

## Appendix I - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

### SECTION 1 - Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

#### 1A. Name of Public Authority.

Department for the Economy

#### 1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.

Onshore Petroleum Licensing Policy in Northern Ireland.

#### 1C. Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### 1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Onshore Petroleum Licensing Policy in Northern Ireland

#### 1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service.

Development of an onshore petroleum licensing policy for Northern Ireland. The Department is consulting on four options  
 Option 1: Status quo – Do Nothing;  
 Option 2: Change from open door policy to licensing rounds in defined areas;  
 Option 3: Moratorium and eventual legislative ban on exploration or production of unconventional hydrocarbons;  
 Option 4: Moratorium and eventual legislative ban on all forms of onshore petroleum exploration and production. (preferred option). This is a no development option.

**1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

*Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.*

N/A

*Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.*

N/A

*Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.*

N/A

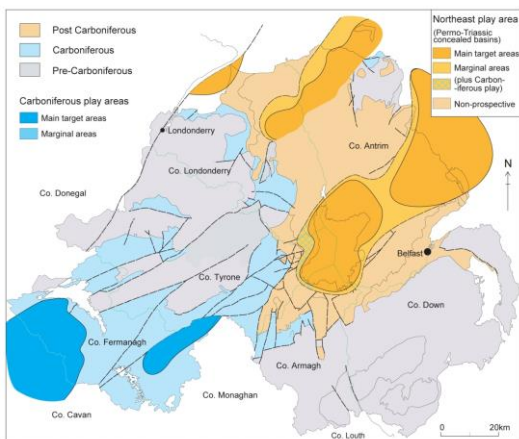
## SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

### 2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

Yes  No  If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

### 2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

The main areas of interest for this activity are rural in nature as shown by the map below (dark orange and dark blue areas). Options 1, 2 and 3 in the consultation document could have impacts (especially at a local level) on the physical and socio-economic environment. This will depend on the level of development and where it is located. There may be impacts on air, noise and water pollution, biodiversity, social cohesion, housing, jobs, tourism, community safety, levels of traffic. Any impacts from option 4 cannot be measured at this stage although we expect that it will have longer term benefits on the environment and aspects of the rural economy such as tourism. A further impact assessment will be considered depending on the final policy option.



### 2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.

The main areas for exploration are rural in nature rather than urban so any impacts on local communities and the environment would be greater.

**2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.**

Rural Businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

**If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.**

**2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

N/A

## SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

**3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Yes  No  If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

**3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

**3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.**

Published rural statistics

[Key Rural Issues 2022](#)

[Rural Deprivation](#)

Research conducted by Hatch Regeneris into the economic, social and environmental impacts of onshore petroleum exploration and production in Northern Ireland – including stakeholder engagement.

**3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?**

[Key Rural Issues 2022](#)

- The rural and urban economies also differ substantially in terms of dominant sectors (Figure 17), with 39% of rural businesses belonging to the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors, followed by construction (17%) (p19).
- Workers may commute long distances for more highly skilled and better paid employment than is available locally - this data reflects the quality of jobs in areas where people work, rather than live. (p14)
- Those living in rural areas (especially more than an hour's drive from Belfast) will be disadvantaged in terms of access to services (p. 32). they will have lower qualifications (p.10); will suffer higher rates of poverty amongst older people (p.41) and there is a higher level of fuel poverty (p.47). Rural people do report higher levels of happiness (p.34), high levels of job satisfaction (p.14) and are more likely to be in work (p.12)

Rural Deprivation (these areas correspond with the main targets areas in the map at Section 2B)

- Newtownbutler and Rosslea – top ten of multiple deprivation
- Belleek and Boa – top ten of income deprivation
- Lisnaskea, Dungiven – top ten of employment deprivation
- Enagh 1 – top ten of health and disability deprivation
- Ballylough and Bushmills, Lisnaskea – top ten of education deprivation
- Belcoo and Garrison – top ten of access to services deprivation
- Dundooan 1 – top ten of multiple deprivation
- Lisnaskea, Enagh 1 – top ten of crime and disorder deprivation

**If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.**

**3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?**

N/A

## SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

### 4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Section 3D shows that we have considered the unique economic and social challenges that exist in rural areas e.g. greater needs in the most rural areas. We have also considered the specific areas of rural deprivation that overlap with the main areas for potential exploration.

The Hatch Regeneris research covers all of Northern Ireland and given that the areas for exploration are mainly rural the key findings will have most relevance in these areas. Some relevant extracts are below

#### Economic

7.31 - *“It is clear that the level of annual average employment supported in Northern over the thirty year development period is fairly modest under all scenarios. It ranges from between 35-45 person years of employment per year under the low scenario to between 110-155 under the high scenario.”*

7.37 – *“For the purposes of comparison with other studies the total average annualised employment impact per pad is estimated to be 7-9 FTE jobs for a conventional pad and 20-28 FTE jobs for an unconventional pad (this difference is explained by the higher number of wells per pad in the unconventional development scenarios).”*

7.47 - *“To put the estimates in context, under the highest development scenario only around 2 FTE jobs would be supported per year in the communities in close proximity to each development pad.”*

7.49 - *Local community benefits including developer contributions and percentage of revenue*

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>
<b>Total community benefits (£m)</b>	<b>3.0-11.6</b>	<b>6.0-13.2</b>	<b>12.0-26.4</b>

7.73 – *“The research evidence points to both established tourism and aspiring areas with high quality landscapes and environments which are a key feature of their visitor offer, and which brand themselves on their peace and tranquillity, as being the area which are much more likely to be sensitive to development.”*

7.78 – *“However, there is the potential risk of reputational damage for the rural economy associated with change in use, perceptions about the potential for contamination and the knock-on this may have for the agri-food and growing food tourism sectors (all concerns expressed by local stakeholders in areas which could be affected by development).”*

#### Environmental and Social

	<b>Moderate adverse significance</b>	<b>Major adverse significance</b>
No development	No impacts.	No impacts.
Low development	Public Health and community well-being, felt seismicity	N/A
Medium development	Public Health and community well-being, felt seismicity, soils, climate change (unconventional only), air quality, water	N/A
High development	Public Health, felt seismicity, soils, biodiversity, landscape and geodiversity, climate change (conventional and unconventional), waste management, air quality	Groundwater abstraction and pollution, social cohesion and community well-being

## SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

**5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?**

Yes  No  If the response is **NO GO TO Section 5C.**

**5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

We know that the areas most likely to experience onshore petroleum exploration will be rural e.g. Glens of Antrim, Fermanagh, Lough Neagh. This was emphasised in the stakeholder engagement that was part of the research by Hatch Regeneris and the location of campaign groups concerned with exploration and production. The research also showed the potential minimal economic impacts and potential higher social and environmental impacts of onshore petroleum exploration and production (this would apply to Options 1, 2 and 3 from the consultation document). Any impacts from stopping onshore petroleum exploration and production (option 4) cannot be measured at this stage although we expect that it will have longer terms benefits on the environment and the aspects of the rural economy such as tourism. These potential impacts on local communities and the rural environment were factors in choosing option 4 as the preferred option (i.e. introducing a moratorium and eventual legislative ban on exploration and production of all forms of onshore oil and gas in Northern Ireland).

If the response to Section **5A** was **YES GO TO Section 6A.**



**5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

N/A

## SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

**6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.**

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.



<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Michael Bradley
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Deputy Principal
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Minerals and Petroleum Branch
<b>Signature:</b>	M Bradley
<b>Date:</b>	11/01/2024
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Lorraine Fleming
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Grade 7
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	Minerals and Petroleum Branch
<b>Signature:</b>	L Fleming
<b>Date:</b>	11/01/2024