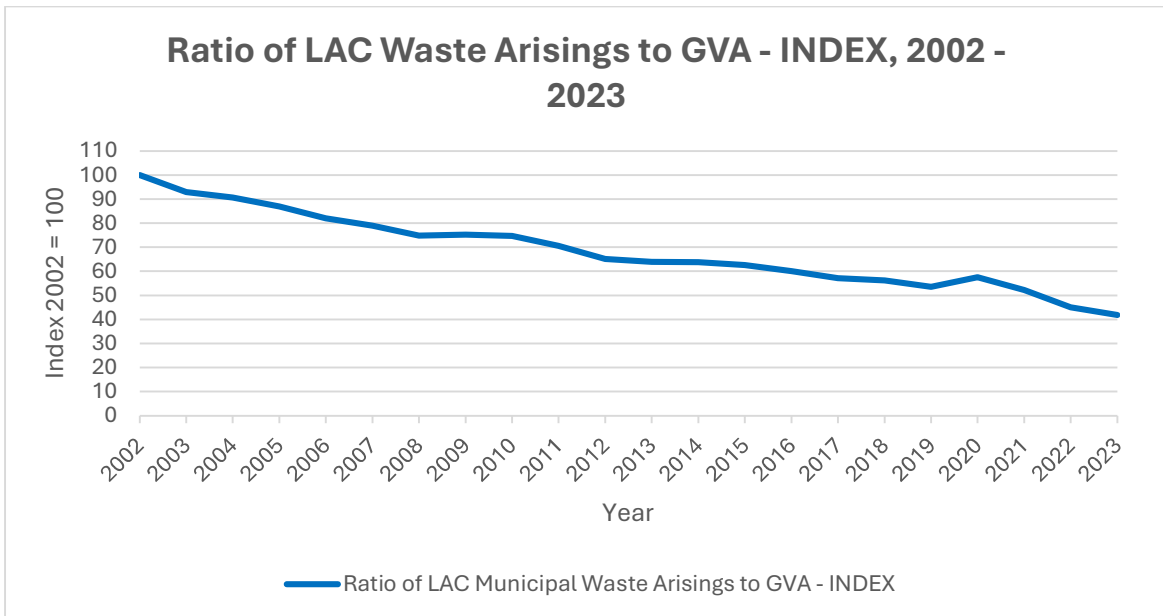


Figure 4

2.3 Food Waste

Although great progress has been made in the UK on food waste from all sectors (manufacture, retail, hospitality and food service, and household), the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have calculated that households in Northern Ireland have the highest rate of food waste in the UK, with families wasting an average of over £1,000 of food a year. Despite having comprehensive collections for the recycling and composting of food waste, around 30% still ends up in landfill where it emits harmful greenhouse gases for decades.²

The DAERA Food Strategy Framework Action Plan 2025–2027 is Northern Ireland’s first comprehensive, cross-government initiative to reshape the region’s food system. It builds on the Food Strategy Framework published in November 2024 and sets out 39 actions to be delivered over two years. Food waste policy sits under the core mission to “support sustainable, safe and ethical agri-food supply chains” and includes actions designed to eliminate food waste through methods such as diverting surplus food to the community and alleviating food poverty.³

Since the introduction of the Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015⁴ there have been requirements for both councils and businesses to have separate food waste collection. This organic waste is sent for composting and anaerobic digestion in the drive towards reducing the amount sent to landfill.

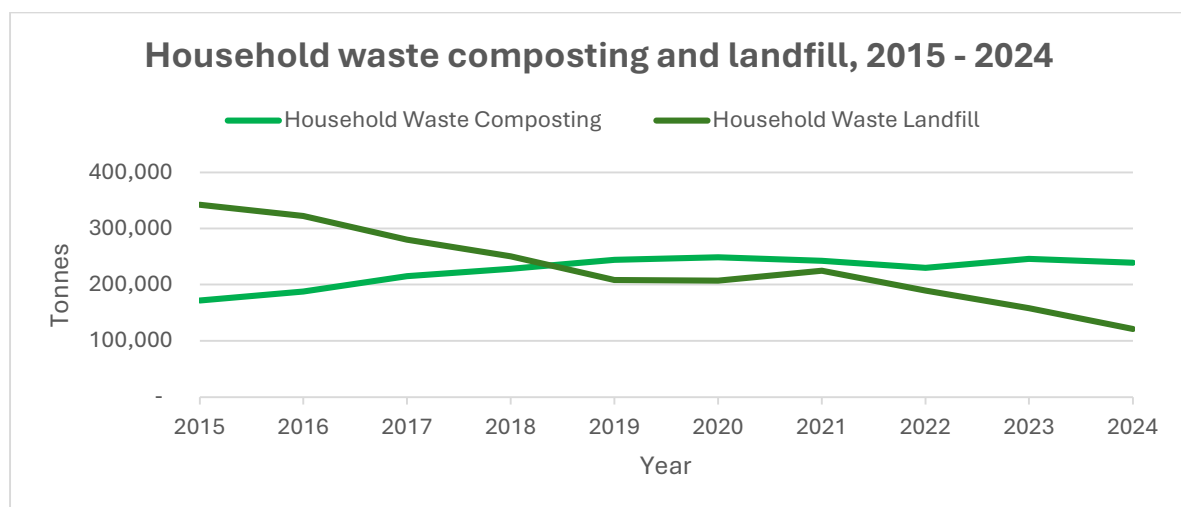


Figure 5

Figure 5 shows the continued trend is the fall of organic waste to landfill, however there was a spike in landfill during Covid-19 when sites were closed and normal collections were severely impacted for some time.

² [New data show’s Northern Ireland households are throwing out food they could eat | WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#)

³ [Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework Action Plan 2025-2027 | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

⁴ [The Food Waste Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#)

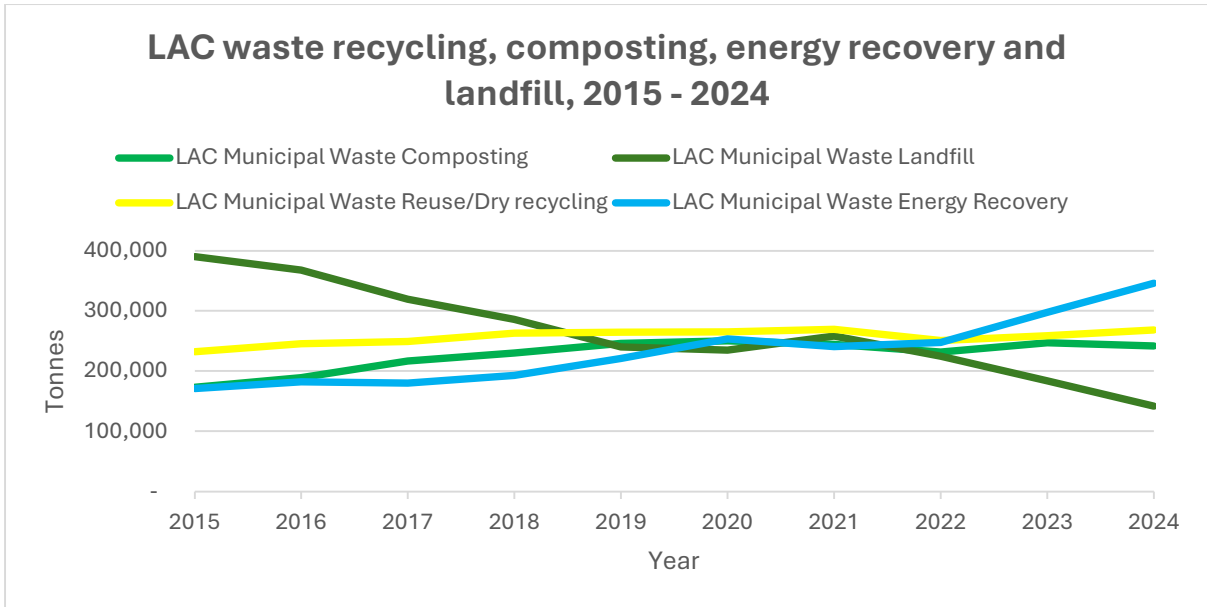


Figure 6

Figure 6 also illustrates a downward trend in the move away from landfill, with energy recovery driving that reduction. Although there has been no specific monitoring of business compliance with the Food Waste Regulations, recent surveys of business waste and recycling practices in Northern Ireland indicate that compliance is generally low. This may be a combination of a lack of knowledge of the recycling requirement on food businesses, the potential additional cost burden for some organisations and limited support to help optimise services to keep costs low. As demonstrated across the UK, the wide range of businesses in scope of the current Northern Ireland regulations would also warrant dedicated resources to deliver education, compliance checks and any enforcement required.

3. Waste Prevention Programme – 2025 Review

Further to the 2013 programme ‘The Road to Zero Waste’ and the 2019 Programme ‘Stopping Waste in its Tracks’ reviewed in 2025, it is proposed to continue building on progress through this revised Programme “From Waste to Worth”.

3.1 The Waste Prevention Programme Framework

Waste management in Northern Ireland has undergone significant changes over the past two decades, driven by evolving environmental priorities, EU legislation, and the transition toward a circular economy.

