

Title of Report:	Call for Evidence on Impacts of Air Pollution on the Natural Environment
Committee Report Submitted To:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	23 August 2023
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership Improvement and Innovation
Outcome	Approval of Terms of Reference
Lead Officer	Head of Planning

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Planning Budget
Included in Current Year Estimates	yes
Capital/Revenue	As per budget
Code	5301
Staffing Costs	As per budget

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:

FOR DECISION

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This Report is to bring to Members attention the Call for Evidence by DAERA on impacts of air pollution on the natural environment which closes on 15 September 2023.

2.0 Details

- 2.1 DAERA has launched an eight -week Call for Evidence on its Future Operational Protocol to assess the impacts of air pollutants, such as ammonia, on the natural environment. The Call for Evidence closes on 15 September 2023 and is available to view at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/future-operational-protocol-a-call-for-evidence>
- 2.2 DAERA is committed to tackling the challenge and growing problem of ammonia emissions from agricultural activities and the impact on sensitive habitats and biodiversity across Northern Ireland.
- 2.3 Current policy is to deliver a solution which achieves both a protected and improved environment and a sustainable agriculture sector. To achieve that balance is challenging.
- 2.4 The recent consultation on the draft Ammonia Strategy was part of this programme of work and this Call for Evidence is the next step in the programme.
- 2.5 DAERA, in its role as the appropriate nature conservation body in Northern Ireland, has a duty to provide advice to planning authorities and other competent authorities on the potential impacts of air pollution, including ammonia, from plans and projects on designated sites and protected habitats. NIEA performs this function for terrestrial/freshwater environments on behalf of DAERA through the use of an operational protocol.
- 2.6 The Call for Evidence presents available scientific evidence and draws upon expertise from subject area specialists and invites stakeholders to submit additional evidence that will contribute to the development and delivery of a scientifically robust evidence-informed operational protocol to protect our natural environment and ensure sustainable development of the agricultural industry.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the Committee agrees to the Head of Planning responding to this Call for Evidence.