

# Prosperity Agreement

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Northern Ireland Environment Agency *and*  
Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (Usel)



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**15<sup>th</sup> February 2018**



An Agency within the Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



# Prosperity Agreement

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15<sup>th</sup> February 2018

## Between:

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### Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

Klondyke Building, Gasworks Business Park,  
Lower Ormeau Road, Malone Lower Belfast,  
BT7 2JA.

*and*

### Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (Usel)

Cambrai Street, Belfast,  
Co. Antrim. BT13 3JH

## In which:

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The parties agree to put in place a framework based on the following joint aspirations to move their business further towards long-term prosperity through improved environmental outcomes:

1. Seeking opportunities to explore innovative solutions to implement resource efficiency and sustainability of business in Northern Ireland.
2. Working in collaboration with the supply chain, other stakeholders and the community to influence environmental outcomes and develop the circular economy.
3. Working together to promote better regulation and secure good business practice.



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**David Small**  
CEO, Northern Ireland Environment Agency



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**Bill Atkinson**  
CEO, Ulster Supported Employment Ltd



## Background information

### What is a Prosperity Agreement?

Prosperity Agreements are voluntary agreements through which the NIEA and an organisation or a group of organisations can explore new creative ways of reducing environment impacts in ways that create prosperity and well-being.

This Prosperity Agreement is between the NIEA and Usel. It aims to, through a stronger partnership between the parties, tackle environmental and economic problems facing Northern Ireland and capitalise on opportunities.

## Key environment opportunities or challenges

The agreed joint aspirations encompass opportunities and challenges that both parties agree are key to developing a better way of working to improve business and environmental outcomes. **These are expressed as four commitments:**

1. Usel will continue to develop opportunities for efficiencies within their existing operations.
2. Usel in partnership with NIEA and other organisations will develop opportunities for expansion, contributing to the circular economy.
3. Usel will maximise the social capital from its activities by working in partnership with others to develop local skills and improve environmental quality and biodiversity arrangements.
4. Both NIEA and Usel commit to monitoring and promoting the Prosperity Agreement on a regular basis.

Commitment	Outcome
1. Usel will continue to develop opportunities for efficiencies within their existing operations.	a) Increased competitiveness and sustainability of Usel.
	b) Reduced energy consumption and carbon emissions from operations.
	c) Increased levels of recycling of key material streams.
	d) A reduction in process waste.
2. Usel in partnership with NIEA and other organisations will develop opportunities for expansion, contributing to the circular economy.	a) Promotion of the circular economy and its benefits.
	b) Increased diversion of reusable materials from landfill.
	c) Effective and strategic partnership working.
3. Usel will maximise the social capital from its activities by working in partnership with others to develop local skills and improve environmental quality and biodiversity arrangements.	a) Improved local environmental quality and biodiversity.
	b) Enhanced relationships and communication with local stakeholders.
	c) More opportunities for learning and social development.

Commitment	Outcome
4. Both NIEA and Usel commit to monitoring and promoting the Prosperity Agreement on a regular basis.	a) Increased awareness of Prosperity Agreement Programme and associated benefits.
	b) Positive and regular communication between NIEA and Usel.

## Parties to the Agreement

### Ulster Supported Employment Ltd

Usel was established in 1962 to provide supported paid employment for people within its Belfast manufacturing base. In 1980 Usel merged with 'Workshops for the Blind' to become the largest supporter of people with disabilities and health-related conditions into open employment in Northern Ireland. Today we employ, support, and train up to 1500 people with disabilities or health-related conditions across the province.

Usel is Northern Ireland's largest provider of supported employment for people with disabilities and health related conditions. Its strategic vision is to "Champion Ability and Transform Lives", helping people living with disabilities and health related conditions find and sustain employment. We place our customers and clients at the heart of everything we do. Our manufacturing operations, based in Belfast, produces a wide range of products, including hand-made mattresses, hand stitched vintage leather satchels and bespoke bags for clients such as UK emergency services. Usel in partnership with local authorities are key drivers in the transformational change of waste management through our recycling operations.

### NIEA

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is an Agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) with approximately 450 staff. The Agency is part of the wider Environment Marine and Fisheries Group (EMFG) in DAERA. The NIEA leads in advising on, and in implementing, the Government's environmental policy and strategy in Northern Ireland. Divisions within the NIEA undertake a range of activities that promote the Government's key themes of sustainable development, biodiversity and climate change.

The Strategic Objective of the NIEA 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"*.

The key outcomes through which the NIEA will meet its strategic objective are:

- a) A fully 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.

### Governance arrangements

#### Life of the Agreement

The parties have agreed that this Prosperity Agreement will operate for a period of three years from the date of this Agreement.

#### Party stakeholders

For the purpose of this Agreement, stakeholders include Usel Board and employees, NGOs, the Northern Ireland community, NIEA employees, and other government agencies, such as Invest NI.

#### Management of the Agreement

The following framework for decision making and management of the agreement has been approved by the two signature parties. .

Both parties are responsible for:

- Endorsing and directing implementation action.
- Reviewing implementation progress.
- Support appropriate resourcing.
- Interacting with their respective organisations and party stakeholders.
- Reporting and making recommendations on the progress of the agreement to both parties.

*A working group consisting of the NIEA Prosperity Agreement team and key contacts from Usel will liaise on meeting the above areas of responsibility.*

This Agreement and progress reports will be made available to the public on the DAERA website. Both parties are accountable and responsible for the commitments made in this Agreement.

Both parties reserve the right to withdraw from this Prosperity Agreement if they believe the Agreement is no longer effectively promoting the joint aspirations, or if significant compliance issues arise at Usel. In the event that a withdrawal or termination looks likely, both parties agree to initiate discussions about why this might occur.

### Review and reporting

Both parties will liaise on a regular basis for the first year to review progress on implementing commitments. The following years will operate on a bi-annual meeting schedule.

Both parties will assess progress against commitments and outcomes agreed annually. This review will also identify areas of focus for the following year and possible amendments to the Agreement. Progress and results will be reported to the Usel Board and NIEA Board and made available through the DAERA website. At the end of this Agreement the working group will undertake a full review of the outcomes of the agreement. This review will assess the success of the Prosperity Agreement and measure deliverables against those identified.

## Contact Details

### **NIEA**

#### **Stephen Gracey**

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Tel: 0300 200 7856

### **Usel**

#### **Scott Jackson**

Circular Economy Manager, Usel

Tel: 02890 356600

#### **Sarah Jane Mowbray**

Head of Corporate Services, Usel

Tel: 02890 356600

### **If you are interested in Prosperity Agreements, contact:**

Prosperity Agreement Programme Team,  
Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)

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Gasworks Business Park

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