

DAERA Business Plan | 2021-22



Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



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

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

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Minister's Foreword



I am pleased to present the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) 2021-22 Business Plan which frames our work for the year ahead. First and foremost this supports the Outcomes set out in the draft Programme for Government as well as our key commitments under 'New Decade, New Approach'. DAERA's purpose is:

'Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.'

I want sustainability to be at the heart of everything we do in DAERA, taking a partnership approach with communities and industry, supporting them to look after the environment and to be custodians of the landscape for future generations. This sustainable approach creates a healthy environment to live in, ensuring food security and enhanced profitability for the wider food production, forestry and fishing industries and improves economic and social wellbeing for Rural Communities.

The previous business planning year presented a number of unique challenges for my Department and for society as a whole. The new decade saw the return of the Assembly, a new Executive, the transition from our EU Exit and the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic. My Department performed to a very high level throughout all of these challenges and staff have worked incredibly hard to prepare for the end of the Transition period under intense scrutiny with regard to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) checks at Northern Ireland Points of Entry.

During 2020 my Department launched significant consultations on a clean air strategy; waste management; access to our natural environment for outdoor recreation; a Climate Change Bill; and further education support at CAFRE. Work progressed on my pledge to plant 18 million trees by 2030 and create 9,000 hectares of new woodland. The publication of the Science Strategy Framework will guide and direct how we will utilise science over the next 15 years.

I secured £42m for our stakeholders to support them through the pandemic. Unfortunately, the impact of COVID-19 continues to profoundly affect the health of our people and drive economic, social and environmental change and I remain committed to ensuring that we make every possible effort to protect the health and well-being of our staff, our customers and the general public and to ensure that we continue to carry out our essential services safely. I recognise that more may be needed in 2021-22 and I will do everything in my power to secure vital and targeted allocations to help affected sectors next year.

Some of my key priorities for the year ahead will focus on helping the people of Northern Ireland recover from the pandemic and we all have our part to play in what that recovery will look like. I launched the Green Growth concept last year and recognised the importance of all the key players working together in a spirit of partnership and collaboration, towards a shared goal of transforming our society to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. My colleagues in the Green Growth Inter-Ministerial Group all confirmed their commitment to the ambition and desired outcomes of the Green Growth agenda to deliver together for the people of Northern Ireland in protecting and enhancing our environment whilst delivering sustainable economic growth. This along with our other strategies on biodiversity, ammonia, climate change, rural development and future

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agricultural support are vitally important to the health and wellbeing of every person in Northern Ireland.

The future of agriculture will be one of my key areas of focus and my vision for Northern Ireland is defined around four outcomes: increased productivity, environmental sustainability, improved resilience and supply chain integration. Moving forward, we must join up our environmental ambitions with farm and fishing economic activity. Leaving the EU restores our discretion and flexibility with regard to future agricultural support in Northern Ireland. My ultimate aim is to ensure that Northern Ireland takes full advantage of the opportunity to develop a sustainable agricultural industry in which all farmers are supported on an equitable basis to make best use of the assets at their disposal, and to invest in all forms of capital - physical, environmental, human and social. We will look to science and technology to continually seek innovative and sustainable solutions to make the best possible use of resources.



Underpinning this will be our championing of sound environmental practices and high animal welfare standards. We will work collaboratively with industry to grow using science, research & development, innovation and education to increase responsiveness, stimulate efficiencies and minimise waste throughout the food chain leading to increased resilience and ensuring a continued supply of safe and nutritious food.

My Department will continue to champion thriving rural communities and focus interventions on activities that will contribute to the prosperity and wellbeing of our rural communities. We will continue to protect and enhance our natural environment now and for future generations, advocating its value to the wellbeing of all the people living and working in Northern Ireland.



My Department is committed to working collectively to deliver on the targets within this Business Plan, and in the Programme for Government's outcomes, to improve the lives of the people who live here. Together we can develop solutions to the complex challenges we face. I will seek to develop a culture of strong leadership and collaboration to support DAERA's delivery to the people we serve.

