



Office for
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By email to: private.office@daera-ni.gov.uk

Dear Minister Muir,

Adoption of Environmental Improvement Plan and Consultation on the Environmental Principles Policy Statement

I am writing to congratulate you on your recent announcements in relation to these two significant steps in environmental governance for Northern Ireland.

As you know, we consider the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) to be both important and urgent for driving the protection and improvement of the environment in Northern Ireland. The investigation we launched in June of this year reflects the seriousness with which we viewed the delays to its publication. That said, we recognise and appreciate your and your department's efforts since you came into office to secure Executive agreement to an EIP, and the constructive way in which you have engaged with our investigation.

We welcomed the commitment of the First and deputy First Minister in their letter to us of 14 August, and of the Executive by way of including the EIP in its draft Programme for Government. This has culminated in agreement and publication of the EIP. It is good to see this collective agreement and commitment to improving the environment in Northern Ireland.

We will now take stock of how best to conclude our investigation, and as to how our previous advice on the content of the EIP has been reflected in the final document.

We also welcome the launch of public consultation on your draft Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS).

You will recall that, in September 2023, we wrote with advice on a draft EPPS. We are pleased that this advice was useful, and that many of our recommendations are reflected in the version now published for consultation. The EPPS has the potential to be a powerful tool to put EIP delivery at the heart of policy-making across the Executive. Now that an EIP is in place, we would encourage DAERA to draw explicit links to that document in the final version of the EPPS.

We look forward to seeing that final version in due course. In the meantime, if helpful, we would be happy to have further discussions with your department as you consider consultation responses and finalise the statement.

Once adopted, we will take an active interest in considering implementation of the duty to have due regard to the EPPS and would encourage a level of transparency that enables us to do so effectively. We look forward to discussing this further with you and your department in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Prosser', is centered on the page.

Natalie Prosser
Chief Executive



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