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24 September 2021

Dear Consultee

## **Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework: Public Consultation**

We are writing to invite you to share your views on proposals for a Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework, which will launch for an **eight week** formal online public consultation on Friday 24 September 2021.

### **Background**

Food contributes to Northern Ireland's regional economic prosperity and can help to address many of its significant societal challenges. There is growing international acceptance of the interconnectedness between food, health and the environment. There is an expectation that a food system should ensure environmental, social and economic sustainability. There is also a growing interest in sustainable healthy diets.

The draft Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework recognises the interconnectedness around food and proposes an innovative strategic food systems approach. It sets out a long term vision, high level principles and areas for strategic focus to optimise cross-departmental working on food matters in Northern Ireland to deliver Programme for Government and departmental objectives. The vision is a transformed food system that protects natural resources for future generations, is economically and environmentally sustainable and provides safe, nourishing, accessible food to people, who make informed healthy choices.

DAERA has been leading on the development of this cross-departmental Framework with input from other Departments and a wide range of external stakeholders.

During the development process six strategic priorities were identified:

- **Priority One:** Building connections between health /wellbeing and food

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- **Priority Two:** Building Sustainable Economic Prosperity
- **Priority Three:** Building a Food Culture and Food Conscious Society
- **Priority Four:** Protecting and Enhancing our Natural Resources
- **Priority Five:** Building Healthy Lives through Food Education
- **Priority Six:** Building and maintaining appropriate Emergency Contingency plans across the supply chain.

The Department is now seeking views on this new collaborative approach under a Northern Ireland Framework from across a much broader range of stakeholders and the general public. Subject to the outcome of this consultation exercise, it is anticipated that an agreed Framework would be published in 2022.

## Consultation

The consultation will run for an 8 week period from **Friday 24 September 2021**; the deadline for responses to this consultation is 23.59 **Friday 19 November 2021**. All responses should be received by then to ensure they can be fully considered.

The consultation documents are available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/northern-ireland-food-strategy-framework/> and the consultation pack includes:

- Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework Consultation Document
- Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework Stakeholder Engagement Letter
- Equality and Human Rights Screening Template
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment

DAERA would welcome views on the proposals for a cross-departmental Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework. In particular, we are seeking your views on the proposed vision, principles and goals of a Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework. We would also welcome any comments you wish to make on those aspects that are of particular interest to you in the consultation.

In an effort to reduce the environmental impact of the production of consultation papers, the Department is encouraging stakeholders to respond using the online response function. If you wish to take part in the consultation, once you have considered the proposals, you should respond online, through our survey which can be accessed here:

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/daera-food-and-farming-policy/food-at-the-heart-of-our-society-a-prospectus>

If required, a limited number of hard copies (typescript) of the consultation response form are available - please contact us to discuss your requirements by email to [futurefoodpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:futurefoodpolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk) or by telephone (028 90524150).

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Responses to this consultation are invited until 23.59 on Friday 19 November 2021.

## Virtual Engagement Events

We are providing the opportunity for engagement via online events with DAERA's Future Food Policy team. At these events, the team will provide an overview of the work undertaken to date in the development of the draft Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework and answer any questions you may have in advance of completing your consultation response via our online survey. It would be helpful if you could forward any questions you may have to [FutureFoodPolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:FutureFoodPolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk) prior to the consultation events.

We plan to hold 3 virtual consultation events. The dates are outlined below:

<b>Virtual Consultation Event Date</b>
<b>Thursday 30 September 4-5pm</b>
<b>Tuesday 5 October 7-8pm</b>
<b>Wednesday 13 October 10.30-11.30am</b>

NB: Registration for each event will open approximately 1 week before the event. For more information on each event and how to register visit: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/northern-ireland-food-strategy-framework/>

## Further Information

We look forward to hearing from you. Please do let us know if you want to speak to a member of the Team about the draft Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework, the approach being taken, or to request an alternative version of the consultation document, or if you or a group you are involved with would like to participate in a Food Strategy Framework engagement event.

You can contact us by email at: [FutureFoodPolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:FutureFoodPolicy@daera-ni.gov.uk) or if you are unable to access e-mail, you can telephone us on 028 90524150.

**Future Food Policy Branch  
Sustainable Agri-Food Development Division  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs**

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