Edwin Poots MLA

Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs

1. Who we are



**Figures as at
March 2021*



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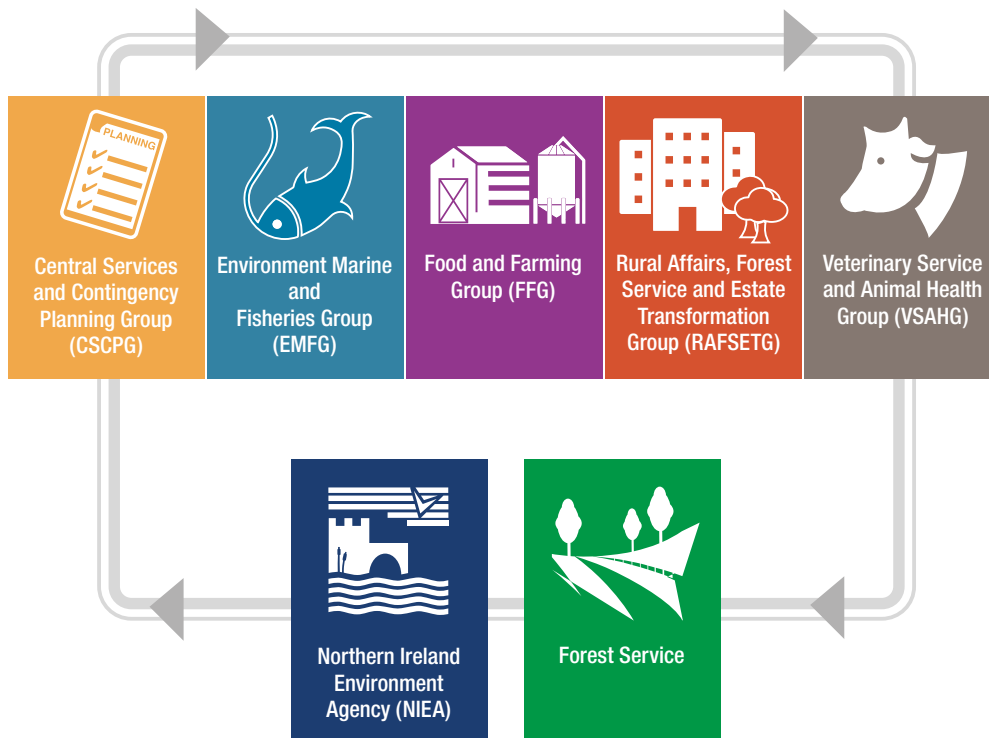
2 What we will deliver

2.1 Our Responsibilities

DAERA operates under the direction and control of the Minister. This is a leadership role of central importance to the environment, the agri-food industry and wider society (including rural society). The Permanent Secretary is Dr Denis McMahon, as Principal Accounting Officer, he has responsible for the overall operation and performance of the Department. DAERA has responsibility for food, farming, environment, fisheries, forestry, sustainability policy and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland.

DAERA's purpose is *'Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.'*

DAERA comprises five Groups and two Agencies



We sponsor a number of Non-Departmental Public Bodies - Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Livestock and Meat Commission for NI (LMC), Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA) and the Agricultural Wages Board for NI (AWB). DAERA is also a co-sponsoring Department (with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) in the Republic of Ireland) for one North South Implementation Body, the Loughs Agency of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC). Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC) is a statutory advisor to the Department on matters affecting nature conservation and the countryside.



2.2 Our Purpose

Success for DAERA will see us deliver on the Department’s purpose of ‘sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone’ and, thereby, improving the lives of the people living in Northern Ireland. We have the 4 following key Strategic Priorities which align to the Programme for Government Outcomes whilst also covering the Department’s regulatory, governance and resource management responsibilities.

