

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Interim Business Plan 2026-27



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Towards 2050: Developing a net zero nature positive future, supporting sustainable agriculture and thriving rural communities.



Contents

Minister's Foreword	3
Message from the Permanent Secretary	4
Programme for Government 2024-27	5
Our Vision	6
Our Priorities	7
Our Key Pledges	8
Our Budget	9
Our People	11
Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations	12
Business Plan Commitments	13
Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements	26

Minister's Foreword



I am pleased to present the DAERA interim Business Plan for 2026-27. This plan sets out the key priorities and actions that DAERA will deliver over the year ahead, supporting our statutory functions, our Corporate Plan pledges, and the Executive's Programme for Government.

Taking its lead from our vision ***'Towards 2050: Developing a net zero, nature-positive future, supporting sustainable agriculture and thriving rural communities'*** the plan sets out the actions and commitments we plan to deliver in the year ahead. It reflects an ambitious work programme, one that will require us to work hard in the months ahead with a firm focus on delivering measurable results for the people and communities we serve.

The plan has been developed on a prudent and sustainable basis and sets out an ambitious and focused programme of work aligned with our statutory duties, corporate plan pledges, and Programme for Government commitments.

Discussions continue on a multi-year budget and it may be necessary, following their conclusion, for the plan to be reviewed and adjusted to take account of final decisions on the budgets to be made available to DAERA. In the meantime, it is important that we are clear about what we want to deliver and important that we continue to use our resources responsibly, transparently and in a way that maximises impact.

Delivery will rely on strong partnership working - within our own department, across government, and with our key partners. I look forward to working collectively to achieve the progress set out in this plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Muir', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Muir MLA

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Message from the Permanent Secretary



I am pleased to join Minister Muir in introducing the Department's Business Plan for 2026-27. The plan reflects the full scope of DAERA's responsibilities - those discharged under the DAERA Minister and those discharged under the direction and control of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Ministers - and highlights the progress we intend to deliver in the year ahead.

Transparency, accountability and performance remain central to how we operate. We will continue to publish regular updates showing progress in delivering the commitments in this plan, ensuring that our performance is open, measurable and focused on delivering tangible outcomes for people, places and the environment.

Our ability to deliver depends fundamentally on the expertise and continuing dedication of our staff. Throughout 2026-27, we will continue to implement the NICS People Strategy and the DAERA

People Plan 2025-27, strengthening capacity and capability, embracing innovation and ensuring that we have the right skills, systems and culture to meet our strategic objectives.

I look forward to working with our Ministers, colleagues across the Department, our agencies, and partners across all sectors to deliver the priorities set out in this plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katrina Godfrey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katrina Godfrey
Permanent Secretary
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Our Vision

Our 2026-27 business plan takes its lead from our overarching vision which is:

Towards 2050: Developing a Net Zero nature positive future, supporting sustainable agriculture and thriving rural communities.



DAERA at a Glance

Who We Are

DAERA is responsible for a wide range of environmental, agricultural and rural affairs functions across Northern Ireland. Around 3,500 staff including colleagues in our two agencies help deliver services that protect the environment, support farming and food production, manage forests and fisheries, and strengthen rural communities.



What We Do

DAERA impacts everyone in Northern Ireland by protecting the environment, tackling climate change, supporting sustainable agri-food and fishing, developing rural communities, and improving animal health and welfare as we work to eradicate disease.

With its agencies, bodies and partners, DAERA:

- Leads Northern Ireland’s climate change agenda and delivers the first Climate Action Plan.
- Takes action to protect and enhances the environment for future generations.
- Supports sustainable growth in agri-food, fishing, forestry, and environmental sectors, ensuring health and welfare standards.
- Delivers education and knowledge transfer programmes to underpin effective policy.
- Works with partners to improve socio-economic outcomes for rural communities.
- Implements Windsor Framework responsibilities.

DAERA Senior Management Structure

This [link](#) illustrates the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs senior staff structure correct as of March 2026.

