

Response ID ANON-C6MZ-A7Y3-4

Submitted to Draft Programme for Government Consultation 2024-2027

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About you

Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

On behalf of an organisation

About you - Organisation

Please provide your organisation's contact details below:

Organisation name::

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Organisation email address:

rob.lennox@archaeologists.net

Which of the following best describes the sector you work in?

Organised interest Group: e.g. Education, Health, Business, Creative Industries, Environment, Community, Voluntary & Third sectors.

Other (please specify):

Can we contact you to discuss your response to this consultation?

Yes

Can we contact you in future about the draft Programme for Government?

Yes

To support transparency in our decision making process, we will publish a summary of the consultation feedback on the PfG webpage. This will sometimes include the responses themselves and may mention names of the responding organisation (if applicable). However, names of individuals responding on a personal capacity will only be published where consent has been given. Please note we will not publish contact details.

Yes, I consent to my name being published with my response

Doing What Matters Most Today: 'Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy'

How much do you agree that the priority 'Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Competitive_Economy - Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy:

Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Grow_Competitive_Economy_Actions - 'Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy' Actions:

Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy' priority:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

As archaeologists, the vast majority of our services are provided as part of construction and development through the planning system. Archaeologists therefore have a key goal of ensuring development and economic growth can be delivered, while also managing a sustainable impact upon valued heritage assets. We must challenge ourselves to deliver our role in the supply chain efficiently, capitalising on opportunities to innovate and improve.

To do this, we need support to ensure that we are able to grow and maintain an appropriately skilled workforce, and a system of policy that encourages good practice and effective public benefit outcomes.

We strongly support the PfG's commitment to the Higher Education Innovation Fund. In this arena we would highlight the Queen's University Belfast Centre for Community Archaeology – developed with National Lottery Heritage Fund support which is ensuring that archaeologists have the necessary resources to capitalise on opportunities to maximise health and wellbeing outcomes through their work. Such centres of excellence drew large amounts

of EU funding prior to Brexit, and it should be a priority for Government to seek to recover the confidence of European funding centres to work with NI institutions going forward.

Additionally, work being done under the Archaeology 2030 strategy and through the Heritage Delivers strategy, will help to ensure positive contributions to a thriving economy – through increased tourism, but also through enriched communities and by creating vibrant places to live, enriched with valued assets and stories from the past.

We also need to maintain an appropriate policy environment to ensure that these benefits can be delivered.

Doing What Matters Most Today: 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare'

How much do you agree that the priority 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Childcare_Priority - Deliver More Affordable Childcare:

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Childcare_Actions - 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare' Actions:

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Deliver More Affordable Childcare' priority:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

Doing What Matters Most Today: 'Cut Health Waiting Times'

How much do you agree that the priority 'Cut Health Waiting Times' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Health_Waiting_Priority - Cut Health Waiting Times:

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Cut Health Waiting Times'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Health_Wait_Times_Actions - 'Cut Health Waiting Times' Actions:

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Cut Health Waiting Times' priority:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

Doing What Matters Most Today: 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls'

How much do you agree that the priority 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Ending_Violence_Women/Girls_Priority - Ending Violence Against Women and Girls:

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Ending_Violence_Women/Girls_Actions - 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' Actions:

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' priority:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

Doing What Matters Most Today: 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs'

How much do you agree that the priority 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Support_Children_SEN_Priority - Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs:

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

SEN_Actions - 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs' Actions:

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs' priority:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

Doing What Matters Most Today: 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing'

How much do you agree that the priority 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Affordable_Housing_Priority - Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing:

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Affordable_Housing_Actions - 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing' Actions:

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing' priority:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

Doing What Matters Most Today: 'Safer Communities'

How much do you agree that the priority 'Safer Communities' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Safer Communities_Priority - Safer Communities:

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Safer Communities'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Safer Communities_Actions - 'Safer Communities' Actions:

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Safer Communities' priority:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

Doing What Matters Most Today: 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment'

How much do you agree that the priority 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment' should be included in the Programme for Government?