 <p>1. Economic Growth</p> <p>To enhance our food, forestry, fishery and farming sectors using efficient and environmentally sustainable models which support economic growth.</p>	 <p>2. Natural Environment</p> <p>To protect and enhance our natural environment now and for future generations whilst advocating its value to and wellbeing for all.</p>
 <p>3. Rural Communities</p> <p>To champion thriving rural communities that contribute to prosperity and wellbeing.</p>	 <p>4. Exemplar Organisation</p> <p>To be an exemplar, people focused organisation, committed to making a difference for the people we serve.</p>

DAERA has a wide range of responsibility and our work touches the lives everyone in Northern Ireland on a daily basis. Some 3,000 staff play a key role in supporting the agri-food sector, our environment and the economy. Now that the UK has fully transitioned from the EU, we will continue to ensure that we take advantage of opportunities presented by exiting the EU to grow our presence globally.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to create exceptional challenges for all of society and the economy and we are all working hard to lessen the negative impacts this has on our society as a whole. We will continue to work safely and diligently to deliver our essential services to the people of Northern Ireland and will continue to support the agri-food, fisheries, rural and environmental sectors towards their recovery and sustainability in the long term.

DAERA is also looking to the future and how to holistically renew our people, our economy and our environment in collaboration with others. Our recovery from this current crisis gives us an opportunity to create an environment in which people, businesses and the environment work in better harmony. Opportunities exist to further the existing collaboration between agriculture and environment on a greater scale and to realise the vision of securing our agri-food sector while safeguarding our natural capital and enhancing our natural capital.

We are committed to the sustainable production of high quality, safe and wholesome food. This is underpinned by our high standards of animal and plant health, animal welfare, robust traceability, our strong environmental standards protecting the quality of our natural capital, our skilled workforce, our internationally recognised science and a vibrant rural community. It is crucial that our supply chains do not falter and that we ensure security of supply for all the people of Northern Ireland and continue to service our markets.



The agri-food sector has further sustainable growth potential and can play a significant part in the recovery of our economy. It is also vital however, not to overlook the importance of this opportunity to help address many of the long term environment and climate change challenges we face and which have previously been prioritised by the Executive.

This can be done by ensuring departments are on a trajectory for Green Growth, where sustainability is at the heart of our economic recovery and the optimum outcome achieved for our future. To achieve this, we must combine innovation with lessons learned from others.



Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

We have already embraced the new ways of working which the pandemic has hastened, but we need to stay ahead of the curve. We will look at agile ways of working for DAERA staff going forward whilst maintaining our high level of service to the people living and working in Northern Ireland.

Our transition from the EU and recovery from COVID-19 has presented us with the opportunity to renew our thinking, stimulate and support new approaches, including alternative sustainable business models; new emphasis on sustainably grown food, use of sustainable energy; decentralised and agile working so that Northern Ireland can increase its capacity and reputation as a strategic location for knowledge based industries. This will support a renewed emphasis on sustainability, promotion of our local agri-industry and the development of policies which will feed into the wider transformation of global economies.

We will work collaboratively with others to help stimulate new businesses, support social enterprises, innovate research and



development as well as facilitate wider social action. We will continue with our engaging, collaborative approach to successfully address the issues we currently face and will turn these into opportunities to make us all stronger and more robust for generations to come. We must also build our global networks and engagement platforms across key policy areas such as the environment, trade, education, science and rural affairs.



DAERA is central to protecting our natural environment, supporting sustainable economic growth in our agri-industries, championing our rural communities and enhancing the quality of life for all the people living and working in Northern Ireland. We will place high quality, cutting-edge science, analysis and policy thinking at the heart of DAERA, including by championing investment in science, research and innovation, and by enhancing science capability internally.

The tables that follow set out the Department's Business Plan targets for the 2021-22 financial year, including timescales for delivery where appropriate. Targets are focused on the top priorities for the Department, namely post EU transition and our recovery and renewal in the wake of COVID-19. Work in these areas will be reviewed by the Departmental Board on a regular basis and will be reported on in the 2021-22 Annual Report.

2.3 Programme for Government

The Executive is currently developing a new strategic, Outcomes-based Programme for Government (PfG) - the draft is set out below. Its aim is to improve wellbeing for all our people and its collective outcomes create a picture of the kind of society we all want to live in.

New draft Outcomes Framework

The PfG Outcomes reflect the areas of economic and societal wellbeing that people say matter most to them.

It is proposed that DAERA will have responsibility for one outcome 'We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment' and 4 key priority areas. DAERA is also projected to have input to another 7 of the 9 draft Outcomes and input into another 18 Key Priority Areas. In developing the targets for 2021-22 we have used this draft PfG as our starting point, given that it is forecast to be approved by early Summer 2021, and will influence a large part of our reporting year.

Our targets recognise the NI Executive's 'New Decade, New Approach' document and its aspirations round Climate Change. These include reducing carbon emissions, eliminating plastic pollution, improving environmental governance, supporting the 'Forests for the Future' and funding NI partners in collaborative all island research hub in the area of agri-food and sustainability.



2.4 Business Plan Targets

This section sets out the Department’s Business Plan targets for the 2021-22 financial year, including timescales for delivery where appropriate, linked to our four Strategic Priorities. A summary of a number of targets can be seen below, with full details of all targets contained in the tables on pages 12 to 21.

Targets have been grouped under 3 key themes in relation to Delivery, Designing the Future and Enabling and Empowering.

DELIVERY	Post EU Transition	Food Supply
	Market Access	Regulatory Compliance & Enforcement
	Farm Support	Forest Estate
DESIGNING THE FUTURE	Agricultural Policy Framework	Environment Strategy
	Circular Economy	Green Growth Strategy
	Food Strategy Framework	Animal Health and Welfare
	Climate Change	Rural Communities
ENABLING AND EMPOWERING	Organisation	Science
	DAERA Estate	Funding

Key Targets

DELIVERY					
Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – <i>include key performance indicators</i>	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
1	6	1, 2, 3, 4	<p>Develop NI's position post-EU Exit including fulfilling the UK's international obligations:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the work of the UK/EU Joint Committee and Specialised Committee on the implementation of post-Exit arrangements including taking forward required legislation. • Implementation of the 15 UK Common Frameworks within DAERA's remit by the 31 December 2021 (subject to JMC(EN) confirmation) and, where appropriate participate in new UK wide Governance structures and groups. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, EMFG Deputy Secretary, FFG Deputy Secretary, VSAHG</p>
2	6	1, 2, 3, 4	<p>Maintain GB, EU and international market access by:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of all relevant Sanitary and Phytosanitary policy/legislation; • Provision of assurances to importing countries' Competent Authorities; and • Demonstrating that Northern Ireland's agri-food products conform with importing countries' animal and public health requirements and all relevant standards. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, VSAHG</p>

Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – include key performance indicators	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
3	2, 6	1, 2, 3, 4	<p>Embrace our transition from the EU and maximise all opportunities to make the delivery of farm support more efficient:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering the 2021 simplification policy changes, introduction of a protein crops scheme and associated legislation. • Full payments made to 95% of eligible Farm Businesses. 	<p>30 Nov 2021</p> <p>30 Nov 2021</p>	Deputy Secretary, FFG
4	6	1, 2, 3, 4	<p>Working across government and with stakeholders ensure continued food supply and security into Northern Ireland in both the immediate and long term and implement mitigations to deliver a resilient food supply chain:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an end to end system that will support the continued movement of agri-food goods and live animals from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. • Maintain close and ongoing liaison with the agri-food industry to monitor food supply to our shelves to help us identify early signs of supply chain issues. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	Deputy Secretary, VSAHG

Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – include key performance indicators	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
5	2	2	<p>Protect public health and the environment through delivering regulatory compliance and enforcement regimes:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 2021 Cross Compliance inspection programme at minimum inspection rate which will include at least 5% of farms operating under a derogation. • Drinking Water supplies - 95% compliance with microbiological parameters at private drinking water supplies and 90% of events notified by NI Water categorised within 5 days. 	<p>31 Dec 2021</p> <p>31 Dec 2021</p>	Deputy Secretary, NIEA
6	2, 4, 9	2, 3	<p>Continue to manage the DAERA forest estate to meet UK sustainable Forestry Standards and progress our commitment to the 2020-2030 Forests for the Future Programme:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supplying at least 400,000m³ of timber to the wood processing industry from well managed forests. • planting 600 hectares of new woodland in 21/22 (includes grants to others). 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	Deputy Secretary, RAFSET