There continues to be a large reduction in waste moving to landfill with both Household and LAC Municipal reporting significant decreases year on year (excluding 2020/21 due to Covid-19 impacts). This programme incorporates ongoing actions from both previous waste prevention programmes and the inclusion of further action areas to help support and maintain the upward trend in waste prevention in line with policies of the Executive.

Programme for Government

The Northern Ireland Programme for Government (PfG)⁵ and the Waste Prevention Programme are aligned through shared goals around sustainability, resource efficiency, and the transition to a circular economy.

The PfG 2024–2027, titled “*Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most*”, places strong emphasis on improving environmental outcomes and tackling climate change through a Wellbeing Framework. This aligns directly with the Waste Prevention Programme’s goals to reduce, promote circular economy principles, reduce greenhouse emissions and to minimise resource consumption.

The Waste Prevention Programme includes actions such as supporting reuse & repair networks, promoting sustainable consumption and implementing Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging which all support the PfG priorities relating to economic resilience and sustainable development, encouraging innovation and reducing waste at source.

DAERA leads many waste prevention initiatives in partnership with local councils, social enterprises and schools & businesses. This collaborative approach mirrors the PfG’s commitment to joined-up government and partnership working to deliver better outcomes.

⁵ [Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most](#)

The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020⁶ were introduced to transpose the EU Circular Economy Package into Northern Ireland law. It is a comprehensive policy initiative designed to accelerate the transition from a linear economy (take-make-dispose) to a circular economy, where resources are kept in use for as long as possible, waste is minimised, and materials are reused, repaired, remanufactured or recycled. This policy has several important implications for waste prevention in Northern Ireland including:

1. Upstream Focus

Encourages designing products and services to avoid waste generation.
Promotes reuse, repair, and refurbishment over disposal.

2. Public Sector and Business Accountability

Expands municipal waste definition to include non-household sources.
Requires organisations to reduce waste at source and improve recycling practices.

3. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

Shifts responsibility to producers to minimise packaging waste and improve product design.

4. Education and Engagement

Supports public awareness campaigns and school programmes to change consumption habits.

5. Monitoring and Targets

Introduces statutory targets (e.g. 65% recycling by 2035) that require preventive action, not just better waste management.

The Environmental Improvement Plan

Northern Ireland's first Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP)⁷ was published in September 2024 which is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021, and it sets the overarching environmental direction for Northern Ireland.

The Waste Prevention Programme contributes directly to EIP goals through a range of measures such as; promoting reducing waste at source, behavioural and cultural change campaigns and encouraging eco-design, extended producer responsibility, and resource-efficient practices.

The Waste Management Strategy

The Waste Management Strategy also complements the Waste Prevention Programme by setting long-term statutory targets and infrastructure plans that promote waste prevention initiatives. The strategy provides the structural framework, while the programme delivers behavioural and community-level interventions.

⁶ [The Waste \(Circular Economy\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#)

⁷ [Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland](#)

3.2 Programme Aim & Objectives

Aim

To reduce the generation of waste at its source, thereby conserving resources, minimising environmental impact, and supporting a transition to a circular economy.

Objectives

To achieve this aim and in keeping with the outcomes of the PfG, this programme focuses on the following objectives;

- 1. Reduce Resource Use**
Encourage efficient use of materials in manufacturing, packaging, and service delivery.
- 2. Promote Reuse and Repair**
Support systems and networks that extend the life of products (e.g. reuse centres, repair cafés).
- 3. Influence Consumer Behaviour**
Raise awareness and educate the public on sustainable choices and waste reduction.
- 4. Support Circular Economy Principles**
Encourage product design that enables reuse, repair, remanufacturing, recycling, and minimal waste.
- 5. Engage Businesses and Public Sector**
Promote waste audits, sustainable procurement, and prevention strategies in organisations.
- 6. Monitor and Report Progress**
Track waste generation trends and evaluate the effectiveness of prevention measures.
- 7. Reduce Environmental Impact**
Lower greenhouse gas emissions and pollution associated with waste production and disposal.

The next section sets out the actions which comprise the Programme.

4. Areas for Action

4.1 Producer Responsibility

Producer responsibility is an environmental policy concept that places the onus on producers to manage the environmental impacts of their products throughout their lifecycle. This includes the design, production, use, and especially the end-of-life stage, such as collection, recycling, and disposal. The idea is to shift the financial and operational burden of waste management away from local authorities and taxpayers, and onto the producers who place products on the market.

4.1.1 Extended Producer Responsibility

A key development is the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), which is increasingly being adopted across the UK and internationally. Under EPR schemes, producers are required to fund or directly manage the collection and treatment of waste arising from their products. This encourages them to design products that are easier to reuse, recycle, or dispose of safely. For example, packaging producers must now pay for the full net cost of managing household packaging waste, which incentivises them to reduce unnecessary packaging and use more recyclable materials.

In Northern Ireland, producer responsibility is a central pillar of the Waste Management Strategy and supports a circular economy by promoting sustainable product design and reducing avoidable waste.

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations 2024⁸ represent a major reform of the UK's packaging waste management system. These regulations were laid before Westminster in October 2024 and came into force on 1 January 2025, enabling the UK-wide extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme for packaging to go live in April 2025.

Action 1 - Extended Producer Responsibility and Reducing Packaging

DAERA will continue to work in conjunction with the UK Government and the Devolved Governments in the implementation of the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations 2024 which aims to reduce the amount of unnecessary and difficult to recycle packaging.

4.1.2 Collaboration with Defra and Other DG's in relation to Eco-Design and Eco-labelling

Eco-design and eco-labelling are two complementary approaches aimed at reducing the environmental impact of products throughout their life cycle.

⁸ [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging and Packaging Waste\) Regulations 2024](#)

Eco-design refers to the process of integrating environmental considerations into the design and development of products. The goal is to minimise negative impacts such as resource depletion, energy consumption, emissions, and waste generation. This approach looks at the entire life cycle - from raw material extraction, manufacturing, and distribution to use and end-of-life disposal or recycling. Key principles include improving energy efficiency, using sustainable materials, designing for durability and repairability, and facilitating recycling. For example, in the electronics sector, eco-design might involve creating devices that consume less power, use recycled plastics, and allow easy component replacement to extend product life.

Eco-labelling is a communication tool that helps consumers identify products with lower environmental impacts. These labels are typically awarded based on compliance with specific sustainability criteria, which can include energy efficiency, reduced emissions, or responsible sourcing of materials. Eco-labels empower consumers to make informed choices and encourage manufacturers to adopt greener practices to meet certification standards.

Together, eco-design and eco-labelling create a feedback loop: better-designed products can earn eco-labels, and consumer demand for eco-labelled goods incentivises further innovation in sustainable design.

Action 2 – Eco-Design and Eco-Labelling

DAERA will continue to work collaboratively with the Devolved Governments to support eco-design and develop eco-label frameworks.

4.1.3 Deposit Return Scheme

A Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) is a circular economy initiative designed to reduce litter and increase recycling rates by incentivising the return of single-use drinks containers. Under the scheme, consumers pay a small deposit when purchasing drinks in containers such as plastic bottles or aluminium/steel cans. This deposit is refunded when the empty container is returned to a designated collection point, such as a shop or a reverse vending machine.

In Northern Ireland, the DRS is being developed by DAERA in collaboration with England and Scotland. The scheme will apply to PET plastic bottles, aluminium and steel cans ranging from 150ml to 3 litres. Containers will be marked with a scheme logo to indicate eligibility. DRS aims to tackle the estimated 120 million plastic bottles and 75 million cans that go unrecycled each year in Northern Ireland, many of which end up as litter or in landfill.⁹

⁹ [Deposit Return Scheme | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

Ireland launched its DRS on 1 February 2024 with over 1 billion containers returned within its first year, driving an increased recycling rate of 73% in that period.

Action 3 – Deposit Return Scheme

DAERA will implement the Deposit Return Scheme for single use drinks containers. This is due to go live from October 2027 to include PET plastic, steel, and aluminium drinks containers from 150ml to 3l to further drive-up recycling rates and reduce littering.

4.1.4 Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

WEEE refers to discarded electrical and electronic devices, such as computers, phones, household appliances, and lighting equipment. These products often contain critical raw materials like copper, lithium and cobalt, as well as hazardous substances such as lead, mercury, and flame retardants. Proper management of WEEE is essential to prevent environmental harm and recover resources.

DAERA, alongside Defra and other devolved governments, consulted on reforms between December 2023 and March 2024 to modernise the producer responsibility framework. The aim is to reduce e-waste, improve recycling rates, and close compliance gaps.

Action 4 – WEEE Reform

DAERA will collaborate with Defra and the other Devolved Governments to implement WEEE Reform.

4.2 Plastic Waste

Plastic waste remains a significant environmental challenge in Northern Ireland. Around 145 million single-use plastic bottles are used annually, many of which end up in landfill or incineration, releasing pollutants into the atmosphere. Despite efforts to improve recycling, only about one-third of household plastic packaging is currently recycled, with most households discarding at least 40 kg of plastic each year¹⁰. In 2023–24, Northern Ireland recycled approximately 16,664 tonnes of plastic, avoiding over £3.5 million in disposal costs and reducing CO₂ emissions by 31,000 tonnes¹¹. However, plastic still dominates marine litter, accounting for 84% of waste found on beaches¹², highlighting persistent leakage into the environment. Policy measures

¹⁰ [Plastic – Northern Ireland Resources Network](#)

¹¹ [Recycling data for Plastic | My Recycling NI](#)

¹² [009659.pdf](#)

aim to curb plastic waste and promote a circular economy by reducing production and improving recycling infrastructure remain priorities.

