

# Rural Needs

## Annual Monitoring Report

1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022

*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](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**

You can get a copy of this document in other formats; including:

- Paper Copy
- Large Print
- Braille
- Other languages

To get a copy of this document in another format contact:

Sustainable Rural Communities Branch  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs  
Dundonald House  
Upper Newtownards Road  
Ballymiscaw  
Belfast  
BT4 3SB

Tel: 028 9052 0884

Website: [www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)

Email: [rural.needs@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:rural.needs@daera-ni.gov.uk)

# Contents

Foreword .....	3
DAERA Overview .....	4
<b>GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs .....	6
Department for Communities .....	18
Department for the Economy .....	42
Department of Education .....	50
Department of Finance.....	52
Department of Health .....	57
Department for Infrastructure .....	64
Department of Justice .....	71
The Executive Office .....	74
Public Prosecution Service .....	81
<b>DISTRICT COUNCILS .....</b>	<b>84</b>
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council .....	85
Ards and North Down Borough Council.....	86
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.....	92
Belfast City Council .....	98
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.....	101
Derry City and Strabane District Council .....	111
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.....	115
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council.....	117
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.....	139
Mid Ulster District Council .....	140
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council .....	142

<b>OTHER PUBLIC AUTHORITIES .....</b>	<b>150</b>
The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools .....	151
The Education Authority .....	153
Invest Northern Ireland.....	163
The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board .....	165
The Northern Ireland Housing Executive .....	167
The Northern Ireland Library Authority .....	174
The Northern Ireland Tourist Board.....	176
Public Health Agency .....	177
The Sports Council for Northern Ireland .....	181
Police Service of Northern Ireland .....	183
The Health and Social Care Board .....	186
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust .....	189
Northern Health and Social Care Trust .....	195
Southern Health and Social Care Trust.....	203
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust .....	204
Western Health and Social Care Trust.....	214
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust.....	222
Glossary .....	228

## Foreword

This is the 5th Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report produced by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and covers the period 1st April 2021 - 31st March 2022.

The report provides details of the Rural Needs Impact Assessments undertaken by the public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (the Act) during this period and helps to provide greater transparency on how rural needs have been considered by public authorities.

People in rural areas often face unique challenges due to geographical isolation and sparsity of population, particularly in relation to accessing public services and high quality broadband. The COVID-19 pandemic has also increased the risk of social isolation for rural dwellers while the cost-of-living crisis has placed additional financial pressures on rural households due to increased transport, energy and fuel costs.

The Rural Needs Impact Assessment process which public authorities are recommended to follow helps ensure that public authorities understand the impact of their decisions on rural communities and requires them to consider how the social and economic needs of people in rural areas can be addressed in the development and implementation of their policies and in the design and delivery of public services.

The report demonstrates that the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process is now well established within public authorities and that consideration is routinely being given to rural needs. However the report also shows that there is scope for more to be done to help ensure that the Rural Needs Impact Assessment process delivers better outcomes for rural dwellers and DAERA will therefore continue to work closely with public authorities to help achieve this.

DAERA has recently provided training on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 to Rural Needs Co-ordinators in public authorities to help ensure that public authorities are fully aware of their responsibilities under the Act and that the Act is being implemented effectively. DAERA has also re-convened meetings of the Rural Needs Network in person following the lifting of the COVID-19 restrictions and these provide an opportunity for public authorities to co-operate and to share information in relation to rural needs.

Finally DAERA would like to express its gratitude to all those public authorities who have contributed to this report.

## DAERA Overview

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (the Act) was introduced to help deliver fairer outcomes for rural communities in Northern Ireland. It is a key rural policy tool for DAERA in helping to ensure that the social and economic needs of rural dwellers are given due regard to by public authorities when undertaking certain activities.

The Rural Needs Impact Assessment process is the process recommended in the Guidance on the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 for Public Authorities (Revised) to help ensure that public authorities fulfil the duty to have due regard to rural needs under Section 1(1) of the Act when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies or plans and when designing and delivering public services. During the period of the report DAERA undertook 44 Rural Needs Impact Assessments details of which are included in the DAERA section of the report.

Section 1(3) of the Act requires DAERA to undertake a review of the list of bodies and persons set out in the Schedule to the Act at least once every three years and, if it thinks it appropriate, by order amend the Schedule to add a body or person to the Schedule, remove any body or person from the Schedule or modify any entry in the Schedule. During the period of the report DAERA completed its first review of the list of bodies and persons set out in the Schedule.

During the period of the report DAERA continued to provide a range of support to the public authorities to help ensure they comply with the requirements of the legislation. This support included the provision of advice, guidance and information in relation to the implementation of the Act including the undertaking of Rural Needs Impact Assessments, the completion of Rural Needs Impact Assessment templates, engagement with rural stakeholders and the monitoring and reporting process. DAERA also continued to maintain the Rural Needs section of the DAERA website which provides a range of resources to assist public authorities including a series of 'Help With' guides, a rural research hub, rural statistics, templates and other useful information.

DAERA published the 4th Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report in December 2021 which contains information on Rural Needs Impact Assessments completed by public authorities during the period April 2020 - March 2021. A copy of the report was laid in the Assembly on Wednesday, 15 December 2021 and the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs provided a written statement to the Assembly on the contents of the report on Wednesday, 23 March 2022.

DAERA has established a Rural Needs Network with a view to securing co-operation and the exchange of information between public authorities. Membership of the Rural Needs Network is open to the Rural Needs Co-ordinator in each public authority. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 restrictions it was not possible for the Rural Needs Network to meet in person during the period of the report. However DAERA continued to maintain relationships with Rural Needs Co-ordinators during the period of the report using online communication.



# GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Reporting Period 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022

## Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>The Development of a Rural Halls Refurbishment Scheme for Voluntary and Community Organisations in Rural Areas.</p>	<p>A need was identified through a consultation process and a scoping study to facilitate rural organisations to deliver small scale capital refurbishment works to rural halls, with the intended aim of keeping community facilities viable and to support existing rural organisations to remain sustainable and identify new volunteers.</p> <p>Provision of fit for purpose rural community space has been a consistent theme throughout the consultation process. A need was also identified for ongoing capacity building and governance support for rural community and voluntary groups which should include committee succession planning and encouraging a culture of volunteering.</p> <p>In response to the needs identified, a pilot Rural Halls Refurbishment Scheme has been developed which invites formally constituted rural and community organisations to request grants of between £15,000 and £60,000 for refurbishment works. As the need was for small scale refurbishment to make halls ‘fit for purpose’ a maximum total project cost has been set at £60,000. A mandatory accredited ‘Managing your Space’ training programme will be an integral part of the Rural Halls Refurbishment Scheme in line with the needs identified to support rural organisations to remain sustainable and identify new volunteers.</p> <p>While it was recognised that rural areas can be isolated by geography, have poor provision of public transport and limited (or no) access to broadband making access to essential services difficult and expensive, the Scheme will prioritise rural halls in areas where there are significant deficiencies in ‘Access to Services’ and which have had limited previous investment, are under-utilised and restricted in usage.</p>
<p>The Waste (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.</p>	<p>As this is an inflationary amendment to waste fees and charges only, there is minimal impact on citizens of any location.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified.</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Revision of the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) Part Three Programme of Measures in line with the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010.	<p>The UKMS Programme of Measures will review policies and work currently operating, the majority of which occur at sea.</p> <p>Any perceived impacts are minimal and beneficial to coastal rural communities as the changes occur at sea.</p>
Development of Pilot “Rural Community Pollinator Scheme”.	<p>Living in a rural area can exacerbate the effects of poverty and social isolation for certain groups. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has clearly identified a lack of safe shared space in rural towns and villages. This was particularly highlighted during the pandemic when rural dwellers were unable to travel and where lack of safe shared space in rural towns and villages became evident.</p> <p>The Rural Community Pollinator Scheme will provide access to green spaces where people can meet and socialise and will support the delivery of departmental objectives in respect of building sustainable rural communities and making our rural communities more accessible, it will also support delivery of health and wellbeing for all.</p> <p>The Department has noted that there is a decline in pollinators due to lack of habitat and overuse of pesticides. The creation of these areas of shared space through a Rural Community Pollinator Scheme will play a role in encouraging pollinators and will also attract visitors which in turn will economically benefit rural towns and villages.</p>
Revision of Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Audit of Inequalities (Aol) and Action Plan to cover 2021-2025.	<p>The development of the Audit of Inequalities (Aol) and related Action Plan is likely to have a positive impact on people including those in rural areas. The Aol is a thorough analysis of inequalities which exist for DAERA service users and those affected by DAERA policies. This Audit helps inform DAERA’s work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties as well as assessing the Departments progress on the implementation of the equality duties.</p> <p>DAERA will allocate all necessary resources (e.g. people, time and money) in order to effectively implement its Aol and improve awareness and take-up of the NI Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) and its replacement programme and funding opportunities for people in the various Section 75 categories in the rural and farming communities. It will also take forward actions to remove those barriers which DAERA</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>are aware of which continue to prevent participation in Rural Development Programmes (RDP).</p> <p>Through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Programme DAERA will continue to create participation opportunities for people in the various Section 75 categories by facilitating rural community transport solutions, social farming opportunities, grant aid for inclusion and access projects and enhancing a range of recreational sites (forest parks and community walkways).</p> <p>As the Aol also applies to DAERA staff there are measures to incorporate learning for staff which includes training for all frontline staff.</p>
<p>Implementing the Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme (RMCGS) 2021.</p>	<p>The Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework aims to provide the basis for the RMCGS. Additionally, the DAERA publication 'Key Rural Issues, Northern Ireland 2020' published in September 2020 provides further evidence to underpin the need for the RMCGS in rural areas and the positive impact that the Scheme would provide for rural dwellers, particularly in relation to access poverty, financial poverty and social isolation.</p> <p>The Rural Policy Framework, launched in March 2022, has been developed collaboratively over the last two years with a wide range of stakeholders. The RMCGS 2022 is specifically focused on rural community and voluntary organisations and thus will complement the ongoing development of schemes through the Framework to address social and economic needs of persons in rural areas.</p> <p>The key themes RMCGS focuses on - Modernisation (of existing premises/assets), Information &amp; Communications Technology and Health and Wellbeing help to empower local community and voluntary organisations to deliver enhanced and new services to sustain rural communities that in turn help to alleviate poverty, reduce isolation and improve community integration.</p>
<p>Implementation of the Science Data Policy will facilitate accessibility and usability of DAERA's Science Data.</p>	<p>Rural poverty as a result of limited local employment opportunities and associated travel costs in securing employment can be a disadvantage that is faced by people living in rural areas. It is important that there are employment opportunities in rural areas. Agriculture, food &amp; drink,</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>horticulture and sea fishing industries are largely rural based industries that provide employment opportunities for people in rural areas.</p> <p>The work of DAERA includes a diverse range of responsibilities including animal health, angling, biodiversity, countryside management, crops and horticulture, education and research, environmental advice for planning, EU exit, fisheries, food, forestry, grants and funding, land and landscapes, livestock farming, marine, plant and tree health, protection of the environment, rural development, statistics, sustainability, waste, water. DAERA invests around a quarter of its annual budget in science services. Science data is used to inform policy development, promote innovation, manage risks to society and the environment, support rural affairs, monitor animal and plant health including disease risk. Science data sets which are open and accessible will contribute to the growth of the agri-food and associated industries within the ever challenging context of EU exit, threats from human SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, existing and newly emerging animal, plant and zoonotic pathogens. Science data will also contribute to the accessibility of the Northern Ireland countryside, promoting leisure and tourism opportunities which again will help create job opportunities and address social isolation in rural areas.</p> <p>The implementation of the Science Data Policy which clarifies the management, publication and potential reuse of science data sets will indirectly and positively impact on the Northern Ireland population and people in rural areas and contribute to the overarching goals of the Science Strategy Framework (2020-2035). The Science Strategy Framework (2020-2035) takes account of the needs of people in rural areas in relation to financial poverty and social isolation by providing for measures aimed at supporting the agri-food, environmental and rural development sectors. It encourages collaboration between the Department, industry and academia to look for new innovative ways of working and sharing information to ensure best outcomes for all. It provides for effective governance around how the Department commissions and uses science to ensure it meets the needs of its stakeholders.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The development of this Science Data Policy aligns with the goals of the Science Strategy Framework and defines how DAERA manages the science data it commissions.</p>
<p>Amendment of the Horse Racing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (the 1990 Order).</p>	<p>As a result of a change of management at Down Royal, and the subsequent suspension of payments to both racecourses, the Fund had not been available to either racecourse for the improvement of facilities and development of horse racing as was intended by its governing legislation, the Horse Racing (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 (the 1990 Order). This had the potential to put the viability of the racecourses at risk which would have had a negative impact on the rural economy in those areas, in terms of business, jobs and tourism.</p> <p>During policy development, the Department concluded that not amending the legislation would put the viability of the racecourses at risk which would result in a potential negative impact on the surrounding rural areas.</p> <p>The 1990 Order was therefore amended by the Horse Racing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (the Act). The Act seeks to prevent this impact and in doing so maintains the existing policy (going back to 1990, when the 1990 Order was enacted) of providing financial assistance to the two horse racecourses in Northern Ireland. As a result, no negative impact is envisaged as a result of these changes - whether on people in rural areas or otherwise. The Act ensures the delivery of the established policy and so prevents the potential negative impact from being realised.</p> <p>DAERA consulted on the proposal to amend the legislation, and in doing so sought views on its conclusion that the proposal would have no negative impacts on rural communities. Stakeholders were asked to comment on the conclusions of the assessment during the consultation and no evidence was provided contrary to the Department's conclusion.</p> <p>No new policy has been introduced by the Act. The only substantial change to the 1990 Order has been to amend the name of the beneficiaries of the fund to ensure that the current operators are eligible for funding as soon as possible.</p> <p>Therefore no negative impact is envisaged as a result of the Act, to people in rural areas or otherwise.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Development of Pilot “Rural Community Rescue Scheme”.	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of safe, shared spaces in rural communities to provide access to rural dwellers to spend time in nature. Within the Rural Policy Framework, it was noted animated outdoor rural community space was needed to promote health and wellbeing and to address loneliness and that such space should be affordable and accessible.</p> <p>The Department engaged with the Department of Justice throughout the development of the Scheme, taking into account the social and economic needs of people in rural areas. In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the high number of call outs the search and rescue groups’ equipment has been put under a lot of pressure.</p> <p>The increased demand for search and rescue services is likely to continue as more people access the outdoors as an alternative to indoor activities and leisure time. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of safe, shared spaces in rural communities to provide access to rural dwellers to spend time in nature.</p> <p>This initiative, through the provision of fit for purpose equipment, can help make our rural communities more accessible, sustainable and places where people want to live, work and be active. It will also help to tackle the impact of social isolation in rural areas by providing access to green spaces where people can meet and socialise safely with the ‘safety net’ of accessible search and rescue services if needed.</p>
The Direct Payments to Farmers (Simplifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.	<p>It was not considered necessary on this occasion to identify the social and economic needs of people living in rural areas. This is because the Direct Payments to Farmers (Simplifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 gives legal effect to improvements/simplifications to the rules governing a number of long established Direct Agricultural Support Schemes with the aim of reducing the administrative burden on applicants and those administering the Schemes.</p>
The Agriculture (Student fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>This amendment reflects the annual inflationary increase in student fees at College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) and maintains a long standing policy decision.</p> <p>The increase does not have a differential impact on rural areas.</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
The Animal Welfare (Service Animals) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.	<p>Amendment of the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 to provide added protection to service animals (i.e. a police dog).</p> <p>The policy will not impact differently on people in rural areas to those in urban areas.</p>
Development of the bTB Eradication Strategy.	<p>The Minister has made the eradication of Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) a priority. The achievement of the eradication of bTB from the Northern Ireland cattle herd is vital for our cattle health, human health and trade exports and in underpinning DAERA's vision of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone. The aim is to address the economic and social impacts that bTB has on the rural economy, farm businesses and on farmers and rural communities. DAERA is committed to making farm businesses sustainable and working with industry to increase trade and reduce the stress that a Tuberculosis (TB) breakdown causes. To achieve this, DAERA is seeking to work better with farmers, vets, conservationists, landowners and other key stakeholders to improve and enhance the current regime of testing and disease prevention, and to stop the disease entering the farm in the first place.</p> <p>There are increasing pressures on public finances, and it is unlikely that this position will be sustainable in the longer-term, particularly, as we leave the EU and the UK seeks to strike new international trade deals, DAERA is only too aware that sustained levels of bTB can be a disincentive for further reopening of our agri-food industry to new markets. DAERA's strategy for eradication aims to introduce an element of cost sharing and shared responsibility for eradicating bTB from cattle in Northern Ireland, reflecting the view that a change in the compensation regime would encourage the cultural change required to progress the eradication of bTB from Northern Ireland. Savings accrued would provide the Department with the opportunity to seek additional resources to support other measures proposed that are necessary to achieve the goal of eradication of bTB from Northern Ireland.</p>
Publication of the Consultation on reform to the Packaging Waste Recycling Note (PRN) and Packaging Waste Export Recycling Note (PERN).	<p>The policy is not likely to have an impact on people in rural areas as it is perceived as a reform of an existing system that targets packaging producers, waste management companies, reprocessors and material exporters. Any reform of the system will be based on extended producer responsibility.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The delivery of the consultation and policy development is not predicated to impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas. Any reform of the existing packaging producer responsibility system will be based on extended producer responsibility and aimed at packaging producers and associated waste industry.</p>
<p>Call for Evidence on Intertidal Hand gathering of Shellfish in the Northern Ireland Marine Area.</p>	<p>The potential economic loss to commercial gatherers and fish processors has been considered. This is the reason for the publishing for a call for evidence document. The questionnaire within this document has been designed to seek the information required to better quantify the potential economic loss to rural communities. The evidence obtained from the consultation responses will be used in the implementation of management measures. The proposed management measures will support fishing at sustainable levels while protecting the marine environment.</p> <p>Evidence suggests the protections afforded to habitats and species within managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and closed areas, provide significant biological benefits. One of the spill over benefits to areas located beside MPAs is the sustainable supply of larger fish. Increased biodiversity also fosters resilience and can offer a buffer to climate change. The potential management measures set out in the call for evidence document have been designed to regulate commercial shellfish gathering. It is recognised that small scale gathering by individuals for personal consumption is an important social and cultural activity that has taken place in coastal communities for generations. The proposed measures have been influenced by this and revised in order to allow it to continue.</p>
<p>Public Consultation on The Single Use Carrier Bags Charge Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.</p>	<p>The Department was aware that a change in policy would impact on all members of the public and businesses throughout Northern Ireland and proposed a full consultation.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified.</p>
<p>Public Consultation on the future Agricultural Policy Proposals for Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>The future agricultural policy proposals will affect virtually all farmers in Northern Ireland and therefore will affect people in rural areas. The future agricultural support policies and schemes will replace existing Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Schemes and will be designed to deliver four main outcomes of the Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework Portfolio.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The social and economic needs of people in rural areas identified in the Northern Ireland Future Agricultural Policy Framework stakeholder engagement carried out in 2018 were considered in the development of the policy proposals for the consultation; namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effect on people in rural areas if farmers are not viewed as equal partners in the supply chain;</li> <li>• Different types of farms/farmers/landscape (e.g. hill farmers and lowland farmers; small farms and large farms), different communities (e.g. farmers in border communities and farmers in non-border communities) and different types of producers (e.g. horticulture and agriculture);</li> <li>• Broadband quality and public transport and maintenance and road networks; and</li> <li>• Rural poverty, mental and physical health, inequalities in health and social inclusion.</li> </ul> <p>The policy is under further development and will take into consideration the responses received to the consultation exercise in relation to rural needs.</p>
Northern Ireland Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Regulatory Inspection Capability.	<p>The locations of the points of entry are pre-existing and cannot be moved and are not located in areas classified as rural. The project is required to implement the Northern Ireland Protocol which impacts on the movement of live animals, and animal, plant, or organic products, affecting the entire food supply chain into and throughout Northern Ireland as such this impacts all areas of Northern Ireland, rural and urban. Checks are required to be carried out within port boundaries.</p> <p>The social and economic needs of people in rural areas have not been considered specifically as the project is required to implement the Northern Ireland Protocol which impacts on the movement of live animals, and animal, plant, or organic products, affecting the entire food supply chain into and throughout Northern Ireland as such this impacts all areas of Northern Ireland, rural and urban.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
New Climate Change Primary Legislation for Northern Ireland.	<p>During the development of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, DAERA identified and give due regard to the needs of the rural sector. The key rural need identified for the Act was to ensure that the agricultural sector, and in particular farmers, are supported and helped to reduce emissions so to help meet the net zero by 2050 target, and that they are not unfairly and disproportionately impacted by the requirements of the Act compared to other Northern Ireland sectors.</p> <p>The Act makes a provision for the level of reductions in methane emissions. The methane provision takes into account the needs of the rural sector in Northern Ireland, as the sector has particularly difficult challenges in reducing methane emissions due to ruminant animals/livestock production. It takes on board and recognises the relevance of Northern Ireland being a significant net exporter of agri-food products, in which nearly 50% of all agri-food products produced in Northern Ireland is consumed in the rest of the UK. The Act also requires a Just Transition Fund for Agriculture to be established to provide financial assistance and help to the agri-sector, so to reduce the potential for significant negative impacts on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas who are dependent on this sector.</p>
Public Consultation on a Review of Bathing Waters.	The Department considers that the identification of bathing waters can be seen as making a positive contribution to rural communities. Identification should increase the profile of those areas, improve the potential for tourism and provide for increased spend in the local economy.
Public Consultation on Management Measures for the use of Fast Craft and Personal Water Craft (PWC) in Marine Protected Areas.	The policy will have minor initial cost to rural business but should ensure the long-term sustainability of their business.
The Introduction of Measures for the Brown Crab Fishery in Northern Ireland.	Most of the pot fishers who target edible (brown) crab within the Northern Ireland fishery live in or near coastal rural villages that have fishing harbours or small ports around the Northern Ireland coast.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The purpose of introducing the measures is to ensure the continual sustainability and profitability of the brown crab fishery in Northern Ireland. The fishing for brown crab, and the processing of the landed product is predominantly conducted by persons living in rural coastal areas. Therefore the impact of the proposed measures are likely to benefit people in rural coastal communities more than persons from urban areas.</p> <p>The fishing industry had expressed concern about a significant increase in fishing effort in the brown crab fishery and the effect that this is having on the health of the brown crab stock and has called for its management to be improved.</p> <p>The resulting consultation responses highlighted the overwhelming support for the introduction of measures which would see an increase in the minimum landing size and address the declawing of edible crabs.</p> <p>The implementation of these measures would benefit the fishermen in terms of a better price for the bigger and better quality crab landed, and at the same time contribute to the future sustainability of the brown crab fishery.</p>
<p>Consultation on the role of the Independent Panel in Reviews of Decisions.</p>	<p>From the point of view of the applicant, the only change is in the decision making body, the rest of the process remains unchanged.</p> <p>The change will not have any significant impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.</p>
<p>The Proposed Requirement for all NI Registered Fishing Vessels (under 12 meters in length) and all Registered Fishing Vessels (under 12 meters in length) to have an Inshore Vessel Monitoring System (IVMS) operational during fishing activities.</p>	<p>DAERA has been engaged with inshore fisheries through its Inshore Fisheries Partnership in discussing the proposed requirement to have a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) on board the smaller vessels within the Northern Ireland fishing fleet. This proposal will impact directly on vessel owners who have an association with the fishery harbours and small ports. Whilst a key policy objective of this proposal is to gain better information on fishing activity in the inshore region (0-12 nautical miles) vessel monitoring systems will improve understanding of the location, volume and value of fishing activity of that fleet, informing a number of key areas necessary to managing fisheries more fairly and efficiently and providing information on fishing activity for use in marine planning.</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Inshore Vessel Monitoring System (IVMS) will also provide a range of benefits to industry including for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise finer scale management to assist in maximising fishing opportunities, such as zoned management within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) without excessive buffer zones and creating a more responsive management system. This means access may be allowed to certain types of fishing in areas where it would otherwise have to be prohibited.</li> </ul> <p>VMS can provide consumers including those in rural areas with accurate information of catch locations which may improve consumer confidence and traceability when purchasing local fish.</p> <p>There is also safety at sea implications, and the tracking functionality may assist with recovery and swifter payment of insurance claims in case of loss or damage of vessels at sea.</p> <p>Providing assurance that we are taking appropriate steps to fish more sustainably and as a result the industry is able to market it as such, use this to support environmental accreditation of fisheries, enable the data captured to be used by fishermen to develop their business plans and enable fishermen based in those rural locations to demonstrate they have a track record of fishing in specific areas.</p>

## Department for Communities

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme (CRRP).</p>	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment identified that the pandemic had a disproportionate impact upon the economies of smaller rural towns. The Programme was a collaboration between Department for Communities, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and Department for Infrastructure, with the latter two Departments contributing funding to allow the Programme to extend into smaller settlements and to encourage active travel.</p> <p>Engagement with other government bodies and principal stakeholders, and consideration of policy documents, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department for Infrastructure;</li> <li>• Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;</li> <li>• Local councils;</li> <li>• Representatives of local traders;</li> <li>• The ‘Principles of Revitalisation 2013’ document;</li> <li>• NI Safer Public Places - Urban Centres and Green Spaces guidance;</li> <li>• Supporting People, Building Communities Shaping Places - DfC Common Purpose; and</li> <li>• The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</li> </ul>
<p>COVID-19 Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme (CRSSRP).</p>	<p>The Programme built on the findings of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment carried out for the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme (CRRP) to develop and implement a Programme aimed specifically at those towns and villages with a population below 5,000.</p> <p>Again, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and Department for Infrastructure contributed funding towards the Programme.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Engagement with other government bodies and principal stakeholders, and consideration of policy documents, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department for Infrastructure;</li> <li>• Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs;</li> <li>• Local councils;</li> <li>• Representatives of local traders;</li> <li>• The ‘Principles of Revitalisation 2013’ document;</li> <li>• NI Safer Public Places - Urban Centres and Green Spaces guidance; and</li> <li>• Supporting People, Building Communities Shaping Places - DfC Common Purpose; and</li> <li>• The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</li> </ul>
The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Amendment) Bill.	The impact of the policy on rural communities was considered and no specific impact was identified.
Changes to the income qualification criteria for the Affordable Warmth Scheme.	<p>In order to inform analysis of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas the Department for Communities (DfC) identified the following key statistics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between NI Census’ in 2001 and 2011, the rural population increased by 15%, the urban population increased by 7%; and the age profile of people aged 65 continued to increase;</li> <li>• Average weekly incomes are on average lower in rural areas, particularly in the west of the province where almost 24% of individuals with low income (average weekly income below £264) reside;</li> <li>• The proportion of urban housing in the social sector was 20%. In rural areas in 2016 approximately 7% of the stock was in the social sector. This pattern was similar to 2011 findings;</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was little variation between the types of household living in urban and rural areas, although households with children were more likely to live in urban areas;</li> <li>• More than one-third (35%; 34% in 2011) of occupied dwellings were in rural areas. Most age groups showed little variation from the average with the exception of the 25 to 39 age group which had a lower than average proportion (27%) living in this location;</li> <li>• Household reference persons who were not working, and who were permanently sick/disabled or looking after family/home were least likely to live in rural areas (both 32%; compared with 35% overall);</li> <li>• Households with annual incomes of £46,800 were most likely to live in rural areas (41%), while those with annual incomes of up to £10,399 (31%) were least likely to live in rural areas;</li> <li>• There was a significant rise in the level of unfitnes in the private sector housing stock in rural areas from 60% to 68% in 2016; and</li> <li>• In 2016 a much higher rate of fuel poverty was found in rural areas (32%; 44% in 2011) compared with urban areas (16%; 41% in 2011). The highest rate of fuel poverty was found in households living in small villages, hamlets or in open country areas (34%).</li> </ul> <p>The majority of this Statistical information is drawn from Northern Ireland Statistics &amp; Research Agency (NISRA) census-based data, the Housing Executive's 2016 House Condition Survey Northern Ireland and the Housing Market Review &amp; Perspective and the Family Resources Survey (FRS) urban/rural publication.</p> <p>The changes to the Affordable Warmth Scheme will apply equally to urban and rural dwellers and will not indirectly impact on rural areas in ways that are likely to disadvantage people in rural areas compared to people in urban areas.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Department for Communities and its delivery partner Northern Ireland Housing Executive has taken account of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas in relation to financial poverty, increasing levels of people over 65 in rural areas, social isolation, fuel poverty and social/affordable housing need in rural areas.</p>
<p>Revision of the Department for Communities Shared Housing Programme.</p>	<p>The initial one mile good relations delivery radius (for the delivery of shared housing Good Relations Plans) was extended to five miles; to allow greater 'reach' in a rural context.</p>
<p>Annual Review of the NI Co-Ownership Housing Scheme Property Value Limit (PVL).</p>	<p>Co-Ownership's Property Value Limit (PVL) sets the maximum value of homes that can be purchased through the product. It is reviewed on an annual basis (at a minimum) to ensure relevant intermediate housing products continue to keep pace with the changing housing market at any given time and help people access intermediate/affordable housing across all areas.</p> <p>In reviewing the change to the 2020/21 Property Value Limit (PVL) the Department considered information from a number of sources to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas, including statistics produced by the Department for Communities (the Department), Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) Co-Ownership, and Northern Ireland Statistics &amp; Research Agency (NISRA).</p> <p>Research highlighted a number of social and economic needs of people in rural areas such as financial poverty, social isolation, fuel poverty and a lack of affordable housing in rural areas.</p> <p>While poverty and social isolation exist in both urban areas and rural areas, those living in rural areas often experience poverty and social isolation differently due to issues relating to geographical isolation, lower population density, lack of affordable housing options and the dispersed nature of many rural settlements.</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>It is anticipated the reviewed PVL will complement the Departments Housing Supply Strategy and NIHE's Rural and Older Peoples strategies, and more generally, help deliver the Programme for Government targets to address housing need and increase the supply of affordable housing in rural areas.</p>
<p>Development of an Intermediate Housing Product for Older People (Over 55's).</p>	<p>In developing this product, the Department considered the social and economic needs of people in rural areas and reviewed a number of sources of statistics, identifying issues such as financial poverty, increasing levels of people over 65 in rural areas, social isolation, increased level of unfitness in the private sector housing stock in rural areas, fuel poverty and a general lack of affordable housing need in rural areas.</p> <p>It is anticipated that this product will complement the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Rural Strategy, and other initiatives and strategies, such as the Housing Supply Strategy, Local Development Plans and Mixed Tenure Housing Development, and more generally, help deliver the draft Programme for Government targets to address housing need and increase housing supply.</p>
<p>Core Funding of Housing Rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The benefits of the project for people in rural areas are equivalent to those for people in urban areas; and</li> <li>• There are no additional costs associated with accessing the project for people/organisations in rural areas.</li> </ul> <p>As the advice service is predominantly delivered via the telephone, it will be equally accessible in rural areas.</p> <p>Also, training and online information is available to other advice providers to ensure there is availability for local and face to face assistance across Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Housing Rights also provide self-help, online resources - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs indicate in their document '<i>Broadband Access in NI - Rural/Urban Comparison - January 2021</i>'</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>that Northern Ireland has longer than average line lengths between enabled properties and the closest fibre cabinet, as a result of how its rural population is distributed. As the broadband signal will degrade over longer distances, this inevitably results in slower than average data transfer speeds to rural households and businesses. However, Northern Ireland's existing networks are currently being upgraded and new fixed infrastructure is being built. Increased competition between providers including Virgin Media, Open Reach and Fibrus has resulted in NI having the best full-fibre internet coverage of the four devolved administrations (56%) compared to England (16%), Scotland (17%) and Wales (19%).</p> <p>Department for Communities and its delivery partner Housing Rights has taken account of the needs of people in rural areas to ensure the project is widely available throughout Northern Ireland.</p>
<p>Development of a New Housing Supply Strategy (HSS) for NI.</p>	<p>The Housing Supply Strategy aims to expand the choice of tenures available in NI and to reduce the number of people experiencing housing stress while improving the quality of rented accommodation available. One of the key long-term policies of the HSS is to consider housing supply in the context of the different needs of rural communities.</p> <p>A full Rural Needs Impact Assessment was undertaken during the Strategy development which noted that the HSS has the potential to have a positive impact on people in rural areas by providing alternative housing options which address a wider range of affordable housing needs.</p> <p>In developing the Strategy, the Department has taken account of a wide range of consultation responses and focus groups responses that outlined some of the issues associated with housing supply in rural areas. These issues include social isolation, declining social cohesion as people struggle to afford housing in areas with which</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>they have a natural affinity, mental health issues, a growing lack of services, rural poverty, fuel poverty and a rise in house prices or rents across many rural areas.</p> <p>The design of the Housing Supply Strategy has been influenced by these factors, along with a range of other factors and research commissioned by Department for Communities (DfC). Once finalised, the development of actions emerging from the Strategy will evolve as part of implementation and action plans that will be produced and will continue to take into account the rural needs highlighted here. The Rural Needs Impact Assessment will be updated to ensure that actions are monitored against rural impact.</p> <p>The Department has also ensured that the Strategy is aligned with the Housing Executive's 'Reaching Rural' 2021-2025 Strategy.</p>
<p>Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) Uniting Communities through Sport and Creativity Programme.</p>	<p>Business case developed to obtain approval for roll out to new areas which involved completion of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment. Due to the nature of how areas targeted are identified i.e. based on hate crime statistics it was noted that cross community youth provision has been historically challenging to establish due to working with population settlements of less than 5000.</p> <p>Distribution of funds in approved geographical locations will not impact differentially on people in rural areas.</p>
<p>2021/22 Access and Inclusion Programme.</p>	<p>The benefits of the Programme for people in rural and urban areas are the same.</p> <p>There are no additional costs associated with accessing the Programme for organisations in rural areas.</p> <p>No funding has been ring fenced for projects in urban areas.</p> <p>Participating councils are eligible to receive equal proportions of funding regardless of the number of venues in their area.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
2021/22 Small Capital Grants Programme.	<p>The benefits of the Programme are the same for people in rural and urban areas.</p> <p>There are no additional costs associated with accessing the Programme for organisations in rural areas.</p> <p>Applications can be requested and submitted either online or by post.</p> <p>A key aim is partnership and collaboration and rural groups with low capacity can come together in designing their applications to ensure they meet all eligibility criteria.</p> <p>No funding is ring fenced for projects in urban areas.</p>
Sub-Regional Stadia Programme for Soccer.	<p>This Programme is still in a development stage, early investigation suggests the benefits of the Programme will be the same for people in rural and urban areas. The Programme will be open to all soccer clubs or soccer facility owners across Northern Ireland with no known negative impact on people in rural areas, at this stage. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has not yet been carried out but will be carried out in full during the development of the Business Case.</p>
State Care Investment Programme.	<p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment carried out as part of developing the State Care Investment Business Case.</p> <p>The recommended option suggests that each State Care site should be considered individually and that the operating model developed for each site should be appropriate to its location and significance. This will ensure that the needs of rural sites and the surrounding communities are considered appropriately when operating models are being developed.</p>
Historic Environment Fund 2021-22.	<p>The funding Scheme is designed to deliver across the whole of Northern Ireland and is not based on which buildings or types of building can avail of the funding. It will not impact negatively on people in rural areas as listed buildings and historic monuments are found across the rural area.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Village Catalyst Grant Scheme.	<p>This Scheme was developed in partnership with Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and the Architectural Heritage Fund. It seeks to tackle rural poverty and social isolation by developing sustainable community uses for under utilised historic buildings in rural villages of fewer than 5,000 people. Rural needs have therefore been front and foremost in the development of this Grant Scheme.</p>
COVID-19 Recovery Programme 21/22.	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The COVID-19 Recovery Programme 21/22 provided recovery funding for individuals, organisations and support employment opportunities in the Culture, Languages, Arts, Heritage, Sports, Charities and Social Enterprises sectors. This funding aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist creative individuals reactivate, maintain or enhance their creative trade, vocation or profession aimed at preventing them from leaving the creative economy;</li> <li>• Provide funding support to organisations within the sectors who have a deficit in finances as a result of COVID-19; and</li> <li>• Promote and encourage economic regeneration within the sectors through labour market interventions.</li> </ul>
Social Supermarket (SSM) Support Funding.	<p>This funding is to expand the SSM model from a 5 pilot programme to a regional programme with a tailored model being developed through co-design for each council area.</p> <p>Consideration of rural issues will be built into the co-design process and will be influenced by the inclusion of rural voluntary and community sector representatives within relevant co-design groups.</p> <p>In addition, during recent Access to Food initiatives the Department worked in collaboration with Councils and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to tackle the impacts of COVID-19 which demonstrated that</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	rural areas can be reached successfully. The same stakeholders have been invited to join the co design process to promote and enhance that collaboration and build a full network of wraparound support that includes the needs of rural areas.
Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.	A Rural Needs Impact Assessment was completed but no adverse impacts were identified.
<p>2021-2022 Annual up-rating of pensions and benefits.</p> <p>The Relevant Legislation is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022 No. 143);</li> <li>• The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022 No. 144);</li> <li>• The Mesothelioma Lump Sum Payments (Conditions and Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022 No. 137).</li> </ul>	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The Statutory Rules merely seek to up-rate pensions, benefits and lump sum amounts in line with inflation. There are no benefit specific policy changes contained within them.</p> <p>They apply to all relevant claimants equally, irrespective of whether their place of residence is in an urban or rural area. Those in rural areas will benefit in exactly the same way as urban dwellers.</p> <p>The legislation sees no distinction between rural and urban and the increased rates of pensions and benefits will be paid automatically without having to be claimed.</p>
The Social Security (Industrial Injuries) (Prescribed Diseases) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022 No. 84).	<p>No rural needs were identified. No variance of impact is intended or envisaged on rural areas as the amendments are technical in nature, designed to enhance the policy position and to extend the occupational prescription for prescribed diseases.</p> <p>The legislation concerned, as per Social Security legislation in general, is subject to nationwide government policy.</p> <p>No distinction is made in either policy or legislation between rural and urban. It applies equally to all claimants across the country and their place of residence should have no negative impact.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
The Social Fund (Child Funeral Fund) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.	<p>No rural needs identified.</p> <p>The policy made no distinction between rural and urban dwellers, and, as a result, it was determined that there would be no adverse impact on people who live in rural areas. This legislation allows payments to be made in the event of a death of a child under the age of 18 or stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.</p> <p>This payment will be made regardless of whether the claimant lives in a rural or urban area. The needs of people in rural areas in relation to this policy are the same as those for urban dwellers.</p>
The Energy Payment Support Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.	<p>No rural needs identified.</p> <p>There are no issues - as the Regulations make no distinction between rural and urban dwellers, there will be no adverse impact on people who live in rural areas. Eligibility for the Energy Payment Support Scheme is not dependent on whether someone lives in a rural area or an urban area.</p>
The Child Support Maintenance Calculation (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>No rural needs identified.</p> <p>These Regulations will amend the Child Support Maintenance Calculation Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 to correct anomalies with regard to Child Benefit end dates. This will allow child maintenance end dates to align with Child Benefit end dates and the date a child leaves full time education.</p> <p>There are no issues as the Regulations make no distinction between rural and urban dwellers, there will be no adverse impact on people who live in rural areas.</p>
The Welfare Supplementary Payments (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.	<p>The social and economic needs of people in rural areas, in relation to this policy, are the same as those for urban dwellers.</p> <p>The policy sees no distinction between people living in rural and urban areas and there will be no adverse impact on people living in rural areas.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	The policy change will be positive for all those impacted by the social sector size criteria policy regardless of where they live in Northern Ireland.
The draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.	<p>The social and economic needs of people in rural areas, in relation to this policy, are the same as those for urban dwellers.</p> <p>The policy sees no distinction between people living in rural and urban areas and there will be no adverse impact on people living in rural areas.</p> <p>The Regulations will apply to all who satisfy the criteria for welfare mitigation payments, irrespective of whether they live in an urban or rural area.</p>
The Social Security (Reciprocal Agreements) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (SR 2021 No. 207).	<p>These amendments will have no bearing on people in rural areas here. They will only affect certain people living in the European Economic Area, Switzerland or Ireland.</p> <p>No potential for differential impact has been identified.</p>
The Social Security (Habitual Residence and Past Presence) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (SR 2021 No. 269).	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The policy is being implemented in connection with the United Kingdom (UK) Government's undertaking to relocate and resettle certain people living in Afghanistan to the UK. It makes no distinction between rural or urban dwellers and will have no impact on people currently living and working here.</p>
The Social Security (Habitual Residence and Past Presence) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (SR 2022 No. 149).	The policy is being implemented in connection with the United Kingdom (UK) Government's undertaking to relocate and resettle people living in Ukraine to the UK. It makes no distinction between rural or urban dwellers and will have no impact on people currently living and working here.
Draft - The Social Security (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 make amendments to the Social Security (Immigration and Asylum) Consequential Amendments Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 ("the 2000 Regulations").	There are no issues as the policy makes no distinction between rural and urban dwellers, there will be no adverse impact on people who live in rural areas.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
The Universal Credit (Coronavirus) (Restoration of the Minimum Income Floor) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>No specific rural needs have been identified.</p> <p>These Regulations provide a gradual restoration of the Gainful Self-Employed Test (GSE), the Minimum Income Floor (MIF) and the Start-Up Periods for self-employed persons who are in receipt of Universal Credit (UC). These measures will be re-introduced over a period of 12 months from 31st July 2021 to 31 July 2022.</p>
The Housing Benefit and Universal Credit (Sanctuary Schemes) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>These Regulations make an exception to exclude individuals in the social rented sector from under-occupancy deductions where domestic violence has been inflicted upon or threatened against the claimant or a member of that claimant's household and they are consequently living in a property under a Sanctuary Scheme.</p>
The Universal Credit (Childcare Costs) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>These Regulations allow childcare payments made by the Department to be used in the calculation of the person's childcare costs element.</p>
The Universal Credit (Work Allowance and Taper) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>These Regulations reduce the taper rate that is applied to the earned income received by working claimants of Universal Credit from 63% to 55%. They also increase the lower and higher work allowances by £500 per annum (rounded up to £42 per month).</p>
The Universal Credit (Exceptions to the Requirement not to be receiving Education) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>These Regulations amend one of the exceptions to the requirement to not be receiving education which determines entitlement to Universal Credit (UC) and also ensures that a disabled student who transitions to UC from old-style (income related) Employment and Support Allowance (OS ESA) is treated as having Limited Capability for Work (LCW) for the purposes of entitlement to UC.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
The Social Security (Income and Capital Disregards) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>These Regulations ensure that payments made under the Windrush Compensation Scheme and schemes which provide compensation for historical institutional child abuse in the United Kingdom do not affect recipients' entitlements to means tested Social Security benefits.</p>
The Welfare Reform (NI) Order 2015 (Commencement No 16 and Commencement No. 8, 13 and 14 and Transitional and Transitory Provisions (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>This change will allow those who work in Northern Ireland (NI) but do not live in Great Britain or NI to claim Universal Credit.</p>
The Support for Mortgage Interest etc. (Security for Loans) Bill 2022.	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The policy made no distinction between rural and urban dwellers, and, as a result, it was determined that there would be no adverse impact on people who live in rural areas. This Bill will allow a Statutory Charge to be registered in respect of a Support for Mortgage Interest loan. The Bill will impact people who live in rural areas in exactly the same way as it will people who live in urban areas.</p> <p>All loan recipients will have a Statutory Charge registered regardless of whether they live in a rural or urban area.</p>
The Pensions Regulator (Information Gathering Powers and Modification) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/243).	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The Statutory Rule sets out the minimum information which the Pensions Regulator must include in a notice which requires a person to attend an interview. It also modifies the Regulator's extended inspection powers so they apply to multi-employer schemes and sets the level of the fixed and escalating civil penalties.</p> <p>There is no relevant urban/rural data in relation to the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>The Occupational Pension Schemes (Climate Change Governance and Reporting) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/244).</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The Statutory Rule introduces requirements for trustees of certain occupational pension schemes to ensure that there is effective governance of those schemes with respect to the effects of climate change. It also introduces related reporting and publication requirements for such trustees and confers new compliance powers on the Pensions Regulator.</p> <p>There is no relevant urban/rural data in respect of the impact of the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
<p>The Occupational Pension Schemes (Climate Change Governance and Reporting) (Miscellaneous Provisions and Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/246).</p>	<p>The Statutory Rule amends existing pensions legislation to introduce related disclosure and notification requirements and new requirements about trustee knowledge and understanding of matters relating to the effects of climate change for Occupational Pension Schemes.</p> <p>There is no relevant urban/rural data in respect of the impact of the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
<p>The Pensions Regulator (Employer Resources Test) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/261).</p>	<p>The Statutory Rule provides the technical details for an additional test to the contribution notice regime, “the employer resources test” - one of two new grounds through which the Pensions Regulator can assess if an act or failure to act satisfies the requirements for issuing a contribution notice.</p> <p>The policy is technical in nature and as such, there is no relevant urban/rural data in relation to the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
<p>The Occupational Pension Schemes (Administration, Investment and Charges and Governance) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/272).</p>	<p>This Statutory Rule amends a number of sets of existing Regulations relating to the administration and governance of Occupational Pension Schemes. The aim is to ensure that Occupational Defined Contribution pension scheme members benefit from efficient and operationally resilient administration, sound investment governance, and access to innovative and diversified investment strategies.</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	The amendments are technical in nature and as such, there is no relevant urban/rural data in relation to the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.
The Social Security (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/287).	<p>This Rule corrects a deficiency in existing legislation following EU Exit and the end of the transition period in order to continue to make payments of the Christmas Bonus to eligible people resident in Switzerland. It also amends the 1992 Act to make clear that the Bonus is payable to eligible people in the European Economic Area (EEA).</p> <p>The amendments are technical in nature and as such, there is no relevant urban/rural data in relation to the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Conditions for Transfers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/298).	<p>The Statutory Rule sets out the conditions that must be satisfied before pension scheme members can exercise their right to transfer their cash equivalent transfer value to another registered pension arrangement. The aim is to protect people from pension scams.</p> <p>There is no relevant urban/rural data in relation to the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
The Occupational Pensions (Revaluation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/314).	<p>The Order specifies the percentage by which preserved pension rights are revalued for members of salary related occupational pension schemes who leave their scheme before pension age. A Rule is made each year to apply to those who attain their scheme's normal pension age in the following calendar year.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified. No potential for differential impact has been identified. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
The State Pension Revaluation for Transitional Pensions Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/317).	<p>The Northern Ireland Pension Centre already administers State Pension for all Northern Ireland claimants.</p> <p>This is a technical Order giving effect to a statutory requirement to specify the percentage that will be used to revalue the "protected payment" element of a new</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>State Pension for persons who reach State Pension age on or after 12 April 2021.</p> <p>Consequently there are no barriers or additional costs associated with implementing the policy in rural areas.</p>
<p>The State Pension Debits and Credits Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021/318).</p>	<p>The Northern Ireland Pension Centre already administers State Pension for all Northern Ireland claimants.</p> <p>The Order allows for the revaluation of the new State Pension Scheme pensions credits and debits, which arise when a Pension Sharing Order is made by the courts where divorce proceedings commence, from 6 April 2016.</p> <p>No new alternative delivery mechanism is planned or required to ensure fair outcomes as a result of this policy.</p>
<p>The Pension Protection Fund and Occupational Pension Schemes (Levy Ceiling) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022 No. 69).</p>	<p>The Order sets the amount of the Pension Protection Fund levy ceiling as £1,178,605,581.00 for the financial year beginning on 1 April 2022.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified. No potential for differential impact has been identified.</p>
<p>Occupational Pension Schemes (Charges and Governance) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022/83).</p>	<p>These Regulations amend existing pensions' legislation to introduce a new restriction which applies to the flat-fee charges which can be levied on members of a defined contribution pension scheme used for automatic enrolment with rights invested in the pension scheme's default fund.</p> <p>The amendments are technical in nature and as such, there is no relevant urban/rural data in relation to the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
<p>The Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022/86).</p>	<p>The Order provides for the revaluation of earnings factors so that they maintain their value in relation to the general level of earnings.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified, consequently there are no barriers or additional costs associated with implementing the policy in rural areas.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Occupational Pension Schemes (Schemes that were contracted out) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022/87).	<p>The Order specifies the percentage by which the guaranteed minimum pension element of an individual's occupational pension entitlement (a person could accrue a guaranteed minimum pension in a contracted-out occupational pension scheme between 1978 and 1997) is increased with effect from 6 April 2022.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified. No potential for differential impact has been identified.</p>
Occupational Pension Schemes (Fraud Compensation Levy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022/98).	<p>The Statutory Rule gives effect to a new maximum Fraud Compensation Levy (FCL) ceiling applicable to eligible occupational pension schemes.</p> <p>The amendments are technical in nature and as such, there is no relevant urban/rural data in relation to the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
The Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022 No. 111).	<p>The Statutory Rule provides a new fixed rate of revaluation of Guaranteed Minimum Pensions of 3.25% for those leaving pensionable service for the period 6 April 2022 to 5 April 2027.</p> <p>The provision is technical in nature and as such, there is no relevant urban/rural data in relation to the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (Disclosure of Information) (Requirements to Refer Members to Guidance etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022/115).	<p>The Statutory Rule amends existing Regulations relating to the administration and governance of certain occupational and personal pension schemes. The aim is to, amongst other things, ensure that a relevant beneficiary has either received appropriate pensions guidance or opted out of receiving such guidance before they can transfer or access their flexible benefits.</p> <p>The amendments are technical in nature and as such, there is no relevant urban/rural data in relation to the Statutory Rule. No adverse rural impact is expected.</p>
The Occupational Pension Schemes (Master Trusts) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 (S.R. 2022/121).	The Statutory Rule sets out the authorisation and supervision regime for Master Trust Pension Schemes - a type of multi-employer pension scheme.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	No data is available in relation to the rural/urban split of membership of Master Trust Pension Schemes. However no adverse rural impact is expected.
Social Security (Terminal Illness) Bill which became the Social Security (Terminal Illness) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 following completion of its legislative passage.	The legislation will have no adverse impacts linked to geographical location. Rural-based claimants will benefit from the legislation in the same way as urban claimants with no disparity of any kind. Those in rural areas will be impacted in exactly the same way as urban dwellers.
Delivering a public service - Workable (Northern Ireland) Programme.	<p>In order to inform analysis of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas the Department has identified the following key statistics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The % of economically inactive people living in rural areas <a href="#">2019 LFS Annual report ODP 17.3</a>: 17.3% or of working age rural population economically inactive (excluding students);</li> <li>• The % of people of working age with disabilities living in rural areas. <a href="#">2019/20 Health Survey Trend Tables - Limiting Longstanding illness</a>: prevalence of respondents with a limiting longstanding illness is 25% (376 respondents) in mixed urban/rural, 27% in rural (1331 respondents), and 33% in urban (2378 respondents);</li> <li>• People living in rural areas are more likely to be in full-time employment, and less likely to be economically inactive than those living in towns and cities;</li> <li>• Between 2001 and 2018, the rural population increased by 16%, the urban population increased by 6%, as a result, the rural share of the overall Northern Ireland (NI) population is 36%;</li> <li>• Less than a quarter (20%) of rural dwellers live within a 3 minute walk of the nearest bus stop, compared with 39% of those living in urban areas - with 9% of rural dwellers living a 44 minute or longer walk to their nearest stop;</li> <li>• The 2019 UK Labour Force Survey revealed that only very small proportions of rural (4%) and urban (3%) employees in NI work at home, however this data is</li> </ul>

<p>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</p>	<p>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</p>
	<p>based on responses collected for the 2019 calendar year. It would be reasonable to assume that the 2020 figures will be influenced by the recent shift for many public and private sector workers to alternative working patterns, including home working, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadband speeds and availability, though improving, are still much lower in rural than in urban areas, due in part to the disparity in infrastructure costs. This issue appears to be particularly pronounced in NI, due to how the rural population is distributed.</li> </ul> <p>The Programme providers take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Programme is delivered equally to those in rural areas to those in urban areas. During the current COVID-19 pandemic the majority of support provided at present to all clients is carried out remotely regardless of what area they live in.</p> <p>The following steps are taken by Workable providers to try to ensure that citizens in rural areas are offered the same level of service as those in urban areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practitioners travel to rural areas to meet participants at their preferred location if practically possible;</li> <li>• Conducting Workable (NI) sessions/help via the telephone;</li> <li>• Practitioners carrying out remote learning with clients given the current COVID-19 pandemic; and</li> <li>• Workable providers offer services across Northern Ireland.</li> </ul> <p>The Department will monitor uptake from clients in rural areas and consider any steps necessary to address any shortfall including collaborating with all relevant stakeholders.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Provision of a new Finance Support Service.	Finance Support is currently accessed by citizens in both urban and rural settings. The new Finance Support Service includes provision for online access therefore the issue of broadband availability in rural areas was considered. The current telephony application process will remain in place for those not willing to or who have difficulty claiming online. This applies to both urban and rural claimants. The Service will therefore still be accessible to all citizens regardless of broadband availability.
On-boarding Income Support (IS) and Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) forms onto the Document Repository System (DRS) Project.	There is no change to the service delivered to the people of Northern Ireland (NI) claiming or seeking to claim IS or JSA and neither rural nor urban customers will be impacted by this project. The change relates to internal processes. The only difference visible to customers will be a change to the postal address where forms or documentation supporting their claim should be sent - post implementation, forms should be returned to the Mail Order Unit in Limavady rather than the Benefit Processing Centres in Andersonstown JBo (IS) and Holywood Road JBo (JSA).
Labour Market Partnerships (LMP) Initiative.	<p>The purpose of the Labour Market Partnerships (LMP) initiative is to benefit from local knowledge and expertise in delivering employability programmes. LMP provision will be available to any claimant irrespective of whether they live in a rural or urban area. It will be delivered through the existing 11 local councils, utilising their local knowledge and expertise in delivering employability programmes. It has been designed to permit maximal flexibility for local areas to tailor and develop provision based on the contemporary needs/issues within their area. LMPs are made up of local stakeholders and are specifically designed to capture the view of rural stakeholders as part of the partnership.</p> <p>In developing a funding allocation matrix for LMP the Department strived to be as fair and equitable as possible, being mindful of a range of relevant issues and needs, including those of rural areas. It is proposed that</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>a proportion of funding will be allocated based on the Multiple Deprivation Measure to help target funding to areas of greatest need This measure includes within it a domain specifically focused on 'Access to Services', which captures issues such as private/public transport times and broadband speeds which are often issues affecting rural areas.</p> <p>Consultation was carried out within the LMP Co-Design Group, including representation from DAERA in respect of the funding allocation matrix.</p> <p>The LMP model allows for the highest possible degree of personalisation based on the identified needs within local areas. This will allow the local LMP to fully consider the needs of residents and businesses when developing local projects and initiatives that we hope will have a positive impact on local labour market conditions and employability outcomes in all areas, including rural.</p>
<p>The New Labour Market IT System will replace Client Management System/Trainee Management System which has been in use since 1998.</p>	<p>The new service will be available to people both in rural and urban areas. It is envisaged that the increase of digital channel use may have a positive impact for those in rural areas due to broadband availability.</p> <p>The Department has not sought the views of rural stakeholders on the likely impact of the new Labour Market IT system as mitigations (in the form of the existing Jobs and Benefits office network and telephony service) will remain in place for those not willing to or who cannot claim online.</p> <p>The introduction of the new Labour Market IT system is in addition to what the Department has already in place for those clients living in rural areas.</p>
<p>JobStart Scheme.</p>	<p>The JobStart team have considered the issue of broadband availability in rural areas and the impact that it may have on the ability of some young people to access details of job opportunities. To mitigate against this Youth Work coaches will be able to offer a telephony or face to face service to the young people.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>It is recognised that young people in rural areas may have to travel further to avail of a face to face meeting with a Youth Work Coach, hence the policy of reimbursement of travel costs incurred as part of their work search activities.</p> <p>Employers from across Northern Ireland have been encouraged to participate in the Scheme. Applications have been received and approved within all council areas.</p> <p>Travel expenses will be paid by the Department to participants for a maximum 3 month period to cover the cost of travel which will help young people in rural areas, particularly those who have to make multiple or long journeys to work.</p>
Expansion to the Adviser Discretion Fund.	<p>The social and economic needs of people who live in rural areas in relation to the financial support provided by the Expansion to the Adviser Discretion Fund are the same as those of people who live in urban areas.</p> <p>There will be no adverse impact on people who live in rural areas as this Scheme will apply equally to any applicant who is eligible for an award under the Expansion to the Adviser Discretion Fund, irrespective of where they live.</p>
Refreshed and Incentivised Work Experience Programme.	<p>The social and economic needs of people who live in rural areas in relation to the proposed refreshed and incentivised Work Experience Programme are the same as those of people who live in urban areas.</p> <p>There will be no adverse impact on people who live in rural areas as this Scheme will be available equally to any claimant or employer who wishes to participate.</p>
The Social Security (Fines) (Deduction from Benefits) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>No rural needs identified. Rural proofing was considered and no differential impact exists as the policy is Northern Ireland wide.</p> <p>This legislation was designed to prevent imprisonment of debtors in relation to non-payment of court fines and provide a manageable way to pay court fines through deductions from benefits.</p>

<b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b>	<b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b>
<p>The Social Security Benefits (Claims and Payments) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.</p>	<p>No rural needs identified. Rural Proofing was considered and no differential impact exists as the policy is Northern Ireland wide.</p> <p>Legislation provides for arrears of benefits to be paid in installments.</p>
<p>The Social Security Benefits (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.</p>	<p>No rural needs identified. Rural Proofing was considered and no differential impact exists as the policy is Northern Ireland wide.</p> <p>Amendment to the Regulation to fix error.</p>

## Department for the Economy

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Open University Community Partnerships Product.	<p>As part of the Department's widening access in Higher Education (HE) Strategy Officials work with HE providers to increase the proportion of underrepresented groups, particularly socially deprived and other disadvantaged groups such as those with disabilities, regardless of their rural/urban location. We have obtained additional funding through the Economic Recovery Action Plan (ERAP) for the first year of a 2-year pilot programme which will be administered by The Open University (OU) in cooperation with community groups.</p> <p>The pilot will enhance a pre-existing community education programme currently operating out of four women's centres in areas of social deprivation and low income within the Greater Belfast Area.</p> <p>The pilot will use the additional funding to increase the total number of community partners from 4 to 12 and open it up to a wider range of applicants. OU will focus on developing partners in areas with high levels of multiple deprivation, particularly with regards to educational deprivation and low higher education participation. As part of the conditions of funding Officials requested OU to make provision for our rural communities and they have committed to reserving two partnerships for community organisations based in a rural area.</p>
Implementing Call 3 of European Social Fund (ESF) Programme 2014-2020.	<p>The Call 3 application process was designed to ensure project activity is delivered across all areas of Northern Ireland. Steps taken include the requirement for projects to avoid duplication of provision, the encouraging of organisations to work in partnership, ensuring applicants identify and evidence both the need and demand for their project.</p> <p>The Programme is open to all areas throughout Northern Ireland. As anticipated, many of the current ESF Call 2 providers re-applied through the Call 3 process. A similar geographical spread between urban and rural areas is therefore likely to result through the Call 3 process.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Development of an Energy Strategy.	<p>At this stage of developing the Strategy, which is setting the high-level strategic direction, work has not been carried out to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas for specific policy areas. Rural needs will be assessed in full as part of individual policy work as it develops.</p> <p>We have undertaken a significant consultation and an extensive energy evidence programme over a period of two years with five working groups covering a wide range of 30 organisations, including representation from local councils and the Consumer Council.</p> <p>All social and economic needs of people in rural areas will be considered as part of developing policy work, and the appropriate impact assessment will be reviewed and completed at that time.</p> <p>The Energy Strategy is a high-level strategic vision; the primary purpose is setting out our 2030 objectives and a pathway to 2050. There are many uncertainties along the way to reaching net zero carbon. The Energy Strategy is a living document that will be reviewed on an annual basis.</p>
Consultation on Relief for Energy Intensive Industries from the indirect costs of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO).	It is not anticipated that a relief scheme in itself, if introduced, would have any differential impact on rural areas as it would be based on electricity usage by companies in specific categories regardless of location.
Future Onshore Petroleum Licensing Policy in Northern Ireland (still at draft stage and has not been subject to public consultation).	The Department began a review of the petroleum licensing system in 2019 and decided that it needed to have a greater focus on environmental and social issues. The areas most likely to experience petroleum exploration are rural e.g. Glens of Antrim, Fermanagh, Lough Neagh. We analysed information on rural needs, rural deprivation and research commissioned by the Department. Any impacts from stopping petroleum exploration and production 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 e.g. tourism. These potential impacts on local communities and the rural environment were an influential factor in choosing the

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	draft preferred option - introducing a moratorium and eventual legislative ban on all forms of onshore petroleum exploration and production in Northern Ireland.
Future Onshore Mineral Licensing Policy in Northern Ireland.	The Department will begin a review of the mineral licensing system in the near future which will include a focus on environmental and social issues. The areas most likely to experience mineral exploration are rural e.g. the Sperrins, South Armagh and County Antrim. We analyse information on rural needs, rural deprivation for every application the Department receives. Any impacts from stopping mineral exploration and production cannot be measured at this stage although we expect that it will have longer term benefits on the environment and the aspects of the rural economy e.g. tourism.
10x Economy: An Economic Vision for a Decade of Innovation.	The Economic Vision provides a framework for future economic policy development and as such does not contain specific policy proposals. Policies and actions arising from the Vision will be subject to the rural needs process.
Proposal Relating to the Adoption of Revised Approved Codes of Practice (ACOP) and guidance entitled "Offshore Installations and Pipeline Works (First-Aid) Regulations 1989" (L123) and "Offshore Installations (Prevention of Fire and Explosion, and Emergency Response) Regulations 1995" (L65).	<p>The Regulations and Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) concern health and safety and are of universal application, covering any setting where lifting operations are undertaken. They will, therefore, have no differential impact on rural areas.</p> <p>Although there are no available geographical data, the ACOP will apply equally beneficially to urban and rural areas.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, rural dwellers had the opportunity to make their views known through the usual consultation process, and no relevant comments were received.</p>
The Adoption of a Revised Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and guidance entitled "The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997" (L101).	The Regulations and Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) concern health and safety and are of universal application, covering any setting where lifting operations are undertaken. They will, therefore, have no differential impact on rural areas.



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Although there are no available geographical data, the ACOP will apply equally beneficially to urban and rural areas.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, rural dwellers had the opportunity to make their views known through the usual consultation process, and no relevant comments were received.</p>
<p>Proposed Revision to Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and guidance for Use Of Lifting Equipment for Compliance with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999.</p>	<p>Proposal relating to the adoption in Northern Ireland of a revised Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and guidance with respect to the safe use of lifting equipment to provide practical advice and assist understanding of what duty-holders have to do to comply with the requirements of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999. The Regulations and Approved Code of Practice concern health and safety and are of universal application, covering any setting where lifting operations are undertaken. They will, therefore, have no differential impact on rural areas.</p> <p>Although there are no available geographical data, the ACOP will apply equally beneficially to urban and rural areas.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, rural dwellers had the opportunity to make their views known through the usual consultation process, and no relevant comments were received.</p>
<p>Health and Safety (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (Statutory Instrument 2018/1377).</p>	<p>The legislation is universal in scope and makes simple technical consequential amendments and the impact on business and stakeholders for complying with the changes has been assessed as minimal. Consequently, when the Rural Impact Screening Exercise Document was completed, Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI) concluded that the proposed Rule will not impact differentially on the needs of people in rural areas of Northern Ireland.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Article 8(4) and 8(5) of EU Directive 89/391/EEC and Article 3 of EU Directive 89/656/EEC.</p>	<p>The main objective of the policy is to remedy a legislative deficiency. In November 2020 a High Court judgment in Great Britain found that the UK had failed to adequately transpose aspects of two EU Directives into domestic law. The UK implementation of these provisions only applied to “employees” and the court found that the UK’s implementation should extend to “limb (b) workers”. The legislation specifically relates to a specific section of the workforce, namely limb (b) workers and will be enhancing the health and safety rights of those workers. Stakeholders from rural areas will also have the opportunity to contribute any views to the public consultation when it issues in due course. Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI) will consider these views, if any are received.</p> <p>There was a comprehensive Regulatory Impact Assessment carried out by HSE in Great Britain. There were no issues identified in this GB assessment (pre and post consultation) with regards to persons from rural areas.</p> <p>HSENI stringently analysed this assessment and when completing the Northern Ireland Rural Impact Screening Exercise Document concluded that the proposed legislation will not impact differentially on the needs of people in rural areas of Northern Ireland.</p>
<p>Proposed Legislation to increase the Monetary Eligibility Limits for the Northern Ireland Debt Relief Scheme.</p>	<p>The proposed legislation will increase the monetary limits for those individuals who are burdened with debt and are eligible to obtain a debt relief order. This Scheme has been operating in Northern Ireland since June 2011.</p> <p>In conclusion the proposed increases to the monetary eligibility limits for the Debt Relief Scheme will not have any differential impact, either positive or negative, on those living in rural areas.</p> <p>However, the policy proposals are currently out for consultation and those living in rural areas will have an opportunity to express their views, which the Insolvency Service will take account of.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>A Regulatory Impact Assessment has also been prepared for this consultation.</p> <p>These increases to the monetary limits will be in parity with what already applies in England &amp; Wales.</p>
Review of the Northern Ireland Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan - Consultation.	<p>A review was undertaken of the current level of Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan (PGTFL) to ensure that it reflects the needs of the Northern Ireland (NI) economy, the higher education sector and individual students and to ensure that access to higher education at postgraduate taught level is based on the ability to learn, not the ability to pay.</p> <p>This impact assessment considered the implementation of proposed reviews to the current PGTFL product which will be available to all prospective postgraduate taught students across NI, irrespective of location. In light of this it is not considered that individuals residing in rural areas will be more affected/impacted than those who reside in non-rural areas.</p>
Implementation of a High Street Scheme (HSS), to stimulate spend in local businesses across Northern Ireland.	<p>Individuals were eligible for the HSS regardless of whether they were located in urban or rural areas and any local business could accept payment by card providing they had the equipment to do so.</p> <p>Throughout the policy development there was no evidence to suggest the policy or its impacts would be different for people who lived in rural and urban areas. The monetary amount allocated was the same for people who lived in rural and urban areas. The policy intent and application as well as its outworking applied equally to people who lived in rural and urban areas, and local businesses in rural and urban areas, and therefore it was not considered appropriate to take additional steps regarding the needs of people in rural areas.</p> <p>It was however recognised that internet connectivity is not linear across Northern Ireland and as the worst affected areas were most likely to be rural the Department provided an alternative telephone application service,</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>for those who could not or did not want to make an online application. In addition, it was recognised that the majority of businesses, including those in rural areas, were already using card reader technology and therefore would not be adversely impacted, and if not, there existed a relatively straight forward and cheap process to obtain the technology including 3G card readers.</p>
<p>Northern Ireland Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme - Future of the Scheme (Consultation).</p>	<p>Consultation on a potential revision to the Northern Ireland Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme. The consultation considered the options for the future of the Scheme, including closure.</p> <p>The proposals set out in the consultation will impact upon all existing Scheme participants. No specific rural needs were identified.</p> <p>In respect of the specific proposals under consideration, the Department consulted on four options to inform the Northern Ireland Executive's final decision on the Scheme's future. The Department notified all participants of the consultation exercise to ensure that all individuals and businesses directly affected by the proposed options had the opportunity to identify any rural specific barriers or issues.</p>
<p>Amendment to the Education (Student Support) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (the Student Support Regulations).</p>	<p>The Regulations apply to Northern Ireland (NI) domiciled students and other qualifying persons undertaking designated higher education courses and are updated annually to reflect changes in the student support package available to NI domiciles. In these amending Regulations the main policy changes included an increase in the Disabled Student Allowance, introduction of a new eligibility category in Regulations for those persons relocated to NI under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement (ACRS) Schemes and making eligibility changes for joining family members and late applicants to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS).</p> <p>The Rural Needs Impact Assessment did not identify any negative impact for those from rural communities.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>The Education (Student Fees (Amounts), Loan Repayment and Support etc.) (Amendment) Regulations.</p>	<p>These Regulations are updated annually to make increases to the prescribed basic and higher amounts which Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland may charge for the following academic year by way of tuition fees to students who are ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland (and excepted others). As this impact assessment is increasing tuition fees in line with inflation across Northern Ireland, it is not considered that recipients in rural areas will be more affected than those in other areas of Northern Ireland.</p> <p>These Regulations are also being used to amend the Education (Student Support) (No. 2) Regulations (NI) 2009 allow students who moved home due to public health guidance continue to receive the higher maintenance loan rate to which they were previously entitled. Again this will affect student equally across all areas of NI.</p> <p>These Regulations are also being used to amend The Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 so that the Department has a measure of discretion in determining the applicable threshold for borrowers who reside overseas but only in cases where the Department is unable to calculate the price level index for the borrower's country of residence. All borrowers across NI are impacted equally.</p>

## Department of Education

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Children & Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework.	The Framework is designed to help promote wellbeing at a universal level, through a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach, and then to provide targeted support when needs are identified. The Framework applies to all schools in Northern Ireland, including Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) and Youth Services.
Summer Scheme Programme 2021.	<p>All primary, post primary and Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) settings were surveyed by the Department and asked if they would be interested in availing of funding to offer a summer scheme for their pupils. This would be to help pupils make a successful return to learning in September 2021 with a focus on emotional health and wellbeing, as well as activities which are interactive and fun, with plenty of scope for outside play, and for learning activities as and where appropriate.</p> <p>Some of the emotional health and well-being impacts, such as isolation of children who have been unable to see friends and adults outside their own family, could be particularly acute in rural areas.</p>
Outdoor Spaces for Play and Learning - Special Schools.	We have used the data from the Northern Ireland School Census 20/21 to ensure that we have the full picture of the Special Schools population. A co-design group has been established between representatives of the 39 Special Schools, the Education Authority and Officials. This group has met on a number of occasions to develop the programme proposal and monitoring framework.
Engage Programme.	We have used the data from the Northern Ireland School Census 2019/20 to ensure that a full picture was gained of the children and young people in education across Northern Ireland. At system level, the Strategic Oversight Group, established to monitor the first year of the Programme, will continue to monitor the outworking of the Programme and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) will provide an overall evaluation of the quality of the work within the Programme and the outcomes for the staff employed in the Programme and the pupils targeted.



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Childcare Financial Support from 1 April 2021, incorporating Sustainability Fund and COVID-19 Temporary Closure Fund.	The Department is aware that there may be limited choice of childcare providers for parents in rural areas therefore these Schemes will help those childcare providers that are in rural areas to remain open and ensure future childcare provision.
Deferring School Starting Age.	The Deferring School Starting Age Policy applies to all children in Northern Ireland, included those located in rural areas.
Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.	The Amendment impacts all Teachers in Northern Ireland, including those living in rural areas.
Selection of Post-Primary Schools for temporary increases to the schools' admissions numbers prior to the commencement of the 2023; 2024 and 2025 Transfer Procedures.	The policy allows for temporary increases in a school's admissions or enrolment numbers to cater for short-term demographic pressures through the Temporary Variation (TV) process. TV requests are submitted by schools that are oversubscribed and wish to increase their admissions and/or enrolment numbers through the admission of additional children who are next in line for a place on the school's rank order of applicants. TV requests consider the availability of alternative schools within the same sector within a reasonable travelling distance of the children's home address. These distances are uniform across urban and rural areas and take account of transport links. This policy operates effectively in rural areas.

## Department of Finance

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Proposed Amendment to the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 (as amended) (Fire Safety and Radon).	No needs were identified specific to people in rural areas as the policy proposals do not impact in a differential way in relation to rural areas from urban areas.
Proposed Amendment to 'The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012' Statutory Guidance in Technical Booklet Part R (TBR) 'Access To and Use of Buildings' 2021. For Changing Places Toilets.	No social or economic needs were identified specific to people in rural areas as the policy proposals do not impact in a differential way in relation to rural areas from urban areas.
Proposed Amendments to Technical Booklet Guidance to Part F (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.	The principal issues considered, in terms of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas, are the capital costs and the long-term energy savings benefits. Rural buildings are likely to be off gas-grid and reliant on more carbon intensive fuels. The current methodologies adjust for this and raise the target carbon dioxide emission rate where the more carbon intensive fuel is proposed, to the extent that an oil fuelled home is currently likely to be able to be built to a standard similar to a gas fuelled home. This is unlike other regions, where the factors would require a more onerous specification to take account of the increased carbon content of the fuel.
Proposed Amendments to the Building (Prescribed Fees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 (as amended) ("the Fees Regulations"). This would entail a two-stage uplift in the fees.	No needs were identified specific to people in rural areas as the policy proposals do not impact in a differential way in relation to rural areas from urban areas.
Digital NI (DNI) Contact Centre Services Project - designed to ensure continuity of Contact Centre services after the closure of the existing NI Direct Contact Centre Contract in October 2022.	The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) DNI Contact Centre Services project endeavours to offer excellent customer service irrespective of geographical location. Whilst rural needs have been assessed and items such as broadband and mobile technology have been highlighted in this assessment, there is no specific rural

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>disadvantage associated with the aims and objectives of the DNI Contact Centre Services project. Due to restricted access of 4G and 5G in some rural areas and the lower speeds of home broadband the telephony option will be a valued service delivery channel both now and, in the future, to mitigate against this factor.</p> <p>The Government is investing in, and upgrading, rural broadband speeds through the likes of Project Stratum. This aims to improve broadband connectivity by extending Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband infrastructure to approximately 79,000 premises across Northern Ireland that cannot yet access NGA broadband services.</p> <p>Project Stratum will work in tandem with the DNI Contract Centre Services Project as broadband connectivity is improved in rural areas channel shifting will increase. This will encourage customers to utilise chatbots and self-service functions on NI Direct and move away from telephony. Though the NICS realise that this is only achievable in rural areas with access to adequate speeds of home broadband and access to mobile 4G and 5G.</p>
Making of The Public Service Pensions Revaluation Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Making of The Public Service (Civil Servants and Others) Pensions (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Making of The Public Service Pensions Revaluation Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Making of The Pensions Increase (Review) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Making of The Pensions Increase (Review) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Omicron Hospitality Payment.	<p>Following the Rural Needs Impact Assessment review no steps were undertaken in this area. The new measure was a restorative mitigating provision to partially or wholly offset impacts of public health measures and guidance agreed by the Executive in December to limit the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in Northern Ireland which causes the disease COVID-19 (“coronavirus”). The scope of the policy was in line with the Executive’s designation order and related only to businesses within the hospitality sector.</p>
Non-Domestic Rates Valuations (Coronavirus) Bill.	<p>Following the Rural Needs Impact Assessment review no steps were required in this area.</p> <p>The new Bill aimed to implement statutory mitigation measures within the non-domestic rating system, made necessary as a result of the public health measures imposed by the Executive in March 2020 to limit the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in Northern Ireland which causes the disease COVID-19 (“coronavirus”).</p> <p>The Executive had already provided compensatory and mitigating rate relief to commercial ratepayers in rural areas (and all areas) affected by health restrictions, through the separate provision of £515 million in COVID-19 related business rate relief for both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 rating years.</p>
Replacement of Rating IT solution.	<p>Following the Rural Needs Impact Assessment review no steps were required in this area.</p> <p>The rating service is Northern Ireland wide. All ratepayers whether in rural or non-rural areas are potentially liable for rates based on the valuation of the property they are the owner or occupier of.</p> <p>The upgraded service will provide greater accessibility to ratepayer rate accounts for all ratepayers not just those in rural areas. The Project is not specifically targeting to improve access to services in rural areas therefore the project has not adopted a definition of ‘rural’.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The Project relates to the administration of rates in Northern Ireland. Rating liability is based on legislation and is linked to occupancy (or entitlement to occupy) a property. The administration of rates is independent of the social and economic needs of any particular group or groups of individuals. Any entitlement to financial or other support for any group in need whether in a rural or other context is independent of and unaffected by this project.</p> <p>Therefore it was not necessary to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas in respect of this project.</p>
Housing Benefit Future Delivery Project.	<p>Following the Rural Needs Impact Assessment review no steps were required in this area.</p> <p>The implementation of Welfare Reform changes and Ministerial agreement presented a unique opportunity to provide a single organisation, clearly signposted and with responsibility for addressing and meeting their benefit claimant needs. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive now administer Housing Benefit and Low Income Rate Relief for Owner Occupiers effective from 1st June 2022.</p> <p>This policy benefits all Northern Ireland citizens regardless of location.</p>
Revised Standards of Conduct Dignity at Work Statement (not yet published).	<p>This policy applies to all members of staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) including those who live or work in rural areas. The policy is intended to have a positive effect on all staff. It does not adversely affect the social or economic needs of people living in rural areas.</p>
Revised Grievance Policy (not yet published).	<p>This policy applies to all members of staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) including those who live or work in rural areas. The policy is intended to have a positive effect on all staff. It does not adversely affect the social or economic needs of people living in rural areas.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Maternity Leave Policy.	This policy applies to all members of staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) including those who live or work in rural areas. The policy is intended to have a positive effect on all staff. It does not adversely affect the social or economic needs of people living in rural areas.
Paternity Leave Policy.	This policy applies to all members of staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) including those who live or work in rural areas. The policy is intended to have a positive effect on all staff. It does not adversely affect the social or economic needs of people living in rural areas.
Adoption Leave Policy.	This policy applies to all members of staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) including those who live or work in rural areas. The policy is intended to have a positive effect on all staff. It does not adversely affect the social or economic needs of people living in rural areas.
Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pay Award 2020 and 2021 for all staff.	This policy applies to all members of staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) including those who live or work in rural areas. The policy is intended to have a positive effect on all staff. It does not adversely affect the social or economic needs of people living in rural areas.
Development of NICS Menopause Policy.	The Menopause Policy is aimed at supporting Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) staff in the workplace. It hopes to benefit those impacted by menopause and to guide those who play a supportive role. It does not affect the social or economic needs of people living in rural areas.
Revised NICS Domestic and Sexual Abuse Policy.	The policy was not influenced by rural needs. It is a Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) policy to support staff who may be impacted by domestic and sexual abuse.



## Department of Health

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Introduction of Statutory Regulation of the Pharmacy Technician Workforce in Northern Ireland.	A Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) was completed and concluded that no specific rural needs were identified. The proposed legislation will benefit both rural and urban areas. This policy is equally applicable to those living in rural areas.
Review of Urgent and Emergency Care Services in Northern Ireland.	Through ongoing engagement with people with lived experience of urgent and emergency services in Northern Ireland, including the Unscheduled Care Service User and Carer Reference Group (USCRG), eight service user and carer workshops across all Trusts areas, we took steps to identify issues that are important to people living in rural areas in relation to urgent and emergency care services. Public consultation provided further opportunity for comment.
Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol.	A Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) was completed and concluded there was no intended or anticipated direct or indirect differential impacts on rural or urban areas. This a universal policy, impacting those who consume alcohol, or may be indirectly impacted by the harm alcohol causes. The development of the consultation document was a commitment in Northern Ireland's overarching substance use strategy Preventing Harm, Empowering Recovery which acknowledges that there are some groups who are particularly at risk of being negatively impacted by the use of alcohol and/or other drugs. The Strategy asks that everyone keep in mind particular groups that may need additional support or even require alternative service models to address their specific needs, including ensuring access to those living in rural areas.
The Reform of Adult Social Care.	The Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) recognised there can be barriers to overcome in rural areas, such as a smaller pool of labour, which can require social care workforce to travel distances to provide services, or service users having limited access to social care services within their locality. Evidence was gathered to

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>assess specific impacts of social care services in rural areas and social care workforce employed in the rural areas.</p> <p>Analysis of data broken down by area was undertaken on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population;</li> <li>• Existing adult social care provision;</li> <li>• Usage of existing provision; and</li> <li>• Workforce.</li> </ul> <p>The assessment concluded <i>“As we move to a regional focus on provision of social care services it is our understanding all people will benefit from a review of the adult social care services regardless of location. As part of the public consultation which runs until 1 June 2022, we will seek additional information”</i>.</p>
Proposals for Legislative Changes to the Human Medicines Regulations (HMR) 2012.	The proposed amendment to the HMRs was subject to an initial Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) and it was not expected that this would present any specific or differential rural impacts, as it was mainly a technical amendment. This preliminary decision is subject to change following analysis of feedback received during this consultation.
Infected Blood Payment Scheme (NI) Consultation on Enhanced Support for Hepatitis C Stage 1.	It was anticipated that any application and assessment process for this proposed policy revision would be handled in the same way as the general application process for the Northern Ireland Scheme and would not present any further impact on those living in rural areas outside of their current access to routine medical treatment or care. The policy will apply equally to all who are eligible for support irrespective of location, rural or urban.
Consultation on the Cancer Strategy for Northern Ireland 2021-2031.	The Cancer Strategy development adopted the approach of co-production, consulting with a wide range of stakeholders with varying social and economic needs in both rural and urban areas across Northern Ireland. The Steering Group and 7 sub-groups contributing to the Cancer Strategy comprised of Health and Social Care professionals and service users from all Trust areas.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Throughout the development of the Strategy we worked with people with lived experience of cancer services in Northern Ireland and their representative groups. The impact of the Strategy on people living in rural areas was considered throughout this process.</p> <p>Issues identified that impact on people living in rural areas centre around access to services, access to travel either by public transport or private vehicle and scheduling of appointments at appropriate times.</p>
Family Practitioner Services Independent Appeals Consultation.	<p>This policy sets out a process for dealing with appeals from contractors. Accessing the service will not differ from what is currently provided - it's the process for managing appeals that will differ, therefore the policy does not change anything in relation to persons living in rural areas.</p>
Draft Regional Policy on The Use of Restrictive Practices in Health and Social Care (HSC) Settings and Regional Operational Procedure for the Use of Seclusion.	<p>The intention of the draft policy is to provide protection for people subject to restrictive practice in HSC settings. There are no barriers to delivery of the policy in rural areas and there is no differential cost burden. However, the policy does encourage service providers to consider particular groups that may be disproportionately affected by restrictive practices. The recommendations proposed and subsequent actions under consideration were not deemed likely to provide any negative impact, as they were designed in consultation with stakeholders from rural settings.</p>
Public Consultation on the Introduction of Statutory Duty of Candour in Northern Ireland.	<p>Feedback gained from extensive involvement and engagement activities did not identify any particular or differential issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas relevant to the policy. Further specific feedback on potential rural impact was requested as part of the formal Public Consultation.</p> <p>Once implemented, the policy proposals should have a positive impact on everyone who uses Health and Social Care services by ensuring greater openness and transparency.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Consultation on proposals to extend modifications to Children's Social Care Regulations.	These proposals temporarily modified for a short period, how Social Services and other providers may temporarily fulfill their statutory obligations to looked after children and their families/carers during the COVID-19 pandemic. These modifications provided flexibility during periods of self-isolation/shielding and public health restrictions to make alternative arrangements to carry out activities such as visits. These proposed modifications were required to safeguard and protect children and young people's welfare during these circumstances and the Regulations applied to looked after children, their families and carers regardless of where they live in Northern Ireland.
The Regulation and Improvement Authority (Fees and frequency of inspections) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 - February 2022.	The Department of Health has considered the Department's role on this specific issue and confirmed that the social and economic needs of people in rural areas would not be differentially impacted by this policy.
Northern Ireland Drug Tariff Project.	This Project aimed to establish a team to help around the establishment of a local process for the management of the Northern Ireland Drug Tariff. It is about the reimbursement of pharmacists and impacts equally across the whole region.
Medicines, Shortages and Discontinuations - February 2022.	The policy is applied to the supply of all medicines and will not impact on any geographical area. The project aimed to reduce the impact of medicines shortages and discontinuations created by EU Exit and the Northern Ireland (NI) Protocol. It will be applied equally to all parts of NI. It will not have a differential impact on rural communities.
Northern Ireland Marketing Authorisation Route (NIMAR) - February 2022.	Medicines on the NIMAR list will be available to the whole population and the policy will be applied equally across all areas.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
COVID-19 Status Certification.	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) was completed and concluded that the policy impacted equally on all people across Northern Ireland, as everyone would be required to show evidence of their COVID-19 status, or exemption from the requirement for this, to gain entry to a relevant venue.</p> <p>There were no differing needs in relation to social and economic needs of people in rural areas identified.</p>
Advance Care Planning Policy for Adults in Northern Ireland.	<p>The policy was developed through a co-production approach with widespread early stakeholder engagement to inform the policy content. Following a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify stakeholders, 430 letters of invitation were issued to organisations and individuals. During Phase I, early stakeholder engagement, 40 virtual engagement sessions were held involving 226 people from a wide range of sectors and organisations and as individuals.</p> <p>During Phase II early stakeholder engagement was via a series of 5 virtual events, undertaken in partnership with the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), the Healthy Living Centre Alliance (HLC Alliance), the Northern Ireland Health Care Leaders Forum and the Community Development and Health Network. Around 200 people from across the region attended the Phase II engagement.</p> <p>Feedback from the extensive engagement activities did not identify any particular or differential issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.</p>
The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 - March 2022.	<p>The change in legislation was developed to ensure free healthcare provision for eligible Ukrainian residents who are fleeing the conflict in Ukraine and coming to Northern Ireland.</p> <p>It applies equally to all residents in Northern Ireland both rural and urban; the current policy and the change in legislation has no differential impact on any of the rural policy areas.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Consultation on amendments to the Northern Ireland Firefighters' Pension Schemes.</p> <p>Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2022 (SR 2022 No 155) - February 2022.</p>	<p>The policy mainly relates to remedying the discrimination identified in public service schemes from 1 April 2015 and removing it for the future. It also made minor amendments to the Northern Ireland (NI) Firefighters' Pension Schemes to align with the GB Schemes.</p> <p>The policy will impact on Firefighters regardless of where they live in NI and should have no differential impact or implications to people in rural areas.</p>

### National Institute for Health and Care Excellence NICE guidance

**The majority of National Institute for Health and care Excellence NICE guidance is of a technical nature and is not regarded as falling within the scope of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. However the following NICE Guidance does fall within the scope of the Act and has been subject to assessment.**

RIAs were completed in each case, however, endorsement, implementation, monitoring and assurance of NICE Clinical Guidelines in Northern Ireland apply to all HSC organisations in both urban and rural areas. DoH considered the Department's role on each specific issue and confirmed that the social and economic needs of people in rural areas is the responsibility of HSC organisations, under the statutory duty of quality as specified in Article 34 of the HPSS (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (NI) Order 2003, to put in place the necessary systems, which should include adequate and comprehensive dissemination, as part of their clinical and social care governance arrangements, for implementing NICE guidance.

NICE Clinical Guideline NG151 - Colorectal cancer (updates and replaces CG131 and TA93)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG154 - Neonatal parenteral nutrition

NICE Clinical Guideline NG155 - Tinnitus: assessment and management

NICE Clinical Guideline NG156 - Abdominal aortic aneurysm: diagnosis and management

NICE Clinical Guideline NG157 - Joint replacement (primary): hip, knee and shoulder

NICE Clinical Guideline NG158 - Venous thromboembolic diseases: diagnosis, management and thrombophilia testing

NICE Clinical Guideline NG180 - Perioperative care in adults

NICE Clinical Guideline NG181 - Rehabilitation for adults with complex psychosis

NICE Clinical Guideline NG185 - Acute coronary syndromes (updates and replaces CGs 172, 167, 130, 94 and TA230)/(partially updates TAs 152 & 71)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG192 - Caesarean birth (updates and replaces CG132)



NICE Clinical Guideline NG193 - Chronic pain (primary and secondary) in over 16s: assessment of all chronic pain and management of chronic primary pain
NICE Clinical Guideline NG194 - Postnatal care (updates and replaces CG37)
NICE Clinical Guideline NG195 - Neonatal infection: antibiotics for prevention and treatment (updates and replaces CG149)
NICE Clinical Guideline NG196 - Atrial fibrillation: diagnosis and management (updates and replaces CG180)
NICE Clinical Guideline NG198 - Acne vulgaris: management
NICE Clinical Guideline NG201 - Antenatal care (updates and replaces CG62)
NICE Clinical Guideline NG202 - Obstructive sleep apnoea/hypopnoea syndrome and obesity hypoventilation syndrome in over 16s (partially updates TA139)
NICE Clinical Guideline NG203 - Chronic kidney disease: assessment and management (updates and replaces CGs 157, 182 & NG8)
NICE Clinical Guideline NG204 - Babies, children and young people's experience of healthcare
NICE Clinical Guideline NG206 - Myalgic encephalomyelitis (or encephalopathy)/chronic fatigue syndrome: diagnosis and management (updates and replaces CG53)
NICE Clinical Guideline NG207 - Inducing labour (updates and replaces CG70)
NICE Clinical Guideline NG208 - Heart valve disease presenting in adults: investigation and management (partially updates and replaces CG187)
NICE Clinical Guideline NG210 - Pelvic floor dysfunction: prevention and non-surgical management
NICE Public Health Guideline PH43 - Hepatitis B and C testing: people at risk of infection
NICE Public Health Guideline NG146 - Workplace health: long-term sickness absence and capability to work

## Department for Infrastructure

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) Booking and Rostering Project for Driver and Vehicle Testing which includes the closure of counters in all DVA Sites and as a consequence, the removal of cash and in most cases, cheque and postal order payments.</p>	<p>DAERA Rural and urban comparisons from 2011 census: <a href="http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/census-2011">www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/census-2011</a></p> <p>We are satisfied that the socio and economic needs of rural dwellers do not have a material bearing on the policy changes being proposed.</p> <p>Consideration was given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of cars per household, employment, age profile, access to internet/broadband, and access to landline telephone for alternative payment methods, as well as the number and methods of payment in DVA test centres.</li> </ul> <p>We are satisfied that the socio and economic needs of rural dwellers do not have a material bearing on the policy changes being proposed.</p> <p>The evidence indicates that rural service users are unlikely to be affected differently to urban service users by the policy change.</p>
<p>Making careless driving a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) offence.</p>	<p>This policy was not influenced by rural needs.</p>
<p>Subordinate Legislation to extend the power to pay subsidy to Northern Ireland (NI) Water in lieu of domestic water charges.</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified. The policy of extending the power to pay subsidy to NI Water guarantees that no domestic water and sewerage customer, regardless if they live in urban or rural areas, will pay water charges. It will therefore benefit both groups equally.</p>
<p>Consultation on the proposed content of the new Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2030.</p>	<p>Issues considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for road maintenance and infrastructure to contribute towards road safety for rural communities;</li> <li>• The need for adequate transport choices to rural communities to address social and economic needs including tackling isolation, assisting vulnerable adults who may not be able to drive and contributing to climate change;</li> <li>• Need for increased awareness of considerations while driving on rural roads;</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for road maintenance and infrastructure to contribute towards road safety for rural communities;</li> <li>• The need for adequate transport choices to rural communities to address social and economic needs including tackling isolation, assisting vulnerable adults who may not be able to drive and contributing to climate change; and</li> <li>• Need for increased awareness of considerations while driving on rural roads.</li> </ul> <p>The Consultation on the proposed content of the new Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland has used evidence gathered to inform the proposed approach to the new Strategy and the high level actions that are required to instill positive change.</p> <p>As part of the consultation process, views were sought on the proposed content of the Strategy with the intention that the Strategy will provide a Framework for Government and other road safety stakeholders to establish their own road safety plans, objectives and interventions to eliminate road crashes which result in serious injuries or fatalities and address the challenges identified, including those that impact on people in rural areas with a view to bringing forward positive change.</p> <p>During the consultation opportunities to engage with stakeholders will be provided, including engagement with those representing rural communities, both at an individual level and as part of an organisation.</p> <p>As policies or legislation is brought forward as a result of this consultation Rural Needs Impacts Assessments will be carried out by the relevant business area.</p> <p>The consultation on the proposed content of the new Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2030 has been informed by data analysis, literature review and consultation with NI stakeholders. This analysis has taken into account the data and concerns raised by stakeholders with regard to the impact of road safety on the needs of rural communities and has informed</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>the consultation document. For example, one of the proposed high level actions aimed at achieving the Outcome 'OUR ROADS WILL BE SAFER FOR ALL' includes the proposal for the Department to undertake an investigation into the nature of collisions on rural roads to identify common factors and seek general solutions to potentially mitigate risk.</p> <p>If, following Public Consultation, any rural needs are identified, the Department will consider them before moving to the next stage of the policy development process.</p>
Revision of Policy Document E040 which outlines how to consider and approve applications for Temporary Traffic Regulations (Road Closures).	The policy is for the technical assessment of road closures and will not impact on any of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.
Capital Grants for Greenways and Council support for Greenways from the Minister's Blue/Green Infrastructure Fund.	<p>The social and economic needs of people in rural and urban council areas are unlikely to differ.</p> <p>The document '<i>Exercise, Explore, Enjoy. A Strategic Plan for Greenways</i>' maps out a proposed network of primary and secondary greenway routes which when completed will encompass the whole of Northern Ireland (urban and rural). In order to achieve this objective the Department intends to hold a series of competitions (funding and Ministerial approval permitting) awarding grants towards the building of these greenways by councils. All Council proposals will be assessed on their merits against a series of criteria which will apply equally to applicants from rural and urban areas.</p> <p>The Department may run the Scheme several times to promote the building of the complete network with the target of 75% of the primary network, and 25% of the secondary network, delivered by 2026.</p>
Operational Procedural Change to Existing Concessionary Fares Scheme.	This is purely procedural to allow asylum seekers to provide alternative documentation to prove their age and residency which are essential criteria for access to the Scheme for those applying under the 60 and Senior (65+) categories.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Rathlin Island e-transport Scheme.	<p>The Scheme will increase Rathlin residents awareness of e-transport alternatives. There are no current e-transport alternatives for residents. The vehicles will clearly be identified as being electric and the Scheme will be delivered by the Rathlin Development &amp; Community Association (RDCA). Increased awareness of zero emission vehicles will help improve attitudes and perhaps encourage others to switch to zero emission vehicles. An audit of energy used on the island for transport is being completed by Energy Co-operatives Ireland. This will provide a benchmark of the opportunities for replacement in domestic and commercial transport. The objective to reduce carbon emissions will be realised should an electric, zero emission, vehicle be used in place of a diesel/petrol vehicle. Less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the local community will result in improved air quality which may have a positive impact on health outcomes.</p>
Rathlin Island East Lighthouse Development.	<p>The main form of identifying the social and economic needs of people in rural areas, in particular those situated on Rathlin, is to examine the policies that are in place which have an effect on them. In this case it would be the Executive's Rathlin Island Policy. This policy has multiple aims and objectives throughout however some of the most notable with regards to the social and economic needs of the islanders, are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance community involvement;</li> <li>• To conserve the islands exceptional environmental heritage;</li> <li>• To develop the islanders employability; and</li> <li>• To increase the community capacity to participate in sustainable economic and tourism development, while protecting the environmental and natural assets.</li> </ul> <p>The issues considered are based upon the previously mentioned aims within the "Rathlin Island Policy". The first being the need to "enhance community involvement". The East Lighthouse project will enhance</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>community involvement through delivery of the project and provide employment for the islanders, which meets another aim of “developing employability”. It will also act as a hot spot for islanders and tourists to interact and socialise with each other. Another issue based upon one of the aims was “the ability to increase the community capacity to participate in sustainable economic and tourism development, while protecting the environmental and natural assets”. Sustainable and economic tourism will be achieved through both the on-site accommodation and food facilities. The aim is to redevelop the existing lighthouse keeper cottages into year round accommodation for tourists. The site also has the capacity to host music and arts related events which in turn can generate income. In terms of protecting the environment and natural assets, the site development be in line with the RDCA’s membership within the “Clean Energy for EU islands” group, as well as their goal of being totally carbon neutral by 2030.</p> <p>The need to enhance community involvement has influenced the project greatly. As previously mentioned the new visitor centre on the site will act as an area for not only visitors, but residents on the island, to interact with one another. The site will also require residents to be employed on the site, whether this will be as a caterer or a possible tour guide. The job roles available to the residents will also have a positive impact in terms of the site being economically sustainable, another rural need which will have an impact on the success and operation of the site.</p> <p>The aim to be entirely carbon neutral has also impacted the project, by ensuring that the development and implementation of the new build, will follow all the Green Energy guidelines and will continue to do so for years to come.</p>



<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Revision to (Roads Service Policy &amp; Procedure Guide) RSPPG E010 v1 Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces.</p>	<p>The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020 identified that while most collisions occur on urban roads, most deaths and serious injuries happen on rural roads. It also identified the need to protect younger and more vulnerable road users.</p> <p>In line with the Roads Safety Strategy, the Department is committed to introducing safer crossing facilities. They are also committed to improving the walking and cycling infrastructure to promote active travel and Blue Green Initiatives. It is hoped that this improved infrastructure will make it safer for all road users but particularly pedestrians, those with a disability or a visual impairment when crossing the road in both rural and urban areas.</p> <p>These issues were explored during the development of the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020:</p> <p><a href="http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-road-safety-strategy-2020">www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/ni-road-safety-strategy-2020</a>.</p> <p>Any initiative aimed at improving road safety and reducing the numbers of potential casualties on our roads is viewed positively in terms of the social and economic needs of all citizens and not just those who live in rural areas.</p> <p>The policy has been revised as part of our continuing commitment to ensuring the road network is accessible and to road safety. Northern Ireland's Road Safety Strategy to 2020 contains specific action measures aimed at providing protecting younger and more vulnerable road users.</p> <p>Any initiative aimed at improving road safety and reducing the numbers of potential causalities on our roads is viewed positively in terms of the social and economic needs of all citizens and not just those who live in rural areas.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Flood Storage Measures.	<p>The overarching aim of this policy is to protect towns and cities (individuals, homes, businesses and the environment) from flooding during periods of heavy rainfall. Some landowners who live in the hills above these towns and cities will be eligible for compensation for use of their land for the storage of flood water.</p> <p>The social and economic needs of those affected by the policy will be considered individually on a case by case basis and reflected in the agreements and compensation arrangements with landowners. Issues considered may be loss of land use, access restrictions, loss of crops and associated income etc.</p>
DfI Rivers Asset Management Plans 2020-2030.	This document is purely a plan for the management of flood defence infrastructure.
Safety certification for Railway Undertakings operating on the Northern Ireland Network.	This policy was not influenced by rural needs.

## Department of Justice

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Proposal to Introduce Standard Fee Arrangements for Solicitors engaged in publicly funded proceedings at the Family Proceedings Court under Article 8 and/or Article 50 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.</p>	<p>It is considered that equality of access to legal services is the primary socio-economic need for the rural communities of Northern Ireland. The policy proposal does not amend the level of services available to rural communities and similarly does not impact upon the eligibility criteria for legal aid access.</p> <p>The Department considered whether the proposals would impact upon the current level of service available and whether there may be a risk of the attenuation of same as a consequence. It is recognised that rural firms may be required to travel further distances to attend proceedings in the Family Proceedings Court (FPC). In calculating the standard fee consideration was given to the inclusion of travel time as an element of the standard fee, with only mileage costs being separately remunerated. It was, however, considered that this would have potential to impact differentially upon solicitors in rural areas who would be more likely to incur significant travel costs. It has therefore the preferred option to continue to allow costs associated with attendance at court at the rate of £29.25 per hour and mileage at £0.357 per mile in addition to the standard fee for firms engaged in publicly funded proceedings at the FPC under Article 8 and/or Article 50 of the Children (NI) Order 1995. It is therefore considered that the proposed arrangements have no differential impact upon solicitor firms representing those in rural communities.</p>
<p>Consultation on whether, and if so how, the Department of Justice ought to legislate to require court approval of compensation settlements to children for personal injuries in cases in which legal proceedings have not issued.</p>	<p>Given the small number of cases anticipated and the potential option of a paper-based procedure and/or a financial threshold, it was not considered that the impact of the policy would have a significant adverse impact on persons in rural areas.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Review of current Legislation regarding the offence of Non-Fatal Strangulation Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, (Section 28, Schedule 4).	It is considered that the policy proposals would impact positively across Northern Ireland by providing further protection to victims and not have any significant adverse or differential impact on people living in rural areas.
Proposals on whether the Introduction of Pro Bono Costs Orders would be useful in Northern Ireland.	<p>This is when a winning party in a legal case, who has received pro bono advice and representation, could be awarded costs. These costs are not paid to the winning party or solicitor but are held by a charity to pay for further pro bono legal work.</p> <p>No differential impact was identified. There is little data available on the extent of pro bono provision in Northern Ireland and therefore the spread across rural and urban areas but there is also no evidence to suggest any difference in unmet legal need in rural and urban areas.</p>
Review of current Legislation and practice regarding the disclosure of information on the whereabouts of victims' remains. This will become the Sentencing Act, commonly referred to as Charlotte's Law, however may not be called Charlottes Law in the Legislation.	The review aims to identify measures during the criminal justice process to encourage the disclosure of details of the location of victims' remains where a person is investigated, charged, tried, convicted, sentenced and imprisoned for murder and refuses to provide such information. It is considered that the review and any subsequent proposals would not have any significant adverse or differential impact on people living in rural communities.
Consultation on Implementation of Recommendations from the Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland.	No specific rural needs were identified as proposals will not impact in a differential way.
Policy Proposals for inclusion in a new proposed consolidated Hate Crime Bill aim to improve the criminal justice system's approach to dealing with criminal conduct motivated by hate, for all victims of hate crime.	The policies will impact equally on all sections of the population, i.e. a person living in a rural area will experience the same benefit and entitlements laid out in the new legislation as someone living in an urban setting, therefore providing a positive impact to all victims of hate crime and people who are vulnerable to hate crime. These measures will have benefits for all victims of hate crime equally, regardless of where this occurs.

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Proposal to seek to amend the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 to include Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders, to commence section 13 'Duty to Notify' and to amend the Act to allow officers powers to obtain items from a person during a search under warrant of a premises, vehicle or vessel that may be used as evidence in investigations linked to modern slavery and human trafficking.</p>	<p>Rural and urban areas are equally susceptible to human trafficking/modern slavery. Traffickers and enslavers are targeting vulnerable people across Northern Ireland and globally. Their crimes can take place in inner city housing estates, in large factories, in rural border areas or, due to immigration controls avoidance, in areas accessible by small boats such as the Glens of Antrim. Therefore, the consultation paper on proposed amendments to the Act does not seek to differentiate between rural and urban areas but will impact on all areas of Northern Ireland.</p>
<p>Development of Legal Aid Policy and implementation of Legal Aid Policy in the form of providing remuneration arrangements for defence representatives in the Crown Court.</p>	<p>The proposal is a review of the legislation which sets out the remuneration arrangements for solicitors/ counsel representing legally-aided defendants in the Crown Court, to ensure that the arrangements are consistent with criteria set out in the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (NI) Order 1981, that any omissions in the rules are rectified, any opportunities to enhance the operation of the rules are taken and that access to justice is maintained or enhanced following the completion of the review.</p> <p>The proposals do not impact on people in rural areas differently, it applies to all legal representatives and by extension, their legally assisted clients, equally no matter the location.</p>
<p>Proposal to provide Registered Intermediaries in Civil and Family Courts.</p>	<p>The proposed provision of Registered Intermediaries to vulnerable court users in civil and family proceedings will be available to all citizens irrespective of whether they reside in urban or rural areas.</p>

## The Executive Office

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Planned Interventions Programme.	<p>The Planned Interventions Programme targets interface areas or areas where there is the potential for severe unrest. These areas are not solely in urban areas. Where a group from a rural area has identified a clear need for good relations work, which does not satisfy the requirements of this Programme, other funding programmes are available to allow these groups the opportunity to access funding.</p> <p>There has been evidence provided in published academic reports linking deprivation in some areas to anti-social behaviour amongst young people, which negatively affects community relations. In addition, interfaces, not necessarily physical barriers, exist in many rural communities.</p> <p>The issues addressed under this Programme are not specifically rural issues.</p> <p>The Programme governance structures, stakeholder engagement, and co-design processes all seek to ensure critical need for intervention is met, and that the Programme is accessible to all.</p> <p>Transport costs are funded as part of the Programme which can be a critical support for rural groups.</p> <p>As outlined above interfaces need not be limited to physical peace walls in urban areas. To encourage uptake in rural areas this has been clarified in the guidance documentation for the Programme. In addition, the guidance has been further updated to encourage applications from areas where young people are travelling to interfaces, which provides scope for applications from rural communities where young people are travelling to urban interfaces.</p> <p>Transport costs are covered under funding and whilst value for money is a key aspect in the evaluation of applications, it is recognised that rural applicants may have higher transport costs.</p>



<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) Strategy - Central Good Relations Funding Programme.</p>	<p>Issues had been raised that certain council areas (including rural communities) are less likely to apply for good relations funding. The Executive Office is working to address gaps in good relations funding provision and in 2018/19 launched a pilot programme designed to target regional needs in year. Evaluation of this pilot programme was received in 2019, and further work in this area is currently being taken forward to inform future development of the Programme to better meet regional needs.</p> <p>There has been evidence provided in published academic reports linking deprivation in some areas to anti-social behaviour amongst young people which negatively affects community relations. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests invisible barriers and segregation exists in many rural communities, and while not as apparent as the interface areas in large population centres, such as Belfast and Londonderry/ Derry, they can have an equally negative impact on communities.</p> <p>The Programme's governance structures, stakeholder engagements, and assessment processes all seek to ensure critical good relations need is met and the Programme is accessible to all. In addition, feedback is offered to unsuccessful applicants to provide advice and guidance as to how they could make a stronger application in future.</p> <p>Analysis of applications and funding awards in-year aids the Programme to understand and improve the distribution of funding and helps ensure the Programme continues to reach where funding is needed most and identify any issues affecting uptake.</p> <p>Transport costs, volunteer expenses and residential costs are funded as part of the Programme which can be critical for more rural groups.</p> <p>As described above, the ongoing engagement and review processes have led to changes in the conditions of funding to engage with rural groups and ensure they</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>have access to funding. Additionally, the provision of small grant funding, increased to £1,500, through the Programme has provided small low-capacity rural groups an opportunity to access funding.</p>
<p>Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) Strategy - Central Good Relations Funding (CGRF) Programme.</p>	<p>The Executive Office (TEO) engages with stakeholders to gather feedback on what is and isn't working well within the Programme. Funding Forums normally held across District Councils were held online and this had a positive impact on reach and access, allowing more rural communities to access sessions where perhaps travel distance and time inhibited them previously. Contact details are also published online to facilitate any queries or raising of issues relating to the Programme.</p> <p>There is engagement with key stakeholders including Community Relations Council (CRC) and Council Good Relations Officers when applications open to utilise their local knowledge and actively target under-represented groups including those in rural communities.</p> <p>The Central Good Relations Funding governance structures, stakeholder engagements, and assessment processes all seek to ensure critical good relations need is met and the Programme is accessible to all.</p> <p>Analysis of applications and funding awards in-year aids the Programme to understand and improve the distribution of funding and helps ensure the Programme continues to reach areas where funding is needed most and identify any issues affecting uptake.</p> <p>Transport costs, volunteer expenses and residential costs are funded as part of the Programme which can be critical for attracting more rural groups.</p> <p>There has been evidence provided in published academic reports linking deprivation in some areas to anti-social behaviour amongst young people which negatively affects community relations. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests invisible barriers and segregation exists in many rural communities, and while</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>not always as apparent as the interface areas in large population centres, such as Belfast and Londonderry/Derry, they can have an equally negative impact on communities.</p> <p>TEO is working to address gaps in good relations funding provision. The ongoing engagement and review processes have led to changes in the conditions of funding to engage with rural groups and ensure they have access to funding.</p> <p>Additionally, the provision of small grant funding of up to £1,500 through the Programme has provided small low-capacity rural groups an opportunity to access funding. Issues had been raised that certain groups or communities in council areas (including rural communities) are less likely to apply for good relations funding.</p>
<p>Implementation of Together: Building a United Community Policy.</p>	<p>The Community Relations Council (CRC) operates evaluation measurements which identify the geographic coverage and the thematic content of funded work. These measurement tools enables the CRC to identify how it is addressing the good relations needs of rural communities and also measure the amount of support it is providing to address these issues.</p> <p>Each year a review is carried out and welcome statements are published to address any funding gaps that have been identified either on a thematic or geographic basis. The CRC supports a broad range of good relations activity within rural communities including providing core funding support to strategic partners such as the Rural Community Network and other regional bodies who are delivering good relations programmes specific to the needs of rural communities.</p> <p>The CRC works with local District Councils to identify emerging needs and will run information events throughout the year to encourage new applications which will include those from rural communities.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>The Development of a draft new Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework, along with a related set of Key Priority Areas.</p>	<p>The PfG team in The Executive Office met online with the Rural Community Network on the 24 February 2021 to discuss their thoughts and opinions on the draft Outcomes Framework. A number of groups responded to the consultation online and advised of rural needs, these included; Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Secure Vision Systems Ltd and several others. Written responses were received from The Rural Area Partnership in Derry Ltd, Fermanagh and Omagh Community Planning Partnership, Royal National Institute of the Blind NI, Mid Ulster District Council, Sinn Fein and Derry and Strabane District Council. Other responses included references to meeting the needs of both rural and urban areas however, these did not necessarily come from specifically rural groups, for example the Northern Ireland Women’s Budget Group advised on how the outcomes would affect both those in rural and urban areas.</p> <p>Following the consultation process, a number of needs were identified of people in rural areas.</p> <p>The Executive is committed to developing a long-term, strategic Programme for Government. This is based on a shared and strategic vision for the future which aims to improve wellbeing for all, including the needs of people living in rural areas. The high-level aspirational Outcome statements point the direction of travel but it is the PfG Actions that provide the substance and it is at this level where the Programme begins to take on real meaning for people and where we will address the social and economic needs through their individual Equality Impact Assessments and Rural Needs Impact Assessments.</p> <p>Following the public consultation, the draft Framework has been revised to take on board the feedback and will be presented for consideration of the incoming Executive at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>The draft Outcomes Framework, once agreed, is the foundation for the wider PfG. Its purpose is to present a complete and balanced picture of the conditions of</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>wellbeing that the Executive wants to see for citizens and communities across Northern Ireland. It is a set of end-products which, together, will provide the focal point for sustained and concerted actions across the Executive and the wider public sector as well as from local government, rural and environmental groups, community and voluntary groups, the private sector and beyond.</p> <p>The PfG Actions, once developed, will provide the substance, and it is at this level where the Programme begins to take on real meaning for people. It is also where the specific needs of those living in rural areas, through their individual Equality Impact Assessments and Rural Needs Impact Assessments will be addressed.</p>
<p>Development of an Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (EVAWG). This Strategy will include the needs across Northern Ireland, including rural populations.</p>	<p>Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Research results and Call for Views responses identify these needs.</p> <p>The geographical isolation, lower population density and the dispersed nature of many rural settlements has been highlighted as an issue for women who experience abuse which can often go unnoticed. Whilst this can be true in urban areas, the isolation of many women in rural areas exacerbates the problem. Households may have access to only one car which further increases the feeling of isolation. The closure of local banks, shops and reduction in public transport was cited as a further obstacle for women seeking assistance, as well as a chance for abuse to go undiscovered in communities owing to a lack of public interaction.</p> <p>The cultural concerns surrounding farm succession planning were brought up, with women frequently being held financially liable for large loans for farm machinery and other items, making it difficult for them to escape violent marriages.</p> <p>Schools in rural and border communities are often left out of emotional and wellness programmes for primary and secondary students.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The intersectional component was addressed among stakeholders in rural communities with a hidden population of ethnic minorities. A lack of data exists on this.</p> <p>Access to support services is more difficult in rural areas, not only due to geographical location, but inferior phone and internet services. Families seek counsel from religious groups, particularly in rural regions; however, support is contingent on their attitude toward domestic abuse, divorce, and the rights of the wife and children, which varies by faith.</p> <p>This forms a part of ongoing research for the EVAWG Strategy.</p> <p>The Executive Office (TEO) has committed to developing a new overarching Executive-wide strategy to address violence against women and girls. This will involve collaboration with other departments and public bodies to ensure a holistic approach is taken, and consideration given to linkages with current and planned strategies.</p> <p>TEO will continue to evolve the Strategy through co-design, which will include all important stakeholders in the framework's development. This will include stakeholders representing rural communities, already identified through the Call for Views.</p>
Development of a Refugee Integration Strategy.	<p>The policy is intended to deliver the best outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers no matter where they live here, while the numbers of refugees in rural areas is minimal it is important that joined up support services are available to all. Access to transport has been identified as a particular issue in rural areas however any actions in relation to this are likely to be within departmental implementation plans rather than the overall strategy.</p>



## Public Prosecution Service

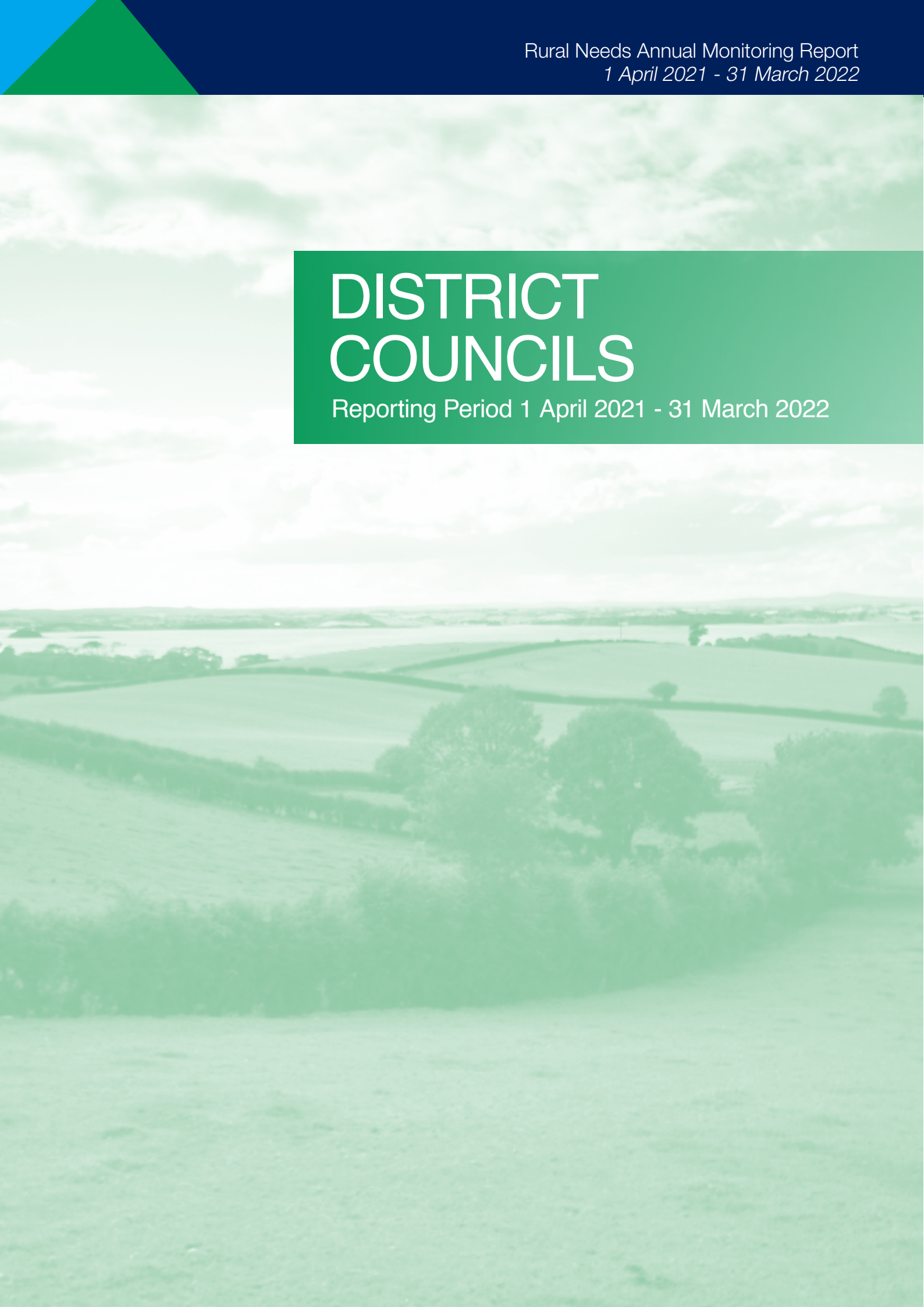
Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Development of Public Prosecution Service (PPS) Guidelines for the Prosecution of Young People.</p>	<p>The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the general principles, commitments and associated working practices, and to explain the standards of service expected from the PPS when a young person has been accused of a crime.</p> <p>The new guidelines are accompanied by four information booklets designed to make often complex legal processes more easily understood by children and young people.</p> <p>The booklets were produced after the PPS met with a range of young people during an extended consultation period, including children who have been in contact with the criminal justice system. These explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the PPS hands cases involving young people, including our role and remit;</li> <li>• The different types of Youth Diversions and alternatives to prosecution;</li> <li>• Our commitment to young people who are vulnerable; and</li> <li>• How we handle sexual offence cases involving young people.</li> </ul> <p>No geographical distinction is made in directing upon the prosecution, or not of offences committed by a young person.</p> <p>Neither the home area of a defendant, location of alleged offence(s) committed nor potential court location for criminal proceedings is a factor in considering prosecution.</p> <p>Eventual court proceedings are typically conducted in the court area within which an offence has been committed. There are rare occasions when court proceedings may be moved to an alternative location, but this is under the authority of the court and the PPS has no influence over such a decision.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>It is considered that application of these guidelines has no impact (positive or negative) on rural needs.</p>
<p>Development of Public Prosecution Service (PPS) Guidelines on Prosecuting Cases Involving Electronic Communications.</p>	<p>These Guidelines are aimed at explaining the approach of the PPS when considering cases where it is alleged that criminal offences have been committed by the sending of an electronic communication, including communications sent via social media.</p> <p>Electronic communications include calls and text messages sent by means of the telephone network, posts on internet discussion forums, streaming of video using the internet and YouTube and other messages sent by or on social media platforms. Social media in this document refers to social networks accessible on the internet which can be used for social interaction between users and the instant sending of messages either to chosen recipients or worldwide, depending on the selection of privacy settings by the sender.</p> <p>These Guidelines cover the offences that are likely to be most commonly committed by the sending of electronic communications and in particular those sent by text or by using social media.</p> <p>No geographical distinction is made in directing upon the prosecution, or not of offences committed by the sending of an electronic communication.</p> <p>Neither the home area of a defendant, location of alleged offence(s) committed nor potential court location for criminal proceedings is a factor in considering prosecution.</p> <p>Eventual court proceedings are typically conducted in the court area within which an offence has been committed. There are rare occasions when court proceedings may be moved to an alternative location, but this is under the authority of the court and the PPS has no influence over such a decision.</p> <p>It is considered that application of these guidelines has no impact (positive or negative) on rural needs.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Multiple measures implemented upon the first COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in late March 2020 and continued throughout the 2021-22 period.</p>	<p>A range of emergency measures and initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic were assessed with regard to their impact upon rural needs and found to have had no detrimental effect. As these measures continued to be refined through 2021-22, no adverse impact on rural needs has been identified.</p> <p>Many of these measures have been in support of staff remote working, and the Public Prosecution Service has taken significant steps throughout the period to develop new hybrid working arrangements under the NICS New Ways of Working initiative. The continued enhancement and augmentation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems and physical equipment has enabled those whose roles can be performed remotely from the office environment to take advantage of the opportunity to do so.</p> <p>These initiatives continue to reduce staff travel requirements, support more flexible working, enable those considered vulnerable to self-isolate where necessary and support those with associated care responsibilities.</p>

# DISTRICT COUNCILS

Reporting Period 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022



## Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Good Relations Audit and Strategy.	<p>This Audit set out to review Good Relations in Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area with a view to developing and prioritising a framework for action for the period 2020 – 2025. Based on strategic context and research a Borough Profile has been established, alongside an overview of Good Relations work in recent times. These findings have been augmented with a comprehensive piece of local research across the Borough, seeking to find out from local people, stakeholders, and elected members the current appraisal of Good Relations in Antrim and Newtownabbey.</p> <p>There has been a positive impact in relation to rural needs with due regard being given through the implementation of the rural screening process, consultation with rural stakeholders and through ongoing engagement when delivering the Good Relations Audit and Strategy.</p>
Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Disability Action Plan.	<p>On 27 January 2021 Elected Members and Officers of the PCSP undertook an assessment of Policing and Community Safety in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Council Area. This exercise was undertaken to ensure that the priorities within the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Disability Action Plan, continue to reflect priority policing and community safety issues in the Borough. The assessment was informed by analysis of information from statutory partners, as well as the results of Borough wide consultation on policing and community safety across the Council area. Engagement activities continued to be impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>There has been a positive impact in relation to rural needs with due regard being given through the implementation of the rural screening process, consultation with rural stakeholders and through ongoing engagement when delivering the PCSP Disability Action Plan.</p>



## Ards and North Down Borough Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Request to remove Priority 4 (specifically in relation to the Council Buildings becoming shared facilities) of the Equality Action Plan 2020-2025 by Elected Members and agree the Equality Action Plan without this action.	People in rural areas require access to the same level of service as those in non-rural areas. This may be by ensuring they have access outside their area and a means to access these services or by delivering services in a manner suitable to ensure they can be accessed within the rural areas.
Newtownards Citizen Hub Project Brief.	The integrated Strategy presents a coherent vision for the pursuit of prosperity in the Borough of Ards and North Down. It responds to the vision and outcomes of the Community Plan for the area and is to be used as the common point of reference for all those contributing to the growth of our economy, the welcoming of visitors and the improvements of our places, both urban and rural.
Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations Programme Action Plan for 2021-2022.	For residents to be comfortable and safe in their community; being an integral part of the Boroughs Good Relations programmes; have a shared community that is open and encourages visitors throughout the year; to encourage opportunities for employment, a sense of community ownership, education and support to enable all to live in a secure environment that has transport links to engage across the Borough and outside the Borough.
Police and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Annual Action Plan 2021-22.	The Annual Plan will impact on individuals and communities across the Borough and thus will have a positive impact on people in rural areas. The impact will be through receiving programmes, activities and engagements to enable them to ensure their communities and individuals are safer and engage appropriately in relation to the correct support that suits the rural area.
Closure of Ards Visitor Information Centre (VIC) and move to literature base within Ards Arts Centre.	The VIC will remain in Newtownards town centre but will be in a different location. Access for those who have poor mobility may be adversely impacted but for others the location in the centre of the town will encourage a



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	greater footfall. However, the services will be reduced due to the size of the area available and the sharing of resources. The information will be available to enable all those who wish to receive information on any tourism attraction in any rural area to receive this as well as accommodation information.
Organisational Development Strategy, Action Plan and People Plan.	None identified.
Learning and Development Strategy.	None identified.
Social Value in Sustainable Procurement Policy.	The policy is equitably available across the Borough, therefore a positive impact.
Experience Development Grant Scheme.	The policy is equitably available across the Borough, therefore a positive impact.
Management of Access to Household Recycling Centres.	The policy is equitably available across the Borough, therefore a positive impact.
Borough Marketing and Communications Strategy.	The policy is equitably available across the Borough, therefore a positive impact.
Conlig Community War Memorial Proposal.	As this is for this Conlig only, it was not selected for the rural area but for the arrangements of the ownership and location in the area of the memorial.
Ards and North Down Borough Council Flags Policy 2020 amendment.	Amendment applies equally across all areas.
Ards and North Down Borough Council Play Strategy.	The Strategy will ensure the Council is consistent, fair and equitable in the provision and maintenance of play areas throughout the Borough and gives consideration to all areas.
Ards And North Down Borough Council Tree and Woodland Strategy 2021-2032.	It's an all-encompassing Strategy that promotes equity across the whole Borough.
Let's Grow Together: A Sustainable Community Food Growing Strategy 2021-2032.	Community ownership can improve neighbourhood-based service provision, increasing accessibility for local people, which is particularly important in rural areas. A sense of community identity and pride can be

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	developed, with the potential for increased community cohesion. Successful transfers can lead to additional jobs, training and business opportunities, improving skills and aspirations locally.
Ards and North Down Borough Council Herbicide Reduction Policy.	This policy sets out need to reduce, replace, and where possible, eliminate the use of herbicides (and pesticides) due to the potential risk to the environment and human health increasingly highlighted in research and media, this applies to the Borough as a whole and not just rural areas.
Community Development Fund 2022-2023.	Everyone that meets the criteria is eligible to apply. The Community Development Fund is open to all community and voluntary groups/organisations based in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area regardless of social or economic needs.
Mentoring to Inspire Scheme.	The Mentoring to Inspire Scheme is only for Employees of Ards and North Down Borough Council therefore is open to all regardless of area.
Learning and Development Strategy 22-23.	This policy has been implemented to address and maximise investment in people potential to deliver outcomes, thereby ensuring a skilled, adaptable and inspired workforce.
Tourism Experiences Programme.	The Programme will increase economic spend, animation of the Borough and increased visitation with additional activity for visitors to do when in the area.
Menopause Policy.	The Menopause Policy is for the staff of Ards and North Down Borough Council only and is applicable to all staff regardless of where they live (rural or urban).
Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations Strategy 22 - 25 and Action Plan for 2022-2023.	The Action Plan will impact on individuals and groups across the Borough and some of the work will be specifically targeted at those living, working or receiving education in rural areas. This is because the Good Relations Strategy is to deliver a programme of a breadth of events across the Borough. To ensure this is achieved programmes will be delivered and promoted in rural areas and be appropriate for the target audiences and relevant to the issues identified and encourage the promotion of good relations.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Notice of Motion - Request to name the Park on the Comber Road, Ballygowan, Platinum Jubilee Park.	The policy relates to the naming of a park and has no bearing on social or economic needs of the area. This is a Notice of Motion (NOM) only - should the NOM be granted the policy on naming of Council facilities will have to be adhered to.
Tourism Guided Walks and Tours Programme.	The policy will bring tourism to local areas, giving people the opportunity to learn more about their local area or the area they are visiting. The policy has been developed to ensure a geographical spread as well as a diverse offering ranging from kids tours to horticulture and historical tours.
Commemorative Tree Policy.	No rural needs are identified as the policy sets out the criteria under which Council will consider applications from local groups and organisations to plant Commemorative trees on Council land.
Good Relation's Grant Scheme 2022-2023.	Everyone that meets the criteria is eligible to apply. The Good Relations Grant Scheme is open to all community and voluntary groups/organisations based in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area regardless of social or economic needs.
Fairtrade Borough Signage.	The Fairtrade Signage would only be on main town signs (Bangor, Comber, Newtownards and Holywood) and not in rural areas.
Notice of Motion (NOM) - Portavogie Centenary Square Proposal.	The policy relates to the naming of a park and has no bearing on social or economic needs of the area This is a Notice of Motion only - should the NOM be granted the policy on naming of Council facilities will have to be adhered to.
Proposed Changes to Existing Flags Policy.	Only two War memorials in the Borough require a flagpole in Millisle and Cloughy, both rural areas. The policy is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) whereby social and economic needs will be considered.
Ards and North Down Borough Council CCTV Policy.	Where Council Close Circuit Television (CCTV) is installed, this policy will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the personal safety of staff and visitors;</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the Council buildings and assets, both during and after normal working hours;</li> <li>• Reduce the fear of crime;</li> <li>• Reduce the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour (including theft and vandalism);</li> <li>• Support the Police in a bid to deter and detect crime;</li> <li>• Assist in identifying, apprehending and prosecuting offenders;</li> <li>• Protect members of the public and Council workers; and</li> <li>• Enable a review of road traffic accidents/ incidents.</li> </ul>
Bangor Waterfront: Outline Business Case.	This Outline Business Case (OBC) sets out the case for investment in the strategic development framework and prioritises a set of key projects supported by the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) to deliver benefits in the short term and provide the basis for longer term growth.
Sustainability and Climate Change Policy.	The Sustainability and Climate Change Policy gives a commitment that the Council will carry out its activities and functions a manner which minimises any potentially negative climate change impacts and states that the principles of sustainable development will be integrated throughout all Ards and North Down Borough Council activities.
Proposed Changes to Existing Flags Policy to include Church Street and all war memorials 365 days of the year.	AMENDMENT TO NOM E266 - Following an Amendment proposed by Cllr Cooper and seconded by Cllr T Smith: This Council amends the current flag policy to fly our Union Flag at every war memorial all year round, and will also include Church Street, Newtownards, Council building.
Treasury Management Policy Statement.	The Council defines its treasury management activities as “the management of its investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2021/22.	Where the Council finances capital expenditure by borrowings, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The Act and the Local Government (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (NI) 2011 require the Council to have regard to the Department of Environment's Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision (the DOE Guidance), most recently issued in 2011.
Organisational Development Strategy, Action Plan and People Plan.	The Organisational Development Strategy details the approach taken to enable sustained organisational performance through the involvement of the workforce.
2022/23 Tourism Events Programme.	Each year Council manages and delivers a series of tourism events. The events and the programming of each has remained reasonably consistent since Council merger. Since March 2020 the delivery of events has been impossible due to COVID-19. In the 21/22 season, events began to be delivered and we are now in a position to plan and develop a full events programme for 22/23 throughout the Borough.

## Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Acquisition and Disposal Policy for Land and Property.	No rural needs were identified.
Agriculture Strategy.	<p>There are nine recommendations in the Strategy which have been developed to address challenges, opportunities and needs for the industry in our Borough.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand and evolve Food Heartland.</li> <li>2. Develop a method of communicating regularly and clearly with every Agriculture and Agri Food business in the Borough.</li> <li>3. Develop a plan to facilitate skills development in the Agriculture and Agri business.</li> <li>4. Appoint Agriculture Champions for the Borough.</li> <li>5. Develop an Agriculture Centre for advice, training, demonstration and research.</li> <li>6. Facilitate structural upgrading.</li> <li>7. ABC Rural Strategy.</li> <li>8. Further studies in agriculture sectors.</li> <li>9. Agri Food development.</li> </ol> <p>An additional recommendation 10 - Promote the health and wellbeing of farmers and rural dwellers, was introduced following feedback from the public consultation.</p> <p>Recommendations have been incorporated into the Strategy to address feedback from stakeholders and the survey results. The recommendations will be Council led and will be delivered on a collaborative basis with stakeholders, therefore the relationship with stakeholders is important. It was identified that the communication between Council, farmers and agri-businesses should be improved and a communications plan put in place in order to engage effectively and make a difference to the rural businesses.</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Council in the past has had limited engagement with the farming community and the wider agriculture industry. This Strategy will have a positive impact on all groups going forward as Council instill greater collaboration with agriculture stakeholders, representatives and as a result from the communication plan.</p> <p>The Farmers Survey in particular identifies a need to support the various age of farmers and gender inequality, general comments leaned towards the misrepresentation of women in the agriculture industry. In both surveys the farmers and agri-businesses identified a need for business skills and learning for this industry. These skills will be addressed under recommendation 1 and 3.</p> <p>Two recommendations in the Strategy will support these two groups. This recommendation 2 (focusing on communication with the industry) recommendation 4 (appointment of agriculture champions, including the consideration of a 'panel of women farmers') other recommendations which focus on skills training, learning and development will provide support.</p> <p>In the delivery phase of the Strategy there will be a focus on improved signposting of current service providers and support such as mental health and well-being, health &amp; safety, and raising awareness of support facilities available in our Borough.</p> <p>The evolution of Food Heartland (recommendation 1) will have a positive impact on the agriculture industry and the broad range of activities/programmes and support Food Heartland will be able to deliver under its new roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills and business training availability and provision for the farmers and agri businesses;</li> <li>• Labour shortages and automation for the industry;</li> <li>• Working long hours;</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New technology and data analysing training and support;</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing of farmers, farming families and people working in the wider agriculture industry;</li> <li>• Farm Business ID not being recognised as a business and not accessible to general business support;</li> <li>• Infrastructure in the rural areas, e.g. lack of broadband restricts business growth;</li> <li>• Improving business productivity; and</li> <li>• Effective communication required between Council and farmers and agri-businesses.</li> </ul>
<p>Armagh Place Plan.</p>	<p>Protecting rural communities and food production is vital for preserving biodiversity, improving health, ensuring food security, maintaining rural (and urban) livelihoods and protecting the environment. The Armagh Place Plan advocates a sustainable urban development approach that seeks to protect the rural landscape allowing the continuation of vital services and activities that need to take place there.</p> <p>The Armagh Place Plan offers many actions for an enhanced and improved city that caters for rural dwellers that use the city regularly to gain access to services.</p> <p>The Place Plan will reinforce and enhance rural and urban connections by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving more opportunities for rural businesses to showcase themselves in the city;</li> <li>• Develop a better and more integrated transport system in and out of the city; and</li> <li>• Design green and blue infrastructure that connects the wider rural areas into the city.</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The following issues were considered in relation to the needs of people in rural areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social isolation and the need for more integrated public transport provision;</li> <li>• Access to services in the city and not competing with rural settlements providing essential more regular services than in Armagh City; and</li> <li>• Employment and access to jobs and opportunities in the city.</li> </ul> <p>Transport through the rural areas of Armagh has been addressed by proposals being developed that will reduce congestion and improve the road infrastructure surrounding the city.</p> <p>More and better alternative transport options for getting into and out of the city have been incorporated into the plan to include exploring the feasibility of reopening the railway station in Armagh, implementing more greenways to connect cyclists into and out of the city and new roads to alleviate congestion on some smaller rural routes into the city.</p>
Banbridge Painting Scheme.	This Scheme is an innovative grant scheme which aims to encourage owners and tenants to invest in their buildings, even though it is urban based it will have a positive effect on the surrounding rural hinterland.
Banbridge Public Realm Scheme.	Access to and within Banbridge town centre is central to those from the rural hinterland who use the town on a regular basis. The improvements will make the town more 'user friendly' for those travelling from rural areas who wish to avail of services and shopping and as a result will enhance the social and economic wellbeing of those in rural areas.
Empty to Occupied Programme.	This Scheme is an innovative grant scheme which aims to encourage vacant commercial property owners within settlement boundaries to invest in their buildings, attract tenants and reduce long term vacancy, but it has positive effects on the surrounding rural hinterland.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Menopause Policy.	No rural issues were identified.
Millennium Way Off Street Carparking.	No rural issues were identified.
Naming Navan Coffee Shop.	No rural issues were identified.
Northern Ireland Centenary Programme.	The Northern Ireland Centenary Programme was a programme of Events to commemorate Northern Ireland's 100th birthday. Many of these events were virtual and others were located across the Borough so all residents could access them. No rural issues were identified.
Performance Improvement Plan 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.	The Performance Improvement Plan has been developed to support continuous improvement in the delivery of our services across the Borough.
Play Strategy 2018-2026 - Play Park Closures.	<p>There are 20 Play Parks both rural and urban identified through the Play Strategy for possible closure.</p> <p>In the case of a potential removal of a play area, Council will engage with local communities (some will be in rural areas) in order to determine the true level of demand for fixed play within the area (through for example door to door survey). This helps to update the available demographic data which has been used in the Strategy and will ensure an accurate reflection of local need.</p> <p>Should it be determined that there is no longer a need for a play area within a specific location Council will initiate a consultation process aimed at ensuring that communities have a say in the transformation of the site to maintain value for the community.</p>
Public Consultation Policy.	No rural issues were identified.
Queen's Platinum Jubilee Programme.	The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Programme is a programme of Events to mark the Queen's Jubilee. Events are located across the Borough so all residents can access them. Whilst the Programme includes events in rural parts of the Borough, no rural issues were identified.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Raising Concerns Policy.	No rural issues were identified.
Recovery and Growth Framework.	<p>The plan has been influenced by research and stakeholder engagement and as 49% of the Borough's population live in rural areas, rural needs have helped influence the short, medium and long term actions identified in the Framework to aid COVID-19 recovery.</p> <p>One of the short term actions is to identify challenges faced by rural businesses and opportunities for rural development and support programmes.</p> <p>One of the long term actions outlined in the Framework is to support rural development and the Framework suggests that rural development should be focused on reducing broadband deprivation, improving road infrastructure and boosting investment and innovation in existing sectors. This will have a positive impact on all residents in the Borough but will particularly impact on those living in rural areas.</p>
Tree Planting. Royal British Legion - Proposal to plant 3 trees with plaques within the grounds of the Palace Demesne, Armagh, Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre and the civic building, Banbridge to make the 100th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion.	No rural issues were identified.
Tree Planting. Royal British Legion - Application from 5 branches of the Royal British Legion to plant a commemorative tree on Council land to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion.	No rural issues were identified.

## Belfast City Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Delivery of the Five C's Public Realm Project.	This Project has considered the impacts on a range of existing and potential stakeholders. We do not consider this policy to have relevance to the social and economic needs of persons in rural areas.
Annual Flying of the Transgender Flag on Transgender Day of Remembrance.	This decision was taken in line with a vision for a shared city. The flying of a flag on a public building will have no impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.
Belfast Open Spaces Strategy (BOSS).	The Strategy and the open space audit can be used at an area/ neighbourhood level for planning purposes and will help inform development contribution decisions in urban or rural areas. Therefore, the BOSS does not seek to specifically address either urban or rural needs. (This process provides non-monetary benefits to those who meet the criteria).
Belfast Zoo Charity Requests Process.	No difference has been identified between people living in rural areas and non-rural areas. The impact on people living in all areas will be positive in that if they meet the applicable criteria, they can benefit from free/ discounted entry to Belfast Zoo. This is beneficial for those particularly living in poverty or deprivation.
City Centre Living Vision (CCLV).	This project has considered the impacts on a range of existing and potential stakeholders. We do not consider this policy to have relevance to the social and economic needs of persons in rural areas.
DfC COVID-19 Revitalisation Programme.	The focus of this Programme was to aid city centre businesses to safeguard businesses and jobs. This policy will not have any major impact on people living in rural areas. The project is designed to ensure survival of city centre businesses and the people they employ.
Dunbar Placemaking Brief.	This project has considered the impacts on a range of existing and potential stakeholders. We do not consider this policy to have relevance to the social and economic needs of persons in rural areas.



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund Programme.	This Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund is open to all legitimate groups across the city including those communities from rural areas.
Ormeau Cluster Brief.	This project has considered the impacts on a range of existing and potential stakeholders. We do not consider this policy to have relevance to the social and economic needs of persons in rural areas.
Ballysillan Playing Fields.	The development of this site was for those communities in the surrounding Ballysillan area. The scale of the enhancements is unlikely to attract new users to the playing fields beyond the existing urban catchment area and is in line with a vision for a shared city.
Belfast Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP).	Each high-level measure within the Plan will undergo a specific Rural Needs Impact Assessment to identify any specific impacts on people in rural communities.
COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.	The policy is for use by internal staff of BCC and has no impact on people in rural areas.
Crematorium Development at Roselawn.	The development of cremation services impacts equally on people in urban and rural areas and will improve services.
Forth Meadow Community Greenway.	The network does not link with any of Belfast's rural areas and therefore would not have any direct impact on people living in these areas.
Gender Identity and Expression - Guidance and information for managers and staff.	The policy is to support internal staff of BCC and has no impact on people in rural areas.
Menopause Policy and Guidance.	The policy is for use by internal staff of Belfast City Council and has no impact on people in rural areas.
Consultation on Council decision to erect bilingual/multilingual external naming and internal directional signage in Andersonstown, Lisnasharragh, Olympia and Templemore Leisure Centres.	This decision was taken in line with a vision for a shared city and has considered the impacts on a range of existing and potential stakeholders including those living in rural areas.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Provide a visual means of identifying a resident approved additional Black Bin. (General Waste).	This request will only apply to residents who request additional black bins for domestic waste and therefore will apply equally to rural and urban residents to request additional black bins.
Supporting Vibrant Business Destinations Pilot Programme.	This pilot Programme will directly target road frontage/ local high streets with a priority focus on arterial routes and routes with a minimum number of 15 businesses located on road frontage. This Programme will have no direct impact on the rural and economic needs of those living in rural areas.
Belfast Resilience Strategy.	The Strategy will focus on general risks to the city, on climate change, children and young people, connectivity and will reflect responses received in relation to rural areas.
Digital Programme.	The Digital Programme has no direct impact on the rural and economic needs of those living in rural areas and will enable better communications for all residents.

## Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Draft Volunteering Policy.	<p>Through the consultation process the Community Section noted in rural areas there was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great levels of social isolation;</li> <li>• Poor provision of facilities for leisure activities, sporting activities, training, health etc.;</li> <li>• Longer distance to travel to access Council facilities;</li> <li>• Longer distance to travel to access health and other facilities;</li> <li>• Poor public transport links;</li> <li>• Increased costs for groups as a result of transport hire costs;</li> <li>• Poor broadband and in some cases mobile phone coverage; and</li> <li>• Most Council provided community centres are in urban areas (although this differs between legacy Council areas) so many rural community groups provide their own community centres, the costs of which are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.</li> </ul> <p>Consideration has been given to the barriers that may affect the ability of people in rural areas to undertake volunteering roles.</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities within Council are more likely to be based in Council buildings; in most cases these are located in urban areas. This would involve travel for volunteers living in rural areas, either by public transport or by use of their personal transportation mode.</p> <p>It has been agreed that potential volunteers should not be out of pocket while volunteering for Council. The rural needs identified have influenced the development of the policy which details that Council will work with the 2 local Volunteer Centres (Causeway VC and Limavady VC and line managers) to support potential volunteers and try to mitigate barriers such as the location, volunteer role, flexibility with working hours around public transport and payment of volunteer travel costs.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>The project is to determine opinions, location and design of a potential memorial which remembers those who lost their lives in the bomb in 1973 at Railway Road, Coleraine and present same to Council for decision.</p>	<p>A formal consultation process commenced mid November 2020 which did not identify any social or economic needs or impacts relevant to the memorial. As the memorial will be based in Coleraine there may be issues with regards to travel to the area; however bus routes are reasonably good to Coleraine as it is a central shopping hub. Impacts will be reviewed again following the proposed extended consultation process.</p> <p>Information will be included on the website relating to options identified. If requested a hard copy of the detail can be issued to individuals in large print, alternatively this information can be downloaded from the website.</p> <p>The issues to date considered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travel;</li> <li>• Parking;</li> <li>• Accessibility;</li> <li>• Internet accessibility;</li> <li>• Disability specific needs such as large print or virtual view of options;</li> <li>• Cost and</li> <li>• Socially relevant factors.</li> </ul> <p>There were no issues raised during the initial consultation with regards to travel to the area, bus routes, impact on current services and access to the proposed location.</p> <p>It is anticipated that visits to the memorial will be free, thus causing no financial impact to those from rural or urban areas.</p> <p>Socially relevant factors were be taken into account at the design phase through the formal consultation process. Individuals did not raise any issues and this area will further be reviewed as potential design options become available.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Any of the previously identified or future needs highlighted via the proposed extended consultation will be taken into consideration and updated at that time.</p>
<p>The Development and Introduction of a Breastfeeding Policy and associated procedures within Council Buildings to support mothers to breastfeed their child/children.</p>	<p>Socially individuals from rural areas tend to have to travel longer distances to work, to socialise with friends/ work colleagues and to shop in larger supermarkets. Economically younger people and women are impacted by the need to work coupled with the requirement to travel to do so (as detailed in the Economic Development Strategy). This may mean that they are away from home at the time when their child needs to feed, so the opportunity for staff to express or feed their child may attempt to counteract this obstacle. This policy will support this in a safe environment.</p> <p>The provision of this service in Council buildings is free in that no purchase is necessary to rest and feed their child. In addition, mothers with other dependents are welcome to use the area.</p> <p>The provision of the same service across the Borough in various rural and urban settings means that individuals from various areas can avail of this provision and the associated health benefits regardless of the area they live in, their income, employment status, or family size.</p> <p>Research by the Economic Development section for its strategy highlighted that socially individuals in rural areas may feel more isolated, therefore supporting individuals to drop into central locations and chat to others may reduce this isolation.</p> <p>Many of the themes raised within the various consultations and research have been included in the policy i.e. the need to offer the service in rural and urban areas, the need to promote and ensure accessibility in rural areas and the need to advertise in alternative formats or languages.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The opening hours of facilities can be accessed via the web, by email or telephone to support users of the building/facility.</p> <p>The policy will be reviewed bi-annually and needs of rural users will also be reviewed at this time.</p>
Review of Planning Enforcement Strategy.	<p>Enforcement cases in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas will be considered taking into account whether it is expedient to take formal action. The alleged offender will have the opportunity to provide any supporting information to demonstrate if their development is immune from enforcement action, benefits from planning permission, negotiate to resolve the planning issues identified etc. People from rural areas will be able to submit complaints/information electronically or have someone represent on their behalf.</p> <p>The Strategy supports individuals to make complaints, submit information electronically without having to attend the Council offices; or to have someone represent on their behalf.</p>
Provision of a new Litter Strategy for the Borough.	<p>To date the Strategy has considered the specific needs of people in rural areas and included elements to mitigate the adverse effects of littering to this section of our community. In addition the partnership with Northern Ireland Environment Agency will support a joined-up approach to rural fly-tipping and the identification of specific relevant impacts.</p> <p>However the formal consultation process will support a more in-depth understanding of needs and how they can align to improve the Strategy and its overall impact.</p>
Revision of current practices to develop a new Policy and Procedure to fly the Union Flag at selected Council Buildings 365 days per year.	<p>Socially individuals from rural areas tend to have to travel longer distances to work, to socialise with friends/ work colleagues. This may mean that they chose a workplace nearer to their home address to meet their economic needs. In turn as a result of the proposed policy change their place of work may now fly a flag</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>which does not reflect the community background to which they belong and the acceptance of diversity and equality. There have been no complaints relating to the current provision by rural individuals although due to increased migration to rural areas the composition may have changed since the initial policy was introduced. This may be of particular relevance to the additional social function provided by town halls and the possibility of a ‘chill factor’ for rural individuals based on their beliefs. Ways to mitigate any factors should be identified through consultation.</p> <p>Therefore it is important that the viewpoints of individuals living in both rural and urban areas will be considered as part of the overall consultation process.</p> <p>In addition the final policy will be developed in light of research, good practice guidelines and information from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other Councils policy and processes;</li> <li>• Good Relations Strategy; and</li> <li>• “Together building a United Community” Strategy May 2013.</li> </ul> <p>Consultation with individuals from both rural and urban areas who are colleagues, visitors or customers to the Council buildings.</p>
<p>The Inclusive Customer Service Policy outlines the Council’s commitment to uphold the spirit and letter of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.</p>	<p>Socially individuals from rural areas tend to build deeper relationships with neighbours and due to their location socialise in local groupings. This policy will support this in an inclusive and accessible environment.</p> <p>Research by the Economic Development section for its strategy; highlighted that socially individuals in rural areas may feel more isolated, therefore supporting individuals to drop into central locations and chat to others may reduce this isolation.</p> <p>The fact that the local building offers this provision will support the need for local opportunities to socialise.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>Many of the themes raised within the various consultations and research have been included in the policy i.e. the need to offer the service in all areas (rural and urban).</p> <p>The opening hours of facilities can be accessed via the web, by email or telephone to support users of the building/facility.</p> <p>The policy will be reviewed bi-annually and needs of rural users will also be reviewed at this time.</p>
<p>Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Elite Athlete/ Gold Card Scheme is an incentive to help support local athletes who are competing at an elite level of excellence in their chosen sport.</p>	<p>Socially individuals from rural areas tend to have to travel longer distances to partake in sporting activities, incur increased costs associated with training due to their residing location and have reduced opportunities to socialise with other sportspeople. This may mean that an increased number of individuals give up their sporting dreams or their families have to spend an increased part of their wage to support their participation. Although the provision of public transport may alleviate this to some degree it may not always be available to suit all training schedules. All Leisure Centres in the Borough have good parking availability.</p> <p>In addition the lack of interaction with other sports people may also be reduced.</p> <p>The provision of the Scheme across the Borough means that individuals from various areas can avail of this provision and the associated health benefits regardless of the area they live in, their income, employment status, or family size. In addition schemes encouraging free participation may again support the economic impact.</p> <p>It is anticipated that knock-on effects will relate to a reduction in costs and increased opportunities for athletes of all ages.</p> <p>The Scheme will be consulted via the use of community groups and sport clubs across the Borough. Once finalised the Scheme will be both accessible to and promoted in rural areas.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The increased use of technology to book training slots will support rural dwellers to pre-book fitness/swim sessions at a time which best suits their needs.</p> <p>In addition, information can be supplied in alternative formats or languages.</p>
Disposal of Land located off New Market Street, Coleraine.	The land is in an urban area which following a review and consultation with stakeholders determined no usage by the rural community. In addition, the stakeholders indicated there were no current or future operational requirements relating to this piece of land.
List of materials that are suitable to be deposited at Council's network of Household Recycling Centres (HRCs). The list aids the harmonisation service delivery at the various sites.	The policy revision support harmonisation of the service only and provision was raised to an equal standing across the Borough in both rural and urban areas.
Disposal of Land located off Coleraine Road, Garvagh.	The land is sited in a rural area which following a review and consultation with stakeholders determined no usage by the rural community. In addition, the stakeholders indicated there were no current or future operational requirements relating to this piece of land.
Disposal of Land at Station Road, Dunloy.	The land is sited in the outskirts of the rural town area which following a review and consultation with stakeholders determined no usage by the rural community. In addition, the stakeholders indicated there were no current or future operational requirements relating to this piece of land.
Water Well & Right of Way located off Mullan Road, Rasharkin.	The land is sited in a rural area which following a review and consultation with stakeholders determined no usage by the rural community. In addition, the stakeholders indicated there were no current or future operational requirements relating to this piece of land.
Disposal of vacant landscape land located off Coleraine Road, Ballymoney, Post Boys Walk.	The land is sited in the outskirts of a rural town area which following a review and consultation with stakeholders determined no usage by the rural community. In addition, the stakeholders indicated there were no current or future operational requirements relating to this piece of land.

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Project by the Policing and Community Safety Partnership to identify solutions regarding the fear of crime/antisocial behaviour within Causeway Coast and Glens Council area.</p>	<p>Socially individuals from rural areas tend to be more spread out with regards to housing and have to travel longer distances to work, socialise with friends/work colleagues and to shop in larger supermarkets. Crime can have a devastating impact on rural dwellers who may be more isolated from neighbours. This project aims to understand the fears of rural dwellers and set in place actions to support and reduce this impact.</p> <p>The online survey and ability for people to complete it using various methods and formats supports increased inclusion and individuals can be heard without an economic impact.</p> <p>Research by the Economic Development section for its strategy highlighted that socially individuals in rural areas may feel more isolated, therefore supporting individuals to speak out about their fears and have them addressed may not only reduce this fear but in turn isolation.</p> <p>In addition, individuals who live in rural areas often have to travel long distances to work, so they must be able to do this without fear of crime when using public transport or when out and about in urban shopping areas.</p> <p>Many of the themes raised within the various meetings to date and research have been included in the project i.e. the need to support rural and urban dwellers, the need to promote and ensure accessibility in rural areas and the need to advertise in alternative formats or languages.</p>
<p>Anti-Poverty Action Plan.</p>	<p>The cost of living is higher in rural areas and rural households are twice as likely as urban households to be in fuel poverty. Source: Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 2016, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, 2018.</p> <p>Poor public transport links - private transport is a necessity in many rural areas in terms of access to employment and basic services. Source: Continuous Household Survey, 2018/19, NISRA.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Access to social housing is much more limited, and rates of owner-occupation are substantially higher in rural than urban areas.</p> <p>Source: Continuous Household Survey, 2018/19, NISRA.</p> <p>Rural pensioners are almost twice as likely to be in relative or absolute poverty as their urban counterparts.</p> <p>Source: Households Below Average Income (HBAI), DfC, 2018/19.</p> <p>Poor broadband coverage in some areas; similarly mobile phone network coverage.</p> <p>Consideration was given to how best to deliver services that were accessible to rural dwellers.</p> <p>Grant programmes were included to allow locally based community and voluntary organisations to deliver services locally such as community fridges, grow your own schemes, luncheon clubs etc.</p> <p>Links to be developed between foodbanks in the main towns and local community organisations in rural villages to support the creation of 'community larders' in order to allow easier access to food for rural dwellers.</p> <p>Advice provision to be delivered via telephone and email with the opportunity for face to face pre-arranged appointments.</p> <p>A Wraparound Support Service to be delivered to ensure that residents were supported to access all the services that they needed to support them back to a position of financial stability e.g. debt advice, benefit checks, social supermarket etc.</p> <p>A Where to Turn Campaign was developed in order to ensure that people in all areas of the Borough were aware of the range of services that were available.</p> <p><a href="http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/live/advice-services">www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/live/advice-services</a></p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>The development of the Action Plan has been influenced by the needs of communities across Causeway Coast and Glens whether they are defined by geography, identity or interest. Because of the significant rural nature of Causeway Coast and Glens the needs of rural communities are particularly to the fore. The needs that are more prevalent in rural areas such as access to services, poor transport links, fuel poverty, increased cost of delivering services all influenced the development of the Action Plan and the design of the actions in the Plan.</p> <p>Consideration was given to how best to deliver services that were accessible to rural communities both in terms of location and method of delivery e.g. advice helpline.</p> <p>Consideration was also given as to how best to support the community and voluntary sector in rural areas to address local needs and to connect and collaborate with Council and Anti-Poverty Stakeholder Steering Group partners to do so.</p>



## Derry City and Strabane District Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Internal Audit Strategy.	The Internal Audit Strategy is an internal document designed to provide an independent assurance and advisory service, which will help the Council achieve its objectives and improve the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes. All Council services within the rural areas will be subject to same level of governance.
Cemeteries Management Policy.	The cemeteries guidance is an operational handbook on how Council cemeteries will be run. This will be applied universally across all cemeteries within Council control without exception regardless of its location.
Play Plan.	<p>After predevelopment consultation and audit of provision Council, in seeking to ensure that the play needs of children and young people living in more dispersed rural locations are met, has included a number of approaches in the Play Plan to meeting play need.</p> <p>These are:</p> <p>Approach 1: Dual Fixed Development in Primary School Grounds.</p> <p>Under approach 1, Council would seek to establish a partnership with an identified primary school with a view to developing a dual access fixed play area on school grounds.</p> <p>Approach 2: Dual Fixed Play Development with Sport Clubs.</p> <p>Under approach 2, Council would seek to establish a partnership with an identified sports club with a view to developing dual access fixed play within the club's grounds.</p> <p>Approach 3: Dual Fixed Play Development with Statutory Partners utilising Landbanks.</p> <p>Under approach 3, Council will work in partnership with other statutory organisations to complete a review of</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>accessible, publicly owned land which could facilitate fixed play development.</p> <p>Under approach 3, Council will work in partnership with other statutory organisations to complete a review of accessible, publicly owned land which could facilitate fixed play development.</p> <p>Should land be identified, Council will work with the statutory landowner to negotiate access and development of the site for community play purposes.</p> <p>Approach 4: Private Land Purchase.</p> <p>In the absence of an alternative approach, where a need for fixed play has been identified within a rural area, Council will review potential land purchase options within a location.</p>
Mayoral Gifts and Hospitality Policy.	This policy sets out the circumstances in which Mayoral/civic hospitality and/or civic or corporate gifts are provided and sets down guidance on the nature of such hospitality/gifts. The guidance refers to all decisions around the allocation of gifts and hospitality regardless of location of recipient.
Rainbow Crossing.	This policy proposal is related to increasing the visibility and displaying support for the LGBTQI+ community - it is also intended to be a visitor attraction and tourist landmark which may increase economic activity in the chosen location. However, as the majority of the LGBTQI+ community are in the urban area of the Council district so it could be determined that there will be no adverse impact on the economic or social needs of this community in rural areas.
Corporate & Improvement Plan 2021/22.	<p>Examples of Improvement objectives inserted following consultation to contribute to economic and social wellbeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase employment opportunities and economic growth through a range of measures including creating new business start-ups, supporting existing business and delivering visitor growth as a destination of choice; and</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assist develop healthy lifestyles through increased participation in high quality leisure and sports activities.</li> </ul>
Code of Practice on Producing Information.	The Code of Practice on Producing Information aims to make all information emanating from Council accessible. The new video Relay System which has been introduced will contribute to the making Council more accessible to members of our d/Deaf community regardless of their location.
Review of Safeguarding (Children and Adults At Risk).	This policy has not been influenced by assessing rural need as this policy does not distinguish between rural and urban areas. It is a council wide policy that's purpose is to promote safe experiences for all within the City and District.
Review of Street Trading Policy.	This policy deals with applications for street trading. Every decision will be made on a case by case basis and when considering applications Licensing Officers will assess all relevant positive and negative impacts of allowing street trading to take place and take all factors into account. This will be implemented in the same way regardless of where the location of the street trading is.
Local Development Plan (LPD) - draft Plan Strategy Schedule of Proposed Changes.	<p>The assessment which has informed this Addendum has determined, that the proposed changes do not materially alter the aims or influence the policies or strategies to which the proposed changes relate; nor have any of the proposed changes impacted on the overall 'Vision' for Derry City and Strabane District Council as set out in the LDP draft Plan Strategy.</p> <p>The majority of the proposed changes have been screened out as having no differential impact on the rural community and are not considered further in this Addendum.</p> <p>The assessment did identify that proposed changes to Other Developments in the Countryside (ODC) 1 and Economic Development (ED) 4 could have a differential</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>impact on rural needs as the proposed changes would address an omission in the previous policies to clarify what types of development are allowed in the countryside. The change of impact would be overall beneficial, providing clarity for developers and ensuring sustainable development in the countryside.</p> <p>In reassessing the outcomes of the original Rural Needs Impact Assessment with regard to the proposed changes, it is considered that those outcomes are unchanged from the original assessment. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed changes do not alter the likely impact of the LDP draft Plan Strategy policies and strategies on the rural community.</p>

## Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Assisted Bin Lift and Additional Bin Collection Policy.	The policy will be applied equally irrespective of location. Hence, the Council has not specifically considered issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas as the policy will not impact differently on people in rural areas compared to those in urban areas.
Revision of the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Street Naming and Numbering Policy (including Dual Language Street Signs).	<p>The policy will be applied equally irrespective of location. Hence, the Council has not specifically considered issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas as the policy will not impact differently on people in rural areas compared to those in urban areas.</p> <p>Some rural roads may necessitate additional signage to be effective, which may have a positive impact.</p>
Development of a draft Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2027.	The Strategy and Action Plan will be applied equally irrespective of location will not impact differently on people in rural areas compared to those in urban areas. Hence, the Council has not specifically considered issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas as the policy will not impact differently on people in rural areas compared to those in urban areas.
Review of the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Corporate Funding Policy.	As above, the policy will not impact differently on people in rural areas compared to those in urban areas and will be applied equally irrespective of location.
Updating the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Fraud and Corruption Policy.	This policy will be applied equally to employees and the general public across the whole district and hence will not impact differently on people in rural areas. Accordingly, the Council has not considered issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.
Development of a Menopause Policy and associated Guidance.	The Council has not considered issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas as the policy will not impact differently on employees living in rural areas compared to those living in urban areas.

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Updating the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Mobile and Smart Device Policy.</p>	<p>The Council has not considered issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas on this occasion as the policy will not impact differently on rural areas and will be applied equally to employees across the whole district, irrespective of location.</p>
<p>Updating the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Raising Concerns (formerly “Whistleblowing”) Policy.</p>	<p>This policy will be applied equally to employees and the general public across the whole district and hence will not impact differently on people in rural areas. Accordingly, the Council has not considered issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.</p>



## Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Rural Micro Business Development Grant Scheme.</p>	<p>Rural needs given due consideration through the screening exercise undertaken by the Council. The Scheme provides targeted support to businesses within rural areas only.</p> <p>Funded under the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Programme the Scheme allocated a total of £89,194 to Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council. The Scheme aims to support at least 21 rural micro businesses with capital grant capped at £4,999 at a match-funding rate of 50% from DAERA and 50% from participating businesses. Businesses operating within a rural area will have the opportunity to benefit from the fund via a competitive application process.</p> <p>The rural share of the Northern Ireland (NI) population is growing. Over the years 2001-2011 the number of people living in rural areas of NI increased by 15% in comparison to a rise of only 4% in urban areas. According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) area live in rural areas. In the last decade to 2016, suburban areas have seen the highest growth rate of 22.1% with five wards alone covering over half of the districts growth - Ballymacross (44.3%), Carrowreagh (9.7%), Maghaberry (7%), Glenavy (6.3%) and Derriaghy (6.2%).</p> <p>In Northern Ireland 58% of businesses are based in rural area. The business base in the region as a whole is predominantly small to medium enterprises with a dominance of micro business. In terms of businesses located only in rural areas, 94% are defined as micro (having less than 10 employees). Agriculture plays a more important role in the economy of NI than is the case in the rest of the UK, it generates a higher proportion of total Gross Valued Added (GVA) in the economy and accounts for a higher proportion of our employment. Furthermore 78% of the total NI land</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>area is in agricultural use. Rural businesses located in NI have particular challenges and need specific solutions. The slow uptake of agriculture and rural enterprises in NI with regards to innovation, the fact that only 67% of rural areas have superfast broadband coverage (98% in urban areas) and 14% of tourism expenditure takes place in rural areas (compared with 86% in urban) are further examples of challenges facing the small rural businesses in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The TRPSI Framework focuses on the three priority areas of access poverty, financial poverty and social isolation which targets vulnerable groups in rural areas based on identified need.</p> <p>In addition, LCCC is already subject to Section 75 of the 1998 NI Act and this involves giving consideration to and assessing the impact of any Council policy and/or service on the nine designated groups. Since June 2017 Council is also now subject to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 which itself also involves giving consideration to policy and/or service impact on those specifically in rural areas.</p>
Labour Market Partnership.	<p>The aim of the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) is to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions by working through a co-ordinated, collaborative and multi-agency partnership. Thus, achieving regional objectives whilst being flexible to meet the needs presented by localised conditions and helping to connect employers with employees.</p> <p>The Action Plan submission was approved by the regional LMP on 28th March 2022 and a Letter of Offer for the LMP Programme 2022-2023 was issued to Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) on 15th April 2022.</p> <p>The LMP is responsible for improving the labour market across Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council regardless of location. COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on the local labour market. At its peak almost 140,000 employees were on furlough equivalent to roughly 15%</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>of all employees. In March 2021, 100,000 employees were still on furlough. Evidence suggests the impact was greater on younger employees, those with low skills and workers with smaller enterprises. A demographic assessment of sectoral employment by Ulster University Economic Policy Centre highlighted a number of concerns including increased vulnerability of women, individuals with long term health conditions and people living in flexible forms of employment. The impact on those with low or no qualifications was also highlighted as an area of concern.</p> <p>As of May 2021 there were 4,600 furloughed jobs in LCCC having fallen from 7090 in April 2021. The take up rate is 7% here compared to 8% in the UK and NI.</p> <p>Coronavirus Job retention Scheme (CJRS) data by sector in May 2021 for LCCC showed that wholesale and retail accounted for 22% of the furloughed jobs and accommodation/food accounted for a further 22% of the total other significant sectors were manufacturing 9%, arts, entertainment and recreation 8% and admin support services 7%.</p> <p>Redundancies have been experienced right throughout the pandemic with almost 5,800 confirmed redundancies in the year to March 2021, the highest since 2001. In 2020 there were 5,020 confirmed redundancies in NI of which 420 are reported for Lisburn and Castlereagh (8% of the NI total) compared to 100 confirmed redundancies in 2019 for this district.</p> <p>The skilled and mobile labour force and the good quality of life on offer in LCCC continue to be assets to the area. The city has room to grow. The west Lisburn Development Framework notes the potential to grow both housing and commercial activity in nearby Blaris and the Maze Long Kesh site (both these locations are rural or on the cusp of the rural/urban boundary). It may result in projects aimed at improving employability and skills. This also includes interventions in support of the extension of transport links, strengthening the</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>tourism offer at Hillsborough Castle and the proposed development of an innovation hub.</p> <p>The rate of disability in Northern Ireland is higher than the other UK regions with the exception of Wales. The rates of disability among older age groups are higher than other regions of the UK. The 50-64 year old age group accounts for 33.4% of our disabled population compared to 26.9% of the UK disabled population as a whole. The most striking finding was that 60.2% of disabled people in Northern Ireland are economically inactive while the comparative figure for the UK as a whole stands at 42.5%.</p> <p>Occupational segregation is problematic; men tend to be more involved in engineering, manufacturing and construction. Women more involved in business, administration and law. One possible related solution is women only training programmes in non-traditional sectors, i.e. construction and engineering.</p> <p>The Programme's overarching principle is working towards alleviating unemployment and improving the labour market across the province. Therefore, both urban and rural dwellers will benefit collectively.</p>
Community Facility Fund (CFF).	<p>The Community Facility Fund (CFF) is a grant scheme to support minor capital works and repairs and/or implementation of digital solutions to enable groups and organisations to improve income opportunities, make changes to the facility use and/or make the facility more accessible and inclusive to further engage the local community.</p> <p>Rural communities tend to be more socially isolated on a number of platforms. Often characterised by lack of amenities such as school, shops, limited public transport, limited access to medical care and cohesion; More often there is a lack of confidence and many folk experience lack of self-esteem and suffer from mental health and poverty. Digital poverty together with poor/ weak broadband coverage is also a key factor affecting rural communities.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>In developing the Programme, we have been mindful of the importance/significance of local community facilities to the lives of people living in rural area who may find it challenging to access services in urban area due to issues with transport, cost, time, poverty, age and disability.</p> <p>This CFF is a grant scheme to support minor capital works and adaptations to enable groups to upgrade community facilities and so improve opportunities making facilities more accessible and inclusive for the local community. This is likely to benefit people in rural areas who tend to rely heavily on their local community facilities due to the relative inaccessibility of provision in urban centres. Upgrading local facilities and enabling rural community groups who are successful to provide more/enhanced services can make a significant impact on addressing rural needs by offering services that are not duplicated in the surrounding area whereby encouraging community engagement and improve connectivity.</p> <p>The grant scheme is open for all projects in the LCCC area and £40,000 has been set aside in the 7 District Electoral Areas (DEAs). Applicants can apply for a minimum of £5,000 up to a maximum of £10,000. Funding is available for physical and digital improvements to community facilities for those organisations who meet the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>The criteria for the funding ensures that community groups in rural areas are equally likely to be eligible and that the type of improvements the funding is targeting may particularly benefit people in rural areas who rely more on local community facilities because of their proximity, etc. and the relative inaccessibility of provision in urban centres.</p>
<p>Development of Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) Open Space Strategy 2021-2026.</p>	<p>An Open Space Strategy is the formally approved policy document defining a Local Authority's approach, commitment and management to protect, enhance and manage open space assets.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>An Open Space Strategy is the formally approved policy document defining a Local Authority's approach, commitment and management to protect, enhance and manage open space assets.</p> <p>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council have developed a new Strategy, of which the Strategic Principles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance open space recognising its value in promoting health and well-being and social benefits to communities;</li> <li>• Provide exciting, active and inclusive places for children and young people's play and recreation in both equipped and natural settings;</li> <li>• Support and encourage access to high quality open space close to where people live that meets the needs of different ages, abilities and backgrounds;</li> <li>• Safeguard key tourism, heritage and recreation assets, reinforcing local identity and civic pride;</li> <li>• Protect and enhance the natural environment, helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change; and</li> <li>• Promote opportunities for sustainable travel through greater connectivity of open spaces.</li> </ul> <p>The Strategy will benefit all citizens living in rural and urban areas alike. Rural needs have been given due consideration through the screening exercise undertaken by the Council. There is a need for people in rural areas to have access to quality open spaces for play and leisure, convenient to where they live. The Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's Open Space Strategy has considered this need. It has also considered the role of open spaces in supporting people's health and wellbeing and as a driver for leisure and tourism development.</p> <p>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's open space provision contributes to the perception of the district as an attractive place for visitors which supports the</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>development and sustainability of rural businesses. The Strategy also considers the benefits of environmental sustainability.</p> <p>The Strategy takes into account the need for equitable provision of quality open space across the district, including in rural areas. It takes into account the specific need for rural dwellers to have access to leisure and play facilities that are convenient and accessible as well as the need for Council to support the development and sustainability of rural tourism and businesses.</p> <p>A public consultation on the Open Spaces Strategy is planned for December 2021 and all stakeholders will be involved, including individual residents, community groups and other organisations from rural and urban areas. If any issues are identified by rural consultees, consideration will be given to these before the Strategy is finalised.</p>
<p>Development of a draft Disability Action Plan 2021-2025 (as required by the Disability Discrimination Act Disability Duties).</p>	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) was completed for the draft Action Plan. The RNIA concluded that the proposed actions should apply equitably to disabled people in rural areas. There was consideration of issues faced by some rural people, for example, in accessing services and information, isolation, transport, employment opportunities, etc., which are exacerbated for those with a disability. The Disability Action Plan commits Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council to consider the needs of people with disabilities when planning and delivering services and this includes people in rural areas. The draft plan was consulted on and consultees included rural representative groups and rural community groups. No issues specifically related to rurality were raised in the consultation but the plan will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated if necessary.</p>
<p>Development of draft Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 (a commitment in Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's (LCCC) Equality Scheme).</p>	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) was completed. There was consideration of whether the proposed actions in the Plan would impact differently on people in rural areas. The RNIA concluded that there</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>should be no differential impact. LCCC's commitment to equality screen policies, projects and programmes ensures that attention is given to those who are affected by council policies and plans and that any differential impacts are identified at the planning stage. This includes potential impacts on people in rural area as well as the various equality groups. The draft Plan was consulted on and consultee database included groups that are based in rural areas and groups. No particular rural issues were raised in the consultation but commitments to consultation should ensure that any issues are highlighted and mitigations considered.</p>
<p>Proposal to increase cemetery provision - Lisburn New Cemetery Extension Phase 1.</p>	<p>The Council is in the planning process for extending an existing Council Cemetery, Lisburn New Cemetery Extension to offer additional burial plots. This is a new proposal to meet demand for burial space.</p> <p>To meet the demand of burial space given that current burial plot capacity is approx. 2.5 years. We have considered whether there will be any different impact on people in rural areas who need cemetery provision.</p> <p>Aims &amp; objectives of the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of future burial capacity of approx. a further 700 plots within Lisburn New Cemetery Extension;</li> <li>• Ensure consistent approach to Interments for all; and</li> <li>• Provision of Interment Ground for all.</li> </ul> <p>We have considered whether the proposal to extend this existing cemetery will meet the needs of all potential service users. We note that people in rural areas may have further to travel to access our cemetery but have concluded that the travel distances are not unreasonable. Rural communities tend to be connected to local denominations and or linked to rural cemeteries which are still in use for burials. In terms of access to information about services which is increasingly provided online, provision is already made for those who do not have access to the internet because of where they live.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>The provision of additional cemetery capacity by extending Lisburn New Cemetery will benefit all those who require the service, whether they live in urban or rural areas. Council procedures for managing cemetery services also apply equally to urban and rural.</p> <p>The plan will not impact differently cemetery provision is open to all.</p> <p>No feedback has been received relating to how this proposal would impact on rural communities.</p> <p>The public can consult via the planning process and also the Council will be conducting a 12 week consultation on a draft Council Cemetery Strategy. This will afford the public an opportunity to comment on future burial needs.</p>
<p>Blaris Road Car Park.</p>	<p>To develop a car park on the Blaris Road to provide car parking facilities which will not only service Navigation House but the adjoining towpath and associated greenways.</p> <p>The land where the car park is being developed, was gifted to Lagan Navigation Trust by the developer, Blue Horizon Developments, and then leased to the Council who then had the funds to develop a car park that could cater for Navigation House, the adjoining towpath and associated greenways.</p> <p>Development of the Lagan Greenway is identified as a priority project within the DFI Strategic Plan for Greenways.</p> <p>We have also received a number of complaints from residents of Blaris Drive and Blaris Green that the public were parking on their curbs in their development in order to visit the towpath which made them unsafe and unusable.</p> <p>Whilst this project is being carried out in the outskirts of Lisburn, many people living in rural areas tend to use the towpath and/or travel past where the car park is being developed.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The purpose of the development of the car park is to service Navigation House, the adjoining lagan tow path and the newly opened greenway route which connects this location to the Sprucefield park &amp; ride and on to the Maze Long Kesh area.</p> <p>In addition, the availability of car parking in the area will encourage visitors to park here and cycle into Lisburn City Centre connecting the rural community to the urban, providing access to local commercial businesses, reduce traffic congestion in the City Centre and provide overflow parking facilities for those visitors travelling by car to access Navigation House. This also supports the further development of the Lagan Greenway which is identified as a priority project within the Department for Infrastructure Strategic Plan for Greenways.</p> <p>The plan will not primarily impact on people in rural areas differently, it will have a neutral impact on both urban and rural dwellers equally.</p> <p>According to the Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016), just under half of the population (47.2%) in the LCCC area live in rural areas. In the last decade to 2016, suburban areas have seen the highest growth rate of 22.1% with five wards alone covering over half of the districts growth - Ballymacross (44.3%), Carrowreagh (9.7%), Maghaberry (7%), Glenavy (6.3%) and Derriaghy (6.2%).</p>
Acquisition and Installation of a Bus Shelter in Maghaberry.	<p>This project is intended to benefit any residents or visitors to Maghaberry who use or would like to use public transport.</p> <p>The main benefits will be increased comfort e.g. built in seating and safeguarding users by providing a shelter from the weather. The bus shelter will impact people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas due to the bus shelter being situated in the rural village of Maghaberry.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved accessibility for users;</li> <li>• Creation of a Safe Space to aid local transportation; and</li> <li>• To make it more appealing and to provide a better experience for its users thereby encouraging use.</li> </ul> <p>The acquisition and installation of a bus shelter in Maghaberry is funded through the District Electoral Area Investment Programme. This project was brought forward by local councillors of the area who were informed by the local residents of the need for a bus shelter.</p>
<p>Acquisition and Installation of a Bus Shelter in Glenavy.</p>	<p>This project is intended to benefit any residents or visitors to Glenavy who use or would like to use public transport.</p> <p>The main benefits will be increased comfort e.g. built in seating and safeguarding users by providing a shelter from the weather. The bus shelter will impact people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas due to the bus shelter being situated in the rural village of Glenavy.</p> <p>Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved accessibility for users;</li> <li>• Creation of a Safe Space to aid local transportation; and</li> <li>• To make it more appealing and to provide a better experience for its users thereby encouraging use.</li> </ul> <p>The acquisition and installation of a Bus Shelter in Glenavy is funded through the DEA Investment Programme. This project was brought forward by local councillors of the area who were informed by the local residents of the need for a bus shelter.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Development and installation of a Parklet Scheme.</p>	<p>Parklet Scheme focuses on COVID-19 recovery of hospitality businesses. Whilst it is recognised that many residents in rural areas work, shop and socialise in the City Centre the project will not have an immediate impact on any of the rural policy areas outlined above.</p> <p>Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department for Communities allocated grant funding to the Council to support businesses who had to close. Following the lockdowns, the impact of social distancing on all hospitality businesses meant they were unable to be at full capacity which resulted in the introduction of a Parklet Scheme to help with the capacity issues and support social distancing.</p> <p>We launched an expression of interest process in which if the hospitality business met the criteria of the Parklet Scheme they would be eligible for the installation of a parklet outside of their premises. This has led to the delivery of 4 parklets in the council area.</p> <p>Whilst this project is being carried out in the urban centres off LCCC namely Lisburn City Centre, Carryduff and Dundonald, many people living in rural areas either tend to work and/or shop in the businesses and facilities located in the urban centre of the council area. The purpose of the Parklet Scheme helps hospitality businesses increase their capacity outside their premises to create spaces to promote social distancing, improve vibrancy of the area and improve footfall to businesses.</p> <p>Case studies on parklets from other areas suggest that parklets have positive impacts on mental health and wellbeing. The development of green spaces can also contribute to tackling socio-environmental challenges.</p> <p>The plan will not primarily impact on people in rural areas differently, it will however be slightly advantageous to people who live in the urban areas where the parklets are situated although the parklets are open to all who wants to visit and use them.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The objectives of the Parklet Scheme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create spaces to eat and drink outdoors to support social distancing;</li> <li>• To increase capacity and sales for businesses;</li> <li>• To improve vibrancy of the area; and</li> <li>• To improve footfall to businesses and the area.</li> </ul>
<p>Orientation &amp; Walkability Strategy.</p>	<p>The purpose of the Strategy is to promote navigation and way finding throughout Lisburn City Centre via cycling and walking through the use of different types of signage and their placement at the gateways to the City Centre and Lagan Towpath.</p> <p>The plan will not primarily impact on people in rural areas differently, it will have a neutral impact as the gateways to the City Centre will affect town dwellers and rural dwellers equally.</p> <p>The Strategy focuses on navigational improvements to the Lagan Towpath and Lisburn City Centre. Whilst it is recognised that many residents in rural areas work, shop and socialise in the City Centre the project will not have an immediate impact on any of the rural policy areas outlined above.</p> <p>However, tourism businesses in rural areas may benefit if they chose to market their business through City Centre facilities such as the visitor information centre in Lisburn Square, the Council website and the City Centre events Facebook page. By improving the City Centre and attracting visitors into the city, businesses in the outlying rural villages who wish to prosper from tourism to Lisburn and Castlereagh will benefit if they utilise the opportunity to promote their businesses.</p> <p>The signs will be located near the gateways as you enter the City Centre boundary. However, the project aims to make improvements throughout the City Centre to ensure it is a well-connected and welcoming regional city with a vibrant and independent character which will attract visitors and residents to work and shop local.</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To contribute to environmental sustainability. Providing a great environment for pedestrians and cyclists;</li> <li>• A more welcoming and better connected city. To create a positive sense of arrival and ensure that the expanded City Centre is easy to access and get around by a wide choice of modes of travel to include walking and cycling;</li> <li>• To enhance permeability through creative place making. To enable visitors to navigate easily throughout Lisburn City Centre; and</li> <li>• Promote wayfinding/navigation through the City Centre. Considering the various entry point's visitor's use to access the city either by car, train, bus or on foot and looking at how we can improve the sense of welcome for visitors and create a sense of connection to the heart of the city.</li> </ul> <p>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) published a Masterplan which received feedback through a public consultation which was advertised via the Councils website, consultation workshops were also held in the Council Offices in Lagan Valley Island. The consultation events were attended by statutory bodies representing the Council area and attended by residents across the Council area, many from rural villages in the Lisburn area. The results of the consultation have been reflected where appropriate to inform the final Masterplan document.</p> <p>Furthermore, the feedback from the public consultation made it apparent that we needed to invest in signage and navigation around Lisburn City Centre. By doing so the hope is that this would help extend and enrich the City Centre experience and help to provide obvious connections between the Centre and surrounding residential areas. A series of signage would aid this transition and create a sense of welcome to the City Centre and promotion of active travel e.g. walking and cycling.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Heritage Shopfront Scheme.	<p>Funded through the Department for Communities, this grant is offered to small business owners with properties within the eligible area, to enhance the appearance and condition of their shop fronts and signage, making the conservation area a more attractive place for both occupiers and visitors.</p> <p>The Council recognise the importance of the City retaining Conservation status, this Scheme focuses on enhancing the conservation area and supports businesses operating in the conservation area to retain shop frontages that complement the character and appearance of the City Centre.</p> <p>Following on from recent City Centre revitalisation schemes and shop front renewal programmes there has been a review of heritage business signage and shop front facades across the conservation areas in the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council areas namely Lisburn City Centre, Moira and Hillsborough. The review was undertaken by City Centre Management and the Council's Planning team in response to a number of queries received from new businesses in the area regarding signage.</p> <p>All businesses within the Lisburn, Moira and Hillsborough Conservation Area are eligible to apply. Therefore, having a positive impact on the rural economy and those who live in these areas.</p> <p>The project aims benefit as many eligible businesses in these areas as much as possible.</p> <p>The plan will not impact on people in rural areas differently, it will have a positive impact as urban town and rural dwellers in the eligible conservation areas are eligible to apply for funding.</p> <p>Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support businesses, whose shop fronts currently sit outside of planning regulations, from a heritage perspective, and help the businesses to replace their shop front façade and signage in order to conform to the guidelines as per the Lisburn Conservation area guide; and</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a more pleasing City Centre environment by improving heritage shop fronts, resulting in wider benefits for the public realm and civic pride.</li> </ul>
Light Festival.	<p>Whilst this project is delivered in the urban centres of Lisburn City, Carryduff and Dundonald, many people living in rural areas visit these areas to enjoy the Light Festival. The Light Festival is advertised widely across the Council area and is for the benefit of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) residents although we know the reach of the light festival goes beyond the Council area.</p> <p>The Light Festival will not primarily impact on people in rural areas differently, it will have a neutral impact as the Light Festival is delivered for the benefit of town dwellers and rural dwellers equally.</p> <p>The overall Council wide Christmas Programme is delivered as such which includes Christmas light switch ons in many of the surrounding rural villages. Pole mounts are also installed across many of the rural villages to the benefit of residents living in those areas.</p> <p>All residents of the LCCC area will benefit from the Christmas Programme.</p> <p>The Light Festival is advertised widely across the Council area and we know the reach of the light festival goes beyond the Council area.</p> <p>The objectives of the Light Festival include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting urban centres as a positive lifestyle destination e.g. shopping, entertainment, arts and culture;</li> <li>• Changing the perception of the City Centre as a Christmas visitor destination;</li> <li>• Animating the City Centre over the Christmas period;</li> <li>• Improving the public's perceptions of the area as a result of this project; and</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working in partnership with local City Centre businesses to maximise the economic contribution into the Council area by attracting spend from inward investors and visitors as well as residents.</li> </ul> <p>Monitoring of events held in these areas such as Christmas Markets and family friendly events has indicated that rural residents travel into the urban centres to partake in the festivities.</p> <p>Information sources include the Council website and social media channels as well as local community groups.</p> <p>Surveys are carried out pre (November) and post (January) Light Festival and associated events (throughout December) in order to inform and justify the delivery of events year on year.</p> <p>All residents of the LCCC area and neighbouring council areas will benefit from the Christmas Programme.</p>
Enterprise and Business Support Programmes 2021-2020 delivered by the Business Solutions Section within Economic Development Unit.	<p>The social and economic needs identified by Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016); Rural Businesses, Rural Tourism, Jobs or Employment in rural areas, Education or Training in rural areas, Poverty in rural areas, Deprivation in rural areas, Rural Development, Agri-Environment.</p> <p>The Business Solutions Programmes will have a positive impact benefitting people in rural areas through increasing employment opportunities and supporting local businesses and supporting business growth and ensure that a broad range of services is easily accessible to the rural communities.</p> <p>In addition to adherence to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council will embrace the principles outlined in our community plan, Sustainable Development, Equality and Participation across all programmes.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Collaboration Projects 2021-2022 delivered by the Business Solutions Section within Economic Development Unit.</p>	<p>The social and economic needs identified by Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) and adherence to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council will embrace the principles outlined in our community plan which are Sustainable Development, Equality and Participation across all programmes.</p>
<p>Inward Investment and International Trade Projects 2021-2022 delivered by the Business Solutions Section within Economic Development Unit.</p>	<p>The social and economic needs identified by Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) and adherence to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council will embrace the principles outlined in our community plan which are Sustainable Development, Equality and Participation across all programmes.</p>
<p>Economic Development Communications 2020-2022 delivered by the Business Solutions Section within Economic Development Unit.</p>	<p>The social and economic needs identified by Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) and adherence to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</p> <p>The content of the websites and e-zine are focused on bringing a benefit to our local community in economic and social terms. A negative impact on our rural communities is not anticipated but there is a small risk of some people in rural areas not having access to the material. However, a report from Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency in 2018 shows that 88.4% of homes in Lisburn and Castlereagh have access to broadband which is higher than the NI average.</p>
<p>Northern Ireland Business Start-Up (NIB-SUP).</p>	<p>The social and economic needs identified by Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) and Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council is subject to the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</p> <p>This NI Business Start-Up programmes allow people in rural areas to consider business ideation, concept and set up. While supporting local entrepreneurs and facilitating an opportunity for increased services and possibility of employment in rural areas. Promotion of this project is through multiple media strands tv, radio, billboards etc.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Royal Hillsborough Programme of Events 21/22.</p>	<p>The series of events to mark the conferring of Royal Status on Hillsborough Village is expected to benefit all individuals irrespective of background or circumstances including people in all age brackets, as well as those with disabilities and those with dependents who live in the Hillsborough area and further afield.</p> <p>The events will take place between October 21 and March 22 and there will be a wide range of activities to ensure inclusivity throughout the rural village.</p> <p>Whilst these events are open to all residents who live in the LCCC area, they are primarily targeted to the local rural dwellers and priority will be given to the local inhabitants of Hillsborough. Furthermore, some events will be ticketed with local residents receiving priority and then opened up to the wider community should numbers permit.</p>
<p>Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh Safety Advisory Group (SAG).</p>	<p>The Council in partnership with the NIFRS, PSNI and NIAS operate Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh Safety Advisory Group. The SAG provides expert advice to outdoor event organisers to ensure a safe event for attendees and the local community.</p> <p>Purpose - To provide support, advice and expert knowledge from different sectors to event organisers who are organising an outdoor event.</p> <p>Aims &amp; objectives of the proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Give a background to why the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is in existence.</li> <li>2. Inform event organisers of the SAG process.</li> <li>3. Stipulate what the SAG does and does not do.</li> <li>4. Provide advice to event organisers regarding their outdoor event.</li> </ol> <p>Rural Needs considered:</p> <p>We have considered whether the SAG policy will have any impacts on those living in rural areas. Those living</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>in rural communities will be no more affected by this policy than those living in more urban settings. However, it is recognised that outdoor events may pose greater difficulties/risk in rural areas. Reasons for this are outlined below. The SAG policy will be adhered to consistently and equitably to any event organisers and therefore will not have an impact on rural event organisers.</p> <p>Impacts on Rural Communities:</p> <p>Rural areas will not necessarily have the same infrastructure than those in urban areas have such as internet, lighting, road networks/transport etc. Events in rural communities may pose greater risk. Therefore, the need for rural communities to engage with SAG is important to support with addressing issues at an early stage in the planning of their event.</p> <p>Some of the risks that rural communities may face when organising events include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor infrastructure such as lighting;</li> <li>• Small/minor roads networks creating traffic issues;</li> <li>• Access to emergency services in an emergency;</li> <li>• Connectivity with internet, communication devices with poor network coverage; and</li> <li>• Affect connectivity/access for homeowners during the event.</li> </ul> <p>Types of annual events may include community Christmas tree light switch on's, agricultural shows and concerts.</p> <p>Consultation:</p> <p>No consultation process was carried out in relation to this policy. It is available on the Council website for the public to view. Event organisers are encouraged to ensure an appropriate media and information campaign is provided to anyone who may be affected by an event and advise of the necessary contact of the event.</p>



<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>European Social Fund - Call 3: Match Funding Assistance.</p>	<p>The Northern Ireland European Social Fund Operational Programme 2014-2020 (ESF) Programme identified the following needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jobs and/or Employment in rural areas;</li> <li>• Education and/or Training in rural areas;</li> <li>• Deprivation in rural areas; and</li> <li>• Rural Development.</li> </ul> <p>The strategic aim of the ESF Programme is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity, and to increase the skills base of those currently in work and future potential participants in the workforce. Those who will be directly targeted will either be economically inactive or long term unemployed, irrespective of their location (either rural or urban), background or circumstance. This Scheme will have direct and indirect benefits for some groups of service users, however, the aim of the Scheme disadvantage groups. Ultimately, this Programme will benefit a wide range of groups particularly youth and those with disabilities within the LCCC area.</p> <p>The European Social Fund (ESF) is the EU's most important instrument for helping EU citizens with finding better jobs and for ensuring fairer job opportunities for all.</p> <p>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council have previously provided match funding assistance for European Social Fund Calls 1 and 2. The projects funded have achieved considerable success, surpassing their targets on some occasions. In call 2 the match funding supported 93 vulnerable people back into employment and delivered 1124 accredited and non-accredited training courses.</p> <p>Given that this fund is directly focused upon improving employability outcomes across disadvantaged groups, it was agreed that Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council would provide another match funding opportunity against this latest call for applications for the European Social Fund Call-3.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council have allocated a total of £100,000 to match fund successful applicants from Department for Economy's third call of the European Social Fund (ESF). The timeframe for projects will run from April 2022 for 12 months. This is a competitive grant funding process with all award decisions made on the basis of merit.</p> <p>The ESF Match Fund is open to consortia of organisations that aim to be representative of the communities or audiences the project is targeting. Eligible applicants are any non-profit organisation that has secured Call 3 ESF funding through the Department for Economy that is operating from or within Lisburn &amp; Castlereagh City Council area.</p>

## Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Proposal to revoke the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order.	If agreed, will have a seemingly disproportionate impact on economic and social needs of people in rural areas when compared with urban areas.
New Housing Supply Strategy call for evidence.	Older properties within rural areas have poor energy efficiency. Attention should be given to communications, internet and transport to improve isolation.
Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland.	Considered appropriate data; completion of screening and mitigation where appropriate.
Policy Options for the new Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland.	Consider challenges including our rural settlement pattern, high car dependency and limited access to public and active transport in rural parts of the province.

## Mid Ulster District Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Mid Ulster Gift Card Programme.	The Mid Ulster Gift Card Programme will impact on people in rural areas in a positive manner. The aim of Mid Ulster Gift Card Programme is to lock in spend, drive footfall and stimulate additional economic activity across the towns and villages of Mid Ulster. All commercial businesses located within Mid Ulster District are eligible to participate, with all public able to avail of the benefits of a Mid Ulster Gift Card from participating businesses.
Dual Language & Nameplate Signage.	No specific rural need was identified that would differ from that of an urban need in relation to this policy which is the outworking's of the legislative provisions currently in place to provide statutory guidance/ requirements in relation to the implementation of the policy and does not differentiate between either rural or urban areas. This legislation is the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.
Safeguarding Policy.	The policy has identified various types of abuse and self-harm including bullying, online bullying, physical and emotional abuse. Appendix A of the policy identifies a range of support services and information, which can be accessed by children/young people and adults living in rural areas. A children's version of Child Safeguarding policy will be developed in conjunction with relevant community partners.
DfC Coalisland Revitalisation Scheme.	<p>The Scheme will contribute to building strong, inclusive and sustainable rural communities by supporting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustain and support rural businesses through provision of better services in local towns and making those services easier to access for the long term;</li> <li>• Encourage retention and development of essential services; and</li> <li>• Encourage urban and rural business owners to invest in their businesses.</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Payment of Subscriptions to Professional Bodies Policy.	The policy sets out how to reimburse employees for payment of subscriptions to professional or other relevant bodies which they are required to maintain in order to effectively discharge their duties and/or conditions of employment. The policy aims to ensure that employees are appropriately financially supported in an affordable and equitable manner.
Flexible Working Arrangements Policy.	The policy sets out options for flexible working as part of Council's wider commitment to equality of opportunity for all employees. Revisions by way of these addendums include opportunities for staff to avail of Carers leave, Term time working & Flexible Retirement.
Menopause Support Policy.	The Council recognises that perimenopause and menopause are work-place issues. This policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing appropriate support to manage menopausal symptoms at work.

## Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Developing a plan - Performance Improvement Objectives 2022-23.</p>	<p>Progress in delivering the performance improvement objectives 2021-22 has informed the ‘supporting actions’ and ‘measures of success’ which underpin the 2022-23 objectives and seek to have a positive impact across all areas of the District.</p> <p>Some objectives are underpinned by ‘supporting actions’ and ‘measures of success’ which will have an indirect positive outcome for rural areas. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has parks, open spaces and community trails in rural areas;</li> <li>• Economic development programmes can be accessed by businesses and individuals in rural areas;</li> <li>• The creation of new jobs and businesses in coastal areas;</li> <li>• Community clean ups are supported across the District, in urban and rural areas;</li> <li>• The Financial Assistance Scheme can be accessed by all communities, including those from rural areas;</li> <li>• The Planning Service is open to all stakeholders and customers across both urban and rural areas; and</li> <li>• Slieve Gullion Forest Park to renew ‘Green Flag’ status.</li> </ul>
<p>Developing Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Directorate Business Plan 2021-2022.</p>	<p>The Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Directorate Business Plan 2021-2022 is focused on recovery and identifying opportunities for recovery and transformation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Plan sets out a number of key delivery actions which will positively impact upon people living in rural areas such as the delivery of the Rural Development Programme, implementation of village plans, Castlewellan Park redevelopment and the Mournes Gateway project. These initiatives will include funding allocated specifically to rural areas programmes.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Developing Chief Executive Department Business Plan 2021-2022.	The actions/objectives detailed with the Chief Executive's Business Plan are corporate objectives which will benefit all residents of the district.
Developing a plan - Pioneering the potential of Community Wealth Building in Newry, Mourne and Down.	This is an initial stage which will undertake a diagnostic process whereby Newry, Mourne and Down District Council assesses its activities and begins exploring the issue of social value by applying the principles of Community Wealth Building (CWB), leading to the development of a Community Wealth Building Action Plan.
Developing Council's new Arts, Cultural and Heritage Strategy 2022-2027.	<p>The key themes of the Strategy are the foundations upon which subsequent delivery plans, programmes, initiatives and grant schemes will be created and delivered over the next five years.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a new arts, culture &amp; heritage forum that represents key stakeholders in order to improve collaboration and co-ordination of the sector development across the District;</li> <li>• Creating networking opportunities between local culture, arts and heritage providers with health and education representatives to enhance opportunities for greater collaboration;</li> <li>• Developing an outreach programme to provide arts, culture and heritage activities to local communities throughout the district; and</li> <li>• Growth of audiences and the participation of our citizens in arts, culture and heritage programmes and activities.</li> </ul>
Developing the Active and Healthy Communities (AHC) Directorate Business Plan 2021-2022.	When developing the AHC Business Plan consideration has been given to information provided by the Council's Evidence and Research Team in relation to the social and economic needs of people within the district. This sets out information including that related to population, multiple deprivation, access to services, economy, income and transport, housing, crime, and health and wellbeing.



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>While the AHC Business Plan details positive actions for all the community, there are some specific actions which will directly positively impact on people living in the rural areas.</p>
<p>Developing an Active Travel Masterplan for the Newry, Mourne and Down District.</p>	<p>Social and economic needs identified included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting transport which balances the needs of our environment, society and economy;</li> <li>• The needs of the pedestrian should be foremost considerations in how places are planned and designed, the quality of the infrastructure contributing greatly to these ends;</li> <li>• The need to support those in Newry, Mourne and Down who live in the least walkable and least cyclable parts of the District to become active and travel sustainably, spatial planning needs to deliver more people-oriented environments - higher density, mixed land-use, low-car developments with permeable street networks; and</li> <li>• Considering access needs for those with protected characteristics, particularly those using non-standard and larger cycles, and those in wheelchairs.</li> </ul> <p>The Active Travel Masterplan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details recommendations for Newry City, the towns of Warrenpoint, Ballynahinch, Crossmaglen, Newtownhamilton and smaller settlements across the District. The implementation of the recommendations are positive active travel changes for residents of the district regardless of where they are located; and</li> <li>• Recognises that the majority of the District is designated as rural and highlighted the difficulties with rural infrastructure.</li> </ul> <p>Examples of some of the recommendations to take place in the rural areas include narrowing radial roads, widening footways on through roads as traditionally these types of roads are wide and providing controlled</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.						
	<p>crossings and dropped kerbs for pedestrians. By doing so helps concerns regarding road safety.</p> <p>The Masterplan also acknowledges that there is traditionally a higher speed by vehicles in rural areas and smaller settlements rarely feature controlled pedestrian crossings. The Masterplan recommends that these should be implemented in key destinations in rural areas.</p>						
<p>Developing a Plan related to a Notice of Motion - Contactless Payment Solutions to tackle Homelessness.</p>	<p>For this proposal, consideration has been given to Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements which are as follows.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Settlement Hierarchy</th> <th>Newry, Mourne &amp; Down Settlement Populations</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Tier 1 City &amp; Main Town</td> <td>Newry (26,893) Downpatrick (10,874)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tier 2 Local &amp; Small Towns</td> <td>Newcastle (7,743) Ballynahinch (5,715) Warrenpoint/Burren (8,721) Crossmaglen (1,608) Kilkeel (6,521) Newtownhamilton (800)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Should Council be minded to establish contactless payment points consideration must be given to the geographic locations of these to enable access for both rural and urban dwellers.</p> <p>Taking into account both Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements Council must give consideration to initially locating paypoints within a minimum of two settlements up to a maximum of eight settlements.</p> <p>Decisions on the geographic location, and the number of paypoints within each settlement, should be underpinned by a projected cost/benefit analysis to implement and maintain.</p>	Settlement Hierarchy	Newry, Mourne & Down Settlement Populations	Tier 1 City & Main Town	Newry (26,893) Downpatrick (10,874)	Tier 2 Local & Small Towns	Newcastle (7,743) Ballynahinch (5,715) Warrenpoint/Burren (8,721) Crossmaglen (1,608) Kilkeel (6,521) Newtownhamilton (800)
Settlement Hierarchy	Newry, Mourne & Down Settlement Populations						
Tier 1 City & Main Town	Newry (26,893) Downpatrick (10,874)						
Tier 2 Local & Small Towns	Newcastle (7,743) Ballynahinch (5,715) Warrenpoint/Burren (8,721) Crossmaglen (1,608) Kilkeel (6,521) Newtownhamilton (800)						

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Developing the Mournes Gateway Project Strategy.	<p>The project proposal is for the establishment of the Thomas Quarry Visitor Centre in the Mournes, with a Gondola/cable car uplift that will commence in Donard Park.</p> <p>Key issues considered included accessibility, transport provision and jobs and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The project will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased access to the Mournes by all abilities &amp; age groups;</li> <li>• The project will contribute to the Belfast Region City Deal's ambition to deliver a step change in the region's economic prosperity, help achieve a 15-year programme of inclusive growth, an increase of £470m Gross Value Added and create up to 20,000 new and better jobs, accessible to people from all communities; and             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The estimated economic benefits of the project include:                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 226 direct, indirect and induced jobs;</li> <li>b. 251 construction jobs; and</li> <li>c. £5.1m annual GVA by 2032, £74.6m GVA over 30 years.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Developing Corporate Communications Strategy 2022-2024.	No specific social and economic needs of people in rural areas were identified in relation to this policy.
Developing Corporate Digital Communications Strategy 2022-2024.	<p>The following data was extracted from NMDDC residents survey conducted in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents in urban areas compared with rural areas were more likely to say they follow or engage with the Council via social media platforms (54% vs. 42%); and</li> <li>• 73% of rural residents support more services being available online compared to 54% of urban residents.</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	Appendices I and II within pages 17-34 of the Corporate Digital Communications Strategy 2021-2023 set out action plans, associated areas of work, activities and actions related to implementing the Social Media Short Term Strategy and the Development of the new Corporate Website respectively.
Developing Corporate Services Directorate Business Plan 2021-2022.	The Corporate Services Business Plan 2021-2022 is focused on recovery and identifying opportunities for recovery and transformation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It details positive actions for all the community through the delivery of internal structures. However, there are some specific actions which will directly positively impact on people living in the rural areas. Capital project delivery is an objective with the Corporate Services directorate and some of the proposed projects identified as needed will be delivered within rural areas.
Revising Dealing with Changed Circumstances Policy.	No specific social and economic needs of people in rural areas were identified in relation to this policy.
Revising Media Policy.	No specific social and economic needs of people in rural areas were identified in relation to this policy.
Developing Neighbourhood Services Directorate Business Plan 2021-2022.	The Neighbourhood Services Directorate Business Plan 2021-2022 is focused on recovery and identifying opportunities for recovery and transformation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The delivery actions detailed in the business plan will impact all citizens of the district, regardless of where they live.
Developing Non-Current Asset Procedures Policy.	The procedures set out inward-facing internal requirements. No direct or indirect impact upon people living in rural or urban areas has been identified.
Reviewing Pavement Cafes Designation Policy.	No specific social and economic needs of people in rural areas were identified in relation to this policy.
Reviewing Pavement Cafes Enforcement Policy.	No specific social and economic needs of people in rural areas were identified in relation to this policy.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Developing a Policy on Management of Bonfires on Council Land.	<p>Council's policy has been informed by the process to develop a Bonfire Management Framework which was part of a process led by Newry, Mourne &amp; Down District Council, supported by Newry, Mourne &amp; Down PCSP (Policing &amp; Community Safety Partnership) and other public agencies, to provide a local, bespoke framework for the management of bonfires in the district.</p> <p>No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.</p>
Designing a service in relation to a proposed Children Memorial Gardens Landscape Scheme.	<p>The proposal is to establish two memory gardens, one within each health trust area, at Ross Monument, Rostrevor and The Quoil, Downpatrick.</p> <p>While the actual provision is not likely to impact people in rural areas differently than people in urban areas, it is acknowledged that all people will require access to a mode of transport to visit the memory gardens and will experience varying travel times.</p>
Revising a policy - Council's Protocol for hearing of statutory referrals to committee.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.
Revising Risk Management Policy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.
Developing a Risk Management Strategy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the Strategy.
Revising Street Trading Designation Policy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.
Revising Street Trading Enforcement Policy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.
Revising Street Trading Mobile Licence Policy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Revising Stall Design and Trading Policy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.
Revising Street Trading Stationary Licence Policy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.
Revising Street Trading Temporary Licence Policy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.
Revising Temporary Road Closures on a Public Road for the Purpose of Holding a Special Event Policy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.
Developing a Vehicle Fuel Management Policy.	No social and economic needs specific to people in rural areas were identified by the Council in relation to the policy.



# OTHER PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Reporting Period: 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022





## The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Proposal for St John the Baptist's College, Portadown to establish Key Stage 4 provision with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 300 to 500 with effect from 1 September 2021, or as soon as possible thereafter.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP), 2009 (a policy which is the foundation of Area Planning proposals) was assessed against the Rural Development Council (RDC) rural proofing checklist (Striking the Balance, Annex 1) and no adverse impact was identified. The SSP recognises the needs of rural communities and this is reflected in the lower enrolment threshold for rural primary schools, the accessibility criterion which provides guidance on home to school travel times and the criterion strong links with the community also recognises the central place a school has for many communities (rural and urban).</p> <p>Throughout each stage of the development proposal consultation period (4 weeks for stakeholders, 4 weeks for affected schools and 8 weeks public objection period) consultees had the opportunity to provide additional information, including rural issues, for consideration. At each stage, consultation responses were analysed, giving due regard to rural needs in line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</p> <p>The Development Proposal, and the decision were demonstrably made with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 in mind. The decision, the case for change, and supporting documentation, are available on the Department of Education Website.</p>
<p>Proposal for Ballyhackett PS to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter. (approved with modification to closure date - amended to 31 August 2021 or as soon as possible thereafter) linked with:  Proposal for Ballyhackett PS to transform to Controlled Integrated</p>	<p>The Sustainable Schools Policy (SSP), 2009 (a policy which is the foundation of Area Planning proposals) was assessed against the Rural Development Council (RDC) rural proofing checklist (Striking the Balance, Annex 1) and no adverse impact was identified. The SSP recognises the needs of rural communities and this is reflected in the lower enrolment threshold for rural primary schools, the accessibility criterion which provides guidance on home to school travel times and the criterion strong links with the community also</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Status, with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.</p>	<p>recognises the central place a school has for many communities (rural and urban).</p> <p>Throughout each stage of the development proposal consultation period (4 weeks for stakeholders, 4 weeks for affected schools and 8 weeks public objection period) consultees had the opportunity to provide additional information, including rural issues, for consideration. At each stage, consultation responses were analysed, giving due regard to rural needs in line with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</p> <p>The Development Proposal, and the decision were demonstrably made with the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 in mind. The decision, the case for change, and supporting documentation, are available on the Department of Education Website.</p>

## The Education Authority

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Maintaining Service Delivery Throughout Pandemic.	<p>£120m additional funding was secured to facilitate effective support and ensure schools in all areas had access to resources required for safe learning environments. A dedicated Helpline supported schools across all areas in managing confirmed cases. A Cross-Organisational Link Officers Model was established to ensure school leaders and teachers benefitted from comprehensive pastoral support in providing continuity of learning and responding to rapidly changing Departmental Guidance during COVID-19. This group comprised officers from Education Authority, Education Training Inspectorate, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, Controlled Schools Support Council, Governing Bodies Association, Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta and strengthened the effectiveness and impact of the model of support for schools across all areas. Education Authority (EA) corporate staff worked within a hybrid operating model using ICT systems and services. This supported our urban and rural dwelling employees. The combination of remote working and online approaches have led to learning on new ways of working and a policy position being developed for later in 2022.</p>
Device Loan Scheme.	<p>EA worked with Department for Education (DE) to deliver the 'Lending Digital Devices to Pupils' Scheme to support eligible pupils who did not have sufficient access to a device at home. The Scheme ended in June 2021 with a total of 24,854 devices allocated to pupils in the priority year groups (reported in Rural Needs Annual Report 2020-21). A total of 7,166 Wi-Fi Vouchers and 2,342 mobile Wi-Fi (Mi-Fi) units were allocated to eligible pupils to support their learning. EA continues to work with schools to address digital poverty and as a result of funding available through "A Fair Start" a further 5,370 devices were procured in March 2022 (1,400 iPads, 1,800 Windows SE Devices and 2,170 Chromebooks).</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Transport.</p>	<p>During 2021-22, EA received 27,702 transport applications online, 5,995 of which were for Primary and 21,707 for Post Primary. Approximately 92,000 pupils and students were transported each day, including over 9,000 pupils with a special education need at an estimated cost of £98million. This service is fundamental to supporting children and young people, their families and particularly those living in rurally.</p> <p>At present there are several innovation projects underway within the Transport Service. The SMART School Project aims to increase safeguarding of our children and young people, providing real time information, telematics, and improved business intelligence. The launch of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) referral process has proven successful during the reporting period, improving the service for parents, including in rural communities. Our transport function received and processed over 2,200 SEN referrals in the period 2021-22. As part of the fleet tender outcome 159 buses have been purchased of which 62 are for SEN and 97 for Mainstream.</p>
<p>Transforming children and young people's learning through digital solutions.</p>	<p>Education Information Solutions (EdIS) Programme launched in February 2022 and will support the learning experience for children and young people over the next 10 years through digital transformation. EdIS will help address the digital gap and enhance digital inclusion including for those living in rural areas. Key workstreams will progress in 2022-23, including a rolling programme of devices for staff and pupils, to support children and young people and improve how school staff, parents, young people, stakeholders and customers access a range of important services. New devices for teachers were provided under the Programme, supported by funding from DE, 20,400 Microsoft Surface Pro 7 Plus devices were delivered to teachers at more than 1,100 schools with associated training for teachers. The devices enhance the in-class learning activities and engagement for pupils whilst also supporting the</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>work of teachers in terms of productivity, peer-to-peer collaboration and access to high quality online teaching and learning tools.</p> <p>Upgrades have been made to the Parent Portal to enhance the admissions processes, with 90% of parents/carers rating the application good/very good. During the reporting period network connectivity has been implemented in 70% of all schools. The Programme is currently developing a replacement for the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register due for implementation in September 2022 and have issued the largest goods and services contract in the NI public sector for a. Strategic Partner and Schools Management System with an estimated value £485m.</p>
Public Sector Shared Network (PSSN) Wireless Connectivity.	<p>Upgraded connectivity to schools is currently deployed through the NI Public Sector Shared Network (PSSN) Framework. Implementation of a new wireless replacement solution is taking place across EA and provide a single solution, further enhancing coverage and connectivity in schools. Schools that already have been 'cut over' to PSSN Wide Area Network connectivity are given priority - and this includes many rural schools. Schools in rural areas are not prejudiced with regards to implementation timescales for PSSN Wireless and the requirement is to provide equal bandwidth to schools based on pupil numbers irrespective of their geographical location. The project is well underway with almost 30% of schools completed and all schools planned to receive the upgrade by December 2022.</p>
Digital Admissions.	<p>We improved our 2021-22 Admissions process across pre School/Primary and Post Primary sectors in line with EA's service transformation. Digitalising the process supports parents living in both rural and urban areas. A Post Primary digital solution was implemented, replacing an almost entirely manual paper-based application process. Parents can now apply online for all admissions groups and facilitated EA, Schools and DE</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>officials in successfully completing the School Admissions process for the September 2021 intake. 98.36% of all applications across Pre-school, Primary and Post Primary were made online (representing 70,111 applications). 77,764 up-loads of supporting evidence were made by parents for Pre-school and Primary and 66103 uploads of supporting evidence made by parents for Post Primary. An estimated 500,000 pieces of paper were removed from the Admissions Application process in 2021. A significant increase in Post Primary appeals were lodged as a result of the cancellation of the Transfer Assessment and use of school's admissions criteria only with over 100% increase in Post Primary appeals on 2020/21. All appeals were facilitated and heard within require timeframe.</p>
<p>Understanding the needs of our communities and creating sustainable educational provision.</p>	<p>We reviewed and updated our Audit of Inequalities during the reporting period, as part of our review of our statutory Equality Scheme and Equality and Disability Action Plans. This involved extensive engagement and research and included consideration of inequalities across the education system from the perspective of rural needs. The findings will support actions in support of enhancing equality and outcomes over the next five years across the themes of Attainment; Access to Education; Bullying Data and Monitoring; Enabling Opportunities; Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing; and developing our workforce to ensure EA is an 'employer of choice'. Development work has continued across all Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services to make improvements within current delivery models. For example, the Statutory Assessment and Review Improvement Project has continued to develop processes and practices in the service to ensure compliance with statutory duties.</p>
<p>EA Youth Service Regional Assessment of Need 2020-23.</p>	<p>The Regional Assessment of Need highlighted that young people living in rural areas face particular barriers, with more than one third of young people living in communities defined as rural. For many, living in a rural community presents challenges - there is a lack</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>of facilities, cinemas or clubs, which peers in urban areas take for granted. Isolation from services is often exacerbated by a lack of transport options and hidden poverty. A lack of Irish Medium provision was a barrier for some young people feeling included. Stakeholders also noted that some young people faced barriers to participation including transport, lack of facilities, access to centres, language and communication, caring responsibilities and a lack of money. This assessment informed part of EA Audit of Inequalities.</p>
<p>Special Education Strategic Area Plan.</p>	<p>EA works to improve education outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs, including in rural settings. The draft Special Education Strategic Area Plan has been informed by two Special Education Area Planning Frameworks which provide criteria and indicators and act as the policy drivers for Special Education area planning into the future. EA collaborated with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and engaged with sectoral support bodies representative of the Integrated, Irish Medium and Controlled sector in preparing the first draft Special Education Strategic Area Plan 2022-27: Planning for Special Education Provision. EA also engaged with Voluntary Grammar Schools and their Trustees and other maintained schools (i.e. church schools). To inform the final Plan, a twelve-week consultation period including stakeholder engagement ran from 18 January 2022 to 12 April 2022.</p>
<p>Strategic Area Plan for Sustainable Provision.</p>	<p>The first Strategic Area Plan, Providing Pathways, was extended to 31 August 2022 as a result of COVID-19, to allow for progression of 176 workstreams and to draft and consult on the new strategic plan. In preparing the draft <i>Strategic Area Plan 2022-27: Planning for Sustainable Provision</i>, we collaborated with the same stakeholders as for the Special Education Strategic Area Plan, with the same consultation period and stakeholder engagement during January to April 2022. A consultation report and recommendations will inform the final version of the Special Education Strategic Area Plan.</p>



<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Special Schools and Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools Pilot.</p>	<p>In preparation for the 2021-22 school year, a cross directorate project was established to take forward £21m of additional investment to address the capacity issues within special education. By September 2021, an additional 39 Specialist Classes attached to mainstream schools were established (22 Primary and 17 Post-Primary Classes) and an additional 61 classrooms across 17 of the 40 Special Schools, along with an additional 60 teachers and 140 classroom assistants. In October 2021, the Education Minister approved the outworking of a pilot exercise and the introduction of a new process developed by EA (on DE's behalf) to effect changes to Specialist Provision at Mainstream Schools without the need for a statutory Development Proposal in the context of the introduction of the Special Education Strategic Area Plan 2022-27. The Minister also agreed to a further Special Education Needs Pilot as a contingency to bridge the gap to help ensure that pupils with Special Educational Needs will have the places they require in the right place and at the right time, which will also support the rural needs agenda.</p>
<p>School Place for Every Child with Special Educational Needs (SEN).</p>	<p>To meet the statutory requirement to have an appropriate school place for every child for the 2021/22 academic year, significant capital investment was identified by EA's Cross-Directorate SEN Placements Working Group. This group identified the need for multiple minor capital construction projects to meet increased pupil enrolment numbers by increasing the accommodation capacity across the schools' estate. 45 minor capital proposals at 24 special schools were developed. Following a further review through the EA's Cross-Directorate SEN Placements Working Group, it was agreed that the Division should progress 14 capital projects to provide additional accommodation at 13 special schools and one mainstream primary school. Following award to contractors, eight of the projects were completed by the end of August 2021 and the remaining six were completed in Term 1.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Upon completion of all 14 projects in schools in Belfast; Derry/Londonderry; Strule, Omagh; Moira; Ballymena; Bangor; Donaghadee; Strabane; Lisburn; and Craigavon, all with pupils coming from the surrounding areas, 34 additional modular classrooms were available and a further 32 built classrooms created by remodelling and extending existing accommodation. Work ranged from new triple-classroom modular buildings complete with hygiene rooms, storage, toilets, resource areas and staff accommodation, to simple refurbishment of existing ancillary spaces to create small classrooms or spaces for aerosol generating procedure treatment.</p>
<p>Education Welfare Service Review (EWS).</p>	<p>A review of the Educational Welfare Service commenced under a transformation project. Following initial stakeholder engagement, a new delivery model has been proposed and will now go forward for consultation which will include assessment of rural needs. The project includes developing Geographic Information Systems mapping to help identify areas of need for the service and to help with resource deployment in the future, an updated EWS website and updated mobile technology to resolve connectivity difficulties. The project is aligned to the EdIS Programme to develop online data storage; digital referral process; recording brief interventions and sharing data digitally when working in partnership with other agencies.</p>
<p>Education for Sustainable Development and Outdoor Learning.</p>	<p>Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is enshrined within the curriculum as part of the core objective of developing children and young people as contributors to the economy and the environment. Opportunities exist across subjects to incorporate ESD, particularly within Outdoor Learning opportunities. EA developed a significant body of resources to promote and facilitate outdoor learning opportunities in schools. Drawing on expertise within schools and EA's Magilligan Field Centre, a programme of teacher professional learning was made available to all schools, supported</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>by resources developed in partnership with practitioners. DE also noted the growth in the use of the outdoors and provided a small funding pot to every nursery and primary to assist with the procurement of resources that would support children learning outside. Interest from schools has continued to remain high in this area and professional learning opportunities will continue to be offered.</p>
EA Music Service.	<p>Throughout 2021-22, a major focus of EA Music Service was to support the re-engagement of pupils and schools in musical activity, following the challenges arising from COVID-19. Through a range of innovative and agile approaches, levels of pupil participation and achievement in music increased substantially throughout the year, with clear evidence of positive outcomes for pupils' emotional health and wellbeing as a result of this, in addition to their musical development. A total of 696 schools accessed music service tuition, with a total of 2,010 children attending ensembles. 803 children achieved music qualifications. An overall total of 24,407 children were in receipt of music tuition during the period across rural and urban locations.</p>
Youth Services Funding Scheme.	<p>EA's new funding Scheme was launched in 2021 which was the final task remaining within the Youth Service's Policy document, Priorities for Youth (2013). The new Scheme ensured that funding was awarded based on an explicit policy imperative; that the funding supported work that could provide clear outcomes linked to the Children and Young People's Strategy and that youth service provision was based on assessed need and supported community planning. Funding was also to address the legacy issue of over and under provision. A total of £10.9m of funding was awarded to the voluntary sector by our Youth Service across 135 projects, a third of which in rural areas. A total of 119,303 children and young people from rural and urban communities were supported through local area based funding and 22,332 through local project based funding.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Youth Services Summer Activity Programme.</p>	<p>The Youth Services Summer Activity Programme was a direct response to the impact of the pandemic and associated public health restrictions on children and young people. The purpose of the Programme was to fully utilise the £5m budget to provide summer activities for children and young people across Northern Ireland during July and August 2021, through the award of financial support to organisations working with children and young people. It aimed to reconnect, re-energise and re-engage those children and young people, aged 4-25 years, in non-formal youth work activities. While the Youth Service continued to support vulnerable and at risk children and young people through targeted delivery throughout the pandemic, youth work was significantly impacted by the restrictions from March 2020 with much local provision suspended and other services provided online. A total of 39,785 young people from EA registered groups were supported, along with 18,800 from non-registered groups. Out of the 58,585, a total of 17,024 were from a rural area. Ages ranged from 4-25 years. The Programme delivered 38,593 hours to EA registered groups and 7,239 hours of service provision to non-registered groups.</p>
<p>Shared Education.</p>	<p>EA has been working in partnership with Léargas since September 2017 to deliver the Collaboration and Sharing in Education Project (CASE), funded under PEACE IV Programme. Shared Education enables schools from different sectors to work in partnership to provide opportunities for pupils, staff and community to engage in collaborative and meaningful learning experiences. EA managed two shared education projects, the Signature Project for Shared Education (SESP) and the CASE project. In 2021/22, 861 schools were involved in the Shared Education Programmes. The SESP Partnerships are currently in a transition phase towards Mainstreamed Shared Education.</p> <p>The CASE Peace IV Project is moving into the final year of activity in 2022/23 and will then join a Mainstreamed Model going forward. 221 schools yet to engage in either of the two Shared Education Projects commenced</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>a Steps into Sharing Programme to help build capacity of leaders and teachers to develop Shared Education Partnerships.</p> <p>CASE aims to build a culture of good relations amongst children and young people and delivery is through provision of curricular-based contact between children and teachers from all backgrounds. Working in partnership, schools promote community cohesion, enhance educational outcomes for all pupils and provide shared professional development. CASE is open to all schools in Northern Ireland and the six Border Counties of Ireland and schools not currently involved in the Delivering Social Change (DSC) Signature Project for Shared Education. The CASE Project will end in 2023.</p>
School Improvement Strategy.	<p>The EA School Improvement Strategy for Northern Ireland is guided by a commitment to making a profound and positive difference in the learning and lives of children and young people, especially those who experience disadvantage and those living in rural areas, through the development of teaching, learning and leadership to realise these intentions. The School Improvement Strategy is EA's blueprint for driving school and system improvement for now and is providing a framework for implementation of DE Learning Leaders Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning and support the recommendations and actions identified in A Fair Start. This includes Pathways into Partnership which is the formalised collaborative partnerships across primary and nursery schools designed and launched during 2021/22. Over 350 schools have committed to the Programme, with a waiting list for the next academic year.</p> <p>The Strategy also supports The Association of Education Advisers' Accreditation and Development Programme for Principals Learning and Development Programme. This supports principals in attaining accreditation as an Associate, lasting for three years. During the reporting period 73 Principals participated across 4 cohorts, with 25 of these Principals coming from designated rural locations. 36 principals have been accredited as Associate Advisers.</p>

## Invest Northern Ireland

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Digital Selling Capability Grant.	<p>The Digital Selling Capability Grant (DSCG) aims to provide financial assist-ances to established businesses in the retail/wholesale sector wishing to improve their online sales by enhancing their website and/or digital marketing strategy towards driving increased online sales.</p> <p>We do not believe that there are barriers to delivery in rural areas and there is no evidence of any specific rural needs or disadvantage at this stage.</p>
Economic Regional Innovation Grant (ERIG).	<p>The primary strategic aim of the Economic Recovery Innovation Grant (ERIG) aims to support local businesses/ businesses impacted within COVID-19 hit sectors (such as hospitality, tourism, close contact services etc) to introduce and/or enhance innovation activities to embed resilience and agility within their operations.</p> <p>The proposed ERIG intervention is to be provided across Northern Ireland and are not Belfast centric, therefore this positive economic measure is unlikely to impact people in rural areas in any negative way or be more difficult to access.</p> <p>Applications for the proposed interventions will be accessed online via Invest NI website. This is not expected to negatively impact rural businesses/dwellers as we deliver ongoing services in this manner, which are being accessed by rural businesses/dwellers currently without issue.</p> <p>We do not envisage any barriers to rural businesses.</p>
Regional Economic Recovery Action Plan (ERAP).	<p>This concerns a range of short-term and medium term regionally focused actions to support the recovery and rebuilding of the NI Economy following the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The primary strategic aims of the regionally focused ERAP interventions (Regional ERAP) are to help protect</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>and stabilise employment, increase levels of innovation within small and micro businesses, build a high skilled and agile workforce, pursue and deliver better jobs, and create a more regionally balanced and greener economy.</p> <p>The proposed interventions are to be provided across Northern Ireland and are not Belfast centric, therefore these positive economic measures are unlikely to impact people in rural areas in any negative way or be more difficult to access.</p> <p>Applications for the proposed interventions will be accessed online via Invest NI website. This is not expected to negatively impact rural businesses/dwellers as we deliver ongoing services in this manner, which are being accessed by rural businesses/dwellers currently without issue.</p>
Procurement of Online Consumer Survey Data.	<p>The main objective of the activity is to provide access to a primary research survey app that is robust, cost effective and useable across different levels of data competency for UK and Ireland for food and drink grocery categories including pet food.</p> <p>Food and drink companies are located across Northern Ireland and are not disproportionately located in rural areas. However, where businesses in this sector are located in these areas, we anticipate a positive impact.</p> <p>The delivery of the service to clients, using the Consumer Online Survey Platform, will be online via a digital platform so it does not require attendance at the client premises or attendance at events. We therefore do not envisage any barriers to rural dwellers.</p>



## The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Board

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>District Structure Re-alignment.</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) is aligning its District structure to that of the local council boundaries; to enhance relationships with partner agencies through community planning arrangements, with a view to NIFRS being at the centre of delivery of initiatives to Save, Protect and Improve Lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new arrangements will improve opportunity for communities to get more involved in shaping priorities and services, volunteering, scrutinising the service and helping to solve problems within their community;</li> <li>• Enhanced collaboration between partners including other blue light services, councils, health authorities, businesses and the voluntary and community sector will provide better outcomes for the community; and</li> <li>• By aligning to Council boundaries, NIFRS District Commanders will undertake the role of Community Risk Manager and be the assigned dedicated point of contact for all aspects on Community Planning, in line with statutory requirements under The Local Government Act (NI) 2014. District Commanders, with their supporting officers, will align to and become embedded in each Council, enabling each to work collaboratively with other partner agencies to develop bespoke and locally informed Community Risk Management Plans.</li> </ul> <p>It is anticipated the changes will have a positive impact in rural areas; similar to urban, as a collaborative approach will assist in the identification and therefore effective targeting of people at risk primarily from fire. It will also enhance signposting of vulnerable groups to appropriate agencies.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Learning and Development Centre (LDC) Cookstown Phase Two.</p>	<p>Designing and Delivering NIFRS LDC Cookstown Phase Two Programme was approved at the end of February 2020, representing a £42.2m capital investment in NIFRS training and development with the facility located in Cookstown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contractor procurement commenced January 2021;</li> <li>• Planning Approval achieved in May 2021;</li> <li>• Full Business Case for Phase 2 approved December 2021;</li> <li>• Contract Award with contractor - Felix O'Hare, December 2021;</li> <li>• Ground Clearance Works Commenced Onsite; and</li> <li>• Construction commenced May 2022, completes mid-2024.</li> </ul> <p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment was carried out on 7 March 2019 and the impact was found to be a positive one on rural communities.</p>
<p>Property Asset Management Plan (PAMP) 2021-2022.</p>	<p>The PAMP was developed to manage the assets more economically.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified.</p>

## The Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Updating Available Latent Demand Choices on NIHE Housing Management System.	Latent Demand Choices are specifically aimed at enhancing the delivery of social housing for people in rural areas. Any person who applies to the waiting list has equal opportunity to select up to 2 Latent Demand Choices out of approx. 600 designated rural settlements. Every settlement in Northern Ireland is now available as a Latent Demand Choice.
Developing Place Shaping Site Identification Study Policy & Procedure.	<p>There are rural settlements where a relatively marginal housing need may discourage housing association site identification activity due to the perceived costs of development and management of small, rural housing schemes.</p> <p>Site Identification Studies (SIS) can help facilitate rural development by encouraging housing associations to deliver in rural areas with sustained housing need and can influence the identification of land for affordable housing within the Local Policy Plan of Local Development Plans.</p> <p>The additional delivery of affordable housing will help meet the housing needs of rural people, contributing to their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>SISs can identify housing land and opportunities and constraints in rural areas to facilitate rural development.</p>
Implementing the Housing Executive's People Strategy.	There are no proposals within the strategy that significantly change the geography of the Housing Executive structure. The People Strategy therefore will have the same impact for rural dwellers as urban dwellers. Although it could be argued that hybrid working will benefit those who have to travel further which could correlate with rural dwellers, this aspect of post COVID-19 workplace strategy will be fundamentally business driven.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Developing PUWER - Provision & Use of Work Equipment Policy.	This policy only affects staff and internal processes for the purchase, hire and safe use of work equipment. Geographical location has no impact on the implementation of the policy.
Developing the Supporting People Three Year Strategic plan and COVID-19 Recovery Plan 2021-2024.	<p>The Strategy will evolve throughout the three years and take into account any emerging strategies, policies, legislation or research. During the life of the Strategy separate Rural Needs Impact Assessments will be drawn up for any development or change in policy, strategy or plan and when designing or delivering new services.</p> <p>At this stage, there is no anticipated rural impact. However, this will be monitored and reviewed throughout the lifespan of the evolving Strategy and mitigation will take place if deemed necessary.</p>
Developing Housing Executive draft Rural Strategy 2021-2025.	The implementation of the actions within the Strategy will only have a positive impact on rural communities and will ensure they are provided with an equitable service to those who reside in urban areas.
Revising Affordable Warmth Policy & Process Guide.	The Housing Executive administer all Affordable Warmth grant applications which are received directly from the local councils. The qualifying criteria is the same for each household regardless of where they live.
Revising Home Improvement Grant Policy Guidance Manual.	Home Improvement Grants are available to homeowners, landlords and private tenants depending on the individual's circumstances, all grants are therefore available to residents irrespective of geographical location.
Revising Option to Purchase Policy.	It is for the individual property owner to decide if and when they wish to sell their property within the 10 year timeframe. Therefore there is no targeting of delivery in rural areas or intention to specifically deliver outcomes for people in rural areas through this policy. However, the implementation of this new policy will be closely monitored by our Place Shaping staff. Any issues identified will be noted and the review date for the policy will be brought forward to account for them.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Revising Health and Safety in Construction Policy.	<p>Property maintenance and repairs, or any modification to the existing dwelling, applies to both rural and urban environments. In this instance there is no difference on how it would, or may impact, either in a different way.</p> <p>The same needs are applicable to all in so far as maintaining a service which provides for both rural and urban properties which may require modifications, repairs and maintenance.</p>
Designing the public service of Supporting People Special Recognition Payment.	Eligible organisations and eligible staff in rural areas have a need for equitable access to the Supporting People Special Recognition Payment. Supporting People Team will administer payments to eligible organisations in respect of eligible staff, irrespective of location.
Revising Sale of Vacant Dwellings Policy.	<p>Under the Sale of Vacant Dwellings Policy, properties are marketed with an estate agent who has coverage in the area that the property is located in. That estate agent uses their local market knowledge to set the sale price and devise a locally appropriate marketing strategy to ensure that the property is made known to the market of potential purchasers. Therefore this approach is tailorable to the circumstances of each property and is considered an equitable approach to ensuring that potential purchasers are made aware of the property being for sale, regardless of their geographical location.</p> <p>Additionally Housing Executive staff who administer the Sale of Vacant Dwellings Policy will not be impacted differentially. All Housing Executive staff involved, be they from rural or urban areas have access to a Housing Executive office location and Housing Executive IT equipment and so have the same level of access to the systems necessary to comply with the provisions of this policy.</p>
Delivering Excellent Office Visits Service.	All offices, irrespective of location, will remain open to the public on an appointment basis and emergency arrangements will be in place for customers who

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>need an issue addressed immediately. In addition to appointments, people in rural areas can make contact with the Housing Executive via multiple methods and all available evidence (including anecdotal) suggests there has been no significant customer dissatisfaction with the operation of an appointments only system during the Pandemic.</p> <p>During 2022/23, the Housing Executive will be developing an accommodation strategy. This work will help to inform the development of this strategy.</p>
Revising Complaints Policy.	<p>Complaints are accepted from any/all customers and are fully investigated and responded to in the same manner irrespective of origin. We currently receive and process complaints from all Local Offices including those covering rural areas.</p> <p>Complaints can be made in person, via post, online (including via email) or over the telephone, ensuring the service is equally accessible in all areas.</p>
Revising Housing Need Assessment (HNA) Process - User Guide.	<p>Through the inclusion of rural needs assessment/testing in the stage 2 analysis, it is considered that the existing HNA process takes account of people from rural areas in a consistent and equitable way.</p> <p>Mitigations are proposed by the process manual to help ensure that there is not likely to be an impact differentially on people in rural areas. Measures proposed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local context section of the Assessment to examine trends including rural initiatives;</li> <li>• The Rural &amp; Regeneration Manager being a consultee in the stage 2 sensitivity analyses carried out by the Regional Place Shaping teams; and</li> <li>• During the sensitivity analysis, specific local issues are considered such as potential need identified through responses to public adverts for rural housing need tests.</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Other rural factors considered during the stage 2 sensitivity analysis are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration/programme proposals from other statutory bodies;</li> <li>• Existence of other public sector facilities e.g. rural school;</li> <li>• Other waiting list information held by NIHE. This would include waiting list second preferences (where the prospects of housing in first preference locations are limited), requests for transfers from existing tenants (including the impact of such transfers on the occupancy of the existing accommodation) and numbers expressing interest in rural areas within section 10 of the Housing Assessment form;</li> <li>• The level and condition of remaining social housing;</li> <li>• Levels of unfitness and/or homelessness; and</li> <li>• Any use of rural needs testing to justify additional new build requirements must be supported by an assessment to establish the impact of such proposals on remaining waiting list and housing stock.</li> </ul>
<p>Developing Flat Leasehold Extensions Policy.</p>	<p>There are five broad aspects to consider when determining the potential rural impact of the Flat Leasehold Extensions Policy. The first is the impact of the leasehold extension eligibility criteria and conditions on people in rural areas. The second is the adequacy and equitability of application methods, the third is the adequacy and equitability of the communications channels for people in rural areas throughout the process to completion stage, the fourth is the premium that will be charged to people in rural areas for granting a lease extension, both method of determination and affordability, and the fifth is mechanisms for payment of the fees, the premium and any other monies owing.</p> <p>Each aspect is equally applicable to a person in a rural area as an urban area, none are based on any geographical characteristic, but are person and individual property focused.</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Developing Business Continuity Policy.	<p>The policy forms the basis for effective business continuity management; to mitigate the impact of disruptive situations, safeguard essential functions, and providing satisfactory customer service to stakeholders. It can also assist in delivering our corporate objectives, particularly in delivering critical services until such time as normal business can be restored.</p> <p>Business Continuity is closely linked with Emergency Management and they work together to ensure the organisation has appropriate planning, response and recovery arrangements in place to deal with disruption. This will apply regardless of where disruption occurs and the priority will be to recover services to business as usual levels as soon as is practical.</p> <p>Given that disruptive incidences are unpredictable by nature, the policy acknowledges that in the event of disruption rural needs will be fully considered and addressed to ensure that rural households are not disadvantaged.</p>
Revising Boiler Replacement Scheme Policy & Process Guide.	<p>The Housing Executive administer all Boiler Replacement grant applications which are received directly from the public. The qualifying criteria is the same for each household regardless of where they live. The property must be in the private sector and the household income must be less than £40k.</p>
Revising Advance Purchase Policy.	<p>There are four broad aspects to consider when determining the potential rural impact of the Advance Purchase Policy. The first is the applicability/availability of Advance Purchase to persons in rural areas. The second is the adequacy and equitability of application methods. The third is the communications channels for people in rural areas throughout the process to completion stage. The fourth is the compensation available to people in rural areas.</p> <p>In examining these issues and the flexibilities that the policy offers to allow the characteristics of rural areas to be accounted for, it is considered that the policy treats people from rural areas in an equitable way.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Additionally Housing Executive staff who administer the policy will not be impacted differentially. All Housing Executive staff involved, be they from rural or urban areas have access to a Housing Executive office location and so have the same level of access to the systems necessary to comply with the provisions of this policy.</p>
<p>Developing Homelessness Strategy 2022-2027 (including Homeless to Home, a Strategic Action Plan for Temporary Accommodation).</p>	<p>Three potential barriers for rural households were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most supported accommodation placements will be in urban areas meaning that rural clients may have to move locality to avail of relevant support;</li> <li>• Time taken for rural support provision can be longer due to travel distances so fewer clients may be able to be supported; and</li> <li>• Limited supply in rural areas of social and affordable housing options.</li> </ul> <p>Mitigations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A local approach to service delivery will be taken, with Local Area Groups playing a key role in the delivery of the aims of the Strategy;</li> <li>• A drive towards homelessness prevention will seek to ensure as many clients as possible are retained within existing accommodation as possible, reducing the demand for temporary accommodation;</li> <li>• A Dispersed Outreach approach will provide support to individuals who have been placed in non-standard and non-supported accommodation;</li> <li>• The alignment of the Strategy with the Supporting People Strategy and Rural Strategy means that information from homelessness data sources will be fed into the analysis of any geographical gaps in the supply of housing support, as well as issues raised at Local Area Groups to ensure that all clients in all locations will be able to access the right support; and</li> <li>• Rural housing supply issues will also be fed into the development of the Housing Supply Strategy with a view to increasing the capacity of social and affordable housing options. Options to assist clients to access private rented sector will be explored.</li> </ul>

## The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Review of the Safeguarding Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to safe-guarding children, young people and adults at risk when using library services and staff/volunteer responsibilities.	No rural needs were identified.
Development of principles for dealing with requests to place commemorative plaques on libraries premises.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of the Opening Hours Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to opening hours.	<p>The key issues considered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties with access to transport outside 'normal office hours';</li> <li>• Access to services for rural dwellers who are not able to access a service during normal office hours.</li> </ul> <p>Reductions in opening hours in libraries based in rural communities were kept to a minimum.</p>
Review of the Risk Management Policy which sets out a framework for managing risk to ensure the achievement of objectives.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Whistleblowing Policy which sets out guidance on raising a concern.	No rural needs were identified.
Development of a Workplace Substance Abuse Policy, the purpose of which is to make it clear to all staff that Libraries NI is a supportive employer and will take all rea-sonable steps to provide help and support to employees with a substance abuse issue.	No rural needs were identified.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Review of Anti-Fraud Policy which sets out Libraries NI's responsibilities and approach to the prevention of fraud.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Promoting Positive Health and Wellbeing Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to promoting positive health and wellbeing through its services and resources.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Community Information Policy which sets out Libraries NI's criteria for the provision of community information in all libraries including those in rural areas.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Filming Policy which sets out the Libraries NI approach to responding to requests to film in or around a library location.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Internal Audit Charter which sets out the authority, responsibilities, scope and resourcing for the operations of the Libraries Internal Audit Function.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of the Capability Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to dealing with underperformance in a supportive, fair and consistent manner.	No rural needs were identified.

## The Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Implementing a Six Monthly Assurance Statement Of Internal Control And Risk Management.	Tourism NI incorporates compliance with the Rural Needs Act in their Assurance Statement Of Internal Control And Risk Management.
Delivering the Second consecutive year of a Web Development Funding Programme.	Delivery of further Web Development Funding Programme, based on its predecessor in 2021, with £100k collaborative funding support from DAERA and to support objectives as part of the Rural Policy Framework.
Developing a Prospective new Rural Tourism Capital Fund.	Collaboration with Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to scope a new £ multi-million Rural Tourism Capital Fund and support on pre-development and market testing activity and to support objectives as part of the Rural Policy Framework.

## Public Health Agency

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Bereaved by Suicide Project: Facilitation of support networks for people bereaved by suicide and their role in influencing policy and service delivery.</p>	<p>The Bereaved by Suicide co-ordination, development and facilitation project is not a service for individuals. It is a project that supports individuals bereaved by suicide to influence policy and service delivery. The project will encourage participation through bereavement groups and local protect life implementation groups which have representation from Rural Networks and Rural Support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no costs to participate in the project; and</li> <li>• Those that wish to participate can do so in person, by phone or by electronic means.</li> </ul> <p>When commissioning the project the Public Health Agency (PHA) took into account the following strategies;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect Life 2 (<a href="http://health-ni.gov.uk">health-ni.gov.uk</a>);</li> <li>• Making Life Better - A Whole System Framework for Public Health 2013-2023 (<a href="http://health-ni.gov.uk">health-ni.gov.uk</a>);</li> <li>• PfG draft Outcomes Framework consultation (<a href="http://northernireland.gov.uk">northernireland.gov.uk</a>);</li> <li>• <a href="http://doh-mhs-draft-2021-2031.pdf">doh-mhs-draft-2021-2031.pdf</a> (<a href="http://health-ni.gov.uk">health-ni.gov.uk</a>);</li> <li>• Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Inclusion - 2016 - A new Framework (<a href="http://daera-ni.gov.uk">daera-ni.gov.uk</a>; and</li> <li>• Key Rural Issues 2020 - Final.pdf (<a href="http://daera-ni.gov.uk">daera-ni.gov.uk</a>).</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholder involvement has been undertaken as part of the review of the project. This was carried out via an online electronic survey in line with COVID-19 Regulations and included identification of gaps and barriers in relation to the current service model. Of the 26 responses, only one comment was made in relation to the need to strengthen links in some rural areas. The PHA has also carried out a wider involvement process to determine how the Protect Life 2 Strategy actions, for which the PHA is responsible, can be delivered. Through this process the following issues around rural service provision were identified;</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers around digital access must be considered e.g. digital poverty, many do not have digital skills, smart phones or good internet connection in rural areas; conversely digital services were also highlighted as a means of helping people in rural communities to be reached with a blended approach and cross departmental working highlighted as a means of addressing barriers; and</li> <li>• Stakeholders outlined a number of user groups who require support accessing services which included rural dwellers.</li> </ul> <p>Additional requirements will be included within the project to ensure direct connection with Rural Networks to raise awareness of the project and to encourage participation from rural communities. Publication in relation to the project will be promoted to groups currently funded by the PHA which include rural networks and community and voluntary organisations located within rural communities.</p>
<p>Early Intervention Support Service (EISS) - Regional Family Support Service across Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>The aim of EISS is to deliver and co-ordinate personalised evidence based early intervention for children, young people and their families to support families when problems first emerge before the need for statutory involvement.</p> <p>When commissioning this service the PHA took into account a number of strategies and reports including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DoH (2021) Health Inequalities Annual Report;</li> <li>• DoH (2021) Health Survey Northern Ireland; and</li> <li>• NISRA (2017) Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017.</li> </ul> <p>As part of the development of EISS comprehensive stakeholder engagement was undertaken facilitated through the Children’s and Young People’s Strategic Partnership Outcomes Groups and Locality Planning Groups in collaboration with the Directors of Social Services within each health and social care trust locality.</p>



<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>A lack of service provision and difficulty accessing services due to transport issues were identified in a number of rural areas. The locations and geographic spread for each EISS was agreed based on local need, emerging need and gaps in service provision.</p> <p>It is clear from the strategies, ongoing monitoring Information, evaluations and stakeholder involvement there is a need to continue to offer the EISS to children, young people and families in both rural and urban communities. Provider organisations will be required to deliver EISS within the geographic areas identified with the aim of ensuring that children, young people and families in both urban and rural areas are supported to access the service. Providers will be required to provide links with Family Support Hubs, other community and voluntary services and others working in related areas such as drugs and alcohol, mental health etc. to ensure families have the ongoing support when their engagement with EISS is completed.</p> <p>Travel to rural areas in winter months and during inclement weather can on occasions cause some difficulties. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic EISS have adapted ways of delivering the service as face to face visits were not possible for a prolonged period of time. All EISS have the necessary technology to offer the EISS using a blended approach of face to face visits and virtual sessions on Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Virtual sessions will continue to be used to offer support to families on occasions when home visiting cannot be offered as an option.</p>
<p>Maintaining the integrity and functionality of the National Breast Screening system in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>The following issues were considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas:</p> <p>Accessibility of healthcare services - the project will have neither a positive or negative impact on the accessibility of healthcare services. No change to the current service configuration is planned.</p> <p>Employment, training and commuting - No change to</p>

<b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b>	<b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b>
	<p>current staffing of Breast Screening Units is planned. No change to the location of Breast Screening Units is planned. Opportunities for appropriate training in the new system will be offered to all staff at their normal place of work, so no additional travel needed. All Breast Screening Units are represented in the project management structure and will contribute to the project implementation plan.</p>

## The Sports Council for Northern Ireland

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
The Building Better Sports Facilities Programme.	The Building Better Sports Facilities Programme offered investment to improve the capital infrastructure of sporting organisations across Northern Ireland. Applicants who were based in rural areas improved operational efficiency leading to increased participation capacity in their areas.
The Club Environment Transition Programme (CETP).	The Club Environment Transition Programme will offer investment to Governing Bodies to support their clubs and its workforce of coaches, officials and volunteers. These clubs are based across Northern Ireland in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas they will offer opportunities for people to participate in sport or undertake roles to assist with the participation of sport - coaches, officials, volunteers.
The Sporting Winners Extension Programme.	The Sporting Winners Extension Programme will offer investment to Governing Bodies to support their performance programmes, which includes athletes and workforce of coaches, officials and volunteers. The Governing Body programmes will include athletes and performance support personnel from across both rural and urban areas in Northern Ireland, offering opportunities for athletes, coaches and volunteers to work towards international sporting success.
The Governing Body Support Programme (GBSP).	The Governing Body Support Programme will offer investment to Governing Bodies to support their clubs and its workforce of coaches, officials and volunteers. These clubs are based across Northern Ireland in both rural and urban areas offering opportunities for people to participate in sport or undertake roles to assist with the participation of sport - coaches, officials, volunteers.
The Performance Environment Transition Programme (PETP).	The Performance Environment Transition Programme will offer investment to Governing Bodies to support their performance programmes, throughout their performance pathways, which includes athletes, workforce of coaches, officials and volunteers.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>The Governing Body performance programmes will include athletes and performance support personnel from across both rural and urban areas in Northern Ireland, offering opportunities for athletes, coaches and volunteers to work towards international sporting success.</p>
<p>Delivery of training courses at Sport NI's National Outdoor Training Centre, Tollymore National Outdoor Centre (TNOC).</p>	<p>TNOC is located in a rural area - the two closest villages are Kilcoo (approx. 2 miles west) and Bryansford (approx. 1 mile east).</p> <p>TNOC delivers a wide range of courses. Its aims include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing participation in a range of adventure sports;</li> <li>• Increasing skill levels in these sports;</li> <li>• Training and assessing coaches, instructors and leaders in these sports; and</li> <li>• Being an example of good practice in the development and delivery of residential and non-residential adventure sports training courses.</li> </ul> <p>In order to achieve these aims, TNOC uses a wide range of locations, from publicly owned land (owned by Forest Service NI and NI water) to privately owned land, such as much of the upland areas of the Mourne, which is owned by local shareholders.</p> <p>Tollymore provides a range of training, which includes training regarding sustainability of the local environment, use of local facilities and awareness of local environmental issues.</p> <p>TNOC is the National Centre for all of NI and provides courses to individuals from rural and urban areas. A large number of its skills and leadership courses focus on and provide information on sustainability of the local (rural) area.</p> <p>Sport NI also leases a local quarry, which it makes available free of charge to local individuals and businesses, as a resources for instructing rock climbing.</p>

## Police Service of Northern Ireland

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Wellbeing Support Hub.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Threats to Life.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Annual Budget.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Leaving the Service.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Police Support Units Personal Protection Equipment.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
The use of LOCATE - fitted vehicles.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
New Service Instruction (Police Drivers).	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Acting Up (Temporary Salary) and Temporary Promotion.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Serious Crime Scenes.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Emergency Response Plan - Larne Short Term Holding Facility.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Emergency Response Plan - City of Derry Airport.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Emergency Response Plan - Belfast International Airport.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Instructors Allowance.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Travel (COVID-19).	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Part-Time Reserve Review.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Probationer Project (Neighbourhood Policing Team).	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Disability Support Network.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Payment of Staff.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Appropriate Policy Documents for Sensitive Processing.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Domestic Abuse - Workplace Guidance.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
The wearing of Wings by Pilots in Air Support Unit.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Road Policing Unit Constable Vacancy Bulletin.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Service Instruction - Critical Incident Management and Community Impact Assessments.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Surveillance Vacancy Bulletin.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Responding to a Chemical; Biological; Radiological or Nuclear material (CBRNe) event.	<p>The nature of a CBRNe incident will be spontaneous however any outcomes would be dependent the response from all agencies. This is explained in the service instruction.</p> <p>There are no statistics or data which could be used to monitor impacts on rural need in planning for a CBRNe incident.</p>
Sharing victim and witness details with Home Office Immigration Enforcement.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
C4 Female Mentoring Scheme.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Corporate Appearance and Protective Equipment Standard (CAPES).	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Security of Documents.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Road Traffic Collision Investigation.	The service instructions apply consistently across NI and there is no distinction for rural or urban residents.
Epizootic Outbreak.	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs monitor and respond to any suspected outbreaks and carry out inspections throughout the rural communities which may be affected.
Youth Justice.	Statistics on Youth Diversion are provided on a quarterly basis and closely monitored by Police Service of Northern Ireland, Youth Justice Agency and Department of Justice. They are provided for each policing District including those with a more rural demographic.
Violence Against Women and Girls.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Close Protection Support Unit (CPSU) Vacancy Bulletin.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Dog Handling Constable Vacancy Bulletin.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Sick Pay Provisions for Police Officers.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.



## The Health and Social Care Board

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Therapeutic Support for Children and Young People who are potentially vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), and Consultation and Training for HSC Staff.</p>	<p>The aim of the Regional CSE Therapeutic Service is to ensure easier access for children and families living in rural communities. There has been a tendency for specialist services to be sited in the greater Belfast conurbation, which can lead to difficulties because of the cost of private and limitations of public transport. The risk of CSE, Neglect and Abuse is poorly recognised in rural settings and there is a risk of stigma and detection of “difference” in rural settings.</p> <p>There are a broad range of social and economic needs and issues associated with people in rural areas including: deprivation, poverty (including fuel poverty), broadband provision, isolation and demographic. A number of methods and sources highlight a range of key issues for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural deprivation infographic;</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Rural-Urban Statistics; and</li> <li>• Key Rural Issues, Northern Ireland 2019’.</li> </ul> <p>The procurement of a Regional CSE Therapeutic Service will be informed by this Rural Needs Impact Assessment and the themes and issues identified in the Marshall Inquiry and work carried out by the Leonard Consultancy. Procurement bids will be required to evidence a discrete strategy for ensuring that the needs of rural communities are reflected in the proposed business model. It is recognised that rurality may present unique challenges to delivery of this service, subsequently it is envisaged that the delivery of services will incorporate a sensibility to services already deployed in each of the HSC Trusts and will realise opportunities to synthesise the delivery of services with key stakeholders accordingly.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Birth Family Support and Counselling Service in Adoption &amp; Adult Adoptee Origins Tracing Service.</p>	<p>The Birth Family Support and Counselling service will be available on an equitable basis throughout NI as will the Adult Adoptee Origins Tracing Service. However, lack of transport may produce a barrier to accessing the Counselling service. Online sessions would mitigate this problem.</p> <p>The service specification to procure the services has been reviewed and now includes asking potential providers to demonstrate how they can bring the service to people in rural communities' by accessing a good quality local disability friendly office where to a face to face service can be delivered to individuals.</p> <p>The specification has also been reviewed to ensure that the use of telephone or counselling or support sessions can be provided effectively and confidentially through the use of a secure social media platform, where this is the service users' preference. This means that some people in rural communities could access the full service online if that was their preferred method of engagement. This would also tackle transport barriers to accessing the service for these people who could choose to have the service in their own home.</p>
<p>Children's Services Safeguarding Training Programme.</p>	<p>The Children's Safeguarding Training Programme is prescribed training for staff and volunteers in voluntary, charitable, faith and community based organisations. The Programme is designed to ensure that the trainees have the skills, knowledge and competence to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, within the overall remit of their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>The content of the training is focused on the needs of children and is therefore independent of the voluntary, charitable, faith and community based organisations' locations, be they rural or urban.</p>
<p>Provision of Advocacy, Mentoring and Participation Support services to looked after and care experienced children.</p>	<p>The overarching Looked After Children Strategy was published in the context of the Executive's draft Programme for Government 2016-2021 (PfG 2016-2021), which committed the Executive to improving</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>outcomes for the citizens of Northern Ireland over the course of the 2016-2021 Assembly mandate. Using existing structures the NI Executive and the NICS Board monitor, review and evaluate any impacts on the rural needs.</p> <p>The Strategy and Implementation Plan have been developed by the Health and Education Departments in conjunction with children and young people and key statutory, voluntary and community, and public stakeholders. The Implementation Plan has been agreed on a cross departmental basis and identifies the intended outcomes and the actions to contribute to their delivery. The Education Authority and Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts have existing policies in place to take account of all the needs of children and young people from rural communities including looked after children. There are no specific additional rural indicators or targets included in the Strategy. The DoH and Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) already monitor statistics e.g. the numbers of Looked After Children in rural areas. These will continue to be monitored using an Outcome Based Accountability model. Although there has been no evidence to date to suggest that the services will result in any significant impacts on the needs of people living in rural communities, equal access to services regardless of the service user's location is a key requirement of the service.</p> <p>It is recognised that additional resources and measures will be required to ensure that Looked After Children in rural areas have access to the same level of service as children from urban areas. The HSCB, now Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG), has the delegated authority and autonomy to the service provider to provide flexible services suitable to meet the needs of their local communities. Any rural issues identified on review of this service will be addressed by the HSCB, now SPPG.</p>

## Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>New Guidance for the management of Virtual Consultations for Outpatients.</p>	<p>The purpose of the guidance is to provide guidance to staff when introducing virtual consultations as a method of service delivery in outpatient clinics and to ensure consistency of approach and implementation across the Trust.</p> <p>The Trust's rural assessment highlighted that IT connectivity may limit the availability of virtual consultations for people who live in rural areas and that the effectiveness of offering virtual consultations depends on the service users/patients having access to adequate landline or mobile technology.</p> <p>Conversely, it was ascertained that use of virtual consultations should have a positive impact upon people who reside in rural areas economically as the consultations can take place at home obviating the need for travel to clinics and the associated transport and parking cost.</p> <p>A key aspect of the guidance acknowledges that each service area should define its inclusion and exclusion criteria for virtual consultations based on clinical judgement applied on an individual basis for each patient mindful of professional standards, patient safety and outcomes, equality, human rights and rural considerations, capacity and consent issues and the informed choice of the patient.</p> <p>The guidance recommends that outpatient clinics will be delivered using a blended approach to service delivery i.e. face to face, telephone and via video consultations.</p> <p>Through the clinical triage process, staff will be mindful of the lack of and/or poor IT connectivity issues that exist across many rural areas in NI. This is particularly so for regional services that BHSCT delivers. There will be no adverse impact on service users in waiting times in terms of the method of service delivery used. Offering</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	a choice of method of delivery upon first contact with service user, including alternative methods of delivery in virtual consultations protocol as mitigation.
Rebuild Plan April - June 2021.	<p>An overarching rural screening was undertaken to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures to deliver services during the quarter between April and June 2021.</p> <p>Many measures within the Plan constitute an incremental attempt to return to service provision, as was, prior to COVID-19 whilst others constitute temporary changes to facilitate service delivery but also to facilitate an agile response to a further surge.</p> <p>The majority of the Trust's services are delivered to people who are not from a rural community. However, we do deliver regional services. Our plan does not have a differential impact on people in rural areas because the proposals apply equally to people both in urban and rural areas (e.g. the regional fertility clinic - rapid access clinic is opened for emergencies only).</p> <p>In addition, our plan includes increases to capacity for a range of regional services e.g. Regional Acquired Brain Injury Unit.</p> <p>Due to continue social distancing and infection control requirements the Trust will continue to use telephone clinics and virtual IT solutions which will enhance the accessibility of regional services for people who live beyond Belfast. However, the Trust is mindful of the need for good connectivity and so will continue to monitor this innovation through feedback from service users and will strive to provide a hybrid service delivery model. Our plan will be continuously reviewed, informed by service user feedback and aligned to regional discussions and priorities.</p>
Service Delivery Plan July - September 2021.	This quarterly service delivery plan constitutes an overarching rebuild plan to show how the Trust will incrementally deliver services. By the very nature of

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>the rebuilding work, it is anticipated that the majority of these actions will have a positive impact on people from both urban and rural needs. Our Plans have been developed aligned to the Department of Health’s overall priorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Equity of Access for the treatment of patients across Northern Ireland,</li> <li>• Minimise the transmission of COVID-19; and</li> <li>• Protect the most urgent services.</li> </ul> <p>In developing this quarterly plan in a series of Rebuild Plans, Belfast Trust is mindful of the Department of Health’s mission stated in the Rebuilding Health and Social Care (HSC) Services Strategic Framework September 2020 which indicated that the overarching principle is: “To incrementally increase HSC service capacity as quickly as possible across all programmes of care, within the prevailing COVID-19 conditions. The aim will be to maximise service activity within the context of managing the ongoing COVID-19 situation; embedding innovation and transformation; incorporating the Encompass Programme; prioritising services; developing contingencies; and planning for the future all at the same time.”</p> <p>This Service Delivery Plan, from July-September 2021 continues to focus on the delivery of services to the most vulnerable people in our community, on services for those people who urgently require acute care, planned cancer surgery and time-critical surgery in a safe environment and ensuring equity in our approach. Any remaining theatre staffing capacity is utilised to support the restart of elective surgery where possible. The Trust’s commitment to provide safe compassionate care to all those who need it continues, although this will mean delivering services in a different way because of social distancing but as previously referenced, services will be offered on a hybrid basis where virtual or telephone consultations are not feasible for people in</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	rural areas. This hybrid option will also reduce the need for people to travel from rural areas and reduce costs.
Winter Service Delivery Plan - October 2021 - March 2022.	<p>This is an overarching rural screening to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures within our Winter Service Delivery Plan October 2021 to March 2022. The Trust prepares an annual winter plan every year to deal with the increased demand on our services but this winter service delivery plan also needs to take account of the impact of COVID-19.</p> <p>The measures within the plan constitute temporary changes to facilitate service delivery but also to facilitate a flexible and agile response to a further surge. The Trust had a 'Learning from COVID-19' initiative which included listening to service users, patients and carers to influence our future service delivery Plans.</p> <p>It is noted that the majority of the Trust's services are delivered to people not from a rural community as defined by the Inter Departmental Urban Rural Definition Group (2015). The services that come within the remit of this assessment therefore are restricted to services delivered regionally by the Trust. We are also mindful that a Rural Needs Impact Assessment is proportionate to the scale of the potential impact and relevance of the activity being undertaken.</p> <p>When considering the impact on people from a rural community, the Trust is mindful that it is important to consider in full the potential impact on rural needs and that we are clear about what is a need and what is desirable. In general, a need can be considered to be something that is essential to achieve a standard of living comparable with that of the population in general e.g. can the people in the rural area access key public services such as health and social care?</p> <p>Our Plan (which involves some regional services) does not have a differential impact on people in rural areas because the proposals apply equally to people both in urban and rural areas. The aim of the plan is to</p>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>make temporary changes to facilitate service delivery and to do this in a safe and compassionate manner, mindful of restrictions and challenges such as the need to be ready for further COVID-19 surges, the need to support the health and well-being of staff and the social distancing and infection control requirements.</p> <p>The plan is designed to help manage and meet enhanced demand on services, particularly our acute services, with the aim of retaining elective services where possible.</p> <p>The Trust will continue to use telephone clinics and virtual IT solutions to triage and review patients, which will enhance the accessibility of regional services for people who live beyond Belfast. Telephone and Virtual clinics means that patients and service users can access a service without the need to travel, which certainly benefits those living in rural communities. However, the Trust is mindful of the need for good connectivity and so will continue to monitor this innovation through feedback from service users. The Trust will strive to provide a hybrid service delivery model and so face to face appointments for regional services may happen when it is clinically critical and where social distancing and infection control guidance permits.</p>
Car parking Strategy.	<p>The Trust assessed the impact of introducing access criteria for a car parking space in terms of both equality and rural impact. The Policy Lead ascertained that those staff travelling to work from rural areas are likely to be more dependent on a car as their mode of travel to work as alternative travel options may be limited. The impact therefore is potentially positive.</p> <p>Staff living in urban areas will have access to more frequent public transport services and those living within Belfast may additionally have the option of cycling or walking to work. Staff living in rural areas do not have the same access to frequent public transport services</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>and will be more dependent on a car to commute to work. The car parking access criteria recognise this difference and staff with a lengthy commute in either distance or time are more likely to secure a car parking permit than those living in Belfast or other urban areas. The access criteria provides points for those who live further from base, making it more likely that they will secure access to car parking.</p> <p>Therefore, it will potentially have a positive impact for staff who live in more rural areas. Implementation of the criteria has been piloted on two sites and will be monitored closely to ensure that there is not any unanticipated impact in terms of rural needs.</p>

In the interests of openness and transparency, the Trust has provided the following link to S75 equality screenings of Trust policies [here](#)

## Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<b>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care</b>	
<p>Re-provision of mental health inpatient services in Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT).</p>	<p>Patients who currently receive inpatient mental health services in the Ross Thompson Unit at Causeway Hospital and Holywell Hospital will receive future services in a modern facility on the Antrim Area Hospital site providing 134 beds in total. This is anticipated to be commissioned and fully operational by September 2025.</p> <p>For this Rural Needs Impact Assessment the definition of rural was further than 20 or 30 minutes drive time from Antrim, the location of the new mental health in-patient services provision.</p> <p>This analysis indicated that 84,447 potential service users reside in excess of 30 minutes drive time from the inpatient facility (out of 308,286, just over 27%). Significantly an additional 155,011 people, (from 2011 Census detail) live in open countryside in NHSCT geographical area, almost one third of potential service users. It is likely that a significant proportion of these people also reside in excess of 30 minutes travel time from the proposed new mental health in-patient facility in Antrim.</p> <p>Differential impact summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment being provided at centralised and modern mental health in-patient services may have an impact in terms of travel on some rural service users and their families;</li> <li>• Potential to impact people in rural areas differently as the use of technology for remote visiting involves internet or broadband connectivity; people who live rurally are more likely to have no broadband or internet access or limited access than urban dwellers; and</li> <li>• Availability of public transport and availability of community transport for people who do not have private transport along with cost of travel.</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Mitigation applied in respect of remote visiting available to enable families to keep in touch with their relatives who use the new mental health inpatient facilities in Antrim.</p> <p>Significant investment in community based mental health services will enable prompt discharge of patients back to the community. The provision of extra care and support provided in people's homes as part of the discharge care plan is likely to reduce barriers regarding travel for some rural service users.</p> <p>Increased care provided in community settings after discharge is likely to have a positive impact in terms of reduced travel times.</p>
<p>Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) COVID-19 Response: Rebuilding Services Plan, Phase 3 (1st April - 30th June 2021).</p>	<p>The Phase 3 plan for April, May and June 2021 outlines how NHSCT will continue the journey of rebuilding health and social care across all services, following the third COVID-19 surge. The Rural Needs Impact Assessment concentrates on services created or existing services still being provided but where the location of these services has changed.</p> <p>Increase of virtual appointments, activities, telemedicine and consultations across many services detailed in this plan. Mitigation by blended model of delivery including face to face where this is possible.</p> <p>Impact on people living rurally includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic cost of travel and travel time to services which are centrally based in urban areas or in one centralised location in the Trust area and ability of individuals in rural areas to travel to clinics which are centrally based in urban areas (mitigation is availability of public or community transportation);</li> <li>• For staff redeployments - availability of public or community transportation (mitigation is that travel costs will be reimbursed); and</li> <li>• Access to adequate Broadband or mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services (mitigation is the use of hybrid service delivery models).</li> </ul>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) Service Delivery Plan for July and August 2021.</p>	<p>The purpose of this two-month Service Delivery Plan is to show how NHSCT will balance the ongoing needs of people and communities affected during the pandemic and to address the impact on all services, particularly elective waiting times and lists, services for children, older people and those who have mental health needs.</p> <p>There is the continued consideration of the impact on service users and carers who reside in rural areas in respect of access to services and access to broadband and mobile connection. The use of blended models of service delivery utilising virtual delivery in combination with face to face appointments as detailed in the service delivery plan offer choice to service users and minimise adverse impact in respect of access to services.</p> <p>Impact on people living rurally includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic cost of travel and travel time to services which are centrally based in urban areas or in one centralised location in the Trust area and ability of individuals in rural areas to travel to clinics which are centrally based in urban areas (mitigation is availability of public or community transportation);</li> <li>• For staff redeployments - availability of public or community transportation (mitigation is that travel costs will be reimbursed); and</li> <li>• Access to adequate Broadband or mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services (mitigation is the use of hybrid service delivery models).</li> </ul>
<p>Service Delivery Plan to include response to COVID-19 Surge (4th wave), Winter Pressures and Delivery of Key Regional Priorities October 2021 - March 2022.</p>	<p>The Plan focuses on three areas describing how the Trust will deliver increased resilience through this challenging autumn and winter period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter Pressures for both adults and paediatrics including our estimated bed projections, actions to secure the appropriate level of suitably trained staff and our response to the influenza virus;</li> <li>• COVID-19 (4th surge) - this sets out across key service areas the actions required to meet the</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>demands of the pandemic whilst continuing to apply the key regional planning principles of equity of access for the treatment of patients, minimising the transmission of COVID-19 and protecting the most urgent services; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery of key regional priorities for unscheduled care, elective care, cancer services, adult social care, children’s services, mental health and physical disability services.</li> </ul> <p>Impact on people living rurally includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic cost of travel and travel time to services which are centrally based in urban areas or in one centralised location in the Trust area and ability of individuals in rural areas to travel to clinics which are centrally based in urban areas (mitigation is availability of public or community transportation);</li> <li>• For staff redeployments - availability of public or community transportation (mitigation is that travel costs will be reimbursed); and</li> <li>• Access to adequate Broadband or mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services (mitigation is the use of hybrid service delivery models).</li> </ul>
<p>Nightingale at Whiteabbey - Enhanced Nursing and Therapies Rehabilitation and Step-Down Unit (regional service).</p>	<p>Due to a decrease in cases of COVID-19 in the Whiteabbey Nightingale, a decision was made to maximise the use of the facility and to transition to a regional enhanced nursing and therapies general rehabilitation model for non-COVID-19 patients in April 2021, as an interim delivery model.</p> <p>The preferred option for legacy use of the Whiteabbey Nightingale is to be primarily a fracture orthopaedic model but that the facility would also accept general rehabilitation patients from across the region at the end of an acute hospital admission who would benefit from active rehabilitation.</p> <p>Differential impacts identified as being both positive and negative:</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment being provided at regional rehabilitation centre may have an impact in terms of travel on some rural service users and their families. Mitigations will be in place to allow family members to connect with patients virtually or remotely using tablets and virtual technology;</li> <li>• Potential for further redeployment of staff in the event of further surge of COVID-19. This may have an impact on staff residing in rural areas if redeployed to Whiteabbey regional stepdown facility. In the case of staff being redeployed from rural to urban areas, the Trust continues to recognise the importance of enabling staff to have flexibility and has introduced a series of flexible working options to facilitate staff;</li> <li>• Potential to impact people in rural areas differently as the use of technology involves internet or broadband connectivity; people who live rurally are more likely to have no broadband or internet access or limited access than urban dwellers;</li> <li>• The provision of extra care and support provided in people’s homes as part of the discharge care plan is likely to reduce barriers regarding travel for some rural service users; and</li> <li>• Increased care provided in community settings after discharge is likely to have a positive impact in terms of reduced travel times.</li> </ul>
My Journey Project.	Podcasts, webinars and video production included as part of a one year pilot project called “My Journey,” where Northern Health and Social Care Trust are offering digital resources, supplementary to existing service provision and therefore there will be no loss of current services being offered, to support service users’ recovery journey and to make educational and clinical information available to patients and service users, in support of, or as an alternative to, existing care pathways for users’ healthcare journey. Potential issues identified in respect of access to services in terms of broadband/internet/mobile communication access.



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Suitable mitigation measures will be implemented (alternative delivery routes and accessible formats) to ensure that “My Journey” elements remain accessible to all service users.</p>
<p>Assistive Technology (AT) Strategy.</p>	<p>This Strategy recommends the relocation of the Trust Community Equipment Service (CES) and integration with the various assistive technology services currently provided by the Northern Trust into one Trust-wide service and management structure based in Galgorm Industrial Estate.</p> <p>Sometimes there will be a requirement for service users to collect products from the centralised CES in Ballymena; the proposed relocated service remains in Ballymena and in a central position within Northern Health and Social Care Trust. There may be some additional travel costs but these should be minimal. Service users of CES and AT primarily aged over 65 or people with a disability - less likely to use their own transport and, for the small part of the CES that requires service users to collect from the depot, transport and cost of transport requires to be considered. Mitigation through decision taken to continue to provide a delivery and collection service of equipment for CES and AT directly to the service user home address - direct to door is best mitigation for needs identified.</p>
<p>Domiciliary Care Provided by Non-Statutory Providers.</p>	<p>The proposal outlines how Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) propose to procure and deliver domiciliary care provided by non-statutory providers. The way NHSCT purchase domiciliary care needs to change due to legislative requirements and also to ensure services provided meet the current and future needs of the NHSCT population. Approximately 25% of the population of Northern Ireland live within the NHSCT, increasing to 27% when only looking at age 75+. Over the next 10 years the population of NHSCT age 85+ is expected to increase by 49%, nearly half of the population. This is a home based service with assessment and any subsequent care delivery taking</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>place in service user's home. The proposed non-statutory contracted service includes all locality areas (historic council areas) within NHSCT. Awards will be made in each area for long term care delivery and for short term care delivery. This should provide full coverage of the Trust geographical area.</p> <p>There will also be continued availability of an in-house service - this will provide mitigation arrangements in the event of a particular geographical area not covered by the non-statutory provider. Service users can also take control of delivery of their domiciliary care needs through direct payments.</p> <p>The interaction of these 3 elements should bring a positive impact to residents of NHSCT area including those who dwell rurally.</p>
<p>Robinson Hospital Redevelopment Business Case.</p>	<p>Temporary re-provision of services to allow major refurbishment of the existing hospital to maximise the number of ensuite facilities and to improve the patient, family and staff experience.</p> <p>There may be an impact upon families and carers in respect of the 6 month re-provision period to allow refurbishment and redevelopment works to take place with community hospital alternative beds being located in Ballycastle, Larne and Magherafelt. Families and carers may have to travel further to visit relatives and incur additional costs related to this travel. It is also recognised that the patient cohort and conditions accommodated may mean that families and carers are under stress and anxious about their family member.</p> <p>Mitigations include the provision of alternative beds in nursing home facilities in or close to the Ballymoney area and a commitment to engage with families and carers to gauge concerns and preferences and to accommodate these where it is possible to do so.</p> <p>Staff may have a temporary change of work location from Ballymoney to other community hospitals. Any such changes will be managed in line with the Northern</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	Health and Social Care Trust HR Management of Change Framework taking into account and responding to the personal situations of staff.
Northern Health and Social Care Trust NHSCT/22/1643 Community Beds Policy.	This policy describes the arrangements for medical cover, referral processes, screening processes and admission/discharge procedures for community beds. Temporary step down bed allocation will be based on availability rather than predetermined by the area in which people normally reside. May mean that family/ carers have a distance to travel to visit family members in community beds. Potential economic impact re cost of travel and availability of transport sources. This is a temporary move to step down bed provision - the nature of the provision means that the displacement from family and associated cost to visit is time limited.

In the interests of openness and transparency, the Trust has provided the following link to S75 equality screenings of Trust policies [here](#)

## Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Change of function for Carrickore from short breaks provision to long term residential care for children and young people with a disability.	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out.</p> <p>No adverse impact has been identified for children and young people living in rural areas. Carrickore is a Trust wide facility. It was initially intended for short breaks but as it is now being deemed as a longer term facility; alternative arrangements have been put in place to accommodate short breaks throughout the Trust via increased places within current facilities and an increase in number of foster care places. Where transport to these facilities creates a barrier the Trust will meet the need.</p>
The design and delivery of a social inclusion support programme for adults with acquired brain injury and carers of individuals with a 'Moderate' - 'Severe' brain injury across the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area.	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out.</p> <p>The service has ensured that there are a range of ways for service users to access the supports offered including virtual and face to face given that rural areas may not have access to public transport as regularly as urban areas.</p> <p>In addition, the service will provide an equitable amount of time in each Trust locality (i.e. Armagh and Dungannon, Craigavon and Banbridge and Newry and Mourne).</p>
The procurement of an additional day care service for adults with learning disability in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust Newry catchment area.	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out.</p> <p>No adverse impact has been identified for people living in rural areas requiring these services as transport provision for each service user from their home address will be included in the delivery of service procured.</p>
Trust Service Delivery Plan including Resilience Plan to address Winter Pressures and any subsequent waves of COVID-19 Pandemic October 2021 - March 2022.	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out</p> <p>This will continue to impact on people living in both rural and urban areas.</p>

In the interests of openness and transparency, the Trust has provided the following link to S75 equality screenings of Trust policies [here](#)

## South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Trust Rebuild Plan April - June 2021.	<p>The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust's Rebuild Plan April - June 2021 is for those services that experienced a significant impact as a result of the pandemic and explains the actions being proposed to further increase capacity and/ or access from April 2021. The Trust has set out in this document, a high-level overview of the services that we plan to maintain and rebuild during April to June 2021.</p> <p>Actions taken during the Trust's COVID-19 Rebuild Plan April - June 2021 are likely to impact people living in rural areas differently from people in urban area in respect to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic cost of travel to services which are based in urban areas or in one centralised location in the Trust area;</li> <li>• The ability of individuals in rural areas to travel to clinics which are based in urban areas, including the availability and timing of public/community transportation;</li> <li>• Access to adequate Broadband and mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services; and</li> <li>• The availability of public or community transportation for staff who have been redeployed from rural to urban Trust areas.</li> </ul> <p>Consideration for potential impact on staff and service users living in rural areas included a number of mitigating measures. These included offering service users the choice of telephone/video call depending on preference and the availability of Broadband/mobile communication.</p> <p>Due to the identification of potential internet challenges for people living in rural areas, services users are also given the option to be contacted by health professionals</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>via landline telephone where available, and if network issues are identified; regular communication and updates are provided to staff and service users via the internet (e.g. Trust social media sites). Other forms of communication have also been used e.g. regular briefings provided to Elected Representatives across the Trust area, including rural areas and relevant electronic signage on main access roads. Various evaluations are in place to assess service users' experience of telephone/video consultations and support provided by the Trust. Consideration is given to duration/period of travel and means of transport, as a provision for staff redeployed to meet urgent pressures in other Trust locations/services.</p> <p>Our plan will be continuously reviewed, informed by service user feedback and aligned to regional discussions and priorities.</p>
<p>Phase 7 Rebuild/Trust Delivery Plan Aug 2021 October 2021 to March 2022.</p>	<p>An overarching rural screening to gauge the potential cumulative impact of the measures outlined in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust's Phase 7 plan to facilitate on-going service delivery and an agile response to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19, winter pressures and ongoing rebuild of health and social care services.</p> <p>In particular, key actions identified with likely impact to people living in rural areas included the following: the economic cost of travel to services which are centrally based in urban areas, the ability of individuals in rural areas to travel to clinics which are centrally based in urban areas, including the availability and timing of public/community transportation, access to adequate broadband and mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services and the availability of public or community transportation for staff who have been redeployed from rural to urban Trust areas.</p> <p>Consideration for potential impact on staff and service users living in rural areas included a number of</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>mitigating measures. These included offering service users the choice of telephone/video call depending on preference and the availability of broadband/mobile communication.</p> <p>Due to the identification of potential internet challenges for people living in rural areas, service users are also given the option to be contacted by health professionals via landline telephone where available, and if network issues are identified; regular communication and updates are provided to staff and service users via the internet (e.g. Trust social media sites). Other forms of communication have also been used e.g. regular briefings provided to Elected Representatives across the Trust area, including rural areas and relevant electronic signage on main access roads. Various evaluations are in place to assess service users' experience of telephone/video consultations and support provided by the Trust. Consideration is given to duration/period of travel and means of transport, as a provision for staff redeployed to meet urgent pressures in other Trust locations/services.</p>
<p>Public Consultation on the temporary changes to Urgent and Emergency Care services at Lagan Valley Hospital, Lisburn.</p>	<p>Screening for Public Consultation on the temporary changes to Urgent and Emergency Care services at Lagan Valley Hospital, Lisburn. From 18 October 2021, in response to extreme workforce challenges the Trust temporarily reduced the opening hours at Lagan Valley Hospital Emergency Department and introduced a Phone First system. The Trust was no longer able to maintain the existing hours of operation across Urgent and Emergency Care Services in Lagan Valley Hospital due to insufficient medical staffing.</p> <p>Potential impact on patients who live in rural areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic cost of travel to services with longer opening hours which are based in urban areas in the Trust area;</li> <li>• The ability of individuals in rural areas to travel to services with longer opening hours which are based</li> </ul>



Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>in urban areas, including the availability and timing of public/community transportation; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to adequate Broadband and mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services and the Phone First service.</li> </ul> <p>Trust Initiatives to mitigate the potential impact on patients from rural areas (as part of the No More Silos Business Case):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing Enhanced Care at Home - will provide a local service and allow patients who are acutely unwell to be cared for at home avoiding unnecessary Emergency Department (ED) and hospital admission;</li> <li>• Rapid Access services - Patients will have direct access via GP referral to specialty specific services when unwell within the hub referral criteria conditions. This will avoid unnecessary ED admissions;</li> <li>• The anticipatory care/enhanced clinical care to care homes will both have a positive impact where every care home resident has an anticipatory care plan and there is improved access and advice from consultants and the multidisciplinary team;</li> <li>• The roll out of the Short Term Assessment Team model of Intermediate care Trust wide will ensure those service users living in more rural areas in the Trust will be able to access a multidisciplinary team response at the point when they require intervention in the community;</li> <li>• The Trust continues to offer service users alternatives depending on access technology/broadband e.g. telephone calls, accessing 'Phone First' for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, through the provision of the remote interpreting service SignVideo App. This service has been established to enable the Deaf community to communicate effectively via telephone and secure video link;</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Trust is continuing to engage with frontline staff as well as key partners, service users and carers to ensure that the temporary changes are representative of and include the valuable input of those who use its services; and</li> <li>• Eligible service users can avail of the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme, a scheme which helps people on a low income or income-based benefits who may be entitled to reclaim travel expenses for hospital treatment.</li> </ul>
SET (South Eastern Trust) Outdoors.	<p>This Rural Needs Impact Assessment outlines a programme called ‘SET (South Eastern Trust) Outdoors’ which aims to support existing Children’s Services across the South Eastern Trust area to utilise outdoor interventions (including animal-facilitated and nature based interventions) to promote and improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of service users. SET Outdoors will target children who access existing support services across the South Eastern Trust. This will include children from rural areas who perhaps struggle to access services based in large towns and cities, e.g. Newtownards and Lisburn.</p> <p>In terms of positive impacts of the Programme, it is hoped that it will improve associated health outcomes including mental wellbeing. This is particularly relevant for people in rural areas given that they are at greater risk of mental-ill health. The very nature of SET Outdoors lends itself to interventions in rural locations; encouraging young people to utilise the outdoor spaces in their local rural environment whilst allowing young people from urban locations to access the benefits of rural spaces.</p> <p>With regards to negative impacts, individuals in rural areas have been shown to experience increased issues surrounding transport which could potentially create barriers with regards to taking part in the Programmes offered, hence reducing the likelihood of them experiencing the benefits outlined above. For example,</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>rural populations may experience a lack of transport options (including mode of travel and times of public transport services), as well as the associated cost of transport from rural areas to attend the Programmes. SET Outdoors will aim to source and/or fund transport for young people to enable them to access the intervention that they are offered and ensure that no young person is disadvantaged by living in a particular area. This may include liaison with the Trust's Volunteer Driver Scheme, provision of public taxis and/or advice regarding rural transport schemes such as Down District Accessible Transport.</p>
Perinatal Mental Health.	<p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment for a Business Plan to implement Perinatal mental health services within the South Eastern Trust geographical area. The Service will be open to referrals from residents of both rural and urban communities within the Trust area. The aim is to have a mixed approach to intervention location, both clinics within centres of population (Ulster Hospital, Downe Hospital, Lisburn Health Centre) and Domiciliary visitations. This will be offered to reduce barriers for engagement including any due to travel, especially if public transport is required. Although the Programme is being rolled out on a phased basis (this is in relation to the recruitment of staff), from its implementation, access to this service will be to the population across the Trust. Phased recruitment and availability of clinic space will impact the ability to introduce local clinics in all areas (rural and urban). The service is planning for a greater level of domiciliary visitations to overcome this. There will be service user engagement, close monitoring and evaluation from implementation onwards.</p>
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) Response to Department of Health Action Plan - No More Silos.	<p>The South Eastern Trust Local Implementation Group serves to outline a vision for the delivery of Emergency and Urgent Care across the South Eastern Trust areas whilst delivering on the 10 Key Actions as defined by the No More Silos (NMS) network.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>Actions taken as part of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust's Response - Department of Health Action Plan - No More Silos - are likely to impact people living in rural areas differently from people in urban area in respect to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economic cost of travel to services which are based in urban areas or in one centralised location in the Trust area;</li> <li>• The ability of individuals in rural areas to travel to clinics which are based in urban areas, including the availability and timing of public/community transportation;</li> <li>• Access to adequate Broadband and mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services;</li> <li>• The availability of public or community transportation for staff; and</li> <li>• Access to domiciliary care in rural areas to support intermediate care.</li> </ul> <p>See consideration and mitigating measures for potential impact on people in rural areas below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan outlines the Trust's intention to move towards providing increased care in care homes and community settings which has the potential to benefit rural service users in terms of reducing travel to hospital settings;</li> <li>• With regards to virtual appointments, Trust services continue to offer service users alternatives to video calls depending on access to technology/broadband e.g. telephone calls;</li> <li>• The Trust is continuing to engage with frontline staff as well as key partners, service users and carers to ensure that plans are representative of and include the valuable input of those who use its services;</li> </ul>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible service users can avail of the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme - a scheme which helps people on a low income or income-based benefits who may be entitled to reclaim travel expenses for hospital treatment; and</li> <li>• The rapid access hubs will be open to clients Trust wide who fit hub referral criteria with consideration given to support transport.</li> </ul>
<p>Smoking Cessation in Secondary Care service and Northern Ireland Prison service.</p>	<p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment for Smoking Cessation in Secondary Care Service and Northern Ireland Prison Service. This service is primarily aimed at secondary care service users within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust geographical area who are reported as being a smoker. Patients are referred into the service during admission to hospital or at an outpatient appointment by health care professionals. Patients/Clients are supported through clinics located on Hospital sites or telephone consultations. Home visits, if required, will be undertaken for all requests regardless of location. Service users who cannot travel to main sites can be signposted to over 600 local community services.</p> <p>Signal issues in rural areas may cause problems with telephone consultations. Patients will be offered a face to face appointment at an outpatient appointment via letter depending on COVID-19 restrictions at that time.</p> <p>If patients have transport issues regarding getting to hospital appointments, they will be offered telephone support and signposted to local stop smoking services available in local GP surgeries or chemists.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, face to face appointments were suspended with patients being supported by telephone consultation only. This has positively impacted the rural community as service users no longer need to travel to appointment and can attend consultation from the comfort of their own home.</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
<p>Caring Communities Wellbeing Hub Action Plan 2021.</p>	<p>Rural Needs Impact Assessment for Caring Communities Wellbeing Hub Action Plan 2021. It sets out high-level measures to achieve this aim, which is expected to impact on adults 18 years old and over who attend GP Services in the Down, North Down and Ards Area.</p> <p>As part of their development, each high-level measure within the Plan will undergo a specific Rural Needs Impact Assessment to identify any specific impacts on people living in rural communities.</p> <p>Internet bandwidth limitations in rural areas may cause problems with rural users accessing service provision. As community settings reopen, efficient and affordable transportation may become an issue. Reliable and affordable transportation is needed for rural residents to access locally based interventions for service users. If service users express difficulties with transport, the service is able to signpost to organisations that can assist with travel, for example Down District Accessible Transport.</p>
<p>Childhood Obesity Programme known as 'Healthy Families Growing Up'.</p>	<p>This Rural Needs Impact Assessment outlines a childhood obesity programme known as 'Healthy Families Growing Up'. 'Healthy Families Growing Up' is a pilot programme which will be offered across South Eastern Trust area. Initially the Programme will be offered via the Zoom platform which may impact those in rural areas due to variable internet connection. Some families however, may find this of benefit as travel to venues will not be required. When COVID-19 guidelines allow, the Programme will be offered face to face and venues will be chosen taking into account where the clients live when possible. Following a successful pilot programme this is likely to be rolled out across the Trust area and careful consideration will be made to ensure access across all Trust areas and particularly those living in rural areas will be addressed.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Momenta Weight Management.	<p>Momenta Weight Management is a behavioural change intervention aimed at improving the physical and mental health of adult service users who are overweight/obese and live within South Eastern Trust geographical area.</p> <p>Initially the Programme will be offered via the Zoom platform which may impact those in rural areas due to variable internet connection. Some clients may however find this of benefit as travel to venues will not be required. When COVID-19 guidelines allow the Programme will be offered face to face and venues will be chosen taking into account where the clients live when possible.</p>

In the interests of openness and transparency, the Trust has provided the following link to S75 equality screenings of Trust policies [here](#).



## Western Health and Social Care Trust

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
<p>Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) Rebuild Plan 1st April 2021 - 30th June 2021.</p>	<p>With this Rebuild Plan the Trust sets out a high-level overview of the services that we plan to maintain and rebuild during April to June 2021. This plan is for those services which experience significant impact as a result of the pandemic and sets out the actions being proposed to further increase capacity and/or access from April 2021. The Trusts ability to deliver against this plan is linked to the effect of any subsequent surges during this period.</p> <p>The actions within the rebuild plan will have an impact on people living in urban and rural areas. Impacts on people living in rural areas may include cost of travel to services which are centrally based in urban areas, the ability of individuals in rural areas to travel to those clinics which may be centrally based, the availability of transport, access to adequate broadband and mobile connection in rural areas, for remote access to services.</p> <p>Departments within the Trust continue to offer appointments in a range of formats including via virtual telephone and digital communication. We are also increasing/reintroducing face to face contacts where appropriately risk assessed. This blended model of service provision adopted by some service areas, has in some instances had a positive impact on some service users and carers as it will have reduced the need to travel for appointments.</p>
<p>Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) Service Delivery Plan 1st July 2021 - 31 August 2021.</p>	<p>The purpose of this Service Delivery Plan is to describe the actions the Western Trust will take during July and August 2021 to continue to meet the needs of our people and communities and to address the impact the pandemic has had on all our services, particularly on waiting times to access assessment and treatment, services for children, older people and those who have mental health needs. In doing so, we will continue to take a carefully considered and balanced approach, ensuring that our plans take into account lessons</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>learned over the past year whilst also acknowledging that we will continue to live with COVID-19 for some time and the ongoing need to implement restrictions and precautions for the safety of our patients, service users and staff will continue to affect how we can deliver our services. Many of our services were suspended or reduced, including many elective procedures, allowing us to protect emergency and urgent services and these are now being re-established. The focus of the HSC continues to be on delivering all elective services in an environment that is safe for both staff and patients.</p> <p>It has become clear that COVID-19 has had a particularly detrimental impact on many who were already facing disadvantage and experiencing health inequalities. We will continue to work in partnership across health and social care, with GP colleagues and government departments and organisations in statutory, community, voluntary and private sectors to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. This includes continued partnership working with local councils to support delivery of Community Plans, continued focus through our Pathfinder Programme on the development of an integrated population health plan aimed at promoting access and meeting the health and care needs of people living in Fermanagh and West Tyrone, ongoing coordination of the Department for Communities Neighbourhood Renewal Groups and support for programmes that reduce health inequalities, and continued focus through our Public Health Agency commissioned programmes of work on disadvantaged and hard to reach groups. We will also continue to communicate regularly with elected representatives to provide updates and information on key issues. We will keep or surge plans under review and work regionally on any surge preparations required.</p> <p>In addition to the three Western Trust operated Mass Vaccination Centres (MVC) established in December 2020, during June 2021 Trust special mobile teams,</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>working with multiagency partners, were deployed to areas with low vaccine uptake rates, including rural areas, these clinics will continue to be operational during July and August. WHSCT will engage with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs funded Farm Families project to assist in targeting and providing vaccination clinics in rural areas.</p> <p>The plan impacts on people throughout the whole of the Western Trust area. For those in rural areas the impact may include cost of travel to centrally based areas to access services, the ability to travel and the availability of transport. The blended model of service provision currently ongoing throughout the Trust includes face to face contact and/or, where appropriate, telephone/virtual appointments. In some instances, a positive impact has been a reduction in travel to appointments when telephone/virtual appointments are used. The Trust remains mindful that both broadband and/or telephone connection in some rural areas remains an issue however face to face appointments remain an option.</p>
<p>Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT) Service Delivery Plan and Winter Pressures October 2021 onwards.</p>	<p>Annually the Western Health and Social Care Trust prepares a seasonal resilience plan outlining measures to address the predicted increase in demand for unscheduled care services each winter. Traditionally, this is a period when overall demand for care services increases and is frequently significantly greater than the capacity of our hospital and community to respond. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial adverse impact on services across all areas of the Trust with capacity in many areas still below pre-COVID-19 levels.</p> <p>The Trust has adopted Department of Health system principles in preparing the surge plan as outlined in the Regional COVID-19 Pandemic Surge Planning Strategic Framework (1 September 2020); patient safety remains the overriding priority. The plan includes activity projections for October - December 2021 across a range of services.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>As we enter the winter months the Trust is committed to taking a carefully considered and balanced approach to the delivery of services taking into account lessons learned over the past 18 months in responding to the pandemic whilst also recognising the wider impact the pandemic continues to have on our service users and local community and our staff. The global pandemic continues to present the health and social care system with unprecedented challenges which impact on how services can be safely delivered. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, the Trust is committed to planning and working as a collective with the whole Health and Social Care system over the coming months.</p> <p>This plan focuses on three areas describing how the Trust will deliver increased resilience through this challenging autumn and winter period:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Winter Pressures for both adults and paediatrics including our estimated bed projections, actions to secure the appropriate level of suitably trained staff and our response to the influenza virus.</li> <li>2. COVID-19 (4th surge) - this sets out across key service areas the actions required to meet the demands of the pandemic whilst continuing to apply the key regional planning principles of equity of access for the treatment of patients, minimising the transmission of COVID-19 and protecting the most urgent services.</li> <li>3. The delivery of key regional priorities for unscheduled care, elective care, cancer services, adult social care, children's services, mental health and physical disability services.</li> </ol> <p>Impact of Combined Winter and COVID-19 Pressures Regional modelling has predicted a fourth wave of COVID-19 will coincide with this year's winter period and is also likely to overlap with outbreaks of other respiratory viruses such as Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and Influenza with the potential to substantially</p>

<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>impact on both adult and children’s health services. Winter pressures traditionally have a significant impact on our hospital and community services. The predicted resurgence of COVID-19 combined with the increased activity associated with winter pressures will place immense demands on the entire system and will have a wide reaching impact on our ability to provide services across the Trust.</p> <p>In making any decisions, we will maintain a focus on patient and staff safety including maintaining social distancing and infection prevention control measures across all our care settings and we will also engage with staff as appropriate. This plan incorporates short term actions to begin tackling our health inequalities, although it is recognised that this is a long-term continuous process.</p> <p>These plans impact on people throughout the whole of the Western Trust area. For those in rural areas the impact may include cost of travel to centrally based areas to access services, the ability to travel and the availability of transport. The blended model of service provision currently ongoing throughout the Trust includes face to face contact and/or, where appropriate, telephone/virtual appointments. In some instances, a positive impact has been a reduction in travel to appointments when telephone/virtual appointments are used. The Trust remains mindful that both broadband and/or telephone connection in some rural areas remains an issue however face to face appointments remain an option.</p>
<p>Service Delivery Plan 1 January 2022 - 31 March 2022.</p>	<p>This Service Delivery/Resilience Plan describes the actions the Trust will take during January to March 2022 to respond to the increased pressures that customarily occur during the Winter period and any further surge of COVID-19. The key focus of the plan is to describe how the Trust will deliver increased resilience through this challenging autumn and winter period across three areas which are detailed below:</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to Winter Pressures (Adults and Paediatrics) - this includes estimated bed projections over this period based on an agreed regional methodology, planned actions to secure the appropriate level of suitably trained staff and planned response to increased incidence of the influenza virus;</li> <li>• COVID-19 (4th surge) - this sets out the actions required across a number of service areas to meet the demands of the pandemic whilst continuing to apply the agreed regional planning principles of equity of access for the treatment of patients, minimising the transmission of COVID-19 and protecting the most urgent services; and</li> <li>• Delivery of Key Regional Priorities - this section sets out the Trust's plans to address the range of regional priorities and covers unscheduled care, elective care, cancer services, adult social care, children's services, mental health and physical disability services.</li> </ul> <p>The next few months are expected to continue to be extremely challenging with the on-going threat of further surge alongside winter pressures and the potential for further local outbreaks and is a rapidly evolving and concerning situation for all who plan and deliver services. A major challenge for the Trust relates to workforce in respect of securing and maintaining safe staffing levels across all areas, ensuring safe environments for patients and staff aligned to current COVID-19 guidance and policy, and funding to support the necessary actions required to address our challenges.</p> <p>Access to all our services continues to be impacted by the pandemic and this is expected to persist during January to March 2022. Addressing patient and staff safety through social distancing, infection prevention control and testing measures remains a priority for the Trust. We will continue to prioritise and focus on treating the most urgent cases first, and as a result, some</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>patients will have to wait longer than we would like. The Trust also acknowledges the role of the Belfast Trust in the provision of a range of regional specialist services and the challenges it will face in continuing to provide these on behalf of the region.</p> <p>This plan incorporates short term actions to begin tackling our health inequalities, although it is recognised that this is a long-term continuous process.</p> <p>We will continue to work in partnership with our stakeholders and key partners including Primary Care, Voluntary and Community Sector, Independent Sector and Trades Unions in the development and implementation of our plans.</p> <p>The plan impacts on people throughout the whole of the Western Trust area. For those in rural areas the impact may include cost of travel to centrally based areas to access services, the ability to travel and the availability of transport. The blended model of service provision currently ongoing throughout the Trust includes face to face contact and/or, where appropriate, telephone/virtual appointments. In some instances, a positive impact has been a reduction in travel to appointments when telephone/virtual appointments are used. The Trust remains mindful that both broadband and/or telephone connection in some rural areas remains an issue however face to face appointments remain an option.</p>
No More Silos - Western Plan.	<p>The No More Silos (NMS) Action Plan sets out 10 key actions for consideration, to ensure that urgent and emergency care services across primary and secondary care can be maintained and improved in an environment that is safe for patients and for staff. This is both in terms of the pressures we are facing this winter (particularly if there is an increase in COVID-19 cases); and the systemic issues faced by emergency care generally.</p> <p>This initiative will include, Phone First Service, the first point of contact and triage to services which will have</p>



<p><b>Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.</b></p>
	<p>direct access to direct and book appropriate patients into alternate pathways including secondary care services and into our minor injury streams, depends on the service users/patients having access to adequate landline or mobile technology.</p> <p>The current plans to provide equity within the Trust between the Northern and Southern sectors through the Hospital at Home service will cover the Fermanagh and West Tyrone areas, once established further expansion of the service will allow coverage of all rural areas within the Southern Sector.</p> <p>The impact of this plan on service users living in rural areas will be cost of travel and travel time to services which are centrally based in urban areas or in one centralised location in the Trust area, the availability of public or community transportation for these journeys and access to adequate mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services.</p>

## Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Trust

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
New and Expectant Mothers - Health and Safety Procedure.	The aim of the Procedure is to ensure compliance with legislation and establish procedures for managing risks to new and expectant mothers in the workplace. The procedure aims to provide appropriate protection by minimising risk for new and expectant mothers and ensure compliance with legislation. It is intended to ensure the impact of any risks to new and expectant mothers are reduced and managed. No rural needs were identified, and the procedure will have no differential impact for service users in rural areas.
Remote and Home Working Procedure.	The policy has been designed to safeguard the health and safety of staff working from home. Access to reliable internet services are vital to facilitate staff to work from home. Internet services are less reliable in rural areas. The lack of these services may actively discourage or prevent staff in rural areas from availing of the option to work from home. The Trust has no control over internet provision in rural areas. However, staff may have the option to work at alternative Trust sites closer to their home location.
The principle of introducing body worn video as one of a number of measures to reduce acts of violence and aggression against staff.	There is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted by the principle of introducing body worn video. No rural needs were identified and the principle of introducing body worn video will have no differential impact for service users in rural areas.
Revision of the Trust's Medical Devices Policy.	The objective of the policy is to ensure that all medical devices for the Trust are selected, risk assessed, procured and used in compliance with statutory instruments, standards, approved codes of practice and manufacturers' recommendations. No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted by the policy.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Hand Hygiene Policy.	The policy relates to all staff within the Trust, especially those who provide care to patients. The policy will benefit service users who live in both rural and urban areas. No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be impacted disproportionately by the policy.
Aseptic Non-Touch Technique (ANTT) Policy.	The policy applies to staff who undertake clinical procedures such as cannulation and wound dressing. It sets out the expected process that is required when a staff member undertakes an aseptic procedure. The policy will benefit service users who live in both rural and urban areas. No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be impacted disproportionately by the policy.
Guidance for Line Managers: COVID-19/Long COVID-19 Absence Support Process.	New guidance adapted from a regional Health and Social Care process relating to existing policy and procedure. It highlights key principles in managing Long COVID-19 and outlines the support process line managers should follow to support the effective management of sickness attributable to Long COVID-19 and facilitate the return of individuals back to the workplace, where possible, in accordance with absence procedures. No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be impacted disproportionately by the guidance. The policy will benefit staff, irrespective of where they live or work.
Safeguarding Education and Training Strategy.	The Training Strategy sets out the Trust's responsibilities to ensure that staff and volunteers work with patients (and others) both adults and children who may be at risk of abuse and neglect, as defined by regional safeguarding policies and procedures, are equipped with the skills and knowledge to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	that staff or patients in rural areas would be impacted disproportionately by the policy.
Revision of the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.	The Safeguarding Policy was developed with reference to current Northern Ireland safeguarding legislation and regional safeguarding policies and procedures on the protection of adults, children and young people. The policy sets out the overall aim and role of the Trust in meeting its safeguarding responsibilities and should be read in conjunction with other Trust policies, procedures, and guidance, including Trust Safeguarding Procedures. No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be impacted disproportionately by the policy.
Revision of the Trust's Safeguarding Procedures and Referral Process.	The aim of the procedure is to ensure that the Trust fulfils its professional responsibilities in relation to safeguarding adults and children, in partnership with other key agencies (Health and Social Care Trusts, PSNI, HSCB, RQIA and the Department of Health). No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be impacted disproportionately by the procedures.
Being Open Policy.	This policy sets out the Trust's commitment to provide open and honest communication between healthcare staff and a patient (and/or their family and carers) when they have suffered harm as a result of their treatment. It is based on published guidance by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) and also complies with step 5 of 'Seven Steps to Service User Safety'. No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be impacted disproportionately by the policy.
Personal Development and Performance Review (PDPR) Policy.	This policy sets out the Trust's commitment to provide open and honest communication between healthcare staff and a patient (and/or their family and carers) when they have suffered harm as a result of their treatment.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	It is based on published guidance by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) and also complies with step 5 of 'Seven Steps to Service User Safety'. No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be impacted disproportionately by the policy.
Personal Development and Performance Review (PDPR) Policy.	The policy aims to implement a new approach to personal development reviews to inspire and motivate staff to be the best that they can be and to provide the best possible care to patients. It will enable meaningful and constructive feedback through structured appraisal and development conversations so that staff feel valued and included in the organisation's vision. No rural needs were identified, and there is nothing in the analysis of data to indicate that staff or patients in rural areas would be impacted disproportionately by the policy.
Policy for the use of camera imagery within the Trust's electronic patient record (ePCR).	The Trust is introducing personal issue devices and electronic patient care records for all staff delivering emergency and non-emergency care. These devices will have camera functionality, however this is only enabled when the device has an active electronic patient care record open. Clinical or scene images captured at an incident or during staff interactions with patients may provide important information that contributes to incident management and the ongoing care of the patient. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the use of the camera functionality on the personal issue device, specifically as part of the electronic patient care record. No rural needs were identified, and there is no evidence to suggest that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted by the use of camera functionality within the electronic patient record.
Community First Responders (CFRs) Policy.	Operational pressures, geographical location and hospital waiting times can contribute to increased ambulance response times. CFR Schemes are made up of a group of volunteers who respond to a specific set of 999 calls within an agreed geographical area.

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
	<p>CFRs provide a complementary service in partnership with the Trust to reach the sickest quickest, making a lifesaving contribution.</p> <p>CFRs were designed with the needs of people in rural areas in mind and are likely to have positive benefits where ambulance response times may be longer. CFRs are able to provide defibrillation and life support until the ambulance arrives. CFR Schemes tend to be established in rural areas but are not limited to those areas. Greater benefits are likely to be experienced for people in rural areas where ambulance response times may be longer.</p>
GoodSam Responders.	<p>The GoodSam App allows members of the public, from doctors to those who have a first aid certificate, to be alerted to a cardiac arrest call within a specific radius of their location. The App also enables the responder to know where the closest defibrillator is located, allowing them to ask someone to retrieve the defibrillator while they provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Each of these steps can strengthen the chain of survival. Use of the GoodSam App is likely to have positive benefits for people in rural areas where ambulance response times may be longer. The GoodSam App has been designed with the needs of people in rural areas in mind and is particularly suited to those needs.</p>
Confidentiality Code of Conduct.	<p>The policy aims to provide comprehensive guidance on the correct way to handle information and ensure adherence to relevant legislation. No rural needs were identified, and there is no evidence to suggest that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted.</p>
Data Protection Impact Assessment Policy.	<p>The policy aims to ensure that systems or processes take account of potential information governance implications and that the Trust meets its statutory obligations regarding the processing and management of information. No rural needs were identified, and there is no evidence to suggest that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted.</p>

Description of the activity undertaken by the public authority which is subject to section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.	Describe how the public authority has had due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising the policy, strategy or plan or when designing or delivering the public service.
Data Quality Policy.	The policy aims to ensure that all staff are aware of and understand the standards expected by the Trust with regard to data quality and its wider implications. No rural needs were identified, and there is no evidence to suggest that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted.
Freedom of Information Policy and Procedure (Including Environmental Information Regulations).	The aim of the policy is to ensure that non-personal information is processed in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations and provide guidance on the correct way to handle requests for non-personal information. No rural needs were identified, and there is no evidence to suggest that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted.
Information Governance Policy.	The aim of the policy is to provide assurance to the Trust Board that a robust information governance system in place, and minimise the risks associated with the incorrect processing and management of information. No rural needs were identified, and there is no evidence to suggest that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted.
Information Management Lifecycle Policy.	The policy aims to ensure that all staff are aware of the importance of effective records management and its associated components. No rural needs were identified, and there is no evidence to suggest that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted.
Information Risk Management Policy.	The policy aims to manage the information risks identified through day to day functions, approval, change and review processes and audit programmes. No rural needs were identified, and there is no evidence to suggest that staff or patients in rural areas would be disproportionately impacted.



## Glossary

3G	Third Generation
4G	Fourth Generation
5G	Fifth Generation
AANDBC	Ards and North Down Borough Council
ABC	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
ACOP	Approved Code of Practice
ACRS	Afghan Citizens Resettlement Schemes
AHC	Active and Healthy Communities
ANTT	Aseptic Non-Touch Technique
AOI	Audit of Inequalities
AQAP	Air Quality Action Plan
ARAP	Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy
AT	Assistive Technology
BCC	Belfast City Council
BHSCT	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
BOSS	Belfast Open Spaces Strategy
BRCD	Belfast Region City Deal
bTB	Bovine Tuberculosis
CAFRE	College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CAPEP	Corporate Appearance and Protective Equipment Standard
CASE	Collaboration and Sharing in Education Project
CBRNe	Chemical Biological Radiological or Nuclear material event
CCLV	City Centre Living Vision
CCTV	Close Circuit Television
CES	Community Equipment Service
CETP	Club Environment Transition Programme
CFF	Community Facility Fund
CFR	Community First Responders
CGRF	Central Good Relations Funding
CJRS	Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
Cllr	Councillor
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CPSU	Close Protection Support Unit
CRC	Community Relations Council
CRRP	COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme
CRSSRP	COVID-19 Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme

## Glossary

CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CWB	Community Wealth Building
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DE	Department for Education
DEA	District Electoral Areas
DFC	Department for Communities
DFE	Department for Economy
DFI	Department for Infrastructure
DNI	Digital Northern Ireland
DOE	Department of Environment
DoH	Department of Health
DRS	Document Repository System
DSC	Delivering Social Change
DSCG	Digital Selling Capability Grant
DVA	Driver and Vehicle Agency
EA	Education Authority
ED	Economic Development
ED	Emergency Department
EdIS	Education Information Solutions
EEA	European Economic Area
EISS	Early Intervention Support Services
EOTAS	Education Other Than at School
ePCR	Electronic Patient Record
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment
ERAP	Economic Recovery Action Plan
ERIG	Economic Recovery Innovation Grant
ESA	Employment Support Allowance
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESF	European Social Fund
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
EU	European Union
EUSS	European Union Settlement Scheme
EVAWG	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
EWS	Education Welfare Service
FCL	Fraud Compensation Levy
FODC	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
FPC	Family Proceedings Court
FPN	Fixed Penalty Notice

## Glossary

FRS	Family Resources Survey
GB	Great Britain
GBSP	Governing Body Support Programme
GP	General Practitioner
GSE	Gainful Self-Employment
GVA	Gross Valued Added
HBAI	Households Below Average Income
HE	Higher Education
HLC Alliance	Healthy Living Centre Alliance
HMR	Human Medicines Regulations
HNA	Housing Need Assessment
HRC	Household Recycling Centre
HSC	Health and Social Care
HSCB	Health and Social Care Board
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
HSENI	Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland
HSS	Housing Supply Strategy
HSS	High Street Scheme
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IS	Income Support
IT	Information Technology
IVMS	Inshore Vessel Monitoring System
JBO	Jobs and Benefits Office
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
LCCC	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
LCW	Limited Capability for Work
LDC	Learning and Development Centre
LDP	Local Development Plan
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Others
LMP	Labour Market Partnerships
MIF	Minimum Income Floor
Mi-Fi	Mobile WiFi
MPA's	Marine Protected Areas
MRP	Minimum Revenue Provision
MVC	Mass Vaccination Centres
NGA	Next Generation Access
NHSCT	Northern Health and Social Care Trust

## Glossary

NI	Northern Ireland
NI Direct	Northern Ireland Direct - Northern Ireland Government Website
NIAS	Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
NIBSUP	Northern Ireland Business Start-Up
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NICVA	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action
NIFRS	Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service
NIHE	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
NIMAR	Northern Ireland Marketing Authorisation Route
NIRDp	Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme
NIRO	Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NMDDC	Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
NMS	No More Silos
NOM	Notice of Motion
NSPA	National Patient Safety Agency
OBC	Outline Business Case
ODC	Other Developments in the Countryside
ODP	Outcome Delivery Plans
OSESA	Old Style Employment Support Allowance
OU	Open University
PAMP	Property Asset Management Plan
PCSP	Policing and Community Safety Partnership
PDPR	Personal Development and Performance Review
PERN	Packaging Waste Export Recycling Note
PETP	Performance Environment Transition Programme
PFG	Programme for Government
PGTFL	Post-graduate Tuition Fee Loan
PHA	Public Health Agency
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PRN	Packaging Waste Recycling Note
PS	Primary School
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
PSSN	Public Sector Shared Network
PUWER	Provision and Use of Work Equipment Policy
PVL	Property Value Limit
PWC	Personal Water Craft
RDC	Rural Development Council

## Glossary

RDCA	Rathlin Development and Community Association
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RHI	Renewable Heat Incentative
RMCGS	Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme
RNIA	Rural Needs Impact Assessment
RQIA	Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
RSPPG	Road Service Policy and Procedure Guide
RSV	Respiratory Syncytial Virus
S.75	Section 75
SAG	Safety Advisory Group
SARS-CoV-2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome-Related Coronavirus (Virus of the species)
SEHSCT	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SESP	Signature Project for Shared Education
SET	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
SIS	Site Identification Studies
SPPG	Strategic Planning and Performance Group
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SR	Statutory Rule
SSM	Social Supermarket Support
SSP	Sustainable Schools Policy
T:BUC	Together: Building a United Community
TB	Tuberculosis
TBR	Technical Booklet Part R
TEO	The Executive Office
TNOC	Tollymore National Outdoor Centre
TRPSI	Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation
TV	Temporary Variation
UC	Universal Credit
UK	United Kingdom
UKMS	United Kingdom Marine Strategy
USCRG	Unscheduled Care Service User and Carer Reference Group
VC	Volunteer Centres
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WHSCCT	Western Health and Social Care Trust
Wi-Fi	Wireless Fidelity

ISBN: 978-1-83887-094-2

Date of Publication - December 2022



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

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**