DESIGNING THE FUTURE					
Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – <i>include key performance indicators</i>	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
7	6	1, 2, 3, 4	<p>Embrace our transition from the EU, maximising all opportunities this presents us by:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing the Future Agricultural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland which protects and enhances our environment whilst delivering sustainable economic growth. • Contribute to the development of and provide the Northern Ireland input to the UK-wide Joint Fisheries Statement, which sets future post EU Exit fisheries policy. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, EMFG</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, FFG</p>
8	2	2	<p>Contribute to developing a Circular Economy including deliver on the ‘New Decade New Approach’ commitment that “The Executive will create a plan to eliminate plastic pollution”:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation issued on a plan. • Carry out consultations on Deposit/Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility. • Transpose elements of the Single Use Plastics Directive. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Dec 2021</p> <p>31 Jan 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, EMFG</p>

Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – include key performance indicators	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
9	2, 6	1, 2, 3, 4	<p>Develop a co-ordinated cross Departmental, strategic approach to food:</p> <p>Measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing an agreed Food Strategy Framework for Northern Ireland. 	31 Mar 2022	Deputy Secretary, FFG
10	2, 6	1, 2	<p>Deliver a co-ordinated and strategic approach to the challenge of climate change:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of a draft Climate Change Bill and proposition of introduction of that Bill to the Assembly. • Deliver a Climate Change awareness campaign in run up to COP26 and COP15 focused on Nature theme. • Co-ordinating Northern Ireland's contribution to COP26. • Issuing a consultation on a Peatlands Strategy and develop implementation plan. 	<p>01 Sep 2021</p> <p>31 Oct 2021</p> <p>30 Nov 2021</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, EMFG</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, NIEA</p>

Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – include key performance indicators	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
11	2	2, 3	<p>Protect & Improve our Environment for future generations:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and Consult on a new Biodiversity Strategy. • Publish the first overarching ‘Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland. • Produce fisheries management measures for Marine Protected Areas. • Enable enactment of Environment Bill and prepare for its implementation. • Complete 15 draft Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Conservation Management Plans. • Produce a 2nd iteration of the draft NI Marine Plan for Minister’s consideration. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Dec 2021</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>30 Nov 2021</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Dec 2021</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, EMFG</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, NIEA</p>
12	2, 6, 9	1, 2, 3	<p>Work collaboratively across government to align our policies, plans and budgets and put in place appropriate structures to underpin effective implementation of the Green Growth Strategy and Climate Action Plan:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish an agreed Green Growth Strategy and Climate Action Plan for the NI Executive (consultation by November and publish by March). • Agree the criteria for Green Growth Foundation Programmes • Scope Green Growth Agreements 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>30 Sep 2021</p> <p>30 Nov 2021</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, EMFG</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, NIEA</p>

Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – include key performance indicators	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
13	2	2, 3	<p>Champion the health and welfare of animals. We will:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the new Strategy for the Eradication of Bovine TB within Northern Ireland. • Finalise and publish the new Animal Health and Welfare Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland. • Progress legislation providing for greater protection of service animals (“Finn’s Law”) and banning the sale of puppies by third parties (“Lucy’s Law”). • Implement the necessary changes associated with the Animal Health law including legislative and operational changes required. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	Deputy Secretary, VSAHG
14	2, 3, 6	3, 4	<p>Support sustainable rural businesses and communities and implementation of actions to support and champion COVID-19 recovery:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver an agreed Rural Policy Framework for NI. • Ensure planned roll out of Fibre Broadband to rural communities is in line with the contracted programme of work for Project Stratum. • Progress draft Bill providing for reinstatement of payments to the two Northern Ireland racecourses from the Horse Racing Fund. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	Deputy Secretary, RAFSET Deputy Secretary, FFG

ENABLING AND EMPOWERING					
Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – <i>include key performance indicators</i>	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
15	3, 5, 7, 9	4	<p>Continue to be a well led, high performing, outcome focused, inclusive and diverse organisation:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a DAERA people Capacity and Capability plan. • Reporting and oversight on delivering our Business Plan objectives and contribution to the NI Executive Programme for Government outcomes. • Deliver 1.1m transactions through online channels. • Increase in the DAERA Employee Engagement Index (EEI) to 69%. • Implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy And Action Plan and DAERA People Strategy Action Plan as a measure. 	<p>31 Dec 2021</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, CSCPG</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, RAFSET</p>

Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – include key performance indicators	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
16	7, 9	4	<p>Maximise the use of DAERA’s existing estate and IT capability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of developing a longer term agile working environment which supports delivery of departmental services:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAERA office and wider estate operated in line with Executive and NICS guidance during COVID-19 pandemic period. • Department’s future operating model developed. • Staff supported to work in an agile manner through the provision of suitable policies, IT and equipment. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, CSCPG</p> <p>Deputy Secretary, RAFSET</p>
17	2, 6	4	<p>We will place high quality, leading-edge science evidence, enabling policy thinking and assurance of statutory requirements at the heart of DAERA, including through the development of a science system, which enables us to get the best science, get the best value for science and make the best use of science:</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The publication of operational strategies for Research and Development and Monitoring and Surveillance science. • Initiating the implementation of the DAERA Innovation Strategy. 	<p>31 Mar 2022</p> <p>31 Mar 2022</p>	<p>Deputy Secretary, FFG</p>

Target Number	New PfG Outcome	Strategic Priority	What we will do – <i>include key performance indicators</i>	When we will do it by	SRO and Business Area
18	6	4	<p>We will seek to achieve the best outcomes with your money:</p> <p>Measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisional Resource and Capital outturn to be between 99% and 100% of Final Budget for 2021/22. 	31 Mar 2022	Deputy Secretary, CSCPG supported by all Grades 3s

2.5 Our Risks

DAERA faces a range of risks which reflects its responsibilities as a policy adviser, researcher, program administrator, and input into market negotiations. We have developed a comprehensive Risk Management Strategy that also contributes to the delivery of targets. However, we recognise that it is not possible, or necessarily desirable, to eliminate all of the risks inherent in our work. Accepting some degree of risk in our business practices promotes efficiency and innovation. In other areas, for example, the safety of our staff and biosecurity threats to human, animal and plant health and the environment, our risk appetite (the level of risk we are willing to accept) is very low.

Strategic risks 2021–22

We have identified 6 areas of strategic risk that are aligned to our objectives. The Department monitors these risks, including the effectiveness of identified controls and mitigation strategies.

We do not develop and implement policies and programs that effectively support profitable and productive agri-industries while ensuring sustainable management of natural resources.



We do not put in place the right capabilities - people, resources, processes, systems and culture - to deliver our objectives and respond to change.

We do not identify or influence opportunities to open, improve or maintain export markets post EU Exit.



Our biosecurity programs fail to prevent, detect and/or manage pest and disease incursions.

We do not develop and implement policies and programs that account for the effects of climate change.



We do not develop and implement effective regulatory frameworks and practice.

3 How we will deliver



Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

3.1 Collaboration

Our pathway to success relies on partnership, mutual understanding and shared goals that can only come about through effective stakeholder engagement and collaborative working which DAERA has a strong history of. In 2021-22 we will strive to work collaboratively with our internal and external partners to ensure we are delivering value for money by making the best use of our resources. We will continue to improve our policies and services by adopting an outward looking approach and learning from good practice across the world, building on their successes and learning from their experiences.

We will continue to develop our relationships with stakeholders, including, but not limited to:

- Ministers and the Assembly
- Other Government Departments
- Our Arm's Length Bodies
- Local government
- Agri-industries
- Our communities
- International trade bodies
- Environmental NGOs
- Private Sector
- Voluntary Community Sector
- Fisheries industry

3.2 Science & Evidence

The greatest challenges facing the agri-food, forestry and environmental sectors are best fully understood and then met by means of sharing both knowledge and ideas and by using research & development. As part of our policy toolkit we will develop robust evidence-based policies. A science led approach underpins the fabric of our frameworks and policies and we will ensure that we make the best use of science to address issues in the short and long term.



3.3 People

This Department is committed to ensuring that it is a well led, high performing, outcomes focused and genuinely diverse organisation, which values its people.

To meet this commitment we have consulted widely within the Department to develop and publish;

- the DAERA People Strategy Action Plans;
- the DAERA Equality Scheme;
- the Department's first Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan for 2021 to 2024; and
- the results of the latest NICS People Survey are very important to us and will continue to inform our work on leadership and engagement. We take seriously the views of our staff and will work to address areas where we are not doing well and will continue to improve those areas where progress has been made. We are particularly pleased with the improvement in 2020 in the DAERA Employee Engagement Index rising from 58% to 64%. We are also committed to complying with our statutory obligations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and will continue to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. We will seek to ensure that Department future proofs itself and is correctly resourced through the introduction of a DAERA people Capacity and Capability plan.

3.4 Processes

In developing our processes we will put our internal and external customers at the heart of what we do, in doing so we will ensure that the delivery and development of these processes work to positively impact our Department and our communities.

We will ensure that we are;

- achieving value for money;
- outcome focused;
- adopting a horizon scanning approach;
- fit for purpose; and
- continuously improving our monitoring and reporting systems in measuring our performance.



3.5 Technology

COVID-19 presented us with a positive challenge in using technology to enable our staff to become more agile. Using technology to facilitate working from home has had associated benefits to the public purse through lower travel and subsistence costs, lower carbon emissions due to a reduction in travel and a positive impact on work/life balance due to reduced time travelling to and from work.

We will use technology to:

- promote innovation and flexibility in our services and processes;
- work smarter;
- improve experiences in accessing services;
- make evidence-based decisions supported by data; and
- keep the information we hold safe.



3.6 Our Budget

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.



The Executives Draft 2021-22 Budget has allocated DAERA a Non-Ring-fenced Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) budget of £553.8 million. This is an increase of £348.6 million on the Department's 2020-21 opening rolled over baseline of £205.4m. This increase in budget covers the following:

- £318.7 million EU Replacement Funding - for agriculture, fisheries and rural affairs;
- £18.8 million EU Exit Staff Costs;
- £1.1million INTERREG National Funding; and
- £9.8m COVID-19 Funding.

DAERA's Capital allocation of £95.5m will allow us to take forward priority investment in Programmes (£48.1m), IT Systems (£21.6m), Estate Transformation (£3.8m) and Research and Development (£22.0m)

[Annex A](#) provides an analysis of this budget allocation by key function area across the Department.

3.7 Our Governance

DAERA is a devolved Government Department in the NI Executive. The Department operates under the direction and control of the Minister, who is responsible and answerable to the Assembly for the exercise of the powers on which the administration of the Department depends. Our Minister has a duty to the Assembly to account and to be held to account for all the policies, decisions and actions of the Department, including its Sponsored Bodies.

The Permanent Secretary, Dr Denis McMahon, as Principal Accounting Officer, is responsible for the overall operation and performance of the Department. He also has responsibility for maintaining a robust governance and risk management structure and a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of departmental policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and departmental assets for which he is personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to him in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland. He must also be satisfied that adequate financial systems and procedures are in place to promote the efficient and economical conduct of business and to safeguard financial propriety and regularity within the Department's Arm's Length Bodies.

The Chief Executives of the Forest Service and NIEA are the Agencies' Accounting Officers, through the Principal Accounting Officer, for the Agencies' performance and operations.

DAERA is managed by a Departmental Board, comprising nine Executive Members and two Non-Executive Members. DAERA operates in compliance with the guidance set out in the "Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice (NI) 2013".

3.8 Six principles that inform how we (DAERA) act

1	Led by evidence, and a clarity of purpose.
2	We will push the boundaries and nurture new ideas.
3	We will deliver for our wide range of customers.
4	We will encourage people to make the right choices and be accountable for their response.
5	We will collaboratively work across all sectors.
6	We are building an exemplar, people focused organisation.

3.9 Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

The Department has established monitoring and reporting arrangements in place in relation to its 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 day to day basis. During the course of the financial year, detailed progress against each Business Plan target will be reported to the Departmental Board for the periods ending 30 June, 30 September, 31 December and 31 March.

Progress will be reported in accordance with the methodology previously adopted for PfG Commitment reports to the Executive.

This on a Red / Amber / Green (RAG) basis as follows:



- achieved or on track for delivery.



- not achieved or not expected to be achieved.



- level of progress is broadly on track with easily redeemable deviations from plans.