4.2.1 Carrier Bag Levy

The Carrier Bag Levy was introduced in Northern Ireland on 8 April 2013 through the introduction of The Single Use Carrier Bags Charge Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 to address the environmental damage caused by the excessive use of single-use carrier bags. Prior to its introduction, around 300 million bags were used annually across the region, contributing significantly to litter, landfill waste, and resource depletion.

The primary objective of the levy is to protect the environment by reducing the number of carrier bags in circulation. By charging consumers a fee for each new bag, the policy encourages people to reuse bags and only purchase new ones when necessary. This behavioural shift helps conserve natural resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with bag production and disposal, and decrease the volume of waste sent to landfill.

The levy charge was increased from 5p to 25p in April 2022 to further incentivise sustainable behaviour. The levy applies to all new carrier bags with a retail price of £5 or less, as all materials have an environmental footprint.

The scheme has had a measurable impact. In 2024/25, around 59.2 million bags were dispensed, which is a reduction from 84.5 since inception in 2013. This has also resulted in generating £13.8 million in revenue¹³. Revenue generated from the levy has been used to fund additional environmental projects and programmes across Northern Ireland. It has supported additional environmental projects and programmes that contribute towards the Department's Environmental Improvement Plan and Climate Action Plans. The Department also contributes towards community groups, schools, charities, and local initiatives aimed at improving biodiversity, reducing pollution, and enhancing public spaces.

Action 5 – Carrier Bag Levy

DAERA will continue to administer the levy and ensure the revenue is allocated to additional environmental projects within Northern Ireland.

4.2.2 Absorbent Hygiene Products

Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHPs) include disposable nappies, incontinence pads, sanitary products, and other single-use items designed to absorb bodily fluids. Due

¹³[NI Carrier Bag Levy Annual Statistics](#)

to their mixed material composition, often combining plastics, cellulose, and superabsorbent polymers, AHPs are challenging to recycle and are typically disposed of in landfill or through energy recovery processes.

Their disposal is regulated as offensive waste, which, while non-hazardous, requires careful handling, particularly in healthcare and public settings. The environmental impact of AHPs is considerable, not only due to their volume but also because of their long degradation times and the resource intensity of their production. Consideration needs to be given to the feasibility of alternative approaches, including their overall environmental impacts.

Action 6 – Absorbent Hygiene Products

DAERA will support WRAP in conducting an AHP Collection study into the separation of AHP waste.

4.2.3 Waste Levies

Levies applied to waste products offer a range of benefits for waste prevention, particularly when designed to influence consumer behaviour, support sustainable alternatives, and fund waste prevention initiatives.

Levies create a direct financial incentive for individuals and businesses to reduce waste. For example, charges on single-use items like plastic carrier bags have led to dramatic reductions in consumption. By making wasteful choices more expensive, levies encourage consumers to opt for reusable or more sustainable alternatives.

Unlike recycling focused policies, levies target waste generation. They help shift attention upstream, toward product design, purchasing decisions, and consumption habits therefore reducing the volume of waste entering the system in the first place.

Through the Carrier Bag Levy Northern Ireland has already acted to reduce the use of all carrier bags with positive results over the last 12 years. To date the levy has seen approximately 2.4 billion carrier bags removed from circulation addressing the problem of plastic litter and raising revenue to support environmental programmes.

Action 7 – Waste Levies

DAERA will continue to tackle the problem of littering and work with stakeholders to advance the circular economy including the potential for introducing bans or levies on certain problematic product materials.

4.2.4 Plastic Pollution Plan

DAERA is developing a Plastic Pollution Plan¹⁴ for Northern Ireland. This will detail a strategic approach to tackling plastic waste and its environmental impacts. The plan aims to reduce plastic pollution, particularly in marine environments, and to support the transition to a circular economy where resources are used efficiently and waste is minimised. It builds on previous initiatives, such as the successful removal of unnecessary single-use plastics (SUP) from the government estate and aligns with broader UK and EU commitments on waste prevention and resource efficiency.

The plan will focus on several key areas: phasing out unnecessary SUP, addressing marine litter and microplastics, and promoting behavioural change among consumers and businesses. It emphasises collaboration with stakeholders and public engagement to drive sustainable practices. DAERA also highlights the urgency of action, noting that global plastic production has surged from 2.3 million tonnes in 1950 to 448 million tonnes in 2015, with only 9% recycled. In Northern Ireland alone, over 250 million plastic bottles are discarded annually, contributing to pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Through this plan, DAERA seeks to create a cleaner environment, protect biodiversity, and reduce the climate impact of plastics. It will set a framework for future regulations, awareness campaigns, and partnerships to ensure that plastic use is minimised and managed responsibly.

Action 8 – Plastic Pollution Plan

DAERA will publish a Plastic Pollution Plan for Northern Ireland to achieve a reduction in plastic pollution.

4.3 Awareness

Waste prevention awareness is vital because it helps people understand that avoiding waste at the source is the most effective way to protect the environment, conserve resources, and reduce carbon emissions. By promoting responsible consumption and encouraging reuse, repair, and smarter purchasing decisions, awareness campaigns support the transition to a circular economy and help households and businesses save money.

4.3.1 European Week for Waste Reduction

The European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) is a major annual campaign across Europe that promotes awareness and action on sustainable resource and waste management. In Northern Ireland, it is coordinated by WRAP and supported by DAERA.

¹⁴ [Plastic Pollution Plan for Northern Ireland | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

Local councils, businesses, schools, and community groups are encouraged to register and carry out awareness-raising actions. Participants can access toolkits, communication resources, and even enter the EWWR Awards for outstanding initiatives.

During EWWR, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) organises and hosts a variety of events and campaigns aimed at raising awareness about waste prevention and encouraging behavioural change. These include workshops on reuse, repair, and sustainable fashion, such as the Fashion Forever Festival, which showcases creative ways to reduce textile waste through community-led activities. KNIB also supports school-based initiatives like the Wheelie Big Challenge, funded by DAERA, which teaches pupils how small lifestyle changes can contribute to climate action and waste reduction.

In 2024, DAERA also supported the launch of the Zero Waste Champion education programme, developed by NIRN, which engages schools in circular economy workshops during EWWR.

Action 9 – European Week for Waste Reduction

DAERA will continue to support the European Week for Waste Reduction and will seek to build upon the outcomes and successes generated through participation in its associated competitions.

4.3.2 Circular Councils

Local councils play a central role in communicating with citizens on waste prevention. The Northern Ireland Audit Office has reported that approximately £170 million is spent annually on household waste management¹⁵ highlighting the potential savings and environmental benefits that could be achieved by reducing waste generation. While councils already deliver public communications on waste, there is an opportunity to increase understanding of the circular economy and the waste hierarchy within councils themselves, supporting cultural change and embedding waste prevention into their own operations.

DAERA delivery partner, NIRN, through its Local Authority Forums, is developing a co-created education programme with councils to raise awareness of the circular economy and waste hierarchy among council staff and elected members. They will showcase and celebrate reuse and repair initiatives currently being delivered by councils and to identify further opportunities for collaboration, innovation and public engagement.

Action 10 – Circular Councils

DAERA will assist NIRN to establish a Circular Councils network and develop a co-created waste prevention education programme with councils.

4.3.3 Waste Prevention Metrics

Waste prevention metrics are essential tools for evaluating the effectiveness of policies, programmes, and interventions aimed at reducing the generation of waste at source. Current waste prevention metrics in Northern Ireland and across the UK face several challenges that limit their effectiveness in guiding policy and evaluating progress. One of the most significant issues is the incomplete coverage of data. In Northern Ireland, detailed monitoring is largely confined to municipal waste collected by councils, which represents only about 10% of total waste.

Another key limitation is the lack of standardised indicators. Waste prevention metrics vary widely in terms of definitions, scope, and methodology, which hinders meaningful comparisons across regions and sectors. Many indicators also focus on downstream activities like recycling rather than upstream actions such as eco-design, reuse, or reduced consumption. This misalignment with the waste hierarchy risks diluting the focus on true prevention.

Action 11 – Waste Prevention Metrics

DAERA will support NIRN to explore the establishment of a framework of metrics to monitor, evaluate, and report on waste prevention efforts across Northern Ireland.

4.3.4 Circular Communities

Circular Communities are grassroots initiatives that place community at the heart of the circular economy. These communities focus on waste reduction, reuse, repair, and sharing, creating local hubs where people can come together to extend the life of products, reduce consumption, and build social connections. Examples include repair cafés, community fridges, tool libraries, and upcycling workshops, all designed to make sustainability accessible and practical for everyone.

The concept goes beyond environmental benefits. Circular communities foster social inclusion, skill-sharing, and economic resilience. For instance, a community fridge not only reduces food waste but also helps tackle food insecurity by redistributing surplus food. Similarly, repair cafés empower people to fix broken items, saving money and learning new skills in the process. These initiatives often involve partnerships between local authorities, charities, social enterprises, and volunteers, creating a vibrant ecosystem of support and collaboration.

NIRN, with DAERA support, plays a pivotal role in supporting these efforts by offering guidance, resources, and networking opportunities. Their events, like the recent “Circular Communities: Connecting People to Create Change” conference, bring together stakeholders from across Northern Ireland and beyond to share best practices and inspire action. The energy and enthusiasm at such gatherings

underscore the transformative potential of circular communities in driving both environmental and social change.

