

NIEA Business Plan 2016-17

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's (NIEA) Business Plan for 2016-17. This is the first year the Agency will play a role in delivering the aims of the new Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), following the reduction of the number of Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Departments from 12 to 9, on 9th May 2016, in line with the Stormont House and Fresh Start Agreements.

During the period of this plan, we will continue to engage with our customers and stakeholders who have a responsible and progressive approach to environmental management and will get tougher with those who want to take short cuts or who damage our environment and heritage.

The resource budget (Annex C) will be sufficient to fund the existing staff complement as well progress all the targets in the plan. However, there will be challenges ahead as the Agency lost 80 staff during 2015-16 under the NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES).

We recognise that there have been significant problems of waste crime and non compliance in the waste industry in the past number of years. The significant illegal waste site at Mobuoy, Co Londonderry which is estimated to hold approximately 913,105 m³ of illegally disposed waste is a clear example of this. Working with the waste industry, councils and other partners, we will continue to work towards a compliant and crime free waste industry. We are also keen to support Council initiatives to promote resource efficiency in order to reduce the amount of waste created and we will play our role by strengthening our regulatory oversight of the residual waste that is created. We will continue to reform the way that we regulate and the way that we provide input to planning decisions.

We will continue to build stronger partnerships with our customers and stakeholders. We will work with businesses and other Government Departments to unlock the economic opportunities provided by the resource efficiency agenda. We will also tackle the most acute natural environmental priorities facing us, such as safeguarding our most valuable sites and landscape, improving water quality,

protecting our priority species and encouraging access to the countryside and promoting the natural environment through our Country Parks and Nature Reserves. We will work with the public and with community groups to help them implement local environmental activities at country parks. Our Business Plan sets out these and other priorities in clear detail so that our staff know what they have to deliver, our customers and stakeholders know what to expect from us and the public knows what targets to hold us to account against. Whilst the focus of restructuring and reform will be on continuing to reduce costs, it will remain important to deliver against the new Programme for Government commitments, focus on Ministerial priorities and maintain key public services during the incoming year. This has been reflected in this Plan.

We look forward to working with all of our partners and meeting the expectations set out in this 2016-17 Business Plan.

David Small
Chief Executive

Introduction

1. This is the Business Plan for the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) for the 2016-17 year. It describes the strategic context within which the NIEA operates, identifies the key priorities for the year and sets out the specific targets the Agency is seeking to achieve to meet its Programme for Government, Departmental and Agency commitments in 2016-17.
2. This is the first Annual Business Plan for NIEA within the new department (DAERA). No functions were done away with and no policies terminated in the transfer process.
3. The result of the EU referendum will impact the future scope, structure and Programmes delivered by DAERA. During the course of the current financial year the focus will be on scoping out the implications, entering into negotiations with Whitehall and engaging with our stakeholders. Governance arrangements have already been put in place to co-ordinate activity across the NICS. Given the scale of change impacting the Department a Brexit Board has also been established to oversee the work programme and provide advice to the Minister on a wide range of issues that will no doubt arise. The Agency will work closely with the Department, other government departments and key stakeholders to fully assess the potential impact that this change will have on the services it delivers.
4. A new Departmental Vision with Strategic Outcomes has been established as follows:

Vision: “A thriving and sustainable economy, environment and rural community”

Strategic Outcomes:

- a) Sustainable agri-food, fisheries, forestry and industrial sectors.

- b) A clean, healthy environment, benefiting people, nature and the economy.
 - c) A thriving rural economy, contributing to prosperity and wellbeing.
5. Although the Agency will deliver outputs relating to all these outcomes, it will primarily deliver against the second strategic outcome.

Who we are

6. The NIEA is an Executive Agency within the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland operating within the context of the Department's overall vision and strategic objectives and is designed to protect and enhance Northern Ireland's environment.
7. We have a total staffing level of c.450 staff (Full Time Equivalent) who are located in offices and regional sites across Northern Ireland. There are two major sites: one in Belfast and one in Lisburn, with the Agency's headquarters located in the Klondyke Building, Belfast.

Structure

8. The NIEA sits within the Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group of the Department and is headed by a Chief Executive and a Board of Divisional Managers which spans two Divisions, Natural Environment and Resource Efficiency. An organisational chart showing the Divisions within the Agency is at **Annex A** (page 16).
9. A Statutory Advisory Council, the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC), provides the Agency with independent advice on environmental issues and activities.
10. The Chief Executive of the Agency is also the Agency Accounting Officer with the responsibilities and delegations outlined in Chapter 3 of the Department of Finance Guide - Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

Strategic Objective, Values

11. The strategic objective of the Agency is:

To create prosperity and well being through effective environment and natural heritage management and regulation.

This objective underpins the Department's overall vision, "*A thriving and sustainable economy, environment and rural community*".

Values

12. The Agency seeks to ensure high standards are maintained by its staff in fulfilling their role of supporting the Minister and developing good quality services to our customers. In doing this we will observe the core NICS values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.

Strategic Planning Context

13. The Stormont House and Fresh Start Agreements require an outcomes-focused Programme for Government (PfG). The Outcomes Framework is intended to help translate this into improvements in quality of life, in both economic and social terms. The PfG is to be developed as a Framework composed of Outcomes, Indicators, and Measures, with SROs responsible for performance against indicators, and Action Plans established for delivery, developed and implemented collaboratively across sectors.
14. The rationale for the new PfG was taken into account in establishing NIEA performance targets for 2016/17 linked to projected Outcomes to 2020.
15. The NIEA has a number of key outcomes included in the Departmental Business Plan which are underpinned by the targets in this Agency Plan.

These key outcomes, which are shown with the underpinning targets on pages 11 to 15, are:

- a) A full compliant regulated industry;
 - b) Freshwater and marine environment at “good status”;
 - c) A compliant crime free waste sector;
 - d) Good habitat and landscape quality with species abundance and diversity;
and
 - e) Promote environmentally sustainable development and infrastructure.
16. The main activities relating to these outcomes are the protection of the environment through regulation and enforcement; statutory designations; research and monitoring; raising public awareness of the environment and their role in protecting it. Using our professional and technical expertise, NIEA also contributes to environmental and natural heritage policy development.
17. We will continue to work with key stakeholders in our Regulated Industry which includes all businesses that require permits, licences, and consents which are issued by NIEA and that set the limits for permissible discharges to protect our natural and aquatic environments.
18. We also face numerous challenges within the realm of biodiversity; 30% of the special features which underpin our Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) network are in an unfavourable condition. This has remained unchanged since 2014 and our Wetland bird populations are continuing to decline across the region.
19. The Agency is exploring the most effective and efficient way to deliver environmental advice and guidance to our customers to comply with legislative requirements; to deliver environmental outcomes and enable businesses to be profitable and sustainable.
20. The Agency has also recommenced discussions with the Ulster Farmers Union on developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to

deliver higher levels of environment compliance, through the provision of advice and guidance and proportionate and appropriate regulation.

Business Planning/Performance Management Processes

21. This NIEA Business Plan covers the year from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. The targets included in the Plan are linked to Outcomes projected to 2020 included in the draft DAERA Strategic Plan. The Agency uses the Outcomes Framework approach to business planning which enables staff to link into the work of their Division, and the Agency, within their Personal Performance Agreements (PPAs).
22. The Minister has set 8 key performance targets for NIEA in 2016/17 (**Annex B** – page 17).

Monitoring

23. The Agency has established monitoring and reporting arrangements in relation to its Business Plan targets. In the first instance, each target is assigned to a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) who will have responsibility for monitoring progress.
24. During the course of the financial year, detailed progress against each Business Plan target will be reported to the NIEA Board. At the highest level, reports setting out the achievement of the DAERA business plan targets to 30 September and 31 March, which include some of the Agency targets, will be submitted to the Minister and the DAERA Committee.
25. Progress will be reported in accordance with the methodology adopted for the Programme for Government (PfG) Commitment reports to the Executive. This is on a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) basis as follows:

Green - achieved or on track for delivery;

Green/Amber - level of progress is broadly on track with easily redeemable

deviations from plans;

Amber - rate of progress is less than planned; and

Red - not achieved or not expected to be achieved.

26. The Agency Board and Corporate Governance sub-committee will oversee the level of progress being made towards the milestones and targets set and will approve corrective actions required, as appropriate, during the course of the year.
27. The Agency's Annual Report and Accounts, which is published in the summer, will provide a summary of the achievement of the Agency's Key Performance Targets, as agreed by the Minister.

Governance

28. The Agency's Framework Document sets out the Agency's approach to corporate governance providing information on the arrangements that have been put in place to ensure proper and effective management of the Agency's affairs.

Funding for 2016/17

29. The Agency's primary source of funding in terms of Departmental Resource and Capital Expenditure comes from within the DAERA's overall Budget allocation as agreed by the Executive and approved by the Assembly. For the 2016/17 financial year, the Agency has been allocated an opening net Resource budget of £19.9 million for Resource expenditure and £1.25 million for Capital expenditure. The Agency also funds additional expenditure on programmes through income from services and the carrier bag levy. Income for 2016-17 is estimated to be £11.3 million. **Annex C** (page 18) provides a breakdown of the resource (including income) and capital funding.

AGENCY TARGETS

DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL PLAN OUTCOME: FULLY COMPLIANT REGULATED INDUSTRY					
Outcome	Sub Outcome	#	2016/17 Targets	By When	Lead
1 Fully compliant regulated industry	Effective and efficient advice, regulation and enforcement	1.1	Using Compliance assessment model aim for 90% compliance with all authorisations. KPT & DAERA target	March 2017	Mark Livingstone
	Robust Authorisations	1.2	Process 80% of duly made applications for authorisations within statutory deadlines.	March 2017	Mark Livingstone / Derek Williamson
	Regulatory Transformation	1.3	Develop and resource a project plan for delivery of Regulatory Transformation.	December 2016	Mark Livingstone
	Enhanced Liaison and Partnership working between Central / Local Government and Key Industry Clients	1.4	Provide input to the Business Plan for Northern Ireland Water Price Control Process (PC15) Investment Programme and apply the change protocol where required.	March 2017	Mark Livingstone
	Innovative regulatory approaches and strategic relationships with business partners	1.5	Deliver Phase 2 Prosperity Agreement Programme, signing a further 3 agreements and review progress on the existing 4.	March 2017	Mark Livingstone
		1.6	Review the current Prosperity Agreement delivery model and process to add transparency and accountability.	March 2017	Mark Livingstone

DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL PLAN OUTCOME: FRESHWATER AND MARINE ENVIRONMENT AT "GOOD STATUS"					
Outcome	Sub Outcome	#	2016/17 Targets	By When	Lead
2 Freshwater and marine environment at "Good Status"	Achieve "Good" Water Quality status in 70% of water bodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, territorial waters and ground waters) by 2021	2.1	[NB] The overall target of 70% is predicated on a 6 year programme. (Indicative 3 yr target for rivers is a 10% improvement). The Annual target is to deliver 80% of actions identified for each project identified in the 2016/17 catchment work programme. KPT	March 2017	Jenny Long
	Effective and efficient advice, regulation and enforcement (Agriculture)	2.2	Complete cross compliance inspections on at least 1% of all farms and 5% under derogation.	December 2016	Jenny Long
		2.3	Engage with UFU to develop an MOU to deliver higher levels of environmental compliance and contribute towards achieving Water Framework Directive objectives.	March 2017	Jenny Long

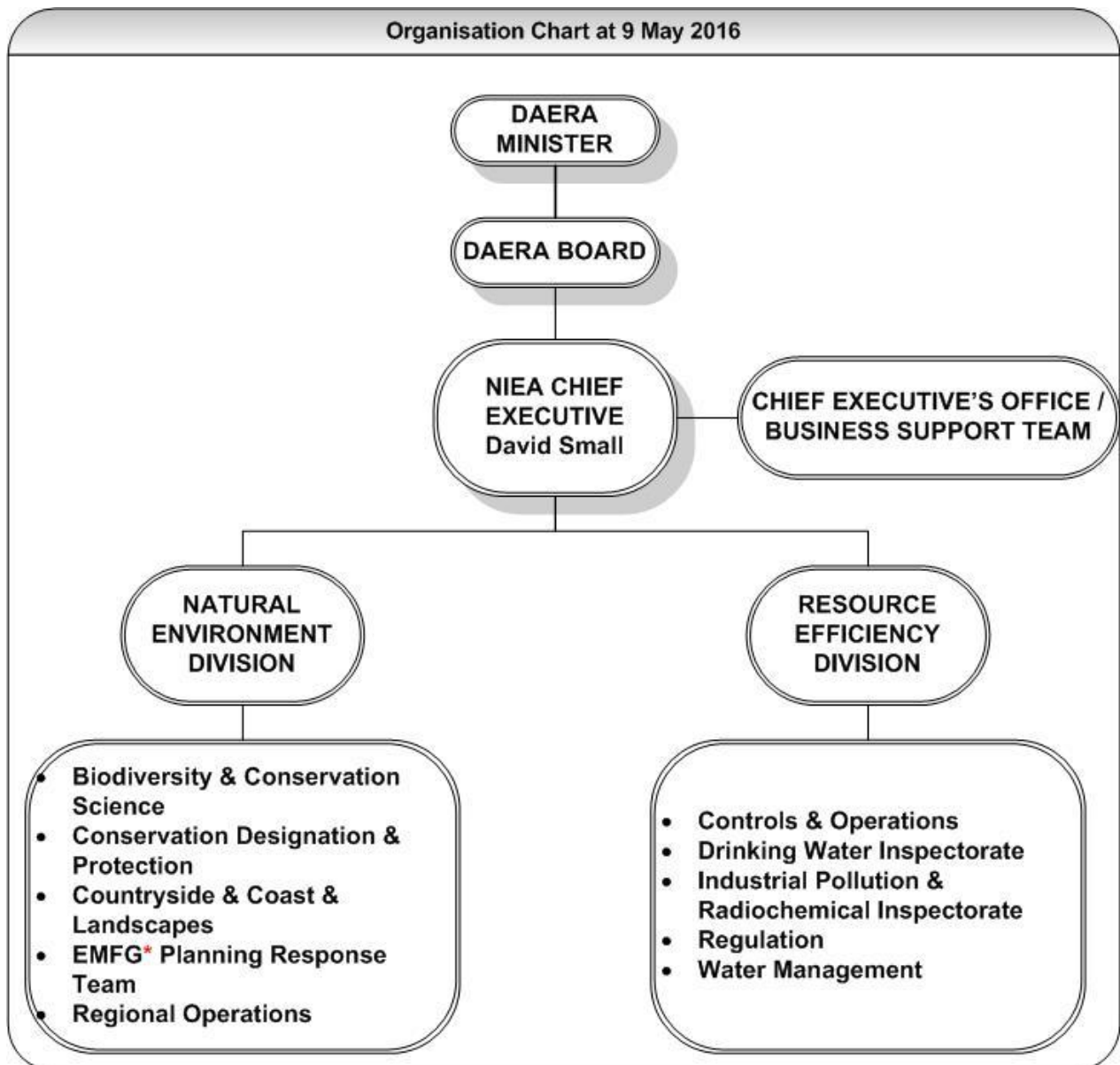
DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL PLAN OUTCOME: A COMPLIANT CRIME FREE WASTE SECTOR					
Outcome	Sub Outcome	#	2016/17 Targets	By When	Lead
3 A compliant crime free waste sector	Reduced Illegal Activity	3.1	Complete biannual strategic assessments of waste crime in Northern Ireland. Assessments are in May and November each year. KPT & DAERA target	November 2016	Derek Williamson
		3.2	Progress at least 90% of all incident/intelligence reports within 28 days of receipt.	March 2017	Derek Williamson
		3.3	Provide an updated strategy for Controls & Operations Unit to include the four pillars of: (a) compliance; (b) disruption; (c) deterrence; and (d) removal of criminals from the waste sector.	June 2016	Derek Williamson
		3.4	In order to ensure that the financial benefits of serious waste crime are addressed we will: (a) Ensure a minimum of 90% of Crown Court cases are adopted for financial investigation; and (b) By year end, maintain a minimum of five financial investigations per accredited financial investigator. (i.e. tackle the economic driver of waste crime),	March 2017	Derek Williamson

DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL PLAN OUTCOME:					
GOOD HABITAT AND LANDSCAPE QUALITY WITH SPECIES ABUNDANCE AND DIVERSITY					
Outcome	Sub-outcomes	#	2016/17 Targets	By When	Lead
4 Good habitat and landscape quality with species abundance and diversity	Loss of Biodiversity halted by 2020	4.1	Implement the relevant Departmental 2016/17 actions in the NI Biodiversity Strategy. KPT & DAERA target	March 2017	Mark Wright
		4.2	Deliver agreed elements of the Environment Farming Scheme programme plan within 2016/17. DAERA target (part input)	March 2017	Mark Wright
		4.3	Agree and deliver designation programme covering Areas of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar Sites and National Nature Reserves.	March 2017	Sara McGuckin
		4.4	Initiate a land cover/habitat mapping project or projects.	March 2017	Mark Wright
		4.5	Agree and instigate operational requirements for Invasive species regulations	March 2017	Mark Wright
	Conservation status on 60% of Natura 2000 network maintained or improved	4.6	Develop Special Areas of Conservation Management programme plan 2016/17. KPT	March 2017	Sara McGuckin
		4.7	Initiate management plans for 5 terrestrial Special Areas of Conservation	March 2017	Sara McGuckin
		4.8	Complete a technical assessment of Phase 2 applications of INTERREG VA projects. KPT	March 2017	Sara McGuckin
	The delivery of grant funding schemes to support good habitat and landscape quality	4.9	Review the successful Environment Fund applications in line with the agreed budget allocations and issue the 2017/18 Environment Fund offers. KPT & DAERA target	November 2016	Mark Hammond
	Community engagement at NIEA-run sites and properties	4.10	Ensure the delivery of safe and sustainable access to NIEA-managed sites while attracting more visitors by engaging with potential partners, educators and volunteers and with other stake-holders.	March 2017	Robert Bleakley

DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL PLAN OUTCOME:						
PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE						
Outcome	Sub-outcome	#	Target	By When	Lead	
5	Promote environmentally sustainable development and infrastructure	Improved service delivery of environmental advice and on strategic and local planning	5.1	Respond to 90% of planning consultation requests within agreed timescales. KPT	March 2017	Pat Corker
			5.2	Respond to Development and Community Plan consultations issued by Councils and Strategic Environmental Assessment consultations from public authorities within statutory or agreed timeframes.	March 2017	Mark Hammond
			5.3	Explore opportunities and develop a new model for delivering environmental advice and guidance to customers	March 2017	Tracey Teague
	Providing Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Public Access to the Natural Environment	5.4	Participate in the delivery of 2016/17 actions in the Outdoor Recreation Action Plan.	March 2017	Mark Hammond	
	5.5	Ensure that five NIEA country parks are rated at least 'good' by Tourism NI.	March 2017	Robert Bleakley		

DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL PLAN OUTCOME:						
A WELL LED, HIGH PERFORMING ORGANISATION FOCUSED ON OUTCOMES						
Outcome	Sub-outcome	#	Target	By When	Lead	
6	To manage our resources effectively within a strong corporate governance framework	Budget Out-turn	6.1	Provisional Resource and Capital Out-turn between 98.5% and 100% of final budget.	March 2017	Agency Board/ Head of Business Support Team

NIEA ORGANISATION CHART



*EMFG – Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group

KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2016-17

Target Number	Outcome	Sub-Outcome	Target	Lead Division
1	Fully compliant regulated industry	Effective and efficient advice, regulation and enforcement	Using Compliance assessment model aim for 90% compliance with all authorisations.	Resource Efficiency
2	Freshwater and marine environment at "Good Status"	Achieve "Good" Water Quality status in 70% of water bodies (rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, territorial waters and ground waters) by 2021	The Annual target is to deliver 80% of actions identified for each project identified in the 2016/17 catchment work programme.	Resource Efficiency
3	A compliant crime free waste sector	Reduced Illegal Activity	Complete biannual strategic assessments of waste crime in Northern Ireland. Assessments are in May and November each year.	Resource Efficiency
4	Good habitat and landscape quality with species abundance and diversity	Loss of biodiversity halted by 2020	Implement the relevant Departmental 2016/17 actions in the NI Biodiversity Strategy.	Natural Environment
5		Conservation status on 60% of Natura 2000 network maintained or improved	Develop Special Areas of Conservation Management programme plan 2016/17.	Natural Environment
6			Complete a technical assessment of Phase 2 applications of INTERREG VA projects.	Natural Environment
7		The delivery of grant funding schemes to support good habitat and landscape quality	Review the successful Environment Fund applications in line with the agreed budget allocations and issue the 2017/18 Environment Fund offers.	Natural Environment
8	Promote environmentally sustainable development and infrastructure	Improved service delivery of environmental advice on strategic and local planning	Respond to 90% of planning consultation requests within agreed timescales	Natural Environment

NIEA FUNDING (2016-17)**RESOURCE BUDGET**

Notes		£k	% (of Gross Resource Budget)
1	Salaries and wages	21,379	68
	Depreciation (ring fenced)	1,420	5
	Sub Total	22,799	73
	Non salary and non ring fenced		
2	GAE	1,849	
3	Contracted Services	4,217	
4	Grants	2,356	
	Sub Total	8,422	27
	Gross Budgets allocated	31,221	100
	Funded By:		
	Income		
	Regulatory & Commercial	7,900	
	Carrier bag levy	3,390	
	Total Income	11,290	36
	Net Resource DEL budget	19,931	64

Notes

1. Non industrial salaries, industrial wages, overtime and local council rivers officers.
2. Travel and subsistence and non salary running costs (including accommodation costs).
3. Management agreements in respect of designated sites; maintenance of country parks and nature reserves; environmental sampling, monitoring and analysis; mapping services; and vehicle running costs.
4. Environmental grants funded from the carrier bag levy income and disbursed mainly through the competitive Environment and Challenge funds.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

	2016-17 £'000s
Vehicles, machinery, equipment and capital works at country parks	1,255