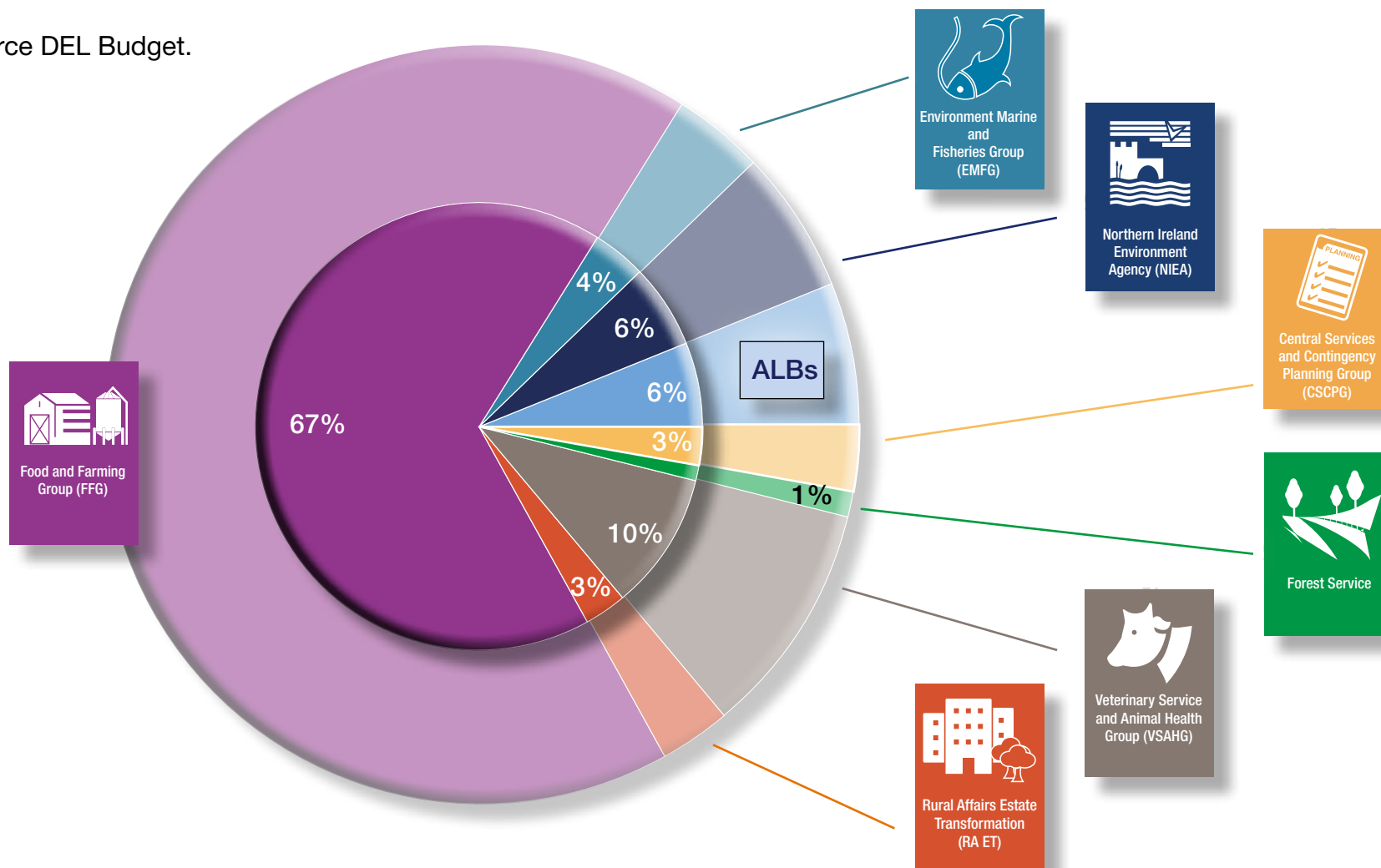
- rate of progress is less than planned.

Following the end of the 2021-22 financial year the DAERA 2021-22 Annual Reports 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 this Plan were achieved.

Annex A

The graph below shows an analysis of the DAERA 2021-22 Opening Budget allocation by key function area across the Department. This is also further broken down for the ALB split.

Analysis of Resource DEL Budget.



Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

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