Action 12 – Circular Communities

DAERA will support NIRN to develop and deliver a Circular Communities Programme to embed reuse and repair into everyday community life.

4.3.5 Recognised Awareness Days

Recognised waste awareness days play a crucial role in promoting sustainable practices and reducing environmental impact. These days serve as focal points for education and advocacy, helping citizens and businesses understand the consequences of waste and the benefits of resource efficiency. By highlighting issues such as plastic pollution, food waste, and electronic waste, they encourage people to rethink consumption habits and adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

NIRN will lead a coordinated programme of multi-channel campaigns tied to key international and national awareness days. These campaigns will harness the visibility of global observances to promote waste prevention and preparation for reuse. Through its extensive network of members, NIRN can co-ordinate local activities, provide event tool kits and create high quality, accessible content.

Action 13 – Recognised Awareness Days

DAERA will support NIRN to co-ordinate a schedule of recognised awareness day campaigns.

4.4 Food Waste

Preventing food waste is essential for environmental, economic, and social reasons. When food is wasted, all the resources used to produce, transport, and store it, such as water, energy, and land are also wasted, contributing to unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Reducing food waste helps households save money, supports food security by ensuring more food reaches those who need it, and lessens pressure on landfill sites where decomposing food generates greenhouse gases such as methane. By raising awareness and encouraging better planning, storage, and portion control, we can make a significant impact on sustainability and create a more efficient food system.

4.4.1 Love Food Hate Waste Communications Campaign

The Love Food Hate Waste campaign is a UK-wide initiative launched in 2007¹⁶ by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) to tackle the growing issue of food waste, particularly in households. Its core mission is to help people reduce the amount of food they throw away by raising awareness, changing behaviours, and providing practical tools and advice.

Recent data shows that 30% of the average household bin in Northern Ireland is food waste, and 23% of that is edible food that could have been consumed. Love Food Hate Waste works by engaging citizens through educational resources, social media campaigns, and events like Food Waste Action Week. It offers tools such as meal planners, portion calculators, storage tips, and recipes for leftovers. These resources are designed to help people buy only what they need, store food correctly, reduce waste and to help households save money. A family of four could save up to £1,000 a year by using all the food they buy¹⁷.

By encouraging small, everyday changes like checking fridge temperatures, understanding food date labels, and planning meals the campaign empowers individuals to make a big difference. It's a key part of the UK's broader strategy to reduce waste, improve resource efficiency, and support climate action.

Action 14 – Consumer Food Waste Prevention

DAERA will maintain its partnership with WRAP to support the delivery of the Love Food Hate Waste campaign, aimed at preventing consumer food waste. DAERA and WRAP will co-develop follow-up initiatives designed to strengthen behavioural change and enhance messaging around food waste prevention.

4.4.2 UK Food and Drink Pact

The UK Food and Drink Pact¹⁸, formerly known as the Courtauld Commitment 2030, is a voluntary agreement led by WRAP that brings together nearly 200 organisations across the food and drink supply chain including businesses, trade bodies, local authorities, and charities to tackle key sustainability challenges.

The Pact aims to build a circular food system that supports the planet, people, and business. Its three core targets for 2030 are:

- Reduce food waste by 50% per capita (compared to the UK 2007 baseline),

¹⁶ [Love Food Hate Waste / Preventing food waste](#)

¹⁷ [New data show's Northern Ireland households are throwing out food they could eat | WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#)

¹⁸ [UK Food and Drink Pact | WRAP - The Waste and Resources Action Programme](#)

- Halve greenhouse gas emissions from the food and drink system (against a 2015 baseline),
- Ensure that 50% of fresh food is sourced from areas with sustainable water management.

These goals align with global ambitions such as UN Sustainable Development Goals 12.3 and 6, reinforcing the UK's commitment to sustainable production and consumption. The Pact provides members with access to evidence-based tools, practical resources, and collaborative working groups, fostering innovation and collective action.

The rebranding from Courtauld Commitment to the UK Food and Drink Pact reflects WRAP's broader strategy to unify its voluntary agreement and expand its international reach through the Global Food Pact Network.

Action 15 – UK Food and Drink Pact

DAERA will continue to support WRAP with the UK Food and Drink Pact to deliver against UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3: a 50% per capita reduction in food and drink waste by 2030 vs the UK 2007 baseline.

4.4.3 Food Redistribution

Large quantities of edible food are wasted every year by producers, retailers, and consumers. This not only represents a loss of valuable resources such as water, energy, and labour but also contributes to environmental degradation through increased greenhouse gas emissions from landfill waste. Many individuals and families across Northern Ireland also face food poverty, struggling to access sufficient, nutritious food on a regular basis.

Addressing this requires a coordinated approach that includes reducing food waste at the source, improving access to affordable food, and supporting community-led models that empower people rather than simply providing charity.

Food redistribution involves collecting surplus food, often from farms, manufacturers, supermarkets, and hospitality businesses and redirecting it to people in need through charities, food banks, and community organisations.

NIRN, supported by DAERA, plays a pivotal role in supporting food redistribution as part of its broader mission to promote sustainable reuse, repair, and circular economy practices across the region. NIRN work with a number of food redistribution networks and identifies opportunities for them to partner with both businesses and public bodies. Their work with the Circular Schools Programme embeds food waste into education and everyday learning.

Action 16 – Food Redistribution

DAERA will work in partnership with NIRN to collaborate with food redistribution networks to reduce avoidable food waste by enhancing their visibility and facilitating connections with businesses and public sector organisations. DAERA will provide support for targeted projects focused on food waste prevention.

4.5 Business and Industry

4.5.1 Industrial Symbiosis

Industrial symbiosis is a collaborative approach where traditionally separate industries work together to exchange materials, energy, water, and by products in ways that create mutual economic and environmental benefits. It is a key strategy in the circular economy, aiming to keep resources in productive use for longer and reduce waste generation.

The concept is based on the idea that the waste output of one company can serve as a resource input for another. This can include anything from excess heat and treated wastewater to surplus materials like plastics, metals, or food by products.

In Northern Ireland, industrial symbiosis has been actively supported through the Industrial Symbiosis Service (ISS) and delivered by Invest NI. Since its launch in 2007, the service has helped divert over 200,000 tonnes of waste from disposal, saved £9 million in costs, and reduced CO₂ emissions by over 260,000 tonnes. It connects businesses through a central database, identifying resource matches and facilitating partnerships that turn waste into value.¹⁹

Action 17 – Industrial Symbiosis

DAERA will continue to collaborate with Invest NI to promote its waste prevention initiatives, particularly those relating to resource efficiency and industrial symbiosis.

4.6 Education

4.6.1 Eco - Schools

Eco-Schools is the world's largest environmental education programme, empowering young people to lead sustainability efforts in their schools and communities. The programme began in 1994 and now spans 101 countries, with over 52,000 registered schools and more than 13.7 million students participating globally.

The programme follows a seven-step Framework that guides schools through forming eco-committees, conducting environmental reviews, creating action plans, linking sustainability to the curriculum, and engaging the wider community. Schools

¹⁹ [industrial-symbiosis-guide-for-businesses-in-northern-ireland.pdf](#)

work on up to 14 themes, including biodiversity, climate change, energy, litter, marine, transport, and waste.

Schools can earn awards at three levels, bronze, silver, and the Green Flag, which is internationally recognised as a symbol of environmental excellence.

Eco-Schools Northern Ireland has led impactful campaigns such as Cut Your Carbon, which in 2023/24 saw nearly 2,000 schools and nurseries participate. Pupils delivered over 200,000 carbon-saving actions, resulting in an estimated 600,000 kg of CO₂e reductions. The Litter Less campaign also saw 1,270 bags of litter collected by schools.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful operate the programme here with support from DAERA and all local councils. As of 2025, Northern Ireland became the second country in the world to have 50% of its schools holding an active Green Flag.²⁰

Action 18 – Eco-Schools

DAERA will further support the Eco-Schools Programme to embed waste prevention and circular economy principles into the curriculum.

4.6.2 Circular - Schools

The Circular Schools Programme²¹ in Northern Ireland is an educational initiative designed to embed circular economy and waste prevention principles into school communities. Its core aim is to help pupils understand how resources can be kept in use for as long as possible, reducing waste and promoting sustainability. Rather than focusing solely on recycling, the programme encourages schools to rethink consumption patterns, repair and reuse materials, and design out waste from everyday activities.

Delivered by NIRN the programme works with schools through interactive workshops and hands-on projects. These sessions cover practical topics such as food waste reduction, textile repair, and creative reuse of materials. Pupils are given opportunities to transform discarded items into useful products, fostering innovation and problem-solving skills while reinforcing the environmental benefits of circular practices.

Schools participating in the programme can earn recognition as Zero Waste Champions, showcasing their projects at a celebration event. This approach not only builds awareness but also equips young people with practical skills and a mindset that supports long-term sustainability. By introducing circular economy concepts early, the programme aims to influence future behaviours and create a culture of resource efficiency across Northern Ireland's education sector.

²⁰ [MyEarth](#)

²¹ [Zero Waste Schools Celebration in Derry City & Strabane District Council – Northern Ireland Resources Network](#)

Action 19 – Circular Schools

DAERA will support NIRN to promote reuse and repair in school communities.

4.7 Support to the third sector

4.7.1 Support to the Third Sector and Zero Waste Projects

DAERA provides targeted support to the third sector in Northern Ireland to help tackle waste and promote circular economy practices. This includes funding, strategic partnerships, and programme delivery aimed at empowering charities, social enterprises, and community groups to reduce consumption, increase reuse, and divert waste from landfill.

DAERA also funds innovative education programmes like the Zero Waste Champion pilot, launched in partnership with NIRN and local councils. This initiative engages schools in workshops on circular economy, food waste, textile reuse, and repair skills, aiming to embed zero waste thinking in young people. The programme is supported by the Carrier Bag Levy, which DAERA uses to fund community-led environmental projects.

In addition, through the Carrier Bag Levy, DAERA's Environment Fund (2023–2028) provides strategic funding to NGOs and community groups delivering environmental outcomes, including waste reduction and circular economy initiatives. Projects that demonstrate strong community engagement and measurable impact are prioritised for support.

Action 20 – Support to the Third Sector for Zero Waste/Circular Economy Projects

The Department will continue to provide support to the Third Sector for zero waste/circular economy projects as part of ongoing funding operations and investigate new ways to do so.

4.7.2 Reuse and Repair Week

Reuse and Repair Week 2025 marked a significant milestone for sustainability in Northern Ireland, running from 3rd to 9th March 2025. Led by NIRN and funded by DAERA through the Carrier Bag Levy, this was the first time an entire UK region hosted a dedicated Repair Week. The initiative aimed to foster a culture of repair and reuse, helping individuals and communities extend the life of everyday items, from textiles and furniture to bikes and electronics, while reducing waste and supporting the circular economy.

Throughout the week, a wide array of interactive workshops, repair cafés, and online seminars were held across the region. Events included textile upcycling sessions, bike maintenance workshops, and even a pre-loved fashion show. These activities not only provided hands-on learning but also celebrated the creativity and

resourcefulness of local communities. A standout event was the “Mending Our Ways” webinar, which brought together repair advocates and sustainability experts to discuss how businesses and communities can embed circular principles into their practices.

Action 21 – Reuse and Repair Week

DAERA will support NIRN to establish an annual Reuse and Repair Week to promote waste prevention across Northern Ireland.

5. Summary of Actions – DAERA Waste Prevention Programme 2026: From Waste to Worth

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the Department)

Action Heading	Action
1. Extended Producer Responsibility and Reducing Packaging	DAERA will continue to work in conjunction with the UK Government and the Devolved Governments in the implementation of the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations 2024 which aims to reduce the amount of unnecessary and difficult to recycle packaging.
2. Collaboration with Defra and Other DA's in relation to Eco-Design and Eco-labelling	DAERA will continue to work collaboratively with the Devolved Governments to support eco-design and develop eco-label frameworks.
3. Deposit Return Scheme	DAERA will implement the Deposit Return Scheme for single use drinks containers. This is due to go live from October 2027 to include PET plastic, steel, and aluminium drinks containers from 150ml to 3l to further drive-up recycling rates and reduce littering.
4. WEEE Reform	DAERA will collaborate with Defra and the other Devolved Governments to implement WEEE Reform.
5. Carrier Bag Levy	DAERA will continue to administer the levy and ensure the revenue is allocated to additional environmental projects within Northern Ireland.
6. Absorbent Hygiene Products	DAERA will support WRAP in conducting an AHP Collection study into the separation of AHP waste.
7. Waste Levies	DAERA will continue to tackle the problem of littering and work with stakeholders to advance the circular economy including the potential for introducing bans or levies on certain problematic product materials.
8. Plastic Pollution Plan	DAERA will publish a Plastic Pollution Plan for Northern Ireland to achieve a reduction in plastic pollution.
9. European Week for Waste Reduction	DAERA will continue to support the European Week for Waste Reduction and will seek to build upon the outcomes and successes generated through participation in its associated competitions.

10. Circular Councils	DAERA will assist NIRN to establish a Circular Councils network and develop a co-created waste prevention education programme with councils.
11. Waste Prevention Metrics	DAERA will support NIRN to explore the establishment of a framework of metrics to monitor, evaluate, and report on waste prevention efforts across Northern Ireland.
12. Circular Communities	DAERA will support NIRN to develop and deliver a Circular Communities Programme to embed reuse and repair into everyday community life.
13. Recognised Awareness Days	DAERA will support NIRN to co-ordinate a schedule of recognised awareness day campaigns.
14. Consumer Food Waste Prevention	DAERA will maintain its partnership with WRAP to support the delivery of the Love Food Hate Waste campaign, aimed at preventing consumer food waste. DAERA and WRAP will co-develop follow-up initiatives designed to strengthen behavioural change and enhance messaging around food waste prevention.
15. UK Food and Drink Pact	DAERA will continue to support WRAP with the UK Food and Drink Pact to deliver against UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3: a 50% per capita reduction in food and drink waste by 2030 vs the UK 2007 baseline
16. Food Redistribution	DAERA will work in partnership with NIRN to collaborate with food redistribution networks to reduce avoidable food waste by enhancing their visibility and facilitating connections with businesses and public sector organisations. DAERA will provide support for targeted projects focused on food waste prevention.
17. Industrial Symbiosis	DAERA will continue to collaborate with Invest NI to promote its waste prevention initiatives, particularly those relating to resource efficiency and industrial symbiosis.
18. Eco-Schools	DAERA will further support the Eco-Schools Programme to embed waste prevention and circular economy principles into the curriculum.
19 Circular Schools	DAERA will support NIRN to promote reuse and repair in school communities.
20. Support to the Third Sector and Zero waste projects	DAERA will continue to provide support to the Third Sector for zero waste/circular economy projects as part of ongoing funding operations and investigate new ways to do so.
21. Reuse and Repair Week	DAERA will support NIRN to establish an annual Reuse and Repair Week to promote waste prevention across Northern Ireland.

Annex A – Review of the 2019 Northern Ireland Waste Prevention Programme: Stopping Waste in its Tracks.

As required by Article 30 of the 2008 Waste Framework Directive and by Regulation 13 of the Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011, the Northern Ireland Waste Prevention Programme has been reviewed in its sixth year. The Waste Prevention Programme 2026: From Waste to Worth is an output of the 2025 review and includes actions following the introduction of the Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

2019 Waste Prevention Programme - Stopping Waste in its Tracks – Actions

The following table lists each of the 22 actions set out in the Northern Ireland Waste Prevention Programme and describes the progress to date.

Action	Progress
Action 1 – Extended Producer Responsibility and Reducing Packaging	
<p>DAERA will continue to work in conjunction with the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations to design and implement EPR schemes that are consistent with the polluter pays principle and which aims to reduce the amount of unnecessary and difficult to recycle goods.</p>	<p>The Environment Act 2021 contains powers that allowed extended producer responsibility regimes to be introduced. The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations 2024 were laid in Westminster in October 2024 and came into force on 1 January 2025 enabling the scheme to go live in April 2025 on a UK-wide basis.</p> <p>Reform of producer responsibility for packaging and the introduction of pEPR was consulted upon on a UK-wide basis in 2019 and 2021. The 2021 consultation put forward proposals that provided the framework for a UK-wide approach, whilst making provision for the delivery of nation-specific requirements where necessary.</p> <p>DAERA in conjunction with the UK Government and the Devolved Governments shared a draft of the main pEPR SI (the draft Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging and Packaging Waste) Regulations) in a consultation that ran from July-October 2023 to seek views on how the regulations implementation the policy decisions in the Government response to the pEPR consultation, (published in March 2022). These draft regulations were also shared with the World Trade Organisation and the European Union for notification purposes on 1 May 2024.</p> <p>This action will be brought forward.</p>

Action 2 - Collaboration with Defra and Other DA's in relation to EcoDesign

DAERA will collaborate with Defra and other devolved administrations to prepare to extend eco-design standards to a range of non-energy resource intensive product groups with the aim of preventing avoidable waste.

Part 3, Section 53 of the Environment Act 2021 introduced a framework for setting eco-design requirements for products to improve their resource efficiency. This section empowered the UK Government to regulate products beyond energy-related ones - extending to non-energy, resource-intensive goods - to reduce waste and environmental harm. The aim was to ensure products are designed with sustainability in mind, including aspects like durability, reparability, recyclability, and reduced environmental impact throughout their lifecycle.

This action will not be brought forward as a standalone action and will instead be amalgamated with action three.

Action 3 - Collaboration with Defra and other DA's in Relation to Enhanced Eco-Labeling

DAERA will collaborate with Defra and other DA's to develop new mandatory consumer information and labelling aimed at conserving resources and preventing waste.

DAERA has collaborated with Defra and other devolved administrations to explore how eco-design and eco-labelling standards can be applied to a broader range of products.

Section 52 of Part 3 of the Environment Act 2021 introduced new powers to set resource efficiency requirements for products, with the aim of reducing environmental harm and promoting a circular economy.

These gave power to set product standards related to durability, material composition and environmental impact. Manufacturers may be required to provide data on a product's environmental performance, lifespan, and recyclability.

This action will not be brought forward as a standalone action but will instead be amalgamated with action two.

Action 4 - Tackling Plastics Project

DAERA will aim to reduce plastic waste through a number of mechanisms being delivered as part of the Tackling Plastics Project that Keep

The Tackling Plastics Programme began in October 2018, with the inclusion of Textiles in 2022/23. The programme engaged four audiences: councils, schools, businesses, and the public. It was a multi-faceted programme to encourage elimination and reduction in Single-Use Plastic (SUP) consumption, including textiles.

<p>Northern Ireland Beautiful are undertaking on behalf of the Department.</p>	<p>One initiative included developing a Tackling Plastics Toolkit which included template policies and practical steps to phase out single use plastics (SUPs) from estates, events and procurement practices. The toolkit accelerated the removal of SUPs across the NICS estate from October 2021. This also laid the groundwork for broader adoption of sustainable practices across councils and other public bodies.</p> <p>The programme also ran a Fashion Forever Festival that was an event designed to tackle textile waste and promote sustainable fashion in Northern Ireland. The festival featured a wide range of activities including pre-loved clothing stalls, swap shops, styling advice, mini workshops, and a community sew-along. It encouraged attendees to reuse, repair, and reimagine their clothing rather than discard it, especially during high-consumption periods like Christmas. The festival also included a plastic-free wrapping station, visits from Sustainable Santa, and exhibitions showcasing local sustainable designers. It aimed to raise awareness of the environmental impact of fast fashion - highlighting that one million tonnes of textiles are discarded annually in the UK, with a third ending up in landfill.</p> <div data-bbox="699 1144 1217 1626" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>This action will not be brought following the completion of the Programme and the development of a number of legislative interventions to tackle plastic pollution.</p>
<p>Action 5 - Carrier Bag Levy</p>	
<p>DAERA will continue to support the</p>	<p>In November 2021, Minister Poots announced his intention to reform the Carrier Bag Levy. From 1st April 2022, the</p>

<p>Carrier Bag Levy charging administration.</p>	<p>Carrier Bags Charge Regulations were extended so that the levy is 25p and applies to all new carrier bags with a retail price of £5 or less. This is regardless of the material used and whether they are single use or reusable.</p> <p>The primary objective of the Carrier Bag Levy remains to protect our environment by influencing customer behaviour to promote a significant reduction in carrier bag usage.</p> <p>Since its introduction, dispensed single use bags have reduced from 84.5 million to 59.2 million bags issued per annum. Published annual usage statistics are available.</p> <p>The current Carrier Bag Levy legislation has been a huge success and has seen a significant reduction in the number of carrier bags from circulation.</p> <div data-bbox="683 813 1230 1122" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>This action will be brought forward.</p>
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Action 6 – Ban on Microbeads

<p>DAERA will continue to support the ban on microbeads by working with councils.</p>	<p>Councils have advised limited input required with regards to enforcement. Manufacturers have removed offending items from the Northern Ireland market prior to the enactment of the legislation.</p> <p>This action point will not be brought forward as the action is complete following the introduction of the legislation.</p>
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Action 7 - Consumer Food Waste Prevention

<p>DAERA will continue to work with WRAP to deliver its 'Love Food Hate Waste' consumer food waste prevention campaign. WRAP</p>	<p>Love Food Hate Waste is WRAP's national brand which runs campaigns to reduce the amount of food wasted in UK homes. 60% of food that is wasted in the UK is wasted by citizens in their own homes – roughly 4.7 million tonnes of edible food wasted each year. WRAP has worked with DAERA to produce Northern Ireland-specific resources under the Love Food Hate Waste brand to help reduce at-</p>
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will establish a network of campaign partners and will engage with consumers, community groups, local authorities and educational bodies. WRAP and DAERA will collaborate to develop follow-up campaigns to build capacity for behavioural change and waste prevention messaging aimed at food waste reduction.

home food waste. Since the launch of Food Waste Action Week in 2021, DAERA has contributed to the largest annual food waste reduction campaign in the UK.



Working in partnership with local councils and through the National Communications Advisory Panel (NCAP) group, DAERA has supported WRAP to maintain and promote food waste prevention messages through its Love Food Hate Waste campaign. In the latest [Northern Ireland Household Food Management Survey](#), published in March 2025, NI citizen recognition of the Love Food Hate Waste campaign has increased from 21% in 2018 to 40% in 2024. This level of recognition is higher than other areas of the UK (average of 32%).

DAERA has encouraged businesses to join the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, a voluntary agreement requiring food waste data reporting and action planning. This mirrors Champions 12.3's push for private sector leadership.

Activities in Northern Ireland have included partnering with local councils, ministerial engagement, PR films and social media and educational information through the Love Food Hate Waste digital channels and website.

This action will be brought forward.

Action 8 - Champions 12.3

DAERA will learn from the Champions 12.3 coalition and will get involved in activities which are aligned with its goals.

DAERA has drawn several key lessons and influences from its engagement with the Champions 12.3 coalition, particularly in shaping its food waste prevention policies and aligning with UN SDG Target 12.3.

DAERA has embraced the Target-Measure-Act framework promoted by Champions 12.3:

- Target: Committed to the UK-wide goal of a 50% per capita reduction in food waste by 2030, using 2007 as the baseline.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure: Support data collection and reporting through the Courtauld Commitment 2030, which tracks food waste across households, manufacturing, hospitality, and retail. • Act: Implemented targeted interventions and supported voluntary agreements to reduce food waste. <p>DAERA has also funded initiatives such as Love Food Hate Waste, Guardians of Grub and The Lyric Theatre Eco-Project to increase public awareness and focus on behaviour change in line with Champions 12.3.</p> <p>This action will not be brought forward as a standalone action and will instead be amalgamated with a revised action nine.</p>
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Action 9 - Courtauld 2025

<p>DAERA will continue to support WRAP and their work with local businesses, NGOs and sector organisations to reduce food and drinks waste arisings in the UK by 20% by 2025 compared to 2015.</p>	<p>The Courtauld Commitment 2025, a UK-wide voluntary agreement coordinated by WRAP, aimed at making food and drink production and consumption more sustainable. It brought together businesses, governments, and other stakeholders across the supply chain to tackle food waste, greenhouse gas emissions, and water stress.</p> <p>Between 2007 and 2021 WRAP’s work with UK manufacturers reduced food waste by over 520,000 tonnes (27%), and their work with retailers prevented 19,500 tonnes of food waste (19%) over the same period. Between 2018 and 2021 their work with signatories led to a sector wide reduction in food waste of 8%. We have also seen food waste reduce by 22% in UK households and have around 400 organisations now signed up to the UK’s Food Waste Reduction Roadmap.</p> <p>DAERA’s support towards the governance of the voluntary agreement has been critical in providing the necessary resourcing to achieve these milestones but also to demonstrate the commitment of the Northern Ireland Executive to the public - private partnership which underpins the agreement.</p> <p>In 2025, the Courtauld Commitment was officially rebranded as the UK Food and Drink Pact to provide clearer recognition and reflect its growing international scope through the Global Food Pact Network.</p> <p>All major supermarkets that operate in Northern Ireland have become members of the UK Food and Drink Pact and</p>
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	<p>key activities undertaken have included the removal of date labels from hundreds of fresh fruit and vegetable products to save equivalent of 400,000 baskets of food going to waste in Northern Ireland every year. Between 2015 and 2022, greenhouse gas emissions associated with food and drink production in Northern Ireland reduced by 12%.</p> <p>Guardians of Grub has supported hospitality and food service businesses to reduce food waste through toolkits, online courses, and case studies. Through DAERA's support WRAP rolled out Guardians of Grub in Northern Ireland and provided support to local councils to build awareness of the programme through NCAP (this included webinars and social media).</p> <p>This action will be brought forward under the UK Food and Drink Pact.</p>
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Action 10 - Food Redistribution	
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<p>DAERA will collaborate with FareShare and other food redistribution networks to minimise avoidable food waste by raising the profile of the organisation and identifying opportunities for them to partner with both businesses and public bodies. DAERA will support specific projects aimed at prevention of food waste.</p>	<p>DAERA, through its agency CAFRE (College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise), partnered with FareShare to tackle the challenge of redistributing surplus food that is close to expiry. Food technologists at CAFRE's Loughry Campus developed shelf-stable products (such as sauces) from fresh produce that would otherwise go to waste. These products are designed to be nutritious, easy to use, and suitable for distribution to charities and community groups. This initiative not only reduced food waste but also enhanced food security for vulnerable populations.</p> <p>DAERA also provided funding to FareShare to facilitate the role of a Food Source Officer to engage with the food industry in Northern Ireland. They developed and managed existing and new business relationships with companies to generate value and secured growing and sustainable volumes of surplus food for FareShare in Northern Ireland, cutting food surplus and waste in doing so. In addition, the funding enabled the employment of a Food Redistribution Driver allowing greater consistent, reliable and timely redistribution of surplus food.</p> <p>Last year, in Northern Ireland, FareShare prevented 727 tonnes of in-date food from going to landfill which is the equivalent to 1.7 million meals.</p> <p>WRAP has reported on progress on increasing surplus food redistribution since 2015. This work aligns with the UK Food and Drink Pact goals and SDG 12.3 on which DAERA</p>
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contributes to the overall governance of the UK Food and Drink Pact.

In 2025, Minister Muir launched DAERA's first Food Action Plan in as part of the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework which included specific actions on reducing food waste and promoting sustainable consumption.