Alignment with DAERA Corporate Plan

The priorities and pledges outlined in [DAERA's Corporate Plan](#) form the foundation for the 2026-27 business plan, ensuring that each strategic commitment drives meaningful progress across Northern Ireland's environmental, agricultural, and rural community sectors.

By drawing on achievements and lessons from the previous year - such as advancements in climate action, improvements in water quality, ongoing nature recovery efforts, and support for rural communities - the business plan is shaped to build upon these successes.

This approach ensures that DAERA's actions remain closely aligned with its overarching vision for a net zero, nature-positive future, while delivering tangible outcomes that benefit people, places, and the agri-food economy. As such, the business plan serves not only as a roadmap for the year ahead, but also as a testament to DAERA's commitment to continuous improvement and effective delivery, informed by its pledges and priorities.

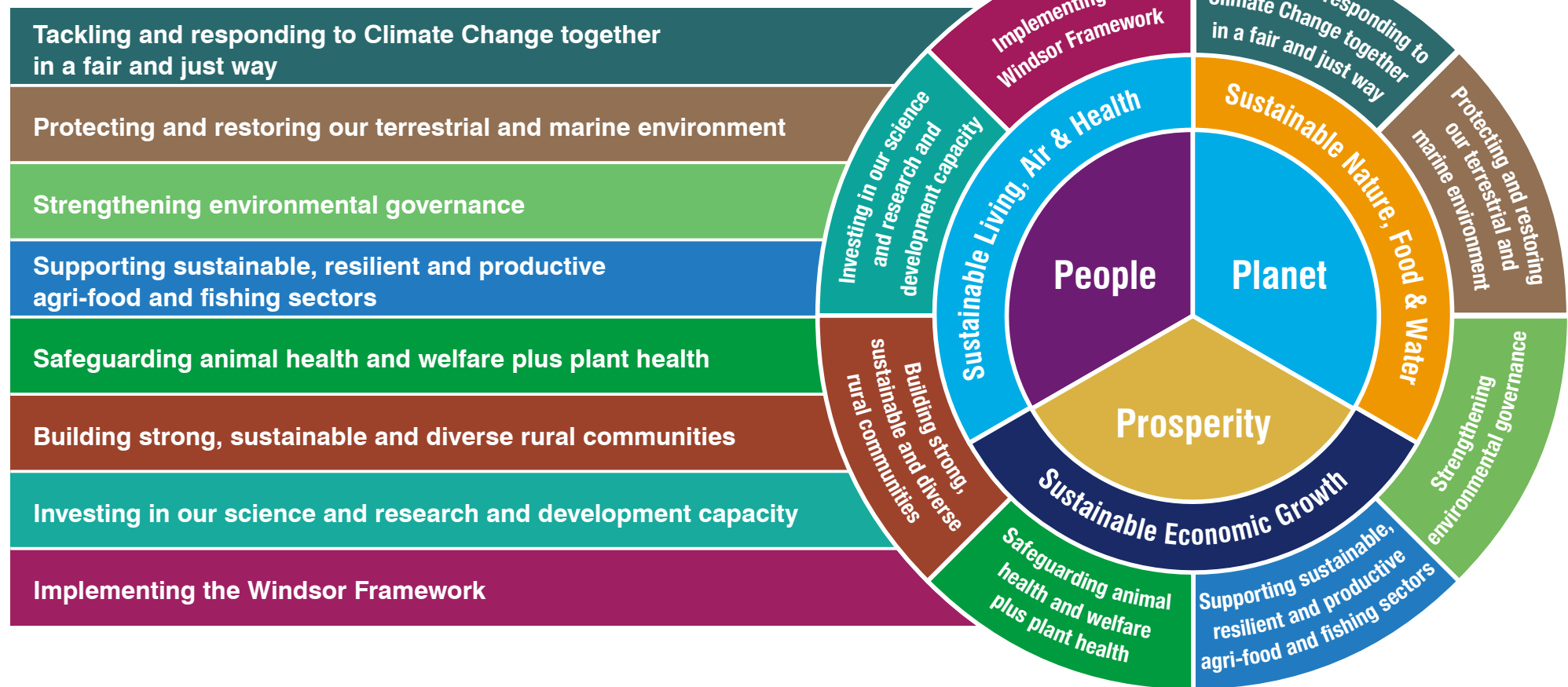
Corporate Plan
2025-2027

Towards 2050:
Delivering a net zero nature positive future, supporting sustainable agriculture and thriving rural communities.

Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gníothaí Tuaithe

Department of
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our Priorities



Our Key Pledges

We will deliver many policies, programmes and services during the life of the DAERA Corporate Plan 2025-27, but we are committing in particular to delivering ten key pledges by the end of the Assembly mandate in May 2027. They are:

<p>1</p>	<p>We will have brought forward the Carbon Budget Regulations to set carbon budgets and published climate action plans capable of delivering those budgets. The Just Transition Commission will be established.</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>We will have delivered a range of new animal welfare priorities, including legislation to better protect domestic and farmed animals.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>We will have delivered improvements to water quality, including through implementation of the Lough Neagh Action Plan and other related interventions.</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>We will have delivered a new, partnership-based rural policy framework capable of improving the wellbeing of our rural communities coupled with new support arrangements.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>We will have presented to the Executive and the Assembly a robust and effective way forward for improving environmental governance.</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>We will have published and worked to deliver a new Nature Recovery Strategy to ensure 30% of our land and seas are protected and well managed for nature by 2030.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>We will continue roll out of the Sustainable Agriculture Programme to help drive sustainable agricultural practices and a positive future for agri-food, whilst also protecting animal health and restoring our natural environment.</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>We will have published and will be working to implement a new Waste Management Strategy to help build a low carbon circular economy.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>We will have brought forward new, effective and evidence-based solutions capable of reducing and then eradicating bovine Tuberculosis.</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>We will continue to fulfil our international obligations through full, timely and faithful implementation of Windsor Framework and in supporting the UK Government to negotiate a new ambitious and comprehensive agri food, drink and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) and Veterinary Agreement with the EU.</p>

Reflection on 2025-26 Pledges and Priorities

During 2025-26, DAERA continued to make progress across all ten corporate plan pledges and eight priorities, delivering key milestones on climate action, water quality, nature recovery, rural communities, and sustainable agriculture. We strengthened our evidence, governance and delivery systems, and advanced work across agri food resilience, animal and plant health, and the Windsor Framework. This business plan builds on that progress and sets out the next steps for 2026-27.

Progress Snapshot 2025-26

- **Climate Action & Green Growth:** Consultation and strategy development progressed.
- **Water Quality:** Actions initiated to improve key catchments including Lough Neagh.
- **Nature Recovery:** Development work advanced on biodiversity strategy and habitat restoration approaches.
- **Sustainable Agriculture:** Continued rollout of nature friendly farming approaches and payments to farm businesses.
- **Rural Communities:** TRPSI projects delivered and PEACEPLUS preparations advanced.
- **Animal & Plant Health:** Strengthened disease preparedness and welfare policy development.
- **Windsor Framework:** Ongoing implementation and systems development.



Our Budget 2026-27

We plan and manage our budgets carefully to ensure public resources are used responsibly and achieve the best outcomes for people, the environment, and the agri food sector.

Through good financial planning, we will make the best use of our budgets, targeting our funding where it will deliver most and prioritising our work to deliver on agreed outcomes and aligned to the agreed Programme for Government Missions, Priorities, and Wellbeing domains.

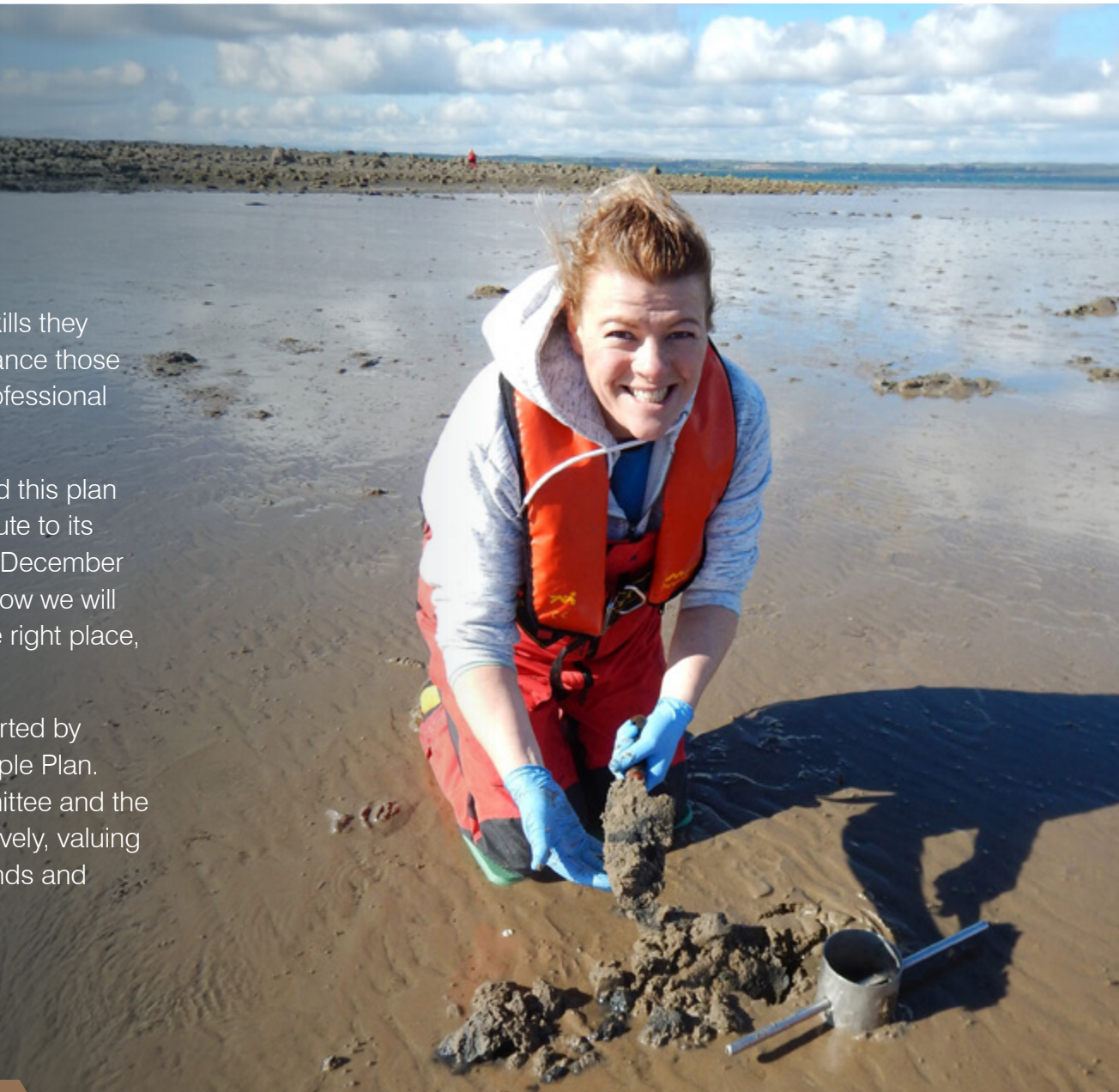
As the Department does not yet have an agreed Budget for 2026-27, the DoF Permanent Secretary has provided contingency planning envelopes (CPEs) to DAERA of £672.0m Resource DEL and £93.7m Capital DEL. These CPEs are not replacements for an agreed Executive Budget. Rather they represent funding that could be reasonably expected to be reflected in a Budget position brought to the Executive for consideration and are being used to inform the Department's spending plans until a Budget is agreed.

Our People

DAERA is committed to ensuring that our staff have the skills they need for their roles and opportunities to develop and enhance those skills. Where appropriate, staff are supported to obtain professional qualifications.

We fully support the NICS People Strategy 2025-2030, and this plan sets out the actions we will take during 2026-27 to contribute to its delivery. The DAERA People Plan 2025-2027, launched in December 2025, aligns with the NICS People Strategy and sets out how we will ensure we have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time to deliver our strategic objectives.

Key workstreams will continue throughout 2026-27, supported by dedicated resource to manage implementation of the People Plan. This work is overseen by the Capacity & Capability Committee and the Departmental Board. We are committed to working inclusively, valuing diversity in all its forms and respecting different backgrounds and perspectives.



Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations

As a public authority, DAERA has a legal responsibility to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across the categories set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Each year, we report our progress to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI), demonstrating the work we have carried out to advance equality and good relations. Further information is available in DAERA's Equality Scheme, which will be reviewed this year.

During this reporting year, the Department will consult on its proposed new Disability Action Plan, which will run until 2029 and ensure our approach remains effective in fostering positive attitudes towards disabled people. We will also begin work on DAERA's Audit of Inequalities, which will examine how our functions relate to the promotion of equality and good relations. The findings will inform a new action plan aligned to the Department's corporate planning cycle.

DAERA is committed to promoting equality, diversity, good relations and human rights across all aspects of our work. A key objective in the DAERA People Plan 2025-27 is to deliver an annual work programme that strengthens this commitment for both our staff and the public we serve.



How our 2026-27 commitments link to the Programme for Government

The Programme for Government (PfG) provides the strategic direction for all Executive departments over the mandate. DAERA's work contributes directly to several PfG priorities, particularly those focused on climate action, clean air and water, nature recovery, sustainable agriculture, rural development and strengthening public services.

Our 2026-27 commitments have been developed to ensure clear alignment with these priorities. Each commitment in this plan contributes to the delivery of PfG outcomes by supporting a healthier environment, a more resilient agri food economy, improved water quality, enhanced biodiversity, and stronger rural communities.

Business Plan Commitments

This section outlines the key actions the Department will implement during the specified period. We have prioritised the functions and services that we are legally mandated to provide, followed by initiatives that will further advance the delivery of the pledges outlined in our Corporate Plan 2025-27 and in the PfG. Where a target date of 31 March 2027 is detailed in this plan, this reflects planned delivery within the 2026-27 financial year, with many actions expected to be completed well in advance of that date.



Priority 1: Tackling and responding to climate change together in a fair and just way.

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
1	Following Executive approval and working with all departments, we will bring forward NI's first Climate Action Plan and commence its implementation.	To set out the policies and proposals that will be implemented to meet the carbon budget for the period up to 2030.	31 March 2027	Pledge 1: Climate Action Plan
2	We will establish the independent Just Transition Commission	To ensure a fair and just transition to net zero.	28 February 2027	Pledge 1: Just Transition
3	We will deliver emissions reduction and carbon sequestration outcomes in line with the Climate Change Act by co-ordinating action across four priority sectors:	To ensure delivery of Northern Ireland's statutory carbon budget commitments by focusing effort on sectors with the greatest potential to reduce emissions and increase carbon sequestration, while supporting	31 March 2027	Pledge 1: Carbon Budgets Pledge 4: Sustainable Agriculture

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste - including action to bring forward the Waste Management Strategy, supporting a transition to a low carbon, circular economy. Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) - including implementation of 2026-27 actions in the Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy to 2040 and development of the Tree Action Plan to support increased carbon sequestration and climate resilience. Agriculture - implementing measures to reduce emissions within the Agriculture Sector Climate Action Plan (2023- 2027) and developing a strategic pathway for agriculture through the next 2 CAP periods. 	wider environmental resilience and nature recovery.		<p>Pledge 8: Nature Recovery</p> <p>Pledge 9: Waste Management</p>
4	We will implement the department’s climate adaptation measures as detailed in the NICCAP3.	Northern Ireland needs to take action to adapt and be resilient to the impact of climate change.	31 March 2027	Pledge 1: Carbon Budgets
5	Following Executive approval and working with other Departments, we will implement the Green Growth Strategy.	To deliver a low carbon, nature-positive environment, supporting green jobs and wellbeing.	31 March 2027	Pledge 1: Just Transition



Priority 2: Protecting and restoring our terrestrial and marine environment.

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
6	Working with other departments, we will continue to drive forward implementation of the Executive-agreed Lough Neagh Action Plan.	To support and improve water quality in Lough Neagh.	31 March 2027	Pledge 2: Water Quality
7	Following public consultation, we will bring forward a new Nature Recovery (Biodiversity) Strategy.	To halt and reverse biodiversity loss and put nature on a path to recovery.	31 March 2027	Pledge 8: Nature Recovery
8	We will continue to take action to safeguard water quality and the environment at Mobuoy.	To protect the environment and maintain water quality.	31 March 2027	Pledge 2: Water Quality
9	Following public consultation, we will bring forward for Executive approval a revised Nutrients Action Programme (2026-2029), an updated Ammonia Strategy providing an integrated suite of support mechanisms to reduce pollution and protect the natural environment.	To meet statutory obligations and improve water quality.	31 March 2027	Pledge 2: Water Quality

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
10	We will progress development of the Fourth Cycle River Basin Management Plan by publishing the draft Fourth Cycle Plan for consultation.	To improve water quality and demonstrate joined-up delivery on Ministerial pledges.	31 December 2026	Pledge 2: Water Quality
11	We will bring forward a Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland.	To reduce air pollution and improve environmental and public health outcomes.	31 March 2027	Pledge 8: Nature Recovery
12	We will finalise and, following Executive and Defra SoS approval, adopt the Marine Plan for Northern Ireland, and progress delivery of the Marine Protected Areas (MPA).	To support sustainable use of marine resources and protect priority habitats and species.	31 December 2026	Pledge 2: Water Quality



Priority 3: Strengthening environmental governance.

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
13	We will develop and maintain our enforcement capability and capacity to help prevent and tackle environmental harm by reviewing our enforcement policy, processes, and training.	To strengthen governance and improve environmental outcomes.	31 March 2027	Pledge 3: Environmental Governance
14	We will implement the NIEA Planning Improvement Plan to improve statutory consultee performance and support timely planning decisions.	To improve NIEA performance as a statutory consultee and support more efficient and effective planning outcomes.	31 March 2027	Pledge 3: Environmental Governance
15	As part of our commitment to strengthening environmental governance, we plan to introduce new primary legislation - the Fisheries and Water Environment Bill and seek its passage through the Assembly.	To establish a robust legal framework for environmental protection.	31 March 2027	Pledge 3: Environmental Governance
16	We will publish the annual progress report on Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) implementation.	To fulfil statutory duty and demonstrate progress.	31 March 2027	Pledge 3: Environmental Governance

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
17	We will develop and implement Wastewater Regulation and Enforcement Plans, building on commitments made to the Assembly.	To strengthen environmental regulation and improve water quality outcomes	31 March 2027	Pledge 8: Nature Recovery Pledge 3: Environmental Governance



Priority 4: Supporting sustainable, resilient and productive agri-food and fishing sectors.

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
18	We will deliver the published timeline for the Sustainable Agriculture Programme and continue to support farmers to improve productivity, adopt low carbon, nature friendly practices across all land types and improve animal health outcomes.	To reduce agricultural carbon emissions, improve sustainability, and support resilient farm businesses.	31 March 2027	Pledge 4: Sustainable Agriculture
19	We will deliver a phased rollout of the Farming with Nature package to support nature friendly farming across all land types in Northern Ireland.	To enhance biodiversity and deliver a nature positive farming environment.	31 March 2027	Pledge 4: Sustainable Agriculture
20	Through the Marine Environment and Fisheries Funding Scheme, we will deliver targeted investment across key areas such as vessel modernisation, conservation, aquaculture, marketing, port infrastructure, science, community sustainability, diversification, and next generation development.	To support a sustainable, resilient, and environmentally responsible fishing industry.	31 March 2027	Pledge 4: Positive future for agri-food

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
21	Through the NI Food Framework we will implement year 2 of the existing Action Plan and work with stakeholders to develop a new Action Plan that considers a systems approach to food production and consumption.	To deliver a whole of government approach towards food, recognising the interconnection between food, health, the economy and the environment.	31 March 2027	Pledge 4: Sustainable Agriculture
22	We will deliver a suite of education, knowledge transfer and innovation programmes, to support key policy drivers across DAERA.	To promote sustainable agricultural production, reduce the sector’s environmental impact, and enhance the resilience of farming communities.	31 March 2027	Pledge 4: Sustainable Agriculture



Priority 5: Safeguarding animal health and welfare plus plant health.

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
23	We will work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to advance delivery of the bTB Eradication Blueprint by implementing agreed science led, evidence-based measures that reduce disease transmission and support long term eradication.	To lower disease incidence, ease the burden on farmers, and protect trade.	31 March 2027	Pledge 5: eradicating bovine Tuberculosis.
24	We will bring forward legislation to ban the third-party sale of pups and kittens in NI for Executive agreement and Assembly approval.	To better protect domestic animals and promote responsible breeding practices.	31 March 2027	Pledge 6: Animal Welfare
25	We will deliver the DAERA Animal Welfare Pathway to improve animal welfare outcomes across Northern Ireland.	To support welfare policies for all animals in NI, and further public and industry confidence in the high standards throughout our food chain.	31 March 2027	Pledge 6: Animal Welfare
26	We will protect the high plant health status of Northern Ireland through surveillance, inspection, contingency planning and advisory support, to prevent the introduction or spread of plant pests and diseases.	To strengthen biosecurity and protect agri-food supply chains.	31 March 2027	Pledge 10: Windsor Framework

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
27	We will strengthen animal disease preparedness by enhancing contingency planning and response capability, to ensure that we can respond effectively to high risk animal health threats.	To strengthen preparedness for epizootic disease threats and protect Northern Ireland’s high animal health status.	31 March 2027	Pledge 6: Animal Welfare
28	We will implement Official Controls on behalf of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) across approved slaughterhouses, cutting plants, primary production and game handling establishments in accordance with Service Level Agreements.	To ensure compliance with statutory standards of animal health, animal welfare and public health and production of safe food.	31 March 2027	Pledge 10: Windsor Framework



Priority 6: Building strong, sustainable and diverse rural communities.

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
29	We will bring forward a new evidence-based rural policy, developed in partnership with rural stakeholders, reflecting the emerging ‘Rural NI: Our New Approach 2026-2041’ strategic direction, for Executive agreement.	To enable and support rural communities where people want to live, work and be active in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.	31 March 2027	Pledge 7: Rural Policy
30	Under the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework and through PEACEPLUS investment, we will strengthen rural communities by supporting projects that promote social inclusion, drive regeneration and stimulate sustainable local growth.	To tackle poverty and social isolation in rural areas.	31 March 2027	Pledge 7: Rural Policy
31	We will progress the Dilapidation Bill through the Assembly and seek its approval.	To give district councils modern and fit-for-purpose powers to tackle dilapidated properties, thereby improving the quality of the environment of our communities.	31 March 2027	Pledge 7: Rural Policy



Priority 7: Investing in our science and research development capacity.

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
32	We will leverage our transformed DAERA science systems to inform and shape policy and programme development, including greater investment in our science and R&D capacity.	To drive evidence-based policy, climate action, and green economic growth.	31 March 2027	All 10 pledges.
33	We will deliver Year 1 of the DAERA Data & AI Strategy by producing priority data products, improving analytical and AI tools, and strengthening the accessibility and responsible use of departmental data to support key programmes including the Climate Action Plan, the Sustainable Agriculture Programme, the Lough Neagh Action Plan and Bovine TB Eradication.	To build the capability within DAERA to enable delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities and pledges.	31 March 2027	All 10 pledges.
34	We will publish our response to the Review of Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and take forward a set of actions to improve how we commission work from AFBI and to ensure that it provides the science services required to meet future needs for research and evidence.	To support evidence-based policy, drive innovation, and strengthen our capacity to meet future challenges in agricultural and environmental science.	31 March 2027	All 10 pledges.



Priority 8: Implementing the Windsor Framework.

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
35	We will progress implementation of the Animal Health Law, ensuring Northern Ireland’s animal health framework is aligned with international standards and supports effective disease prevention, control and trade.	To ensure compliance and protect public and animal health, and support trade and agri-food supply chain continuity.	31 March 2027	Pledge 10: Windsor Framework
36	We will fulfil our international obligations through full, timely and faithful implementation of the Windsor Framework, including delivery of required resources and legislative programme.	To ensure compliance and protect public, animal, and plant health, and support trade and agri-food supply chain continuity.	31 March 2027	Pledge 10: Windsor Framework

To support the delivery of all of our Corporate Plan priorities and pledges we have also agreed a further area of focus which is:

We will build our capacity to deliver, by investing in our people, while also safeguarding

Commitment number	How we will achieve it	Why we are doing this (outcomes)	Commitment date	Link to Corporate Plan Pledges
37	We will live within the budgets allocated to us, ensuring that we manage public expenditure in line with the principles of regularity, propriety, value for money and feasibility.	We have a responsibility to be effective stewards of taxpayers' money, ensuring high standards of financial management and accountability and living within the legal budget ceiling for DAERA set out in the Budget Act.	31 March 2027	All 10 pledges.
38	We will continue to implement new DAERA People Plan, and the actions taken will support the implementation of the NICS People Strategy within DAERA.	The actions, in our People Plan will enable us to ensure that we have the right staff in the right place, at the right time with the right skills to deliver our strategic objectives.	31 March 2027	All 10 pledges.
39	We will strengthen DAERA's capability by delivering the long term transformation, sustainability, modernisation and effective management and safety of the DAERA and AFBI estate.	To strengthen DAERA's organisational capability and ensure the long-term resilience and sustainability of our estate.	31 March 2027	All 10 pledges.

Alignment with the DAERA Corporate Risk Register

Delivery of the Interim DAERA Business Plan 2026-27 is closely linked to the effective management of the Department's Corporate Risk Register. The priorities and commitments set out in the Business Plan contribute directly to the mitigation of key corporate risks, particularly those relating to policy coherence, programme delivery, affordability and organisational capacity.

Progress in delivering Business Plan commitments, and emerging issues affecting delivery, will continue to inform the identification, assessment and management of corporate risks through established governance arrangements, including the Departmental Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.



Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

The Department has established monitoring and reporting arrangements in place in relation to our Business Plan targets. In the first instance, each target is assigned to a Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) who will have responsibility for monitoring progress on a regular basis. During the course of the financial year, detailed progress against each Business Plan target will be reported to the Departmental Board. This will be done for the periods ending 30 September, 31 December and 31 March.

Progress will be reported on a Red / Amber / Green (RAG) basis as follows:

Green

- Where a commitment has been delivered or where there is significant confidence, drawing on robust monitoring systems/data, that it will be delivered on schedule.

Amber

- An amber rating should be used where there is some slippage in delivery but steady progress is being maintained and the action will be delivered albeit slightly later than the target date.
- An amber might also be used or where the commitment will be largely but not completely achieved (eg if the action specified a 90% response rate and only 80% was delivered).

Red

- A red rating is appropriate where a commitment is not going to be delivered at all or in the foreseeable future.

Following the end of the 2026-27 financial year the DAERA 2026-27 Annual Report and Accounts will be published and placed on the DAERA website. The Annual Report will include a Performance section showing the extent to which the targets in the 2026-27 Business Plan were achieved.

BUSINESS PLAN 2026-27



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

An Róinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE[®]
We invest in people Standard