LoughNeagh_Env_Priority - Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment:
Strongly agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

LoughNeagh_Env_Actions - 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment' Actions:
Strongly agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment' priority:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

We strongly support the adoption of an Environmental Improvement Plan and welcome the fact that the historic environment is understood in the plan to be a 'major component' of our environment. It is vital that the links between people and places are understood holistically, and that means using our culture and heritage as tools to help understand the tapestry of interactions between humans and nature.

It is vital that this connection is developed consistently across the various national strategies that will sit beneath the EIP and seek to deliver on its objectives. This will include the 'Heritage Delivers' agenda, the Archaeology 2030 plan, and the Landscapes NI manifesto. Government must recognise that these strategies are required to deliver EIP goals. DfC must also be appropriately resourced to engage with DAERA on cross-cutting issues such as agricultural subsidy / agri-environment scheme reform, and updating the NI Marine Plan to better integrate heritage assets into wider marine management.

There will also be cross-overs between historic environment strategies and the Climate Action Plan, especially in respect of adapting historic buildings to improve energy efficiency, and ensuring streamlined and carbon efficient processes are employed for development and transport.

Doing What Matters Most Today: 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services'

How much do you agree that the priority 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services' should be included in the Programme for Government?

Reform_Transform_Priority - Reform and Transformation of Public Services:

Agree

The draft Programme for Government has set out actions that we plan to take under the priority 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services'. How much do you agree that these are the right actions to take?

Reform_Transform_Actions - 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services' Actions:

Agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the 'Reform and Transformation of Public Services' priority:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

We recognise and support the potential to streamline and digitise the planning system to improve functionality while improving accessibility and speed. We would welcome Transformation Fund support for pilot projects that could help to deliver transformation of planning processes, including for archaeology, where new methods of recording and investigation hold potential to 'dig smarter' and reduce time and cost of archaeological mitigation on construction projects.

However, delivery is already under pressure due to cuts to staffing in many public services, including in Government and local authorities. This squeeze has often restricted innovation and closed off opportunities and reduced the capacity to consider progressive reforms or take risks on new innovative approaches. We need to inspire a culture that seeks to foster innovative approaches to work, with a focus on achieving better outcomes, rather than simply protecting limited resources.

Doing What Matters Most Today: Priorities

Are there any other priorities that should be included in the Programme for Government?

Please enter any comments in the box below:

Building New Foundations

How much do you agree that these are the right commitments in relation to the plans for investment in infrastructure?

Agree

Please provide any other comments you have in relation to the plans for investment in infrastructure:

Please enter any comments in the box below:

We strongly support goals to improve the planning system. As archaeologists, our services – the vast majority of which provided as part of construction and development through the planning system – are employed in order to enable sustainable development and economic growth. We welcome clearer, more effective planning rules, provided that they enable sustainable management of the historic environment and ensure that impacts on the historic environment (and money spent to mitigate and offset those impacts) creates genuine public benefit. Meanwhile, we welcome support to challenge ourselves to deliver our role in the supply chain more efficiently, capitalising on opportunities to innovate and improve.

We welcome planning reform which increases accessibility, improves digital systems which enable greater speed, and discourages adversarial consenting procedures. We welcome opportunities to integrate better data into decision making – e.g. by improving historic environment record datasets and utilising them to better inform plan-making and strategic planning. We also support greater encouragement in policy to deliver innovative public benefit outcomes from community involvement and engagement with research that helps us not only understand the past, but also communicate it with engaged communities. We encourage Government to work closely with the sector, e.g. through the Archaeology 2030 and Heritage Delivers strategies, to identify and pursue opportunities.

We have articulated our support for heritage-sensitive retrofit and net zero obligations in questions above.

We also strongly support transport infrastructure improvements and recognise the impacts on heritage that expanding rail networks will bring. While impactful on heritage assets, such infrastructure projects are fertile ground for innovative archaeological research and can also offer new opportunities to enhance accessibility and experience of the historic environment. Reactivating previously decommissioned rail lines, in particular, would be a project that would have huge heritage potential, both in terms of assets in places along those rail lines, but also in terms of reconnecting with the history of pre-partition lines and community history.

We welcome opportunities to deliver projects which efficiently enable infrastructure delivery, but also provide opportunities to engage communities and expand our understanding of Northern Ireland's past. We also note that this must be informed by robust historic environment records to ensure unnecessary harm is avoided and that development plans meet the SPPS objective of protecting, conserving and enhancing heritage assets.