This action will be brought forward collaboratively through Northern Ireland Resources Network.

Action 11 - Business Resource Efficiency - Invest NI

DAERA will collaborate with Invest NI to promote its waste prevention initiatives, particularly those relating to resource efficiency and industrial symbiosis.

DAERA has played a strategic role in promoting resource efficiency and industrial symbiosis in Northern Ireland through its delivery partner Invest NI.

Through support from DAERA and DfE, Invest NI have delivered a number of financial and advisory supports to help businesses reduce waste and improve efficiency including Resource Efficiency capital grants, technical consultancy and sustainability reports.

DAERA have also supported Invest NI's Resource Matching Service, which facilitates industrial symbiosis to assist with the of matching of underutilised resources (like materials, energy, water, or capacity) from one business with the needs of another.

This offering has given businesses an idea of how they are performing across a range of areas including waste and makes recommendations as to how they can improve their environmental performance.

The resource matching programme reports on waste diverted from landfill on performance since 2020.

	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Financial Year</th> <th>Diverted from landfill</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>1,589 Tonnes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>1,952 Tonnes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>271 Tonnes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2023/24</td> <td>379 Tonnes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2024/25</td> <td>19,095 Tonnes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This action will be brought forward under Industrial Symbiosis</p>	Financial Year	Diverted from landfill	2020/21	1,589 Tonnes	2021/22	1,952 Tonnes	2022/23	271 Tonnes	2023/24	379 Tonnes	2024/25	19,095 Tonnes
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2020/21	1,589 Tonnes												
2021/22	1,952 Tonnes												
2022/23	271 Tonnes												
2023/24	379 Tonnes												
2024/25	19,095 Tonnes												

Action 12 - Prosperity Agreements

<p>DAERA will work with Prosperity Agreement partners to identify opportunities to promote resource efficiency and waste prevention measures. In particular, and where possible, we will aim to include food redistribution actions and areas of agreement around the reduction of packaging to help reduce waste</p>	<p>From 2014 to 2021 10 Prosperity Agreements were signed with a range of Northern Ireland businesses. Benefits included reduction in energy usage, carbon emissions, waste production and water usage.</p> <p>Actions relating to food redistribution and reduction of packaging are being taken forward under Extended Producer Responsibility, the Plastic Pollution Plan and food redistribution networks.</p>
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Action 13 - Eco-Schools Programme


<p>DAERA will continue support for the Eco-Schools Programme in order to maximise opportunities for learning and teaching about waste prevention.</p>	<p>The Eco-Schools Programme aims to educate and empower young people to make positive decisions and become change makers for an environmentally sustainable world.</p> <p>Topics relating to waste include carrying out Waste Audits, Tackling Fast fashion, Litter Less Campaign, Adopt-A-Spot and resources on the circular economy.</p>
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<p>We will aim to introduce a specific topic on waste prevention into the EcoSchools curriculum.</p>	<p>Eco-Schools also covers topics looking at what happens to textile and electronic waste, and through the ‘International Young Reporters for the Environment’ Programme young people investigate issues around waste and waste prevention and its barriers.</p> <div data-bbox="614 425 1300 604" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Northern Ireland have become the first country globally to have every school registered as an eco-school and during 2025 have become the second country globally to have achieved 50% of its schools holding a Green Flag, achieving the UNESCO target five years ahead of schedule.</p> <p>This action will be brought forward.</p>
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Action 14 - Eco-Hospitals Programme

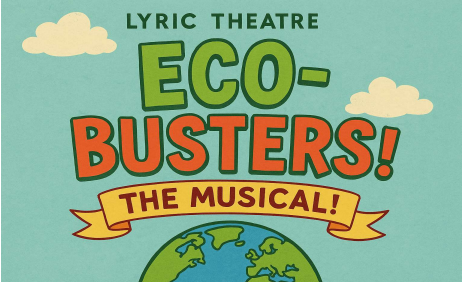
<p>DAERA's is investigating the feasibility of introducing a similar scheme in Northern Ireland. By engaging staff, students, local businesses, contractors and suppliers as well as visitors, we will highlight the importance of environmental protection, and in particular, waste prevention. We aim to initiate a trial on one site to further assess the potential environmental and financial benefits of such a scheme. If successful, there is scope for a broader</p>	<p>Lockdown commenced officially on 26 March 2020, with the Health Service under significant pressure. This initiative did not go ahead. The feasibility of this initiative was explored again in early 2024, however the necessary level of buy in to proceed with the scheme could not be secured.</p> <p>This action will not be brought forward.</p>
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rollout within the health sector.	
Action 15 - Working with NI Education Authority	
<p>DAERA will collaborate with the Education Authority to help reduce waste both in classrooms and in school catering services. DAERA will use the learning generated to help inform further waste prevention interventions with the wider public sector.</p>	<p>As part of the Tackling Plastic Tackling Textiles project a schools photography competition was launched by KNIB. It invited participants to submit images that raised awareness of plastic pollution and highlighted areas badly affected by plastic waste. The competition was part of a broader campaign to engage the public—especially young people—in environmental awareness and action around single-use plastics.</p> <p>While the first year of the competition was successfully delivered, plans for a second year were not taken forward due to a lack of match funding from the other funder involved.</p> <p>DAERA also attended meetings with the Education Authority to explore the creation of an education officer role. Due to cuts to other operational areas, there was feedback that it was not a suitable time.</p> <p>This action will not be brought forward due to the significant demands on the EA none of the initiatives resulted in a viable outcome. However, work with the Education Authority will continue through the Eco-Schools programme and Northern Ireland Resources Network.</p>
Action 16 - Reuse and Repair Network	
<p>DAERA will undertake a feasibility study into the economic and social benefits of establishing a reuse and repair network in Northern Ireland including establishing a reuse quality mark.</p>	<p>Community Resources Network Ireland (CRNI) were awarded funding to establish a new reuse and repair network in Northern Ireland. The primary aim was to explore the feasibility of establishing a dedicated network to support and represent organisations involved in reuse and repair in Northern Ireland. The steering committee established a pilot which later was officially named Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN). NIRN became incorporated in February 2022, with two members of staff and membership growing to 23.</p> <p>NIRN is the representative body for reuse and repair organisations, established with support from DAERA, with the aim to promote sustainable reuse and repair as a practical and effective way of tackling Northern Ireland's waste generation. The network encompasses a diverse</p>

	<p>range of organisations including community groups, social enterprises, charities, and all eleven local authorities. Members of NIRN all share a commitment to community-driven initiatives with activities ranging from repair cafes, community fridges, and lending libraries.</p> <p>Membership has risen steadily since 2021 and in September 2025 totalled 54 members, including all eleven councils and now employ eight staff.</p> <p>NIRN provide training, advice, and support to their members, encouraging collaborations and actively publicising member's activities via social media, podcasts, interviews and monthly E-newsletter.</p>  <p>This action will not be brought forward as NIRN are now well established as a reuse and repair network and will assist with delivery of actions in future programmes.</p>
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Action 17- Support to the Third Sector

<p>The Department will continue to support the Third Sector as part of ongoing funding operations and investigate new ways to do so.</p>	<p>DAERA have supported the Third Sector through a number of initiatives detailed in actions 4, 7, 9 10, 13, 16 & 19)</p> <p>One particular example of support to the third sector is that the Department funded The Lyric Theatre Eco-project "Waste busters the Musical" a musical production devised by the Lyric Theatre. It aimed to increase environmental awareness and promote positive behaviour change in relation to waste prevention, reuse, recycling and sustainability across Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The musical production acted as a creative and memorable tool to deliver a lasting message, educating young people on different forms of waste, the impact of this waste and how it can be prevented. It targeted KS2 pupils aiming to get the message home to parents and wider family circle, helping impact attitudes towards environmental issues through the influence of 'pester power.' This helped to</p>
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	<p>disseminate the message much further than the approximately 4,300+ school children.</p>  <p>The project is currently in its fifth year of delivery and has received excellent feedback from schools and pupils and has been oversubscribed every year. To date the project has been delivered to 13,381 children in 152 schools across Northern Ireland over four years.</p> <p>There are currently no other projects of this scale addressing environmental issues through live theatre to primary school audiences in Northern Ireland. The project highlights the importance of young people being more environmentally aware and is an opportunity to educate and empower young people.</p> <p>This action will be brought forward.</p>
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Action 18 - Zero Waste/Circular Economy Projects

<p>DAERA will continue to support “zero waste” projects where objectives align and funding is available</p>	<p>DAERA has supported a diverse range of zero waste projects across Northern Ireland, reflecting its commitment to circular economy principles and community-led sustainability. One of the flagship initiatives is the Zero Waste Champion Education Programme, developed in partnership with NIRN. This pilot project engaged schools in reuse and repair activities, embedding circular thinking in education and inspiring young people to become sustainability advocates.</p> <p>DAERA has also played a key role in supporting the growth of NIRN, which connects community organisations and all 11 local councils promoting reuse and repair. Through this network, projects such as repair cafés, tool libraries, and zero waste hubs have flourished, helping to reduce waste and build local resilience.</p> <p>In addition to education and community engagement, DAERA has backed targeted campaigns to reduce plastic and textile waste, including the Plastic Reduction Action</p>
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	<p>Plan (PRAP) and support for the UK Plastics Pact. It has also contributed to food waste prevention through partnerships with WRAP, the Courtauld Commitment, and redistribution efforts that helped surplus food reach those in need.</p> <p>This action will not be brought forward as a standalone action and will instead be absorbed into action 17.</p>
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Action 19 - European Week for Waste Reduction

<p>DAERA will continue to support the European Week for Waste Reduction and build upon any successes arising from entries to its competitions.</p>	<p>The European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) is the annual European campaign to raise awareness of waste prevention. It provides a platform to celebrate and share good practices in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Following on from the recognition of Cloughmill's Community Action Team's 'Library of Things' in 2019, the first Fashion Forever Festival in Northern Ireland was the winner of the Association/NGO category in European Week for Waste Reduction in 2022. NIRN's successful Sustainable Conversations podcast series was one of three finalists selected in the same Association/NGO category in 2023. This recognition, at a European level, demonstrates the value of waste prevention activities happening here in Northern Ireland.</p> <div data-bbox="758 1256 1155 1536" data-label="Image"> <p>The logo consists of a green square on the left containing a white stylized eye shape. To the right of the square, the text 'EUROPEAN WEEK FOR WASTE REDUCTION' is written in blue, stacked in three lines. Below the text is a photograph of a globe with various pieces of plastic waste (bottles, containers) attached to its surface.</p> </div> <p>This action will be brought forward.</p>
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Action 20 - Tap Water Refill Scheme

<p>DAERA will continue to promote water refilling schemes in conjunction with NI Water, local Councils and local businesses to</p>	<p>Figures from a Marine Litter report (2020) conducted by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful revealed that 67% of litter collected on Northern Ireland's beaches was plastic. In Northern Ireland it is estimated that 12,000 tonnes of plastic bottles are collected every year equating to 181 million plastic bottles per year.</p>
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<p>reduce waste from single use plastic bottles and to promote reusable bottles.</p>	<p>NI Water ran a campaign under the banner of “Refillution” aimed at encouraging local businesses to offer tap water from their premises to those who ask for it using refillable bottles.</p> <p>Community Hydration Hubs were provided to local businesses who were willing to offer free water refills, increasing access in urban and rural areas.</p> <p>The scheme was integrated with the Refill UK app which helped users locate over 280 refill stations in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Events and outreach campaigns have distributed free reusable bottles and encouraged uptake of the scheme.</p> <p>This action will not be brought forward as refill stations are now becoming well established across Northern Ireland.</p>
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Action 21 - Social Media & Internet Campaigns & Messaging

<p>DAERA will continue to promote reuse and reduction through social media campaigns MyNI, in tandem with existing more traditional messaging and associated social media posts to raise awareness of the content. The Department will develop specific campaigns in conjunction with these channels to raise awareness of waste prevention and zero waste.</p>	<p>The MyNI team was absorbed into DAERA central communications team at the end of December 2021.</p> <p>This action will not be brought forward as a stand-alone action. Social media campaigns tend to form part of all actions and will continue to promote reuse and reduction through those.</p>
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Action 22 - Local Authorities

<p>DAERA will continue to collaborate with local councils to</p>	<p>DAERA have funded NIRN through the Carrier Bag Levy who have secured membership of all 11 local authorities. NIRN have engaged with all councils through quarterly</p>
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<p>develop waste prevention plans.</p>	<p>forums that have promoted collaboration and sharing of best practice. NIRN have assisted councils to implement community-based reuse and repair cafes and supported public education campaigns to encourage sustainable behaviours to push waste as far up the waste hierarchy as possible.</p> <p>This action will not be brought forward as this will be incorporated as part of the work delivered by NIRN going forward.</p>
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Annex B – Meeting Legal Requirements

The Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 include a number of review and participation requirements at regulation 10 and 13 to regulation 16. These regulations are reproduced below along with an explanation of how DAERA is following the regulations;

Waste Prevention Measures

10 — (1)(a) The waste prevention measures are measures to at least—

- (a) promote and support sustainable production and consumption models;
- (b) encourage the design, manufacturing and use of products that are resource-efficient, durable (including in terms of life span and absence of planned obsolescence), repairable, re-usable and upgradable;
- (c) target products containing critical raw materials to prevent those materials becoming waste;
- (d) encourage the re-use of products and the setting up of systems promoting repair and re-use activities, including in particular for electrical and electronic equipment, textiles and furniture, as well as packaging and construction materials and products;
- (e) encourage, as appropriate and without prejudice to intellectual property rights, the availability of spare parts, instruction manuals, technical information, or other instruments, equipment or software enabling the repair and re-use of products without compromising their quality and safety;
- (f) reduce waste generation in processes related to industrial production, extraction of minerals, manufacturing, construction and demolition, taking into account best available techniques;
- (g) reduce the generation of food waste in primary production, in processing and manufacturing, in retail and other distribution of food, in restaurants and food services as well as in households;
- (h) encourage food donation and other redistribution for human consumption, prioritising human use over animal feed and the reprocessing into non-food products;
- (i) promote the reduction of the content of hazardous substances in materials and products;
- (j) reduce the generation of waste, in particular waste that is not suitable for preparing for re-use or recycling;
- (k) identify products that are the main sources of littering and take appropriate measures to prevent and reduce litter from such products;
- (l) aim to halt the generation of marine litter; and

(m) develop and support information campaigns to raise awareness about waste prevention and littering.”

The actions contained in in this document take all the waste prevention measures into account.

Review and modification of waste prevention programmes

13.—(1) *The Department shall—*

(a) shall review each waste prevention programme at least every sixth year; and

(b) may from time to time modify the waste prevention programmes in accordance with Article 30 of the Waste Framework Directive.

The Waste Prevention Programme for Northern Ireland – Stopping Waste in its Tracks – was published in July 2020 and is now in its sixth year. In accordance with the requirement at Regulation 13(1)(a) (above) the Programme was reviewed between June 2025 and October 2025 and a modified programme with 21 proposed actions has been drafted in accordance with Regulation 13(1)(b);

Public participation in waste prevention programmes

14.—(1) Regulations 15 and 16 apply to the modification of a waste prevention programme as they apply to the preparation of such a programme.

(2) Regulations 15 and 16 do not apply to a waste prevention programme—

(a) designed for the sole purpose of serving national defence or taken in case of civil emergencies;

(b) for which a public participation procedure is carried out under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004(5);

(c) containing only provision relating to separation collection of waste, bio-waste, reuse, preparing for reuse, recovery and recycling targets;

(3) Steps taken before the coming into operation of these Regulations in relation to a waste prevention programme may be steps for the purposes of regulations 15 and 16.

Public participation procedures

15.—(1) As soon as reasonably practicable after preparing proposals for a waste prevention programme or for the modification of such a waste prevention programme, the Department shall—

(a) send a copy of the proposals to the consultation bodies;

(b) take such steps as it considers appropriate to bring the proposals to the attention of the persons who in the Department’s opinion—

(i) are, or are likely to be affected by the waste prevention programme; or

(ii) have an interest in the waste prevention programme;

(c) inform the public consultees of the address (which may include a website)—
(i) at which a copy of the proposals may be viewed; and
(ii) from which a copy of the proposals may be obtained;
(d) invite the consultation bodies and public consultees to express their opinion on the proposals, specifying the address to which, and the period within which opinions must be sent.

(2) The period referred to in paragraph (1)(d) must be of such length as will ensure that the consultation bodies and the public consultees are given an early and effective opportunity to express their opinion on the proposals.

(3) The Department shall keep a copy of the proposals for inspection by the public at all reasonable times free of charge.

(4) Nothing in paragraph (1)(c) requires the Department to provide copies of the proposals free of charge, but where a charge is made, it shall be a reasonable amount.

In accordance with Regulations 14 and 15 (above) DAERA will issue this draft Waste Prevention Programme for public consultation, including Northern Ireland local councils, Northern Ireland environmental groups, businesses and trade associations. The draft of the programme will be published on DAERA's website and the consultation will be promoted through DAERA's social media channels to encourage widespread participation. The consultation seeking replies and comments on the draft programme will be open for response for a period of 12 weeks.

Procedures following public participation

16.—(1) Before decisions on a waste management programme are made, the Department shall take account of any opinions expressed by a consultation body or public consultees.

(2) As soon as reasonably practicable after making decisions on a waste prevention programme the Department shall—

(a) inform the consultation bodies and the public consultees of the matters in paragraph (3);

(b) take such steps as it considers appropriate to bring the matters in paragraph (3) to the attention of the public; and

(c) if it has adopted the waste prevention programme, place a copy of the programme on the Department's website and make a copy of the programme available for inspection by the public at all reasonable times and free of charge.

(3) The matters are—

(a) the decisions made by the Department on the waste prevention programme;

(b) the reasons and considerations on which those decisions are based; and

(c) information about the public participation procedure.

(4) Nothing in paragraph (2)(c) requires the Department to provide copies free of charge, but where a charge is made, it shall be a reasonable amount.

Following the end of the consultation period DAERA will publish on its website a summary of the responses received. The Department will analyse the consultation responses and comments to consider if changes are required to the draft programme taking account of the views expressed during the consultation.

In accordance with Regulation 16(3), DAERA will, as soon as reasonably practicable, publish on DAERA website its views and decisions on the consultation responses and send a copy to stakeholders and consultees. If appropriate a final modified programme will be published on the Departmental website and copied to stakeholders and consultees.