

25 November 2019

Neighbourhood Environment Quality Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy Division
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Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation on a Northern Ireland Environmental Strategy

The Carnegie UK Trust welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on a Northern Ireland Environmental Strategy. The Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. Our [Strategic Plan \(2016-2020\)](#) takes a holistic approach to wellbeing and outlines our work as focusing on '[Enabling Wellbeing](#)'; '[Flourishing Towns](#)'; '[Fulfilling Work](#)'; and '[Digital Futures](#)'.

EVIDENCE BASE

The Carnegie UK Trust has been actively involved in promoting wellbeing in policy since the establishment of the first [Carnegie Roundtable on Measuring What Matters in Scotland](#) in 2010. Since 2011 we have published [case studies](#) of how governments and civil society organisations measure wellbeing in France, the USA, and Canada; made recommendations on [next steps for the Scottish National Performance Framework](#); funded a [policy assessment tool](#) which uses wellbeing indicators to critique policy proposals; set out steps for developing a [wellbeing framework in Northern Ireland](#); produced [guidance on wellbeing frameworks for cities and regions](#); convened an [international roundtable discussion](#) on the successes and challenges of [developing high-level strategies based on wellbeing and translating this to policy action](#); and developed a UK-wide programme on the [Enabling State](#) which explores public service approaches which give citizens and communities more opportunity to shape the services that they receive and to contribute to their own wellbeing. Our project [Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland](#) is providing financial and in-kind support to Community Planning Partnerships in the local authority areas of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council; Derry and Strabane District Council; and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council to implement a local wellbeing outcomes approach through their Community Plan.

CO-PRODUCTION AND SHARED LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

The Trust recognises the importance of the environment for the wellbeing of citizens in Northern Ireland. The Trust believes that the long-term nature of Northern Ireland's Community Plans presents an opportunity to take a strategic approach to developing an environmental strategy for Northern Ireland.

Honorary President: William Thomson CBE
Chair: Sir John Elvidge
Chief Executive: Sarah Davidson

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Registered Charity No: 20142957 operating in Ireland

With the Community Plans setting the strategic direction of local authorities and their partners until 2030-2035, beyond the current scope of the draft Programme for Government Outcome 2: *We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment* until 2021, the Trust encourages engagement with Community Planning colleagues in the respective local authorities to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach to environmental policy across Northern Ireland in the long-term.

The Trust's Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project is designed to support project participants to overcome challenges in delivering their Community Plan which they have identified as a priority. The project participants are receiving support on extending co-production in the delivery of their Community Plans, and facilitating shared leadership within the Partnerships and outwith their formal structures across sectors and levels of organisation. The Trust encourages such a commitment to a joined up approach, within and across Community Planning Partnerships; government departments; and existing strategies, such as the Sustainable Development, Public Health and Economic Strategies, to the consultation on and development and implementation of, an environmental strategy for Northern Ireland.

A NATURAL CAPITAL ACCOUNT FOR DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

As part of bespoke support provided to Derry City and Strabane District Council provided through the Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland project, the Trust has resourced the development of a Natural Capital Account for the local authority area, to assist with the delivery of the Green Infrastructure Plan and Community Plan. The Trust has commissioned Vivid Economics to develop a Natural Capital Account, which will demonstrate the qualitative value that public green and blue spaces provide for the wellbeing of citizens. The primary objective of this work is to influence the way public service providers understand the benefits of green spaces and wider green infrastructure, particularly those interested in improving population health and wellbeing; new ways of working across public services; delivering shared outcomes; and assisting with informed decision-making.

While this work remains on-going, headline findings are that for every £1 invested in green spaces, citizens receive £14 worth of benefits. This equates to £75 million per year in health and wellbeing benefits for the local authority area. The final report of the Natural Capital Account will be launched at the end of January 2020, however, we would be pleased to discuss this with you further in the meantime.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We hope that you find these comments helpful. We would be delighted to speak with you further on our experiences in Northern Ireland and internationally. If you would like to discuss our response or would like to find out more about our work please contact me via email at lauren@carnegieuk.org or by telephone on 01383 721445.

Yours faithfully,



Lauren Pennycook
Senior Policy and Development Officer
Carnegie UK Trust