Shaping a Better Tomorrow

The Executive have set out a long-term strategy to deliver three Missions, People, Planet and Prosperity, as well as a cross-cutting commitment to Peace. How much do you agree with a Missions-based approach?

Agree

Please enter any comments in the box below:

How much do you agree that these are the right Missions to focus on?

Missions - People:

Strongly agree

Missions - Planet:

Missions - Prosperity:

Are there any areas that are not captured under these missions?:

People Mission: A series of actions have been proposed under this Mission. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly agree

Is there anything else that should be included under the People Mission?:

It is right that People should be at the heart of everything Government does. If they are not the beneficiaries of its work, then they are the parties responsible for making it happen.

The Heritage Delivers strategy delivers a similarly P-focused alliterative priority approach, focusing on prosperity, progress, and personality. All of these are, however, critically about people.

Heritage is one of the tools that Government has at its disposal to address issues related to cultural integration, social inclusion, health and wellbeing. Government should work with DfC and heritage and archaeology bodies to expand opportunities to use the past to tell the stories about communities of the past to foster inclusion goals, combat issues like social isolation and loneliness, and tackle health and wellbeing inequality. Much work is already being done in these areas, for example by Local Landscape Partnerships and the Centre for Community Archaeology at Queen's University Belfast.

We also strongly support skills objectives to improve careers, including apprenticeship development – and note the potential for NI to follow other UK nations in adopting heritage and archaeology apprenticeship standards. Archaeology 2030's skills aims are working to this end.

Planet Mission: A series of actions have been proposed under this Mission. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Agree

Is there anything else that should be included under the Planet Mission?:

We strongly support action to tackle climate and biodiversity crises. However, we consistently see a tendency to underplay the connection between people and place when seeking to understand the value of nature and the need to protect it. Similarly, climate goals are human goals, which require a holistic understanding of our place in, and impact on the planet, which requires a deep understanding of how our actions impacts on the environment. We strongly support cross-departmental working between DfC and DAERA on implementing the EIP and ensuring that historic landscapes, places, and culture are recognised for their overlaps with nature and climate goals and that these things are used as tools for the communication of climate action, with cross-cutting goals and benefits identified, measured, and addressed.

Prosperity Mission: A series of actions have been proposed under this Mission. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Agree

Is there anything else that should be included under the Prosperity Mission?:

We support the economic-focussed goals under this mission, but also recognise that prosperity includes factors of wellbeing and quality of life, which may not always be directly measurable via strictly economic metrics. The Heritage Delivers strategy's Prosperity goal reflects the need to recognise the things that matter to people, such as the character of the places they live. Not only does this help to foster a sense of self-respect for communities which is of value in itself, it is also a building block for greater economic prosperity. Places that inspire pride in communities will be places that are more cared for, in which economic opportunities are more likely to flourish. Data from the rest of the UK routinely shows that areas which respect and seek to regenerate their heritage become more economically prosperous – attracting people to live and set up businesses. We recommend broadening the scope of this mission to take account of the type of avenue to prosperity that the Heritage Delivers strategy outlines.

A commitment to Peace will underpin the three missions (People, Planet and Prosperity). A series of actions have been proposed under this commitment. How much do you agree that these are the right actions?

Strongly agree

Is there anything else that should be included under the commitment to Peace?:

We again echo the Heritage Delivers strategy in noting that investing in heritage helps us to protect and celebrate the character of our region and its people. This is essential to a peaceful, prosperous and progressive future.

We would also emphasise the key role that heritage assets, as actual fabric can help in articulating and helping people to understand what can sometimes be a complicated and challenging past.

Peace is framed as a cross-cutting commitment, rather than a mission. How much do you agree that this is the right structure?

Neither agree nor disagree

Please enter any comments in the box below:

Understanding Missions by Tracking Wellbeing

The draft Programme for Government outlines how it will measure progress through a Wellbeing Framework. How much do you agree with the proposed approach?

Strongly agree

Please provide any further comments you may have in relation to your response:

Additional Information

Do you have any further comments relevant to this consultation?

Please enter any additional comments in the box below: