

Rural Needs

Annual Monitoring Report

1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



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

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IN PEOPLE**

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Ministerial Foreword

I am pleased to present the fourth Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report covering the reporting period 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021. This Report provides details of all the Rural Needs Impact Assessments undertaken by public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act during this period and is an integral part of the rural needs monitoring process.



All public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act are required to comply with the due regard duty under section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016. This duty requires public authorities to give fair consideration to the issues that may impact on rural dwellers and to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and designing and delivering public services.

Rural areas are diverse and have many differences that contrast greatly to urban areas. It is therefore vital that public authorities consider these differences during the policymaking process to ensure an equitable outcome for those who live in our rural areas. The Rural Needs Impact Assessment process helps ensure that these differences are considered by public authorities when carrying out their functions.

It is clear to me from this report that consideration of rural needs is now becoming more firmly embedded within public authorities and my department will continue to work with these public authorities to help them implement the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 effectively with the ultimate aim of improving outcomes for rural dwellers. I am committed to ensuring that the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 broadens its reach and to this end my Department undertook a Review of the Schedule to the Act in Autumn 2020. This review provides an opportunity for my Department to amend the Schedule to the Act and add additional public authorities to it thereby ensuring that rural needs are given due regard to by these additional public authorities which will help deliver positive and meaningful benefits for rural dwellers in the future.

Finally I would like to thank those public authorities who have contributed to this Annual Monitoring Report and I hope that by continuing to work together we can deliver better outcomes for rural dwellers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edwin Poots". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Edwin Poots MLA

Minister of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs

DAERA Overview

The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 (the Act) was introduced to help deliver fairer outcomes for people who live in rural areas in Northern Ireland and it is a key rural policy tool for DAERA in supporting rural communities. The aim of the Act is to improve outcomes for rural people by ensuring that the social and economic needs of people in rural areas are given due regard to by public authorities in their decision making processes and to increase transparency on how public authorities consider rural needs when undertaking their functions.

The Rural Needs Annual Monitoring Report is an integral part of the monitoring process as it provides a formal record of all the Rural Needs Impact Assessments undertaken by public authorities. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment is the process recommended by DAERA to assist public authorities in fulfilling their due regard duty. It requires public authorities to detail how they have complied with the due regard duty when carrying out activities specified under section 1(1) of the Act.

This annual monitoring report, coupled with the requirement for public authorities to compile and report in their own annual reports, increases the level of transparency and enables stakeholders to evaluate the implementation of the Act across a wide and diverse range of public authorities.

As the department with responsibility for the Act, DAERA continues to provide a range of support to the other public authorities listed in the Schedule to the Act to help ensure they comply with the requirements of the legislation. This support includes the provision of advice on the implementation of the due regard duty, the undertaking of Rural Needs Impact Assessments, the completion of Rural Needs Impact Assessment templates, engaging with rural stakeholders and monitoring and reporting.

One of the recommendations in the report on the Review of the Implementation of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 was that DAERA would review the structure and content of the 'Rural Needs' section on DAERA's internet site with a view to making the information more user-friendly. This has been implemented and the new rural needs section is now live and the new web address is <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/rural-needs>.

Some new features include the development of a number of 'Help With' guides for Public Authorities, the incorporation of a 'rural research hub' with information on available rural related research and publications, and details of the range of support measures and other resources available to assist Public Authorities.

DAERA also undertook a Review to the Schedule of the Act in autumn 2020. The review provides an opportunity for DAERA to amend the Schedule to the Act and add additional public authorities to it. This will help to broaden the reach of the Act thereby ensuring that rural needs are given due regard to by these organisations with the ultimate aim of improving outcomes for rural people.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

Reporting Period 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Deprivation	
Support for the Community Foundation Northern Ireland (CFNI) Coronavirus Community Fund.	The fund is open to community organisations throughout Northern Ireland. The focus of the fund is to offer community organisations emergency funding to deal with emerging issues in the community, affecting older people (aged 50 and over), those at an increased risk, particularly in relation to poor mental health and well-being, vulnerable isolated people and families, particularly those living in rural areas, families where a parent/both parents have lost their employment or where children are living in poverty as a result of the continuing threat of Coronavirus.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
Young Farmer Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) Land Mobility Scheme 2019-21.	The consideration for the continuation of funding for YFCU Land Mobility Scheme for another 2 years has been on the basis that YFCU Land Mobility Scheme contributes towards improving key themes of social interaction & rural development, good relations and poverty in rural areas. The Land Mobility Scheme will facilitate the generational change within rural communities by repositioning the age profile of Northern Ireland farmers and their families thus having a positive impact by avoiding rural isolation. By providing opportunities for young farmers to pursue their career in farming whilst allowing older farmers to reduced or retire from their farming duties the land mobility scheme will improve on farm productivity which will have a positive impact on the rural economy.
Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme (NIRFP) 20210-21.	The NIRFP does not indirectly impact on rural areas in ways that are likely to disadvantage people in rural areas compared to people in urban areas. The costs of providing the programme is not disproportionately higher in rural areas and a different delivery model is not required. During the development and revising of the business case and associated guidance notes/application form for NIRFP 2020-21, rural needs have been considered to ensure a fair and equitable treatment of people in rural areas. We are open to new, innovative ideas and approaches when considering how to take

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.
	account of rural needs. The NIRFP Selection Panel scoring matrix was adjusted for the 18/19 programme to give increased weighting to the criterion relating to the development of a sustainable and thriving rural economy.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
European Innovation Partnerships (EIP) (Part of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme Farm Business Improvement Scheme).	There are no barriers to the delivery of a fair and equitable outcome for people in rural areas. The EIP scheme does not indirectly impact on rural areas in ways that are likely to disadvantage people in rural areas compared to people in urban areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other-Environment	
The Waste Circular Economy (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020.	The proposed legislative change is as a result of evaluating and reviewing the current policy. No specific rural needs apply as there is no major difference in terms of impact between rural and urban settings.
Introduction of new legislation to set up a UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to replace the EU Emissions Trading Scheme at the end of the Transition Period.	This policy does not impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.
Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy 2020-2040.	Implementation of the Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy will lead to positive outcomes for the environment in Northern Ireland and will help to underpin the intention of the Northern Ireland Executive to tackle the challenge of climate change. All comments in relation to impacts on people in rural communities will be welcome during the consultation process and reflected as far as is reasonably possible in the final Strategy document.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development	
The development of a Framework for Rural Policy.	Informed by a range of rural research, evidence and extensive stakeholder engagement, which fed into the development of the Framework, the needs of people in rural areas were taken into account through the development of five key thematic pillars as follows:

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"> • To create a rural society where innovation and entrepreneurship flourish; • To maximise the contribution that sustainable rural tourism makes to rural society and to the wider economy and environment; • To reduce loneliness and social exclusion in rural areas, to minimise the impacts of rural isolation and to promote the health and wellbeing of rural dwellers; • To increase employment opportunities available to people living in rural areas; • To improve connectivity between rural and urban areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
<p>Rural Micro Business Growth Scheme.</p> <p>The development of a pilot 'Growth' grant scheme for rural micro businesses.</p>	<p>Section 4A of the RNIA detailed the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas. Section 4A also highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship as well as the need for innovation in terms of driving competitiveness and growth.</p> <p>This scheme's specific focus on rural is viewed as an opportunity to deliver on the draft Programme for Government particularly in achieving a 'regionally balanced economy' and in 'improving wellbeing for all by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth'. Entrepreneurship and innovation contribute to at least two of the Programme for Government outcomes (see Section 3D and its reference to PfG Outcomes No's 1 & 5).</p> <p>The pilot Rural Micro Business Growth Scheme provides an immediate opportunity for rural businesses to grasp an opportunity as part of the COVID19 recovery to invest in new technologies or to develop new products to meet a demand or growing market, create growth in the rural economy and make a positive climate related contribution. The pilot also aims to bridge the gap between the end of the EU support via the 2014-2020 Leader programme and the finalisation of the Rural Policy Framework. The outcomes of the pilot will therefore help inform any future programme designed to address the social and economic needs of people 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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Update to the Marine Monitoring Programme in-line with the UK's legal obligations under the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010.</p>	<p>The monitoring programmes proposed in the Marine Strategy Part Two: UK Updated Monitoring Programmes will be carried out at sea and are designed to have no/negligible/minimal impact on the environment or the people who may work at sea.</p> <p>Most of the proposed monitoring programmes are a continuation of existing programmes and often fulfil other policy purposes, for example Domestic Fisheries Policy.</p> <p>It has therefore been considered unnecessary to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas associated with the delivery of these programmes and no specific differentiation between the needs of rural versus urban communities has been identified by the Department in relation to the UK Marine Strategy Part Two.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development/ Rural Businesses	
<p>Development of Pilot 'Rural Social Economy Investment Scheme' - a grant scheme that will provide funds to social enterprises in rural areas.</p>	<p>The pilot scheme has been informed through a range of rural research, evidence and extensive stakeholder engagement, which was undertaken as part of the Development of the Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland. Working Group reports and stakeholder consultation identified a need for providing support to rural social enterprises and it has been clear from the framework development work to date that rural businesses and communities remain critical to the sustainability of rural areas.</p> <p>This scheme identifies social enterprises as vehicles for tackling economically disadvantaged rural areas, and through provision of grant funding will seek to support high-potential social enterprises in making a significant economic and social contribution to their local rural communities.</p> <p>It is envisaged the scheme will be of benefit to emerging and established social enterprises, in particular those that contain high potential to implement innovative projects that will have direct positive impact to their local rural areas. These successful social enterprises will subsequently be able to distribute surplus profits to charitable/communal causes in their local rural communities.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
Draft Statutory Rule (SR): Organic Product Regulations (NI) 2020.	The Northern Ireland SR will not give effect to any policy change from that which already exists in the Organic Product Regulations 2009. It is only required due to the amendments made to these regulations which mean that they will no longer extend to Northern Ireland at the end of the Transition Period. The measures apply specifically to businesses that are by their nature rural, they do not have a differential effect and do not require modification or adaption.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 update packaging targets for 2021 and 2022 as the current legislation contains packaging targets until 2020.	As this is a technical amendment to packaging targets only, there is no impact on citizens of any location.
Development of fisheries management measures for Marine Protected Areas and establishment of scallop enhancement sites.	Rural coastal communities are vulnerable to economic change, but the introduction of fisheries management measures is not expected to impact the economic needs of people in rural areas. This policy is required to provide environmental protection to habitats and species within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), from damage from fishing activities. It is based on scientific evidence of risk of damage and is intended to have the same impact in urban areas and rural areas. To date, no issues have been raised regarding impacts on rural needs. This policy will continue to be monitored and reviewed and we welcome comments from all stakeholders during the public consultation period.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Business	
A Financial support package for fishing undertakings (commercial sea fishing vessel owners that predominantly deploy	The financial support package available during the COVID-19 pandemic is targeted at operators of fishing 'undertakings' (boats) to cover the fixed costs of their boats which typically deploy static gear (pots and creels) to catch high value species such as crab and lobster.

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.
static fishing gear) that have been affected during the continued COVID-19 pandemic due to the impact on markets for their catch.	The scheme has been designed in conjunction with industry representatives and excluded those undertakings that were eligible for support from the concurrent European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) funded temporary cessation scheme for the trawling/dredging fleet. The scheme aims to sustain fishing undertakings as viable to remain fishing when circumstances allow and provide supply to the seafood supply chain. The fish processing sector is also based in these rural communities employing many residents.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Regulatory Charging Policy April 2021 - March 2023.	<p>The NIEA Regulatory Charging Policy impacts businesses and operations regulated under Waste, Water and Pollution Control legislation.</p> <p>This two year extension to the Policy will allow sufficient time to procure and manage a suitably qualified consultancy to undertake a complete root and branch review of the regulatory charging policy. This is an opportunity to develop a sustainable long term regulatory charging policy that is also consistent with the other regulatory agencies within the UK, and addresses any requirements under EU-Transition and any anomalies within the current regulatory charging policy.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
A consultation on the Proposal to Introduce a Protein Crop Payment Pilot Scheme.	This policy does not impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
Financial Support Package for income foregone for Lough Neagh fishers impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.	<p>The continuance of the Co-operative is vitally important in the sustainable management of the fishery and plays an important part in monitoring of fish populations which feed into international research and conservation programmes.</p> <p>Additionally the Co-operatives role in the protection of eel stocks is crucial at a time of enormous pressure on the wild eel population and a lucrative black market in glass (young) eels.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
A consultation on the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in Northern Ireland.	This Consultation is seeking views on the possibility of the introduction of a deposit return system in Northern Ireland. It is at a high level and future work is required to develop proposals for the introduction of any new system. If/when a new scheme is implemented a further RNIA will be completed. At consultation stage there is no likely impact on people in rural areas.
A UK wide consultation to seeking views on proposals to reform the packaging producer responsibility obligations.	The policy is not likely to have an impact on people in rural areas as it's 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.
Compiling and bringing into law the Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases and Ozone Depleting Substances (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (NI) 2020. This law ensure that the provisions on emissions of F-gases and ODS still apply in NI after EU Exit.	No issues considered, because there are no effects in practice upon any sector of society, including people in rural areas, as a result of the draft 2020 Regulations coming into operation. The draft 2020 Regulations merely allow F-gas and ODS provisions in law to continue to operate as normal after Implementation Period Completion Day.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Business	
The Direct Payments to Farmers (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	It was not considered necessary to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas. This is because the draft Statutory Rule makes technical changes to reflect that the UK is no longer an EU Member State and will allow the previously existing legislation governing Direct Payment Schemes for farmers in NI to continue to operate beyond the end of the 2020 Scheme.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
The Direct Payments to Farmers (Simplifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	It was not considered necessary to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas. This is because this SR gives legal effect to improvements/changes/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.

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
Financial Support Scheme to provide grant in aid towards aquaculture undertakings (bottom grown mussel, trout and oyster farms, kelp) to assist with income lost from the sales of aquaculture products (March to May 2020), due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	The aquaculture financial support package is targeted at those aquaculture undertakings which have been adversely impacted as a result of reduced sales as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will assist eligible operators to recover a portion of the 'income foregone' associated with their operations. Due the rural location of the aquaculture farms, it is likely that both the operators and employees will live in rural areas. The scheme aims to assist aquaculture undertakings to help sustain or maintain operations until traditional and new market opportunities return.
The Alien and Locally Absent Species (Aquaculture) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.	The amendment is technical in nature and will ensure that the Department complies fully with its obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP). There are, however, no policy changes arising from this SR, as it has always been the policy to control and, where necessary, restrict movements of species which could pose an environmental threat into NI from GB and elsewhere. There are no financial or procurement implications.
The Agriculture, Animals and Aquaculture (Health, Identification, Welfare, Trade etc.).	The Statutory Regulation (SR) makes technical changes only and will not change the substance of the existing domestic legislation. As such, it is not intended that it will have any impact on rural areas and no requirement arises to define 'rural' for the purposes of the SR.
The Animals (Health, Identification, Trade and Veterinary Medicines) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.	The Statutory Rule (SR) makes technical changes only and will not change the substance of the existing domestic legislation. As such, it is not intended that it will have any impact on rural areas and no requirement arises to define 'rural' for the purposes of the SR.
The Plant Health and Diseases of Animals (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.	The drafting of the Statutory Rule makes technical changes only and will not change the substance of the existing domestic legislation. No rural needs have, therefore, been 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
<p>Consultation on and publication of the draft River Basin Management Plan for Northern Ireland for the 3rd cycle of implementation of The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.</p>	<p>The objective in preparing a River Basin Management Plan is to fulfil the requirements of The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017. This requires the undertaking of a staged process on a 6 yearly cycle to prepare and review the river basin management plan. The regulations take an integrated approach to the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment.</p> <p>Note that the final Plan once published in Dec 2021, will constitute a review of the 2nd cycle River Basin Management Plans published in December 2015 and the 1st cycle plan published in 2009.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
<p>Financial Support Scheme to provide grant in aid towards aquaculture undertakings (bottom grown mussels, rope grown mussels, trout and oyster farms, kelp) to assist with income lost from the sales of aquaculture products (September to December 2020), due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>This further aquaculture financial support package is also targeted at those aquaculture undertakings which have been adversely impacted as a result of reduced sales due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will assist eligible operators to recover a portion of the 'income foregone' associated with their operations. Due the rural location of the aquaculture farms, it is likely that both the operators and employees will live in rural areas. The scheme aims to assist aquaculture undertakings to help sustain or maintain operations until traditional and new market opportunities return.</p>
<p>The Seed Marketing and Fertilisers (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.</p>	<p>These regulations have been brought forward as a result of the EU Withdrawal Agreement and the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol. They are designed to keep NI seed marketing and fertiliser regulations functional upon exiting the EU and as such are not likely to impact the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.</p>
<p>The Official Controls (Plant Protection Products) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.</p>	<p>The purpose of drafting this Statutory Rule (SR) is to ensure there is no statutory gap in relation to the enforcement of the pesticide elements of the new EU Official Controls Regulation (2017/625) in Northern Ireland. The SR does not impose significant changes to food safety standards and rules for the authorisation and use of pesticides. As such, it is not considered necessary to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas (and, hence, there are no issues to consider).</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
The Seeds (Variety Lists) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.	The purpose of this Statutory Rule (SR) is to mitigate for disruption of seed trade across the UK. They have been brought forward as a result of the EU Withdrawal Agreement and the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol, to transpose EU law. They are designed to keep seed trade in NI continuing as normal as possible after exiting the EU and as such are not likely to impact the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other	
The Statutory Rule (SR) being screened amends The Horses (Free Access to Competitions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 to allow for the reservation of up to 20% of competition prize money for the safeguard, development and improvement of horse breeding.	If the Department were to consider reserving prize money for the purposes set out in the SR at some point in the future, a full screening exercise would be carried out. As the SR does not introduce a change in policy, no impact is envisaged as a result of these changes - whether on people in rural areas or otherwise.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
The EPD 'Emergency COVID-19 Funding for Councils Programme' 2020/21.	The administration of the Emergency COVID-19 Funding for Councils Programme is to assist with increases in resources needed to maintain waste management services for the public at the outset of Covid and throughout its duration. It is not predicated on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas therefore this step is not applicable.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
Rural Micro Capital Grant Scheme (RMCGS) 2020.	Under the RMCGS the benefits from the TRPSI funding available through the RMCGS allows DAERA to combine the tools it has available to help tackle poverty and social isolation in rural areas (e.g. financial resources, staff resources, legislation, experience etc.) with the financial resources and expertise of other public sector bodies and the local knowledge and skills provided by the rural community sector (Rural Support Networks).

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.
	There are benefits to be gained through a collaborative approach that can lever additional resources for the benefit of rural communities. It also provides flexibility to help address a broad range of poverty and social isolation issues and to target specific groups of people in rural areas who have been identified as being at risk of poverty and/or social isolation. The Scheme provides grant under 3 Themes; IT; Modernisation of premises and Health & Well-Being.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme 2021.	The Social Farming Capital Grant Scheme is one of a number of Schemes delivered under the Framework. This Scheme provides 50% grant of up to £4,999 to existing or new Social Farmers to adapt their Farm Business to help them achieve the Social Farm Standards.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2021.	The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme provides a 50% grant of up to £4,999 to rural micro businesses to help them recover from the Covid 19 pandemic as well as sustain and development their business.
Draft Edible Crabs (Minimum Landing Size) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020; and Draft Edible Crabs (Prohibition on Landing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.	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. The concerns of the potting fishermen and the processors in relation to the future sustainability of brown crab fishery were discussed at meetings of DAERA's Inshore Fisheries Partnership Group, and this lead to a subsequent consultation on a range of proposed conservation measures.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
Issue of an environmental consent decision, draft marine licence and review of water abstraction licence and a water discharge consent for proposed Islandmagee Gas Storage development.	The decision relates to the issue of an environmental consent decision and draft marine licence for a proposed gas storage development 1 km below Larne Lough (the Islandmagee gas storage development). This assessment also applies to a review of a water abstraction licence and a water discharge consent originally issued in 2014 for this proposed development. The consent decisions are unlikely to impact people 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.
	<p>outside of Islandmagee differently from those in other areas. However, the residents of Islandmagee are likely to be impacted by the development and this was considered in the assessment. DAERA considered the issues raised by the local Islandmagee community around the potential impact of the development through the EIA process and the Environmental Statement. These include a potential negative impact on tourism, local bathing water quality and health and safety concerns. DAERA has addressed these concerns through conditions on the marine licence, revised abstraction licence and discharge consent. The company applying for the consents has also established a community fund of £1 million to be independently administered and to be spent over the first 3 years, with another £50000 for a minimum of 6 years.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
<p>Amendment of the policy and Marine Licensing (Exempted Activities) Order (NI) 2011.</p>	<p>The Marine Licensing (Exempted Activities) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 will amend The Marine Licensing (Exempted Activities) Order (Northern Ireland) 2011. The Order defines the circumstances under which the Department may exempt those using the marine environment from the need to obtain a marine licence. The objective of the amendments is to ensure the Marine Licensing (Exempted Activities) Order (NI) 2011 remains responsive to the safe and sustainable use of the marine environment. This Order applies to Northern Ireland's inshore region for which DAERA is the licensing authority. There is also a need to ensure a consistent licensing approach when allowing an exemption from the need to obtain a marine licence across both of the Northern Ireland inshore and offshore regions. The Secretary of State is the licensing authority for the Northern Ireland offshore region and applies a separate Exemptions Order to manage that region. The consultation on DAERAs proposals will close on 30 July 2021 and it is anticipated that the amending legislation will be brought forward later in 2021.</p>
<p>Introduction of new legislation to set up a UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to replace the EU Emissions Trading Scheme</p>	<p>This legislation to set up the UK ETS is to be made by Order in Council under the Climate Change Act 2008, and a draft of the Statutory Instrument must be laid before, and approved by, all four UK legislatures, prior to making a recommendation to Her Majesty's Privy Council to make the Order. The new legislation</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.
at the end of the Transition Period.	will set up a UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to replace the EU Emissions Trading Scheme at the end of the Transition Period. The scheme promotes carbon emissions reduction and investment in clean, low carbon technologies. This policy does not impact on the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
Introduction of legislation to allow NI electricity generators to continue to participate in the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EUETS) under the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol.	This Statutory Instrument ensures a smooth exit from the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EUETS) for UK participants and NI installations (with the exception of NI power generators which are required to remain in the EUETS under the Northern Ireland Protocol), while ensuring that obligations relating to UK's participation in the scheme which fall in 2021 are transposed into domestic law. No impact is envisaged as a result of these changes - whether on people in rural areas or otherwise and the Regulations do not introduce new policy in these areas.

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Housing	
Core funding of Housing Rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The benefits of the project for people in rural areas are equivalent to those for people in urban areas; • There are no additional costs associated with accessing the project for people/organisations in rural areas. <p>As the advice service is predominantly delivered via the telephone, it will be equally accessible in rural areas.</p> <p>Also, training and on-line 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 Service (HRS) also provide self-help, on-line resources - recent information indicates improving internet services in rural areas of Northern Ireland, although quality of access is still poorer for rural than urban premises and rural dwellers may have a more limited choice of providers, and Next Generation Access and Superfast Broadband availability are lower in rural than in urban areas. Longer line lengths in rural areas may also result in deteriorations in speed (DAERA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation - A New Framework; March 2016).</p> <p>The DfC and its delivery partner HRS has taken account of the needs of people in rural areas to ensure the project is widely available throughout Northern Ireland.</p>
Development of a new Intermediate Rental policy and model.	<p>In beginning to develop a new policy around the creation of a new Intermediate Rent product, DfC has taken account of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas as identified 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>Introducing an intermediate rental product in Northern Ireland may have a positive impact on people in 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>areas by increasing housing options that address a wider range of affordable housing need. It is anticipated the impact could be similar in rural and urban areas depending on viability of the areas. The Department intends to consult on the proposals in due course and will seek further feedback and evidence on potential rural impacts.</p> <p>It is anticipated these changes will complement the Northern Ireland Housing Executive rural strategy, and more generally, help deliver the Programme for Government targets to address housing need and increase housing supply.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Housing	
<p>Development and implementation of a Private Sector Leasing policy and scheme in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>The Department is mindful of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas and has reviewed a number of sources of statistics, identifying issues such as financial poverty, increasing levels of people over 65 in rural areas, social isolation, fuel poverty and affordable housing need in rural areas.</p> <p>The design of Private Sector Leasing policy and implementation is being influenced by these factors, along with a range of other factors and research commissioned by DfC. The development of the product will evolve as further research is completed but will continue to take into account the rural needs highlighted here. The Department intends to consult on the scheme proposals in due course and will seek further feedback and evidence on potential rural impacts.</p> <p>Introducing a Private Sector Leasing policy and scheme in Northern Ireland has the potential to have a positive impact on people in rural areas by providing an alternative housing option that addresses a wider range of affordable housing need. It is anticipated the impact could be similar in rural and urban areas depending on the outcome of an assessment of viability of the scheme in these types of 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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Sports Sustainability Fund (SSF) and Sports Hardship Fund (SHF).</p>	<p>Business case development for both Funds included completion of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment. Due to the nature of the COVID-19 restrictions the proposed projects and completion of both assessments showed that these intervention will have a direct positive impact on the needs identified that included a requirement to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustain sports clubs and sporting provision in rural areas (SSF); and • help sports clubs meet essential costs and maintain their facilities or hire facilities during ongoing public health restrictions (SHF). <p>It is recognized that Sports clubs in rural areas play a significant role in their local communities. This was strongly demonstrated during the COVID-19 restrictions with local sports clubs playing a critical volunteering role in supporting vulnerable people during periods of isolation with delivery of food, medicines etc.</p> <p>Each RNIA for the SSF and SHF found that these Funds will not impact differentially on people in rural areas. Every club irrespective of whether located in a rural or urban area were eligible to apply provided they met the scheme criteria to do so.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Sport and Leisure Access	
<p>Your School Your Club - opening up school facilities for community use.</p>	<p>The Your School Your Club initiative allows the potential for DfC, Sport NI, DAERA and other stakeholders to work collaboratively to develop sports, recreational and community facilities in rural areas for the benefit of those living in rural communities.</p> <p>4 projects were identified in rural areas and were subsequently taken forward in 2020/21 including schools in Eskra, Newtownstewart and Maghera.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Cross-cutting	
<p>S2020 - A new Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity.</p>	<p>A new 10 year strategy for sport and physical activity will seek to improve opportunities for every one of all ages to engage in some form of physical activity. The proposed vision is ‘Lifelong involvement in sport and physical activity leads to an active, healthy, resilient and inclusive society which recognises and values both participation and excellence.’</p> <p>In the pre-consultation phase the Project Team consulted with a wide range of stakeholders including those in rural communities to find out about their needs and issues that need to be addressed. The pre-consultation included focus group meeting and this included people from rural communities.</p>
<p>Community Support Programme - Community Development element outcomes framework and funding formula.</p>	<p>Updating the outcomes framework and funding formula for the Community Development element included completion of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment.</p> <p>We did not identify any specific differential needs of people in rural areas that are not supported within the community development element of the Community Support Programme</p> <p>The high level objectives and proposed draft outcomes framework of the community development element of the Community Support Programme encompass the needs of both urban and rural communities.</p> <p>The delivery mechanism for the programme allows councils to direct the funding to priority community development activity within their council areas, recognising that each council has a different balance of urban/rural population and associated community development approaches.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
<p>Warm Well and Connected (WWC).</p>	<p>The Warm, Well & Connected initiative was established to provide support, in addition to existing wellbeing programmes of support delivered by Public Health Agency, in response to the impacts of the ongoing pandemic and Covid restrictions.</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>Early scoping in terms of need and proposed responses involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rural Community Network which advocates for rural VCS communities; • The VCS Emergencies Leadership Group; • DAERA - specific consultation on rural impacts and their plans for winter support. This resulted in a match funding commitment; • The six Rural Support Networks - facilitated by DAERA, already delivering services in this space, identified gaps in provision and capacity and agreed to assist in closing these gaps with WWC Wellbeing activities. <p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment was completed and identified that whilst rural area needs were similar to those in urban areas, there was a more acute impact in rural areas in terms of social isolation.</p> <p>The Department considered the impact of Covid 19 on the health and wellbeing of vulnerable groups in rural areas, and how living in rural areas can exacerbate those impacts.</p> <p>The 'connected' element of the programme was therefore directed and funding allocated more directly towards the outcomes set for rural delivery partners.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty/Deprivation	
COVID-19 Charities Fund.	<p>The emergency health crisis has meant that processes designed to ensure sound policy making have had to be set aside to facilitate the delivery of timely financial support. Delays could have resulted in charities not being able to meet unavoidable costs and going into administration. Given that the time pressures precluded public engagement, engagement has taken place at leadership level with third sector representatives. A Strategic Reference Group was established early and this has provided a beneficial sounding board to help shape the emergency intervention.</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 Equality Commission has also been consulted to ensure that the necessity for pace was balanced with appropriate equality considerations.</p> <p>Business case development included completion of a Rural Needs Impact Assessment. Due to the nature of the COVID-19 restrictions the proposed projects and completion of both assessments showed that these intervention will have a direct positive impact on the needs identified that included a requirement to retain a balanced charities sector.</p> <p>The majority of charities have rural addresses 62%, with 37% urban based with only 1% based outside of NI. The address of the charity is likely to reflect their headquarters rather than the location of services which could be misleading as the provision of services is more important that where a charity is located.</p> <p>The focus of this emergency was to target across the province who needed financial support because they suffered a loss of income due to the pandemic and had unavoidable costs, which without financial support were at risk of going into administration.</p> <p>In the event of the Fund being heavily oversubscribed value judgements would have need to be made to ensure the survival of a balanced sector both in terms of charity categories and geographical location. The latter was to ensure that the rural needs continued to be adequately catered for in the event of a major loss of charities and that we didn't end up with charities solely operating in urban locations. As it transpired the Fund was undersubscribed and all eligible applications from legal charities were met.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Culture	
COVID-19 Culture, Languages, Arts & Heritage Support Programme 2020-2021.	The impact of Covid on the culture, languages, arts and heritage sectors has been profound. Venues including theatres, cinemas, music venues, heritage sites, libraries, museums, galleries and community

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty/Social Security Benefits Legislation	
	<p>based cultural facilities have been closed to the public. Creative organisations, festivals, freelancers, musicians and craftspeople have lost audiences, income and contracts.</p> <p>The Impact on people in rural areas was mostly as beneficiaries of arts, culture and heritage venues and places of interest as well as individuals from rural parts who work within and derive a livelihood from the sectors. However, the outcome of the distribution of this fund is not expected to impact on people in rural areas differently from those in urban areas. The policy framework and the development of a business case which was subject to a rural needs assessment which confirmed that the policy did not have a differential impact on people in rural areas. The emergency funding interventions aimed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the timely intervention to prevent the closure of arts, culture and heritage venues, and the loss of key services and creative skills; • That financial interventions mitigate the impacts on people and wider society; • The survival of arts culture and heritage sectors remains after the crisis has passed to continue being a catalyst for wider economic regeneration.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Poverty	
Amendment of regulation 27 of The Personal Independence Payment Regulations (NI) 2016.	No rural needs were identified.
The State Pension Debits and Credits (Revaluation) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020 (S.R.2020/297) allows for the revaluation of the new State Pension scheme pensions credits and debits.	<p>The Northern Ireland Pension Centre already administers State Pension for all Northern Ireland claimants.</p> <p>No new alternative delivery mechanism is planned or required to ensure fair outcomes as a result of this policy.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
The State Pension Revaluation for Transitional Pensions (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020 (S.R.2020/298).	<p>The Northern Ireland Pension Centre already administers State Pension for all Northern Ireland claimants.</p> <p>The Order only provides for the revaluation of elements of State Pension; consequently there are no barriers or additional costs associated with implementing the policy in rural areas.</p>
The Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R.2021/58).	There are no issues, the Order simply provides for the revaluation of earnings factors so that they maintain their value in relation to the general level of earnings; consequently there are no barriers or additional costs associated with implementing the policy in rural areas.
The implementation of the Social Fund Funeral Expenses Payment (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 15).	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. The amendments being made maintained the status quo by ensuring that Funeral Expenses Payments continue to be available for eligible persons where the funeral is to take place within the UK. The needs of people in rural areas in relation to this policy are the same as those for urban dwellers.
The draft Social Security (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<p>The social and economic needs of rural dwellers do not differ from urban dwellers in this instance - so no details of specific rural needs have been identified.</p> <p>As the policy makes no distinction between rural and urban dwellers, there will be no adverse impact on people who live in rural areas and the policy change will be applied equally to urban and rural dwellers. The social and economic needs of people in rural areas in relation to this policy are the same as those for urban dwellers. Therefore no further consideration of needs was deemed necessary.</p> <p>As no specific rural needs have been identified and the necessary delivery mechanisms already exist in rural areas, no further solutions are required.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
<p>The Pension Protection Fund (Moratorium and Arrangements for Companies in Financial Difficulty) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 (S.R. 2020 No. 162).</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The Regulations provide specific protection for pension schemes and the Pension Protection Fund during a moratorium pursuant to the Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989. They enable the Pension Protection Fund to participate in key decisions in the process by enabling it to exercise creditor rights that would otherwise be exercised by the scheme trustees or managers.</p> <p>The age profile and life expectancy of the urban and rural populations are broadly similar.</p> <p>No potential for differential impact has been identified.</p>
<p>The Occupational Pensions (Revaluation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020 (S.R. 2020 No. 283).</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <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 (“early leavers”). 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>The age profile and life expectancy of the urban and rural populations are broadly similar.</p> <p>No potential for differential impact has been identified.</p>
<p>The Pension Protection Fund (State Aid) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 (S.R. 2020 No. 318).</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The Regulations makes amendments to legislation related to the Pension Protection Fund consequential on EU Exit.</p> <p>The age profile and life expectancy of the urban and rural populations are broadly similar.</p> <p>No potential for differential impact has been 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
<p>The Pension Protection Fund and Occupational Pension Schemes (Levy Ceiling) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 38).</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The Order sets the amount of the Pension Protection Fund levy ceiling as £1,099,445,505 for the financial year beginning on 1 April 2021.</p> <p>The age profile and life expectancy of the urban and rural populations are broadly similar.</p> <p>No potential for differential impact has been identified.</p>
<p>The Guaranteed Minimum Pensions Increase Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 48).</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <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 2021.</p> <p>The age profile and life expectancy of the urban and rural populations are broadly similar.</p> <p>No potential for differential impact has been identified.</p>
<p>The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (General Levy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 58).</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The Regulations gives effect to a new structure, and to new rates, that will be used to calculate the general levy payable by occupational pension schemes and personal pension schemes.</p> <p>According to Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information service (NINIS) statistical information, the age profile and life expectancy of the urban and rural populations are broadly similar.</p> <p>No potential for differential impact has been identified.</p>
<p>The Automatic Enrolment (Earnings Trigger and Qualifying Earnings Band) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 66).</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified.</p> <p>The Order sets the amount of the upper limit of the automatic enrolment qualifying earnings band for 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>2021-2022 year in line with the upper National Insurance contributions earnings limit for that year. It also specifies rounded figures for the earnings trigger and qualifying earnings band for that year.</p> <p>The age profile and life expectancy of the urban and rural populations are broadly similar.</p> <p>No potential for differential impact has been identified.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
<p>2021-2022 Annual up-rating of pensions and benefits.</p>	<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. There are no changes to the policy in place, but the increased rates of benefit, pension and lump sum rates may have a minor positive impact on poverty in rural areas.</p> <p>The relevant legislation is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 82); • The Social Security Benefits Up-rating Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 83); • The Mesothelioma Lump Sum Payments (Conditions and Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 59); • The Pneumoconiosis etc. Workers' Compensation) (Payment of Claims) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (S.R. 2021 No. 55).

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs and Employment/Poverty	
Amendments to Social Security Legislation.	A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been undertaken for 12 regulations amending a range of social security benefits providing financial support to the most vulnerable in our community, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact on people in rural communities was considered with each amendment and no rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
Revision of the Reciprocal Arrangements policy between NI and GB to include Universal Credit.	The Memorandum of Reciprocal Arrangements between NI and GB is to ensure that recipients of Universal Credit do not have a break in their claim as a result of moving from one jurisdiction to the other. The impact on people in rural communities was considered and no rural needs were identified.
The draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<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>There will be no adverse impact on people who live in rural areas as the regulations will apply to all claimants who satisfy the criteria for a payment, irrespective of whether they live in an urban or rural area. In all cases the mitigation payments will cover the actual loss of benefit.</p>
The draft Welfare Supplementary Payment (Extension) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.	<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. Therefore no further consideration of needs is required.</p>
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

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.
	application process will remain in place for those not willing to or who have difficulty claiming on-line. This applies to both urban and rural claimants. The Service will therefore still be accessible to all citizens regardless of broadband availability.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment/Education	
The Work Ready Employability Services (WRES) project.	We have considered the issue of broadband availability in rural areas for delivering a virtual service but have mitigated against this in that providers will be required to offer a Face to Face option for delivery of services and while acknowledging that people in rural areas may have to travel further for Face to Face services an element of travel costs has been included in the design of WRES.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
The refreshed Work Experience Programme (WEP).	The social and economic needs of people who live in rural areas in relation to the refreshed and incentivised Work Experience Programme are the same as those of people who live in urban areas. 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Jobs or Employment/Education or Training/Poverty/Deprivation	
An expansion to the Adviser Discretion Fund (ADF) financial support scheme.	<p>The Expansion to the Adviser Discretion Fund (ADF) is invigorating and builds upon the ADF scheme which provides financial support (up to £300 for the purchase of goods or services) across all cohorts in different sectors, occupations and geographical areas. This expansion to the ADF financial support scheme makes no distinction between rural or urban dwellers. Those living in rural areas will be able to apply and benefit from the scheme on the same basis as those living in urban areas.</p> <p>Implementation was due from 30/11/2020 but was delayed until 12/04/2021. This expansion includes the introduction of assistance with the cost of upfront</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>childcare costs which we hope to introduce from October 2021.</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 ADF irrespective of where they live. The Department has not sought the views of rural stakeholders on the likely impact of the scheme as no negative outcomes are envisaged and therefore no specific mitigations are necessary. The social and economic needs of people who live in rural areas in relation to the proposed financial support provided by the Expansion to the ADF are the same as those of people who live in urban areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care Services	
<p>Delivering a public service - The Condition Management Programme (CMP).</p>	<p>RNIA completed which included consideration of the following:</p> <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"> • The number/% of economically inactive people living in rural areas 2018 LFS Annual report ODP 17.3: The number/% of people of working age with disabilities living in rural areas. 2018/19 Health Survey Trend Tables - Limiting Longstanding illness: prevalence of respondents with a limiting longstanding illness is 23% (321 respondents) in mixed urban/rural; 26% in rural (1291 respondents); and 33% in urban (1981 respondents); • We currently do not have data on the overlap of the above data sets; • During 2018/19 70% of people in rural or mixed areas are in good/very good health compared to 64% in urban areas; • 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;

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"> • Between 2001 and 2017, the rural population increased by 18%, the urban population increased by 6%, as a result, the rural share of the overall NI population grew from 34% to 36%; • Just over half the proportion of rural (22%) as urban (40%) dwellers live within a 3 minute walk of the nearest bus stop and almost a tenth (9%) of the rural population have a walk of at least three quarters of an hour to their nearest stop; and • Public transport services in rural areas is considered inadequate in terms of frequency. The vast majority (69%) of urban dwellers report a bus service frequency of at least once an hour, whereas rural services are much less frequent. <p>The following steps are taken by CMP 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"> • Practitioners travel to rural areas to meet participants at their preferred location if practically possible; • Client travel costs reimbursed; and • Conducting CMP sessions/help via the Telephone. <p>Due to the following reasons however it is not always possible to offer the same level of provision to those in rural areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource implications; • The nature of the participants health condition which may prevent them from travelling long distances; and • Whether or not the participant can afford to pay for travel in advance and wait to be reimbursed. <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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs and Employment	
Delivering a public service - The Access to Work (NI) Programme.	<p>It is not envisaged that this scheme will impact people who live in rural areas any differently than people who live in urban areas.</p> <p>The Access to Work (NI) programme aims to assist people with disabilities who are either in paid employment, or who have been offered a job but need assistance in place to take up that offer. This is done through the provision of practical and financial support to overcome work related obstacles that may result from having a disability.</p> <p>Eligibility for the Access to Work (NI) programme was extended to include Work Experience clients with the Rural Needs Assessment refreshed to reflect this change. There is no distinction between rural and urban in the delivery of the Access to Work (NI) programme.</p> <p>The Department has not sought the views of rural stakeholders on the likely impact of the scheme as no negative outcomes are envisaged and therefore no specific mitigations are necessary.</p>
JobStart Scheme.	<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> <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>

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
<p>Challenge Fund Incentive - Development of a policy to maintain and grow the supply of apprenticeships.</p>	<p>In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn the Department developed a Challenge Fund Incentive as part of a broader package of measures. This incentive aimed to maintain and grow the supply of apprenticeship opportunities. It was a new policy, developed to aid the development of new and innovative solutions to mitigate risk, promote collaboration and increase employer confidence to engage with the apprenticeship system to achieve the overall aim of maintaining the skills pipeline and preventing short term economic shock resulting in long term damage to businesses/sectors.</p> <p>The Challenge Fund Incentive and the wider package of measures was developed to mitigate against the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Apprenticeships and Youth Training Systems. The challenge fund aimed to promote collaboration and encourage new models of recruitment and apprenticeship delivery including, but not limited to: Shared Apprenticeship Models; Apprenticeship brokerage Service; Employers and organisations with an interest in the NI apprenticeship system to provide Apprenticeship Mentoring Programmes for managers. Successful applicants could receive one- off awards of up to £50,000 (with an option to increase for proposals with multiple partners or features).</p> <p>The Challenge Fund Incentive was available to all Employers to support Apprentices across NI, irrespective of location, and it is not considered that recipients in rural areas and urban areas will benefit differently.</p>
<p>Recruit An Apprentice-Development of a policy to maintain and grow the supply of apprenticeships.</p>	<p>In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn the Department introduced, as part of a package of measures, an Apprenticeship Recruitment Incentive. This aimed to assist with the continued provision of employment and training 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>ensure a highly skilled and available workforce across all sectors as we move towards recovery.</p> <p>The Recruit an Apprenticeship initiative is part of a package of measures developed by the Department to mitigate against the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Apprenticeships and Youth Training Systems. By providing a financial incentive for each apprentice employed, the Department aims to: encourage and support employers to create apprenticeship opportunities (jobs) for both new apprentices and apprentices who have been displaced by other employers; ensure businesses continue to have access to the skills needed to respond to recovery and are able to increase productivity and aid in the rebuilding of the economy; and reduce the major risk and associated economic scarring that could arise as a result of a significant increase in unemployment and the number of NEETS.</p> <p>As part of this scheme employers were offered £3,000 for each new apprenticeship opportunity created between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021. This incentive applied to all new apprenticeship opportunities created during this period, and the payment applied equally to apprenticeships created for 'new' apprentices, or 'displaced' apprentices. Payments were scheduled as £2,000 after 90 days retention, and £1,000 after 200 days retention from first employment.</p> <p>The Recruit an Apprentice scheme was available to all Employers to support Apprentices across NI, irrespective of location, and it is not considered that recipients in rural areas and urban areas will benefit differently.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
Skills for Life and Work - development of a revised vocational training provision.	Skills for Life and Work is aimed at those who leave school with very low or no qualifications. Economies of scale may mean that access to a particular area of vocational training at a provider within travelling distance

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>may not be possible. However the skills gained at Level 1 will be fully portable to Level 2 no matter what the discipline chosen. The programme will provide for travelling expenses and for taxis where public transport is not available.</p> <p>Availability of training provision is the same for rural areas and urban areas. The main issue considered is accessibility. The training programme therefore allows providers to make arrangements to get trainees to their training or work experience and to reimburse them for the expense involved.</p> <p>In addition to the comprehensive provision of Professional and Technical disciplines available from the Regional Colleges, contracts with Training Providers in the public sector are based in council areas in an attempt to ensure that training is available on as widespread basis as possible.</p> <p>It has been concluded that provision of training in rural areas has not been adversely affected by the introduction of this policy. Rural dwellers will continue to be catered for by the transport arrangements made for them.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
Update to Standards within the Local Government (Performance Indicators & Standards) Order (NI) 2015.	This is an update of a policy intervention/incentive that will be available to all potential entrepreneurs to start a new business, irrespective of location. In light of this it is not considered that recipients in rural areas will be more affected than those in non-rural areas.
Going Dutch Programme.	<p>The Going Dutch programme is an Export Capability Development programme for first time exporters. The programme is specifically designed to help companies to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence required to sell into a new export market. The objective of the programme is to help first-time/early stage exporters to achieve their first international sales, specifically in the Dutch market.</p> <p>The programme is promoted throughout Invest NI's Regional Office Network, in order to attract companies</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>from all regions in Northern Ireland. Our Client Facing teams within Invest NI's Regional Offices, in turn promote the benefits of the programme to their Customers, and nominate suitable companies to attend a programme Recruitment Seminar. Interested companies are screened and selected on the basis of their export readiness/suitability for the programme, regardless of their geographical location. No specific rural needs were therefore identified.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
Energy Efficiency Capital Grant.	<p>The Energy and Resource Efficiency Programme (EREAP) aims to deliver support to Northern Ireland businesses to identify and implement cost savings in the use of energy, water, material and waste through advisory support in Technical Consultancy and Industrial Symbiosis resource matching support. Within this the team have recently developed a new programme the Energy Efficiency Capital Grant scheme developed as an interim scheme following the closure of the Invest NI funded Carbon Trust Loan Fund in 2018.</p> <p>A broad geographical spread of interventions, including a 45.18% uptake in rural areas, demonstrates there are no barriers to delivery in rural areas.</p> <p>The only potential additional cost for delivery in rural areas may be further mileage expenses incurred by the programme team, whilst all procurements ask for contractors to account for this in their pricing.</p>
Update to Standards within the Local Government (Performance Indicators & Standards) Order (NI) 2015.	<p>This is an update of a policy intervention/incentive that will be available to all potential entrepreneurs to start a new business, irrespective of location. In light of this it is not considered that recipients in rural areas will be more affected than those in non-rural areas.</p>
Market Intelligence Worldwide.	<p>The main objective of the proposed activity is to access an export market focused market intelligence platform that has the granular level of detail required for Food and Drink companies, and product launch case studies and trend analysis to inform New Product Development (NPD).</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>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, InvestNI would anticipate a positive impact.</p> <p>The delivery of the service to Clients, using the Market Intelligence Worldwide Database, will be online via a digital platform so it does not require attendance at the Client premises or attendance at events. No specific rural needs were therefore identified.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
Procurement of Syndicated Consumer Panel Data.	<p>The main objective of the proposed activity is to provide access to syndicated consumer panel data for UK and Ireland for food and drink grocery categories including pet food. 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, InvestNI would anticipate a positive impact.</p> <p>The delivery of the service to Clients, using the Consumer Panel Database, will be online via a digital platform, consequently it does not require attendance at the Client premises or attendance at events. No specific rural needs were therefore identified.</p>
Northern Ireland Aerospace Customer Diversification Programme.	<p>The strategic context for the introduction of this programme is to contribute to the aims and objectives of the wider governmental industrial strategies and Invest NI's business and international strategies, which are inclusive of the whole Northern Ireland community.</p> <p>There is no specifically rural impact on the social or economic needs of people in rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism Jobs or Employment	
Large Tourism and Hospitality Business Support Scheme (LTHBSS).	Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 required businesses within the large tourism and hospitality sectors to close

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>from 16 October 2020 (from 5 October 2020 in the Derry City & Strabane District Council area). The scheme aimed to provide additional financial support to large businesses in the tourism and hospitality sectors that had been impacted by the health protection regulations put in place by the Executive. The grant aimed to assist businesses to meet fixed costs and overheads associated with the survival of their businesses.</p> <p>LTHBSS was aimed at helping to protect jobs, prevent business closures and promote economic recovery. Urban/rural location is not part of the eligibility criteria for LTHBSS, and the scheme was open to businesses, irrespective of whether they exist within a rural or urban area.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
Supply Chain Resilience and Development Framework. (SCRDF).	<p>The SCRDF service forms a key element of the objective of Invest NI facilitating the development of a Northern Ireland supply chain ecosystem for agreed sectors. InvestNI works directly with customers to provide a framework to build resilience into their supply chain in response to COVID-19/EU Exit. This involves a graduated/tailored framework of support including identifying supply chain risks, resilience planning, identifying supply chain opportunities and capability development initially in light of COVID 19 and EU Exit impacts. Ultimately creating competitive advantage for those businesses operating in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The service is available to all Invest NI customers. Invest NI has historically provided limited supply chain advice through the Operational Excellence Team and there has been a good geographical spread with this with in excess of 1000 referrals have been received. On an on-going basis the SCRDF Service will typically be engaged with over 80 Invest NI customers on a one to one basis. Evidence from the INI COVID-19 Customer Survey 2020 highlighted that supply chain impact was a significant concern across a wide range of sectors which ensures a broad geographical spread.</p>

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	<p>Part of the service involves the delivery of a range of workshops, awareness raising events, where these are not delivered in-house on company premises these will be arranged to be held either on a regional basis, virtually or in a central location (i.e. Belfast International Airport vicinity).As the broad geographical spread of customers and referrals has shown, there are no barriers to delivery in rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/ Jobs or Employment	
<p>Business support grant scheme, paying a one off £10,000 grant to businesses in receipt of small business rate relief (SBRR) with a Net Annual Value (NAV) of up to £15,000.</p>	<p>The COVID-19 crisis is a health and economic shock unprecedented in the past century and resulted in many businesses having to close temporarily or incur additional costs. The Executive was clear that a rapid response to support small businesses was imperative. The impact on businesses has been immediate with a significant threat to employment and business survival. The Executive in line with the other Devolved Administrations and UK Government have put these schemes in place as a matter of urgency to get financial assistance out to businesses in receipt of SBRR.</p> <p>The schemes are open to businesses if they meet the eligibility criteria, irrespective of whether they exist within a rural or urban area. Urban/rural location is not part of the eligibility criteria for either scheme.</p>
<p>Newly Self-Employed Support Scheme (NSESS).</p>	<p>The COVID-19 crisis is a health and economic shock unprecedented in the past century and the Executive was clear that a rapid response to support businesses was imperative.</p> <p>While best practice would indicate that an analysis and consultation as part of rural and equality proofing would be expected, it was clear that there was not time to undertake such an exercise as it would have resulted in a delay in getting payments to individuals/businesses. In addition, given the disruption of the COVID-19 lockdown measures, meaningful consultation would have proven extremely difficult.</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 COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented financial difficulties for many businesses. The Executive has put in place a number of business support grants to help protect jobs, prevent business closures and promote economic recovery.</p> <p>NSESS is designed to provide support to newly self-employed individuals (sole traders and those in partnerships) who have been adversely impacted by COVID-19 and who were unable to obtain financial support from UKG Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.</p> <p>The schemes is open to individuals/businesses if they meet the eligibility criteria, irrespective of whether they exist within a rural or urban area. Urban/rural location is not part of the eligibility criteria for the schemes.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/ Jobs or Employment	
Wet Pub Business Support Scheme (WPBSS).	<p>Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 required wet pub businesses to close or cease trading during the period from 4th July to September 2020. The Wet Pub Business Support Scheme was developed to provide financial support to businesses across Northern Ireland which were directly affected by the regulations and whose premises were required to close or cease trading during the period 4 July to 22 September 2020. The Scheme aimed to help to keep companies in business, protect jobs, help prevent business closure and promote economic recovery.</p> <p>The scheme applies to eligible businesses regardless of whether they are located in urban or rural areas.</p> <p>WPBSS was aimed at helping to protect jobs, prevent business closures and promote economic recovery. The scheme was open to wet pub businesses if they meet the eligibility criteria, irrespective of whether they exist within a rural or urban area. Urban/rural location is not part of the eligibility criteria for WPBSS.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/ Jobs or Employment	
<p>Limited Company Directors Support Scheme (LCDSS).</p>	<p>LCDSS is designed to provide financial support to limited company directors who have personally been adversely impacted by COVID-19.</p> <p>While best practice would indicate that an analysis and consultation as part of rural and equality proofing would be expected, it was clear that there was not time to undertake such an exercise as it would have resulted in a delay in getting payments to individuals/businesses. In addition, given the disruption of the COVID-19 lockdown measures, meaningful consultation would have proven extremely difficult.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented financial difficulties for many businesses. Individuals/businesses are eligible regardless of whether they are located in urban or rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
<p>Making and Laying of The Education (Student Support etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (SR No. 50).</p>	<p>As recipients of student support are necessarily based at Higher Education campuses the proposed changes are not considered to have any specific impact on those in rural areas These changes apply to all NI Domiciled students studying eligible HE courses, it is not considered that recipients in rural areas will be more affected than those in other areas of Northern Ireland.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
<p>Challenge Fund Incentive for Employers for support of Apprentices.</p>	<p>In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn the Department is proposing, as part of a package of measures, a Challenge Fund Incentive that will be available to all Employers to support Apprentices across NI, irrespective of location. In light of this it is not considered that recipients in rural areas will be more affected than those in non-rural areas.</p> <p>This incentive will maintain and grow the supply of apprenticeship opportunities. It is a new policy that is being developed to aid the development of 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>and innovative solutions to mitigate risk, promote collaboration and increase employer confidence to engage with the apprenticeship system to achieve the overall aim of maintaining the skills pipeline and preventing short term economic shock resulting in long term damage to businesses/sectors.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
<p>2020 RHI Tariff Review.</p>	<p>Research previously undertaken by the Department has indicated that approximately 88% of accredited installations are located in rural areas. The proposed increase in tariff levels is therefore likely to have a greater impact on rural communities than on urban communities.</p> <p>This is a small increase in the tariff. Extensive research was carried out during the initial policy set up and previous tariff structure revision (in 2019), which are still relevant. Current and previous methods used include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing cost information provided by participants and analysed by Cornwall Insight; • Consultation to be published from 28 April to 26 May; • Previous consultation with rural stakeholders ; • Previous consultation with other organisations; • Published statistics. <p>The proposed tariff increase will continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the generation of renewable heat; • Provide a typical 12% rate of return on investment to the Scheme participants; and • Ensure Scheme operates within its allocated budget; and • Represent Value for Money.

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
Implementation of New Rules for Priority Dispatch Provisions under Article 12 of the EU Electricity (Recast) Regulation 2019.	Compliance with the new rules involves both legislative implementation, by the Department, and practical implementation by the Single Electricity Market Committee (SEMC) and the Transmission System Operators (TSOs). The Department consulted with all relevant stakeholders through the issue of a public consultation document on the implementation of the new rules around priority dispatch. This allowed stakeholders the opportunity to respond to the Department on a number of questions on the amended legislation. The Consultation was issued on 15 July 2020, closing on 8 September 2020. The Department did not receive any data from stakeholders on the potential, negative or positive, social and economic impact of people in rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Business	
Renewables Obligation Order (NI) 2009 - Implementation of temporary SR for Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Quality Assurance Standard.	<p>This is an amending SR to allow NI CHP operators to submit 2019 operational data rather than 2020 data to potentially qualify for annual incentives such as Climate Change Levy exemption.</p> <p>It is not envisaged that the amended order will have an impact on rural social or economic needs.</p>
Transposition of the EU Electricity (Recast) Directive 2019.	<p>The EU Electricity (Recast) Directive 2019 was made on 5 June 2019 and has a transposition deadline of 31 December 2020. The aim of this Directive is to outline the rules on retail markets for electricity including, inter-alia, generation, transmission and distribution. It also clarifies and reinforces existing consumer rights and introduces new rights.</p> <p>The Department consulted with relevant stakeholders through the issue of a public consultation document on the transposition of the Electricity Directive. This allowed stakeholders the opportunity to respond to the Department on a number of questions raised in the consultation. The consultation was issued on 3 September 2020, closing on 16 October 2020.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Business	
<p>Gas (Internal Market) Regulations (NI) 2020 and associated Gas (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (NI) 2020.</p>	<p>It is the Department's view that transposition of the 2019 EU Gas Directive Amendment should not have any impact, positive or negative, on the needs of people living, working or operating businesses in rural areas.</p> <p>The proposed amendments to existing energy legislation will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for regulating gas transmission pipelines which connect NI with a country outside the EU, and for arranging third party access to a gas storage facility sited in the NI territorial seas. As no such infrastructure currently exists in NI, or is planned, these amendments are not anticipated to have any immediate practical impact other than ensuring compliance with an EU Directive and avoiding infraction fines. The proposed consequential amendments, effective from 31 December 2020, will ensure that the legislation continues to operate effectively from the end of the transition period following the UK's exit from the EU.</p>
<p>Consultation on the potential revision to the Northern Ireland Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme, including possible closure.</p>	<p>In addition to previous research carried out prior to Scheme creation, the Department has taken account of independent tariff review reports produced by Ricardo Energy and Environment (2018) and Cornwall Insight (2020) and an independent report on hardship experienced by participants as a consequence of changes to the Scheme, prepared by independent energy expert Andrew Buglass (2020) based on direct engagement with Scheme participants. The Department consulted on the options for the future of the Scheme.</p> <p>Detailed relevant responses were received to the following consultation and call for evidence exercises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 public consultation on options for the future of the Scheme, taking account of Ricardo's review of the biomass tariff structure; • 2019 call for evidence on hardship;

<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>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 public consultation on implementation of revised medium biomass tariffs based on Cornwall Insight's tariff review In respect of the specific present proposals under consideration, the Department consulted on four options for the future of the Scheme over an eight week period from 11 February 2021 to 9 April 2021 to inform the NI Executive's final decision on the Scheme's future. <p>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. If specific rural issues are identified, the Department will consider how these issues may be mitigated.</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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
<p>Impact of COVID-19: Alternative Awarding Arrangements for Occupational Studies and Entry Level Qualifications.</p>	<p>In relation to the issue identified around small schools in both urban and rural areas, CCEA has advised that whilst the statistical model for the summer awarding arrangements is still being developed with the Awarding Organisation for regulatory approval, and small cohorts are being considered in all qualifications as part of the statistical modelling. CCEA are aiming to be fair and consistent to all candidates in the models used for standardisation.</p> <p>The Department has deemed that the evidence, available to them, does not differentiate between rural communities and the rest of the region.</p>
<p>Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion Policy known as the new SEN Framework.</p>	<p>The new SEN Framework applies equally to all children whether they are in a rural setting or otherwise.</p> <p>The formation of the Education Authority (EA) in 2015, which replaced the former five Education and Library Boards, is a key driver in the consistent delivery of services and support for children and young people. In the new framework provision continues to be based on the individual needs of the child and the measures put in place by schools and the EA to address those needs.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
<p>Provision of digital devices to disadvantaged/vulnerable pupils during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>To establish the position in rural areas we looked at the figures taken from the Annual School census in particular comparing rural/urban children and the number of these pupils attending schools with FSME and either of SEN, LAC or Newcomer 2019/20.</p> <p>Connection to the internet is being considered at the same time as the provision of devices. This will form part of the Business Case being developed under Stage 3 of the process. The provision of digital devices will enhance equality of opportunity for those families who have currently little or no access and for pupils who are</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.
	disadvantaged/vulnerable. In so doing, it will help to bridge the digital divide.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
COVID-19 response - Virtual Learning and Summer schools.	Rural schools will be invited to take part in both aspects of the programme on the same basis as urban schools. In deciding whether to take part, schools will have assessed the needs of individual pupils currently in Year 6 and determined which pupils need additional support and what form that support should take.
Establish an Expert Panel to develop an Action Plan addressing educational underachievement.	<p>Educational attainment has been compared for pupils in urban and rural areas. The comparison shows that pupils in rural settings tend to do better on average than pupils in urban settings.</p> <p>It is expected that the implementation of an Action Plan by the Expert Panel should have benefits for pupils living in rural settings in the same way as it would for pupils living in urban settings. Whilst the level of poverty may be higher in urban settings there are also pockets of significant deprivation in rural areas which the recommendations of the Expert Panel could help to address.</p>
Pilot scheme to address period poverty in schools.	The percentage of Free School Meal Entitled (FSME) pupils in rural areas is significantly smaller than those in urban settings nevertheless, schools in urban and rural settings will both be supported by this initiative and pupils will have access to the scheme regardless of FSME status.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training/Health or Social Care Services	
A Life Deserved - Caring for Children & Young People in Northern Ireland Strategy.	During the consultation stage of the Strategy, access to services was highlighted as a possible barrier in rural areas. It is recognised that looked after children and young people from rural areas should have access to appropriate transport to enable them to engage fully in play and leisure activities. This has been reflected within the context of the draft Strategy under the outcome, "Children and Young People enjoy Play and Leisure".

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
Engage Special Schools Programme.	Data from the Northern Ireland School Census 19/20 has been used to provide a full picture of the Special Schools population. A co-design group has been established between representatives of Special Schools, the Education Authority and Officials to develop the programme proposal and monitoring framework.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment/Health or Social Care/Poverty	
Childcare Support Fund (April - June 2020).	<p>A Childcare Reference Group has been established with representatives of childcare support organisations. These organisations represent the views of providers in urban and rural areas/settings.</p> <p>A number of surveys have been carried out, including one in May 2020, to identify and assess the needs of providers in urban and rural areas.</p>
Childcare Recovery Support Fund (July to August 2020).	<p>A Childcare Reference Group has been established with representatives of childcare support organisations. These organisations represent the views of providers in urban and rural areas/settings.</p> <p>A number of surveys have been carried out, including one in May 2020, to identify and assess the needs of providers in urban and rural areas.</p>
Childcare COVID-19 funding - Temporary Closure Fund (September 2020 - March 2021) and Sustainability Fund (Sept - Dec and Jan - March 2021).	<p>A Childcare Reference Group has been established with representatives of childcare support organisations. These organisations represent the views of providers in urban and rural areas/settings.</p> <p>A number of surveys have been carried out, including one in May 2020, to identify and assess the needs of providers in urban and rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
A Review of the Children (Public Performances) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.	The main focus of the review is to amend the existing legislation to align with the rest of the UK. While child Licensing regulations in Britain have been reformed,

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	legislation in this jurisdiction has not. The proposed amendments are designed to be of benefit to all children to enhance their opportunities to participate in performances.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
Independent Review of Education - Terms of Reference.	The Independent Review Panel will be required through the Terms of Reference to consult stakeholders across the education sector including rural schools and other stakeholders. This will allow the Panel to establish issues that are specific to those schools and pupils and ensure that there is no adverse impact on rural communities as a result of Review Panel recommendations and indeed should seek to improve educational outcomes for pupils living in rural areas on the same basis as urban pupils.
Expansion of the Department of Education's Nurture Provision.	Nurture provision aims to tackle multi-generational poverty and to improve children's health, wellbeing, educational and life opportunities. Criteria for the selection of schools using objective measures of need will be applied in order to ensure equality. All Primary Schools will be considered irrespective of their location.
DE Pathway Fund - Changes to Fund from 2021/22.	All eligible Pathway Fund settings (rural and urban) will be equally impacted by the anticipated changes to the Pathway Fund from 2021/22 onwards. The existing policy and fund criterion scores applications where settings demonstrate provision in areas where there is little or no rural provision. This requirement will remain within the fund allowing applications from rural settings the potential to achieve a higher score within the competitive funding process.
Selection of a post-primary school for a temporary increase to the school's admission number prior to the commencement of the 2022 Transfer Procedure.	This is continuation of an existing policy in which the Department's Open Enrolment Policy provides the framework within which the process of school admissions operates. The policy allows for temporary increases in a school's admissions or enrolment numbers to cater for

<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>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Transport Services or Infrastructure	
Interim Policy on Provision of car parking in Belfast City Centre. Removal of car parking spaces for staff in Belfast City Centre (unless required for DDA purposes).	No specific rural needs have been identified in development of this policy.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Health and Safety	
The Department is consulting on a 4th amendment to 'The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 (as amended)'. The Statutory Rule will be entitled 'The Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020'. Fire Safety and Radon matters.	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.
The Department will be consulting on amendment to 'The Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012' statutory guidance. Will create an amendment Technical Booklet Part R (TBR) 'Access to and use of buildings' 2021.	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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Development of a prospective Holiday Pay Policy for all NICS staff.	Consideration was given as to if the new internal HR policy has any impact on rural areas across Northern Ireland from an economic and social perspective. There are no impacts specifically as the policy applies to all NICS staff regardless of whether or not they reside in a rural location.
Pay Award 2020 and Pay Award 2021.	Consideration was given to any impacts of the Pay Awards on rural areas across Northern Ireland from an economic and social perspective. There are no impacts specifically as the policy applies to all NICS staff regardless of whether or not they reside in a rural location.

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
Removal of holiday pay and payment in lieu of notice from the calculation of income for the Rate Rebate Scheme.	As this policy disregards some earnings from the amount of income that is taken into account when calculating how much Rate Rebate can be paid it benefits everyone by potentially increasing the amount of the award. There are no detrimental effects on anyone regardless of where they live. An increase in the amount of a rate rebate award will always be economically beneficial to the individual claimant. The policy was not therefore influenced specifically by rural needs.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal/Broadband/Jobs or Employment	
Development and roll-out of Connect2 hubs to provide strategically located work and collaboration spaces for NICS staff.	The Connect2 strategy has taken account rural needs by ensuring that the hubs are placed in optimal locations to reduce commute times for all staff including rural dwellers and to provide enhanced technology in regional locations which will enable staff in rural areas to avail of access to high quality broadband and increase NICS employment opportunities for people in rural areas who previously may not have applied for jobs due to long travel distances.

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>Revising a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Consultation on proposed amendments to the pharmaceutical service regulations (NI) 1997.</p>	<p>The proposed changes have been subject to an initial screening and it is not expected that implementation of this policy will present any specific or differential rural impacts. This preliminary decision is subject to change following analysis of feedback received during this consultation.</p>
<p>Implementing a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Cross-Departmental Actions for Vulnerable Children and Young People during the COVID-19 Pandemic Period.</p>	<p>No reference to Rural Needs.</p>
<p>Developing a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Temporary Amendment of the Health and Social Care (HSC) Framework document for the period June 2020 to May 2022.</p>	<p>The temporary amendments to the HSC Framework Document should benefit all citizens who use Health and Social Care Services by enabling the health and social care system to maximise service activity in the context of managing the ongoing COVID-19 situation. Given the complexity and scale of those challenges, it is more important than ever that our health and social care system be given clear direction and that decisions be taken quickly in a fluid and changing environment. The revisions to the Framework will affect all service users in a similar manner.</p>
<p>Implementing a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Consultation on Establishment of a Regional Care and Justice Campus.</p>	<p>The proposals to establish a Regional Care and Justice Campus will impact on a very small cohort of children, with a variety of complex needs. Rurality has not been identified as a significant contributory factor in the needs of these young people, and it is unlikely that proposals will impact significantly on people in rural areas any more than on those living in urban areas.</p>

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The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>Developing a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Consultation on the New Substance Use Strategy.</p>	<p>Following consideration of all relevant factors in relation to the delivery of services to the potential target group, it has been concluded that due regard has been considered in the development of this strategy consultation document and that it will not impact on the rural needs of the people in Northern Ireland.</p>
<p>Revising a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Proposals to change the current system of consent for organ donation in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>The revised policy this will not impact on rural areas any more than on urban areas.</p> <p>No issues were identified. As this screening relates to the consultation at this stage, should any impacts be identified, they will be considered going forward.</p>
<p>Developing a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Consultation on proposals to introduce an Adult Protection Bill in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>Where necessary, policy adjustments might be made to reflect rural needs and in particular to ensure that as far as possible public services are accessible on a fair basis to the rural community. Throughout the consultation process, careful consideration will be given to the needs of rural communities.</p>
<p>Developing a policy, strategy or plan. Consultation on the Draft Mental Health Strategy.</p>	<p>The recommendations proposed and subsequent actions under consideration here are not likely to provide any negative impact as they have been designed in consultation with stakeholders from rural settings.</p> <p>The Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031 will not impact rural areas in any different ways than urban areas. As the Strategy will impact on all mental health services which are delivered on an equal basis, of need, rural impact has been considered but determined as none. Where rural/urban issues are at stake, further Rural Impact Assessment screenings will be completed.</p>
<p>Developing a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Draft Budget Outcome Consultation.</p>	<p>The Department is committed to ensuring that it fulfils its rural needs duties and ensures rural needs are appropriately taken into account. Once a final budget has been agreed spending areas will assess whether policies, strategies and plans that are to be taken forward have a differential impact on rural areas, and where appropriate, make adjustments to take account of particular rural circumstances.</p>

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. However the following Clinical 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 NG124 - Specialist neonatal respiratory care for babies born preterm

NICE Clinical Guideline NG125 - Surgical site infections: prevention and treatment (updates and replaces CG74)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG126 - Ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage: diagnosis and initial management (updates and replaces CG154)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG127 - Suspected neurological conditions: recognition and referral

NICE Clinical Guideline NG128 - Stroke and transient ischaemic attack in over 16s: diagnosis and initial management (updates and replaces CG68)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG129 - Crohn's disease: management (updates and replaces CG152)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG130 - Ulcerative colitis: management (updates and replaces CG166)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG131 - Prostate cancer: diagnosis and management (updates and replaces CG175)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG132 - Hyperparathyroidism (primary): diagnosis, assessment and initial management

NICE Clinical Guideline NG133 - Hypertension in pregnancy: diagnosis and management (updates and replaces CG107)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG134 - Depression in children and young people: identification and management (updates and replaces CG28)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG136 - Hypertension in adults: diagnosis and management (updates and replaces CG127 & partially updates NG28)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG137 - Twin and triplet pregnancy (updates and replaces CG129 & partially updates CG132)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG142 - End of life care for adults: service delivery

NICE Clinical Guideline NG143 - Fever in under 5s: assessment and initial management (updates and replaces CG160)

NICE Clinical Guideline NG144 - Cannabis-based medicinal products

NICE Clinical Guideline NG145 - Thyroid disease: assessment and management

NICE Clinical Guideline NG147 - Diverticular disease: diagnosis and management
NICE Clinical Guideline NG148 - Acute kidney injury: prevention, detection and management (updates and replaces CG169)
NICE Public Health Guideline NG102 - Community pharmacies: promoting health and wellbeing
NICE Clinical Guideline NG103 - Flu vaccination: increasing uptake
NICE Public Health Guideline NG135 - Alcohol interventions in secondary and further education

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Education or Training /Transport Services or Infrastructure	
<p>Road Safety at Schools - Version 3. Revision to policy and procedure guide Road Safety at Schools - RSPPG E070 v2.</p>	<p>This is a policy revision intending to allow more schools to feel safer, particularly in rural areas. It follows a trial at seven rural schools where the Department introduced new arrangements to roll out 20mph speed limits to all schools based on need.</p> <p>Various information was used to inform this policy change, the 20mph sign trial at rural schools, the 2010 consultation on the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy and The Continuous Household Survey (CHS) report, 'Road Safety Issues in Northern Ireland 2018/19', published on 20 February 2020.</p> <p>Data highlighted that many rural schools are adjacent to roads subject to the national speed limit, and during school start and finish times people travelling to the school are potentially at risk from passing traffic. A reduction in speed limit could reduce this risk.</p> <p>This initiative targets all schools; however schools on rural roads where the national speed limit applies will benefit children who live in rural areas though there will also be positive impacts for people with dependents and vulnerable road users.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Housing Transport Services or Infrastructure/Rural Development	
<p>Road Risk Management Plan - 2nd Cycle. Preparation of a Flood Risk Management Plan for Northern Ireland for the 2nd cycle of implementation of The Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.</p>	<p>No issues relating to social and economic needs of people in rural areas were considered by the Department's River's Division. The Plan is focused on Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk which are urban in nature. But the Plan does not preclude against mitigation of flooding in rural conurbations.</p> <p>Note that the final Plan once published in Dec 2021, will constitute a review of the 1st cycle Flood Risk Management Plans prepared in 2015.</p>

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The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Jobs or Employment/Agri-Environment	
The Port Services (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.	<p>This policy seeks to maintain the regulatory status quo and ensures that those to whom the amended Regulation applies are able to operate within the existing legislative regime after the implementation period completion day, therefore there will be no negative impact on rural communities.</p> <p>If these policy changes were not to take place, it may have a negative impact the ability for our commercial ports to operate which may impact businesses which rely on trade through the port, many of which are rural based businesses.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Housing	
The Broadwater Reservoir - Measures to be taken in the interests of safety mandated by the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.	The proposed works will reduce the risk of flooding to the local rural community and is specific to the area surrounding the Broadwater Reservoir.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
Living with Water in Belfast. An Integrated Plan for Drainage and Wastewater Management in Greater Belfast.	The Plan is specific to Belfast and does not impact on rural communities. The land to be used for projects is in public ownership.

Department of Justice

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
New NI Organised Crime Strategy 2020-2023.	<p>The Northern Ireland Organised Crime Strategy sets out the strategic direction to be taken to tackle the increasing threat from organised crime and identifies the objectives that will underpin delivery.</p> <p>Organised crime is not limited to either urban or rural areas. Implementing the organised crime strategy is therefore not likely to have a differential impact on service provision, economics, infrastructure or social wellbeing/cohesion of rural areas in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Strategy will be implemented in NI by the relevant enforcement agencies regardless of where a crime occurs.</p> <p>The Strategy's overarching aim is to protect individuals, communities and businesses in Northern Ireland from Organised crime.</p> <p>There is no intended impact on rural areas.</p>
Amendment to NI Human Trafficking and Exploitation Act 2015.	<p>The course of action proposed is to place a 2016 Ministerial policy decision on a statutory footing. It will confirm under legislation the availability of National Referral Mechanism (NRM) assistance and support for potential victims of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour as well as for potential victims of human trafficking. This is in line with action taken in the other UK jurisdictions and internationally.</p> <p>There is no intended impact on people in rural areas. While human trafficking and modern slavery can occur in any setting it should be noted that exploitation can be hidden in industries with large, low skilled worker bases for example production businesses and seasonal business. Seasonal agricultural work is almost exclusively in rural areas. The provision of support to potential victims and awareness raising about the support and about identifying will have a positive impact.</p>

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	<p>The HT Act 2015 stipulates that assistance and support “must be provided to meet the assessed needs of that person, having regard in particular to any special needs or vulnerabilities of that person caused by gender, pregnancy, physical or mental illness, disability or being the victim of serious violence or serious abuse”.</p> <p>Provision of assistance and support will continue to be offered to potential victims of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour who agree to enter the NRM regardless of whether their exploitation occurred in rural or urban areas in Northern Ireland or whether it occurred outside Northern Ireland.</p> <p>There is no intended impact on people in rural areas. No specific needs were identified in relation to people in rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
<p>Policy proposals for new provisions to tackle organised crime in NI.</p>	<p>Unlike other jurisdictions, there is no explicit legislation in Northern Ireland to tackle serious and organised crime. The policy proposals are tailored to the specific needs of Northern Ireland and will build on the armoury of legislative tools available to law enforcement to investigate, prosecute, disrupt and punish those involved in serious and organised crime.</p> <p>Organised crime effects individuals, communities and businesses in Northern Ireland including both urban and rural communities.</p> <p>The policy proposals are additional legislative tools to tackle organized crime groups who work in both rural and urban communities and will help reduce the number of crimes taking place.</p> <p>No needs were identified specific to people in rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
<p>Mandatory retirement age for devolved judicial office holders in NI.</p>	<p>The Judicial Pensions and Retirement Act 1993 (“JUPRA”) introduced a standard judicial retirement age of 70 for all judicial offices listed in schedule 5. The provisions, which brought greater consistency to</p>

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	<p>the judicial retirement system, only applied to judges' appointments made after the relevant provisions were commenced on 31 March 1995. Some judges appointed to judicial office prior to 31 March 1995 retained their previous (usually higher) retirement date.</p> <p>A mandatory retirement age (MRA) of 70 was set in 2003 for magistrates and in 2013 for coroners in England and Wales, which has aligned their MRA with that of the wider judiciary.</p> <p>Since the MRA was set, average life expectancy has increased and many people want to and expect to continue working for longer than in previous decades.</p> <p>Any amendment to the Judicial Retirement Age will impact on all devolved judicial office holders and is unlikely to impact on people in rural areas.</p> <p>There is therefore no need to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other-Pensions	
<p>Consultation on the proposed remedy to <i>McCloud</i> which intends to address the discrimination identified in public service pension schemes including the Northern Ireland Judicial Pension Scheme.</p>	<p>Judicial Pensions: Proposed response to <i>McCloud</i>.</p> <p>In <i>McCloud</i> the Court of Appeal held that transitional protections provided to older judges as part of the 2015 judicial pension reforms constituted unlawful direct age discrimination. Rulings of the Court of Appeal in England and Wales are not directly binding here as this is a separate legal jurisdiction. However the devolved public service schemes in Northern Ireland incorporate the same transitional protection arrangements as the schemes in Britain. Legal advice confirms the implications of the Appeal Court decision is such that all schemes must be treated as affected by the <i>McCloud</i> decisions and so require to be remedied.</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Judicial Pension Scheme is a pension scheme for specified members of the devolved judiciary in Northern Ireland. The Scheme is regulated by the Judicial Pensions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. The Scheme does not affect people in rural areas. There is therefore no need to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.</p> <p>There are no rural needs identified.</p>

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The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
<p>Consultation on Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 & Criminal Finances Act 2017 NI codes of practice.</p>	<p>The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) NI codes of practice provide guidance on powers to assist with the identification and recovery of assets or recoverable property.</p> <p>The four NI codes of practice are a statutory requirement under POCA to provide guidance on powers to assist with the identification and recovery of assets or recoverable property as defined under the Act.</p> <p>The codes are written in the form of a manual to provide operational guidance on the use of the relevant POCA powers. The NI codes cover use of the powers by constables and accredited financial investigators. There is no distinction between the use of the powers in rural or urban settings.</p> <p>No needs were identified specific to people in rural areas or to operational officers working in rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
<p>Transparency in the Supply Chain - consultation with NI's public sector bodies.</p>	<p>Human trafficking and slavery practices take place across Northern Ireland and not limited to urban or rural areas.</p> <p>Forced labour and human trafficking for forced labour may take place in rural areas. For example, there have been incidents of forced labour within the agricultural sector. However, the agricultural sector is not the only sector where forced labour can take place: there have also been instances of forced labour within factories (including food processing factories) and the maritime sector. Modern slavery can take place in any setting.</p> <p>Public and private sector businesses are at risk of modern slavery occurring in their supply chains. Modern slavery can occur in any country, including locally, not least in rural areas where farming, fruit and vegetable picking and commercial factories are prevalent. Introduction of these proposals would have</p>

<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>a positive impact as it would help raise awareness and set procedures in place to help strengthen procurement procedures.</p> <p>Public and private sector businesses are at risk of modern slavery occurring in their supply chains. Modern slavery can occur in any country, including locally, not least in rural areas where farming, fruit and vegetable picking and commercial factories are prevalent. Introduction of these proposals would have a positive impact as it would help raise awareness and set procedures in place to help strengthen procurement procedures.</p> <p>The Department of Justice has engaged directly with the Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) Engagement Group on Human Trafficking to inform the strategic direction and content. A number of these civic society groups have a reach across Northern Ireland, in both urban and rural areas including faith groups which reach into churches across Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) can report the mistreatment of workers, labour providers operating without a licence or a business using an unlicensed gangmaster to the GLAA. In recent months the GLAA has provided assistance in collaboration with the PSNI to combat exploitation across both rural and urban areas, more specifically in working to publish an awareness raising article in the Farming Life magazine.</p> <p>Civic society groups also reflect the views of other NGO partners with whom they work, providing the Department with a wide range of input from across the whole of Northern Ireland. Similarly, statutory partners such as the Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI), Home Office Visas and Immigration and Immigration Enforcement, HMRC, the Health and Social Care Board etc all have reach into all areas of Northern Ireland. An Garda Síochána also work as a partner on cross-border aspects, with issues affecting rural areas on both sides of the border.</p>

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	<p>All of these groups have had the opportunity to input to discussions on the content, measures and actions to be included in the Draft Strategy.</p> <p>The Draft Strategy will also be subject to public consultation, giving other civic society organisations and the wider public (in both urban and rural areas) the opportunity to help shape the final strategy.</p> <p>The Department also works with Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) to raise awareness of modern slavery across Northern Ireland. In partnership with the DOJ, NILGA produced guidance for council workers and frontline officials raising awareness of the potential to encounter trafficking across the entirety of Northern Ireland. Awareness raising material (poster, leaflet and video) has been distributed and displayed in council buildings across all council areas and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner is exploring the possibility of producing a guidance document on modern slavery for staff across all councils. Also, faith-based groups have received awareness raising material for circulation to churches across Northern Ireland. Media interviews also reach into homes across Northern Ireland.</p> <p>No specific rural needs have been identified and the evaluation process will cover Northern Ireland-wide measures.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>Mediation and Alternative Dispute Resolution Services Funded by Civil Legal Aid in Northern Ireland - Non Family Civil Cases.</p>	<p>Traditionally, legal aid was not provided for mediation in non-family civil cases. Following a judgement in a judicial review which determined that mediation is within the scope of a legal aid certificate, the Department is complying with the ruling and providing arrangements and protocols for funding mediation in civil legal aid cases.</p> <p>Currently, persons pursuing mediation to resolve disputes are generally required to go to the offices of mediators when they are availing of the opportunity</p>

<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>to use the services of an independent facilitator who facilitates the parties to communicate effectively and negotiate the settlement of the dispute. These proposals will not impact on the location of those mediators. The mediators may, provide the service at a place which is convenient to both parties outside of their offices, however, it should be noted that the two parties to the dispute may not reside close to each other, or where a business is involved, be located close to the other party. Additionally, it is important to have appropriate premises for the mediation, for example, separate rooms where the parties can consider their position on offers made.</p> <p>The mediation usually takes one to two days to complete and the impact of travel will be minimal if a person in a rural area has to travel for mediation for this short period.</p> <p>There is no data as to the extent to which those who live in rural areas would be financially eligible to receive legal aid. The extent to which legally aided parties will avail of mediation as an alternative to having the matter resolved at court or the uptake in rural areas and urban areas is unknown.</p> <p>In engagement with the legal profession, who offer mediation, and other professional mediators it has been highlighted that we will need to make provision for funding for the hire of premises at which mediation will take place and we will consider that as part of the consultation. The stakeholders advised that where the two parties to the dispute are located outside of the main cities and close to each other, they may offer mediation facilities at a location close to the parties, however, often the parties are located at a distance to each other. They also advised that the premises for mediation can be crucial to the mediation being effective and they may need a place where there are break out areas and where the confidentiality of the proceedings is protected which might provide limitations on the location of the mediation.</p>

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	Taking into account the limited impact on members of the rural community, further consideration of the policy in rural areas is not deemed to be appropriate.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Victims of Crime Commissioner.	<p>A Victims of Crime Commissioner would provide a voice for victims;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote and encourage good practice; • review the adequacy and effectiveness of our laws and operational practices; • champion delivery of Charter entitlements and challenge, advise and make recommendations to the Minister of Justice and to criminal justice agencies, to ultimately deliver improved outcomes for victims. <p>A Victims of Crime commissioner can represent all victims of crime equally regardless of where a crime occurs.</p> <p>As the intention is to protect all individuals and communities, no specific steps were taken to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.</p> <p>No specific rural needs were identified as proposals will not impact on rural cases in a differential way.</p>
Implementation of a new (revised) 3 year Victim and Witness Strategy for NI.	This strategy is an overarching strategy for all victims and witness of crime in NI. Its aim is to improve the experiences of all victims and witnesses of crime. Currently, irrespective of rural or urban location, all victims and witnesses have needs and entitlements laid out in the Victim and Witness Charters. This strategy seeks to better understand the needs of victims and witnesses and implement improvements and support initiatives specifically for those needs. For example, whether there are accessibility or mobility issues to attending court, there may be opportunities to avail of remote evidence centres.

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 strategy has 4 strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of the needs, interests and experiences of victims and witnesses; • Ensuring victims and witnesses receive the emotional and practical support they need; • Embedding increased organisational focus on victims and witnesses; • Ensuring victims and witnesses receive the services and information they need and are entitled to. <p>This overarching strategy is about improving the experiences of all victims and witnesses irrespective of location/rural area. Where specific needs/vulnerabilities are identified, the appropriate support will be provided via an existing national network of services including Victim Support NI, Advocacy services, registered Intermediaries etc.</p> <p>The strategy has been informed by national surveys and reviews and reports into the experience of all victims and witnesses. No evidence has been forthcoming from any of these reviews, surveys etc, that demonstrate a social or economic issue. This strategy aims to consider the needs of all victims and witnesses and improve their experience/provide the specific support they need</p> <p>The Victim and Witness Steering Group members who are responsible for delivering this strategic and associated action plans in partnership also act as Victims Champions within their own organizations and agencies.</p> <p>Should any new policies or plans arise from this strategy at a local/operational level, they will be subject to further rural needs assessments.</p> <p>No rural needs identified or impact on rural needs as a result of this 3 year strategy that aims to improve the experience of all victims and witnesses of crime.</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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Nil	
Nil.	Nil.

The 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
<p>Update of the PPS Policy for the Prosecution of Sexual Offences/ Serious Sexual Offences.</p>	<p>This policy aims to achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To describe the services the PPS provides to victims and witnesses in cases involving sexual offences/serious sexual offences; • To explain the specific practices and procedures involved in prosecuting cases of this nature; • To describe the trial process including sentencing and appeals; • To ensure compliance with the Victim Charter; and • To provide guidance to PPS staff and external agencies on best practice in the provision of those services. <p>No geographical distinction is made in directing upon the prosecution, or not of sexual offences.</p> <p>Neither the home area of a defendant, location of alleged offence(s) 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>Development of a Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.</p>	<p>The purpose of this policy is to explain the approach of the PPS in taking prosecutorial decisions in respect of offences arising from modern slavery and human trafficking and the wide range of other crimes associated with it such as benefit fraud, grievous bodily harm, assault, rape or child sex abuse.</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>No geographical distinction is made in directing upon the prosecution, or not of offences addressed by this policy. Neither the home area of a defendant, location of alleged offence(s) 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>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
<p>Multiple measures implemented upon the first COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in late March 2020, and continued throughout the 2020-21 period.</p>	<p>A range of emergency measures and initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have been assessed with regard to their impact upon rural needs, and found to have had no detrimental effect.</p> <p>Many of these have been in support of staff remote working, and have involved the enhancement and augmentation of ICT systems and physical equipment. This 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 have reduced staff travel requirements, supported more flexible working, enabled those considered vulnerable to self-isolate and supported those with care responsibilities.</p>

DISTRICT COUNCILS

Reporting Period 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Policy on the use of Council owned Car Parks for Drive in Events.	<p>This policy ensures a transparent procedure in relation to the use of Council owned Car Parks for the purpose of holding “Drive in” events.</p> <p>Positive impact in relation to rural needs with due regard being implemented through rural screening process, consultation with rural stakeholders and through ongoing engagement with community and voluntary organisations during the delivery of this policy.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
COVID-19 Community Support Fund.	<p>The aim of this support fund programme was to ensure that Council provided COVID-19 funding to those communities and individuals within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough who are most in need.</p> <p>Positive impact in relation to rural needs with due regard being implemented through rural screening process, consultation with rural stakeholders and through ongoing engagement with community and voluntary organisations during the delivery of this support programme.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Light up Policy for Civic Buildings.	<p>This policy ensures a transparent procedure in relation to “lighting up” requests of Council’s Civic Buildings. This policy manages internal and external requests.</p> <p>Positive impact in relation to rural needs with due regard being implemented through rural screening process, consultation with rural stakeholders and through ongoing engagement with community and voluntary organisations during the delivery of this policy.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty	
Access to Food (Christmas and New Year Support).	<p>The aim of this support fund programme was to ensure that Council provided the necessary food supplies to those communities and individuals within the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough who are most in need. This was carried out in partnership with local community and voluntary groups/ organisations.</p> <p>Positive impact in relation to rural needs with due regard being implemented through rural screening process, consultation with rural stakeholders and through ongoing engagement with community and voluntary organisations during the delivery of this support programme.</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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Community Support Hub.	A multi-agency approach has been utilised in the development of this policy, to ensure all identified rural needs are addressed. The range of needs of all the residents of the Borough have been considered throughout the development of this policy. This policy will enable all residents of the Borough to access the Community Hub services from their own home, and this will mitigate the social and economic needs of those living in a rural location.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Ards and North Down Borough Council Employee Furlough Arrangements.	This internal policy is delivered based on the employee's tasks or place of work. It has ensured that where rural service may be retained within the Local and Regional Guidance and with safety paramount these facilities and services have been retained or delivered in a manner that is suitable and appropriate for all employees working in or living in rural areas. Furlough arrangements have been considered equitably and appropriately with service delivery as the main assurance for residents, ratepayers and employees.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
Rent Rebate Scheme for COVID-19 Due Diligence Scheme.	These arrangements will impact on potentially all who have a rental or license arrangement with Ards and North Down Borough Council no matter where the facility is located.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Broadband & Mobile Communications	
Amendment of Standing Orders to enable remote attendance at Council meetings.	Prior to implementing the meetings and holding the first remote meeting, Business Technology officers have worked with all Members and officers in rural areas as required to ensure they have the necessary technology and connectivity in place to access and participate in the meetings. Consideration of rural needs has also

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>meant that provision has been made for anyone who remains concerned with regard to connectivity to attend Council offices and participate remotely in the meeting from that venue.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - raise awareness and acknowledge role of RUC	
<p>Request to locate a Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) plaque in Ards Arts Centre to mark the centenary of the forming of the RUC.</p>	<p>The area of Newtownards is appropriate for an event such as this with the Royal British Legion facility in the town as wreath laying may take place there and Newtownards is a central area for all to visit and participate if eligible which good public transport, car parking and facilities for attendees.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Tourism	
<p>Proposed Portaferry Visitor Information Provision 2021 - Portaferry Visitor Information Centre lease expires 31 March 2021.</p>	<p>The relocation of this service satisfies the need to keep residents, ratepayers and visitors in the borough. It encourages them from the large towns and on to the rural routes as part of the tourism plan in rural areas and supports creative craft providers in the area. Also, for those going to or coming from Newry Mourne and Down Council area they have the facility to get year-round tourism provision. This will include information on the Ards Peninsula as well as other rural tourism sites and experiences etc. as this will also be housed in the proposed location to promote rural and benefit the economy.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
<p>COVID-19 Workplace Advice.</p>	<p>The policy is based on central and Local Government advice in relation to the restrictions across the Borough. The policy takes into consideration the needs of those residing or providing services in rural areas.</p>
<p>Ards and North Down Borough Council Books of Condolence.</p>	<p>Although this policy is to provide clarity on when a book of condolence may be opened the policy does take into consideration the needs of those in rural areas who may not otherwise be in a position to visit the location of the books during the period in which they are open for signing. Access to online books will assist those individuals.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Budget review September 2020 - March 2021.	This policy is based on delivering Council services cognisant of the needs of all residents in the Borough, to businesses as well as delivering to those visiting the Borough, whilst ensuring the restrictions from local and central government are adhered to.
Ards and North Down Borough Council Voluntary Severance Scheme.	This is a policy that is available to all employees and will be affected where the criteria of service provision across the Borough will not be adversely affected.
Ards and North Down Borough Council Compulsory Redundancy Scheme.	This is a policy that will be applied to all employees across the Council. The policy applies where the post is no longer in place or the service will not be provided then the individual will be made redundant. Rural and non-rural service provision will be reviewed as part of this policy.
Interim Home Working Arrangements.	All employees will be affected dependent on their tasks and responsibilities as outlined by central and local government advice. It outlines the support for each employee in their circumstances.
Interim Part-time Study Policy (COVID-19).	This policy will be enacted based on the employee's duties irrespective of where they are carried out.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Covid Community Recovery Plan.	This policy considers and addresses the needs of those in rural areas - including those living and those providing services. The Plan will identify different needs through working with individuals and statutory, community and voluntary organisations. The issues will be particularly around, but not solely about isolation and loneliness and include transport, broadband, local facilities of shops, community centres and other services. They will address the needs of all ages and those working and those not working.

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Statutory Duty and Sustainability Policy delivery	
Trial alteration to household bin collection in 4 collections which correlates to 5%of domestic household.	The trial period ensures all household collection services in any area of the borough including all rural areas will be provided with a service that meets their needs including taking positive action to provide bins appropriate for larger households, those with medical or clinical need or other needs as identified within the policy.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education and training	
Ards and North Down Borough Council events for 100th Anniversary of Northern Ireland.	Where the events are appropriate to be supported in the area due to size of area, access etc, or to those involved they will be delivered in a range of rural areas of the Borough. These may include tree planting or talks on events 100 years ago.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Ards and North Down Innovation Hub Outline Business Case.	The Business case does consider the location of the hub in or near rural areas as well as the needs of those living, working or hoping to develop a business in a rural area of the Borough. All relevant requirements will be considered throughout the planning and development stages.
Borough Events Strategic Direction 2020-2025.	The Plan seeks to ensure events and support for those providing events will be provided where the conditions including theme, infrastructure, relevance to the area is suitable.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Cemeteries Pricing Policy 2021-2022.	This is an inflationary uplift across all cemeteries within the Borough.
Ards and North Down In-House Leisure Pricing Policy 2021-2022.	This is an inflationary uplift across all relevant leisure provision within the Borough.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Bicentenary of Donaghadee Harbour.	Although Donaghadee is not a rural area of the Borough this event will take place in the area and raise the profile of the history that is on the boundary of rural areas. This event will encourage attendance from local areas who would not otherwise perhaps attend events in larger 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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
2021/22 Arts and Tourism Events Transition Plan.	This plan is developed based on themes identified in the Borough Events Strategic Direction. They include: 'Sea, Coast and Maritime', 'Food and Drink', 'Creative Industry', 'Arts and Crafts', 'Live Music', 'Heritage and Ecology'. Many themes have a relevance to rural areas within the Borough. All the event planning will ensure the needs of rural dwellers will be considered to ensure their access to attendance and relevant events are supported in their area.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Tourism	
Tourism Events Grant Scheme 21/22.	<p>The Tourism Events Grant Scheme contains themes identified in the Borough Events Strategic Direction. These themes are often relevant to rural areas within the Borough. Access for attendees to large scale events in non-rural areas will be considered and where public transport is limited, services to assist access will be reviewed and implemented as required.</p> <p>Access to and egress from areas that are more rural, and events are held will be considered in the planning to ensure attendees may attend by public or private transport and routes are open for all users in the area.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Business	
EU Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Digital Project Application Proposal to aid COVID-19 Recovery.	This funding is to enable business transformation of any business within the criteria irrespective of where it is located or with whom it does business.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Ards and North Down Borough Council Roadmap to Sustainability 2021-2028.	<p>This Roadmap has been developed to formalise the Council's commitment to becoming more sustainable. The Council, through its implementation of other key strategies and partnerships such as The Big Plan and ongoing initiatives to improve waste management practices within the Borough, has been steadily improving its sustainability performance.</p> <p>This Roadmap is for the period 2021 to 2028 and will be updated periodically, with the accompanying Action Plan reviewed and updated on an annual basis.</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>This roadmap and subsequent annual action plans will impact positively on all ratepayers, residents of the Borough and businesses as the roadmap gives direction for all services to achieve the objectives of sustainability irrespective of the location within the Borough.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Policy and procedures for exhibition selection at Ards Arts Centre.</p>	<p>The Arts bring employment for individuals particularly in the visual art and craft sectors and other creative industries. The Borough has a high concentration of artists and makers choosing to live and work in rural areas as they find inspiration in the natural beauty of the Borough and Strangford Lough. It is important for as broad a range of individuals of all ages to engage in the arts as it brings social interaction, expression of their talents, inspires creativity and has a proven positive impact on wellbeing. These identified needs have been considered as an integral part of this policy.</p>
<p>Future Cemetery Provision Project Brief.</p>	<p>This Future Cemetery Provision Project Brief explores the needs of the Borough and Council areas that border with the ANDBC boundary to provide suitable burial space for the next 30 to 50 years for the burial of both coffins and ashes.</p> <p>The location of these sites considers the needs of those in rural areas both in the provision of the space as well as the connectivity to sites across the Borough.</p>

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Furlough Policy.	No rural needs were identified.
Remote Meetings Protocol.	This Protocol enables both Staff and Members to participate in Council meetings remotely. The policy was not influenced by rural needs.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Physical Activity	
Get Moving ABC Framework.	The Framework's vision is to 'Get Everyone Moving' and is a Borough-wide targeted and collective approach by a range of local organisations and groups. Residents in rural areas were consulted but no specific rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal Policy	
ICT Acceptable Use Policy.	The policy was not influenced by rural needs.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
Implement a Participatory Budgeting Pilot.	The Community Engagement Strategy where the PB project is an action from states: "We acknowledge that good community engagement is at the heart of addressing inequality. Therefore, we will strive to enable and empower the full participation of all our community. We will make extra efforts to actively engage with those who are traditionally underrepresented or face barriers to inclusion including women, children and young people, people with disabilities and rural dwellers." The Community Planning Partnership includes a Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise Panel to facilitate wider community engagement and to ensure that all communities have the opportunity to make their needs known to the community planning partnership.

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>Nine out of 38 of the organisations on the panel are rural, including TADA, the rural network for the Borough.</p> <p>Access to digital infrastructure was considered.</p> <p>The Tak£500 Working Group has links across the whole borough. Officers have committed to ensuring that constituted and non-constituted groups are supported to apply for this funding. As the funding pool will be split evenly across each of the District Electoral Areas rural areas will also benefit.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal Policy	
Leave Entitlement Policy.	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan.	<p>The plan has been influenced by research and community engagement and as 49% of the borough's population live in rural areas, rural needs have helped influence the actions within the Connected response and recovery plan in particular actions in Part A of the action plan relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address barriers to services and community support; • Enhance coordination of food assistance and networks; • Continue to engage with and listen to communities to ensure the partnership is responsive to needs. <p>In part B of the plan there are actions that will tackle social isolation and loneliness and this will include a focus on Making and Enhancing Connections which will help create connections with groups that are socially isolated.</p> <p>The following issues were considered in relation to the needs of people in rural areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to digital infrastructure ; • Social isolation; • Mental 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.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services; • Poverty; • Loneliness; • Employment and Jobs.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Severance and Redundancy Policy.	No rural needs were identified.
Street Naming Policy.	No rural needs were identified.
Flexible Working Hours Policy.	No rural needs were identified.
Fraud and Corruption Policy.	No rural needs were identified.
Gifts and Hospitality Policy.	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Environmental Impacts	
Tree Management Policy.	The policy was not influenced by rural needs.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal Policy	
Commemorative Memorial Licence Application (including Cemeteries).	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
Play Park, Local, Neighbourhood and District.	<p>Residents in rural areas have the right to enjoy a healthy lifestyle so it is important that they have access to play parks.</p> <p>Based on the designated Settlement Development Limits (SDL) classification (a statistical delineation of settlements in Northern Ireland defined by the Planning Service), the council area comprises a combination of rural and urban areas with the population located across a range of residential classifications including rural settlement based, dispersed rural living and urban residential. Key settlements identified within the SDL include:</p> <p>Armagh City, Keady, Banbridge, Magheralin, Craigavon Urban Area and Bleary, Markethill, Dollingstown, Rathfriland, Dromore, Richhill, Gilford and Waringstown.</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>Due to differences in population spread, in particular the largely rural, dispersed nature of settlements and the population base in Northern Ireland, Council has sought to develop its own tailored categorisation for fixed play areas with associated distance criteria which relate more closely to existing local fixed play provision, underlying demographic patterns and local geography.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
<p>Play Park, Oxford Island.</p>	<p>Residents in rural areas have the right to enjoy a healthy lifestyle so it is important that they have access to play parks.</p> <p>Based on the designated Settlement Development Limits (SDL) classification (a statistical delineation of settlements in Northern Ireland defined by the Planning Service), the council area comprises a combination of rural and urban areas with the population located across a range of residential classifications including rural settlement based, dispersed rural living and urban residential. Key settlements identified within the SDL include:</p> <p>Armagh City, Keady, Banbridge, Magheralin, Craigavon Urban Area and Bleary, Markethill, Dollingstown, Rathfriland, Dromore, Richhill, Gilford and Waringstown.</p> <p>Due to differences in population spread, in particular the largely rural, dispersed nature of settlements and the population base in Northern Ireland, Council has sought to develop its own tailored categorisation for fixed play areas with associated distance criteria which relate more closely to existing local fixed play provision, underlying demographic patterns and local geography.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal Policy	
<p>Recognition Proposal.</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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism	
Tandragee Public Realm.	This is a Public Realm improvement scheme that is focused on Tandragee, but it has positive effects on the surrounding rural hinterland.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Urban Identities	
Urban Centres Identities Project.	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism	
Waringstown Public Realm.	This is a Public Realm improvement scheme that is focused on Waringstown but it has positive effects on the surrounding rural hinterland.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal Policy	
Whistleblowing Policy.	No rural needs were identified.

An online link to Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council Policies can be found [Here](#)

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty/Deprivation	
COVID-19 Micro Funding.	An emergency fund to help communities and vulnerable people. The social and economic needs of all residents of Belfast, including those living in rural areas have been considered.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
Household Recycling Centre COVID-19 Recovery Plan.	<p>The re-opening of Household Recycling Centres to provide an interim recycling and waste service for all residents of Belfast, both urban and rural.</p> <p>Within the context of the Household Recycling Centre Recovery Plan, Belfast City Council aims to offer the same service to all residents of Belfast, irrespective of their geographical location within the city.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
Licensing of Pavement Cafés.	<p>The introduction of pavement café licenses in urban Belfast city streetscape.</p> <p>This strategy 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 the rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Poverty/Deprivation	
Provision of emergency funding - COVID-19.	<p>An emergency fund to assist with getting citizens through the COVID-19 crisis.</p> <p>The social and economic needs of all residents of Belfast, including those living in rural areas have been considered.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Tourism	
Springfield Dam Park Project.	<p>The redevelopment of this site was for those communities in the surrounding Springfield Road area.</p> <p>This is not located in any of the rural areas identified for Belfast.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other- Good Relations	
Good Relations Strategy.	An overarching strategy setting out a vision for a shared city. No specific rural needs emerged in the consultation exercise.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Transport Services or Infrastructure	
Inner North West - Northern Cluster Sites.	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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Good Relations	
PEACE IV Connecting Open Spaces Project.	The objective of the programme was to promote positive community relations. The geographic scope of this capital project is not located in any of the rural areas identified for Belfast.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Report It App.	The trial took place for a limited period and did not include work in rural areas. Further consideration of the issues in relation to the social and economic needs of people on rural areas will take place once the trial is completed.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Transport Services or Infrastructure	
Strategic Sites Assessment (SSA).	This programme 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses	
DfC COVID-19 Revitalisation Programme.	The focus of this Programme was to aid city centre businesses to safeguard businesses and jobs. Research and engagement as part of the DfC COVID-19 Revitalisation Programme has not identified any specific issues for people 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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Transport Services or Infrastructure	
Luminous City - A Lighting Strategy for Belfast.	Developing a co-ordinated approach to lighting for the city's urban area. This programme 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.

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
<p>A booking system has been introduced for householders wishing to deposit recyclables and other waste at household recycling centres (HRCs). Householders can book an appointment either online or via the telephone.</p>	<p>No change to service provision in rural areas.</p>
<p>Car Parking Permit Scheme at Townhead Street and East Strand car parks. The scheme has originated as a result of a Council motion to mitigate the move from free to pay and display charging in specific car parks within our borough.</p>	<p>An informal consultation process will commence July 2020 which will identify any social or economic needs relevant to the proposed changes. In addition a pilot will commence at the end of June 2020 to allow the identification of issues or suggestions for improvements which will then be taken to Council within the year for consideration.</p> <p>As the proposal is to introduce parking charges in urban town centre car parks there may be additional costs for those in rural areas who wish to park in specific car parks.</p> <p>Again this may impact on travel to work commuters who use the current free car parks during working hours.</p> <p>Socially it may cost more for individuals from rural areas to socialize in town during operational hours at areas near to the pay and display car parks.</p> <p>However it is Councils intention to mitigate this by clearly educating our citizens on alternative free parking and consider any issues or suggestions for improvements raised. Information will be included on the website relating to alternative free car parking locations and if requested a hard copy of this information can be issued to individuals in large print. The translation tool will also support those whose first language is not English to change the language to a more suitable one. Alternatively a virtual map could be devised and uploaded to the website.</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 issues to date considered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and cost; • Parking; • Accessibility; • Internet accessibility; • Disability specific needs such as large print or virtual maps; • Socially relevant factors. <p>As a result of new parking charges there may be increased costs with regards to travel to the area, bus routes are reasonably good to most central shopping hubs, however their usage may result in longer waiting times than for those who can drive.</p> <p>There are other alternative free car parks in the local vicinity to support parking and reduce costs as well as on road parking which would reduce walking distances. There is adequate accessible car parking at the other sites and these will be kept under review. All current car parks meet accessibility requirements.</p> <p>Any other factors raised will be considered following consultation. Socially relevant factors not presently known will be taken into account as a result of the consultation and pilot feedback.</p> <p>Any identified needs will be taken into consideration. Any future needs identified via the informal consultation and or pilot will be taken into consideration.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Causeway Coast and Glens Grant Funding Policy is to outline the Council's agreed approach to Grant Funding in relation to resourcing external bodies to assist in the delivery of Council's strategic objectives and priorities.</p>	<p>The social and economic needs of the people within the Council area are highlighted through the elected representatives this is evident through the commission of 17 grant programmes delivered annually, supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and Social Development; • Sports and Well Being; • Community Safety;

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"> • Cultural and Art focus development; • Community and Sports Capital infrastructure and Business Enterprise. <p>Oversubscription of the grant programmes is an annual occurrence and highlights the need for support through the whole Council area in the urban and rural settlements.</p> <p>In addition the needs of the local rural areas is evident in Causeway Coast and Glens delivering a £9.6 million investment from the Rural Development Programme. To date key projects have been delivered through various strands to help support and develop rural applicants through; Rural Business Investment Scheme, Village Renewal Scheme, Rural Broadband Scheme, Rural Basic Services Scheme and Local Action Group Co-operation. These projects were developed as a result of identifying and targeting specific rural needs and inequalities. To date these schemes have contributed towards enhancing rural life, tackling poverty in rural areas, increasing social interaction, improving education, networking, good relations and collaboration. These are further improved by the on-going networking between Council and Local Action Groups including the opportunities for local groups to work together on projects with similar aims and objectives.</p> <p>The level of funding that has been applied for and delivered within the rural areas clearly shows the social and economic need identified by the Causeway Coast and Glens Council.</p> <p>The grant funding policy outlines the process which Council will follow with regards to any funding award. As such no set social and economic needs are specifically detailed in the policy.</p> <p>The policy itself will not have a direct impact on individuals in rural areas; however all funding awards are 'based on established need' which may relate</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.
	to rural areas. As detailed in the previous section grants can cover all the identified as Rural Policy areas and may relate solely to one or touch on a variety depending on the project proposed for funding.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Development of a draft Community Development Strategy 2020-23.	<p>Through the consultation process for development of the draft Community Development Strategy the following are the social and economic needs that were specifically evident in rural areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great levels of social isolation; • Poor provision of facilities for leisure activities, sporting activities, training, health etc.; • Longer distance to travel to access Council facilities; • Longer distance to travel to access health and other facilities; • Poor public transport links; • Increased costs for groups as a result of transport hire costs; • Poor broadband and in some cases mobile phone coverage; • 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. <p>Consideration was given to how best to deliver services, programmes and projects that were accessible to rural community groups, in terms of venues for and times of provision e.g. advice drop in times provision, community group training etc.</p> <p>Consideration was also given as to how best to support rural community groups to address the needs identified in Section 3D using a community development approach- carrying out community engagement activities, identifying needs and solutions, connecting with Council and statutory bodies, lobbying, developing projects, securing funding 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>An Action Plan has been identified to deliver the Community Development Strategy and identified within this are actions to develop a Community Centres Strategy that will review the current methods of provision/ support for community centres in Causeway Coast and Glens and identify a range of delivery models which will include support for community centre provision in rural areas.</p> <p>The development of the draft Community Development Strategy 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 identified specific to rural areas such as access to services, poor transport links, increased cost of delivering services and providing community facilities have influenced the development of the Strategy and design of the associated Action Plan.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<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 will commence mid November 2020 which will identify any social or economic needs or impacts relevant to the memorial.</p> <p>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. However impacts will be reviewed following the consultation process as the options for the memorial may change the current perceived impacts. At present it is known that the area where the incident occurred is near to the train station and a Council pay and display car park.</p> <p>If the memorial was placed near to the actual site, then the pay and display carpark in the local vicinity would support parking and reduce the walking distance to the site.</p> <p>Information will be included on the website relating to the consultation process as will information relating</p>

<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>to the options for council's consideration. 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"> • Travel; • Parking; • Accessibility; • Internet accessibility; • Disability specific needs such as large print or virtual view of options; • Cost; • Socially relevant factors. <p>The consultation will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual's views on any memorial; • location of any memorial; and • proposed style and structure of any memorial. <p>Once further information is available following the consultation this assessment will be reviewed to consider issues with regards to travel to the area, bus routes, impact on current services and access to the proposed location.</p> <p>Socially relevant factors will be taken into account at the design phase through the formal consultation process - individuals will be able to comment and make suggestions as to potential design options.</p> <p>Following the consultation the actual proposed designs for the memorial will be reviewed to meet accessibility requirements as appropriate.</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>

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 needs will be taken into consideration. Any future needs identified via the formal consultation will be taken into consideration and updated at that time.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Provision of a new Economic Development Strategy for the Borough.</p>	<p>The following is a summary of the overarching elements identified through the analysis of need for the Causeway Coast and Glens Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Impacts: Job creation is the priority; Poverty reduction; Economic prosperity; Opportunities for young people; Business opportunities for women. • Social Impacts: Promoting social inclusion; Village enhancement -vibrant villages. • Also mentioned: Basic service provision; Good community infrastructure; Empowering local people to get more involved in their community issues and also empowering business people to be better entrepreneurs. <p>Research highlighted that socially individuals in rural areas may feel more isolated, therefore projects surrounding the promotion of social inclusion were developed to tackle this issue.</p> <p>In addition individuals who live in rural areas often have to travel long distances to work, so job creation and schemes supporting up-skilling have been made a priority.</p> <p>It is anticipated that knock-on effects will relate to poverty reduction, economic prosperity and increased opportunities for young people and business women. To achieve this good community infrastructure is required as this will empower local people to get involved in community issues.</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>Improved services in villages will lead to their enhancement and improve local service provision.</p> <p>Many of the themes raised within the consultation for the economic development strategy are now covered within the wider document.</p> <p>This includes the need to ensure that programmes such as Alchemy and Business Start are accessible to and promoted in rural areas, or rather that enhanced promotion needs to take place.</p> <p>Prosperity and Place undertakes regular roadshows to promote its services, and this always includes harder-to-reach areas in rural districts as well as Rathlin Island.</p> <p>In addition improvements to the digital infrastructure of the Council area has and will continue to support increased business utilisation; therefore a central hub can be accessed via the web, by email or telephone to support entrepreneurs. In addition information can be supplied in alternative formats or languages.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Digital Strategy.	<p>Economically:</p> <p>The only costs incurred by this strategy are to Council.</p> <p>For this strategy, Council has considered the geographical make-up of the Borough and the needs of those in remote, rural areas who will require an upgrade to their digital connectivity and skillsets. Indeed, there are some areas within the Borough that have no digital connectivity or digital skills at all, leading to an increased sense of isolation.</p> <p>As this strategy will not cost the residents of the Borough any money, the outcome of a coherent roll-out plan will only be beneficial to all the stakeholders.</p> <p>Council has identified the need for improved broadband connections in rural areas, this strategy will enable Council to develop a coherent plan for the roll-out of FFNI and Project Stratum within these 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>Council has also identified a need for up skilling to take place in relation to digital applications, enabling those in rural areas to remain connected. Council had employed a consultancy firm to provide expertise and engagement with the community.</p> <p>Council will continually review the progress of the roll-out plan and if necessary, will engage with key stakeholders to ensure that all their needs are being fully catered for.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
<p>LiveSmart Community Environmental Grant Programme 2021-22 (pilot scheme). A grant application scheme to engage local groups and organisations in raising environmental standards in places where people live, work and relax.</p>	<p>No change to service provision in rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Planning Application Checklist - advice and guidance to applicants.</p>	<p>The basic information required for a planning application for those in rural areas is set out in the Planning (General Development Procedures) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and in planning policy statements. The Checklist pulls all of this information together in one document to make it easily accessible to people in rural areas in terms of other supporting information that is likely to be required to be submitted for their planning application.</p> <p>The basic information and other supporting information contained within the Checklist is already a requirement of planning legislation and planning policy statements.</p>
<p>A revision/update of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (SCI).</p>	<p>Planning applications in relation to social and economic needs of people in rural areas may be determined at the Planning Committee meeting.</p> <p>People in rural area may wish to participate in the Council's Development Plan functions.</p> <p>People from rural areas will be able to view information online, submit representations electronically or have someone attend Committee, or other meetings, on their behalf.</p> <p>Virtual meetings/workshops can be accommodated where relevant.</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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Health & Safety	
Revised Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.	This health, safety and well-being policy has been put in place for the good of all individuals who work or use Council facilities. The protection provided applies equally to all staff and service users regardless of their religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, gender, marital status or sexual orientation, ability/disability, caring responsibilities.
Policy on the use of tobacco and electronic cigarettes in the workplace.	This policy is legislatively driven and will be applied in all Council facilities regardless of whether they are located in urban or rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Transport	
Fleet Safety Policy.	This policy is not intended to impact on people in rural areas - it is a technical policy which sets out how Council will comply with statutory requirements and good practice in fleet management.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Community Safety	
Dog Control Enforcement Policy.	The overall aim of the policy is to ensure consistency in enforcement of all dog related legislation regardless of the location of the owner however there is specific reference to dog attacks on livestock which would more likely have an impact on dog owners in the rural areas of the Council district - The policy will benefit everyone equally regardless of geographical location.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development	
Play Pitches Strategy.	The Playing Pitch Strategy aims to deliver a strategic approach to the future development of pitch infrastructure and prioritise the identified shortfalls especially in Strabane rural. This will benefit all local communities (including rural communities) within the Derry and Strabane district.

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Arts and Culture	
Museum and Visitor Attraction Pricing Policy.	<p>This scope of this policy is around the revised pricing schedule for the Museum and Visitor Services facilities, which include the Guildhall, Tower Museum and Harbour House. Its purpose is to propose an incentive of 15% discount for national and international conferences in an effort to encourage organisers to choose Derry as a conference destination.</p> <p>It is intended to increase the participation of groups in terms of hiring rooms within Visitor and Attraction facilities within the Derry City and Strabane District Council area however as these named facilities are based within the urban area of the Council.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Internal	
Decision to use E-Tendering process.	<p>Derry City and Strabane District Council have commenced using E-tenders in order to streamline its procurement activities and as per guidance given by government, they ensure that officers consider the use of contractual requirements in their public procurement exercises to address social, environmental or economic issues. This is applicable universally regardless of the location of the project.</p> <p>It was recognized that E-tendering may negatively impact on rural businesses due to broadband coverage however that is an improving situation with 91% of all NI residents and businesses with broadband coverage (66% in rural areas). (Connected Nations 2020 Northern Ireland Report).</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Community Safety	
Revised Safeguarding Policy (Children and Adults at Risk).	<p>This policy refers to Council's commitment provide protection for all children and adults at risk who use its facilities regardless of whether they are located in rural or urban areas.</p> <p>The policy is based on existing legislation and is primarily for Council staff.</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.
	At this stage of the policy development there is nothing to indicate that the guidance will impact differently on the effectiveness and lawfulness of the protection of children or adults at risk in rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Severance and Redundancy Policy.	This is an internal policy for Council staff only.
Discretionary Policy.	This is an internal policy for Council staff only.

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Transport Services or Infrastructure	
Development of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Safe Driving at Work Policy.	In recognition of the restrictions imposed by the lack of broadband connectivity, additional regard was taken in relation to supporting communications with employees who were likely to be driving in rural areas on a regular basis through the provision of two-way radios and also through the ability to communicate via the Fusion in-cab Route Optimisation software.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Development of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Estates Strategy 2020 - 2030.	The Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area is the largest geographical area of the 11 Councils but has the lowest population. The Estates Strategy is designed to support and enable service delivery across a geographically large district with a dispersed population. The development of the Estates Strategy is likely to impact positively upon people in rural areas by striving to ensure that their needs are taken account of and addressed in the delivery of Council services.
Development of The Marble Arch Caves UNESCO Global Geopark Development Plan.	Prior to the creation of the Geopark Development Plan, taking cognisance of the Council's evidence based approach, consultation took place with a range of stakeholders to identify need and inform future direction and solutions. Stakeholder engagement included representation from rural areas including local enterprise and community partnerships. The feedback received was used to inform and shape the Development Plan and its associated actions/ programmes. One of the objectives identified within the Plan in relation to the Stakeholder Engagement pillar is to increase the sense of ownership of and commitment to the Geopark by local communities and businesses, facilitating and enabling them to leverage social and commercial opportunities from the designation.

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
Revision of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's ICT Policies and Procedures for Employees.	The Procedures will apply equally whether the equipment is in use in rural or urban areas. In relation to poor broadband connectivity, the Council has lobbied consistently for the necessary funding for infrastructural improvements in the area. ICT staff have been able to improve connectivity to the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark through investment in the installation of a reliable private circuit. In relation to improving connectivity for staff working from home, ICT staff have worked with colleagues from Funding and Investment on a cross-council consortium bid to successfully secure funding from Wave 3 of the Local Full Fibre Network Programme.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Access to a Council initiative	
Revision of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Memorial Benches and Trees Policy.	No rural needs identified. The policy will be implemented consistently across urban and rural areas of the District.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Revision of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Procurement Policy.	No rural needs were identified. The policy will be implemented consistently across urban and rural areas of the District.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other: Access to services	
Development of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Plan to reopen Public Conveniences following their closure during the COVID-19 Pandemic.	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has considered the needs of those people who live or work within the rural areas of the District, particularly in relation to access to services. The first phase of the Re-opening Plan is supportive of the two main retail centres within the District, which will also benefit people who live in rural areas who form the customer base for such outlets. The next three phases facilitate the opening of twelve Public Conveniences in rural areas, which will further support both rural businesses in those areas, and the customer base for local retail outlets.

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 potential for the re-opening of the remaining Public Conveniences will be actively monitored. Any decisions made will consider staffing availability, the feasibility of ensuring safe operations for both staff and the public wishing to access the site, and future changes to relevant regional or national guidance.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Access to services	
Development of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Plan to reopen Household Waste Recycling Centres following their closure during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Apr 2020).	The Council has considered the needs of those people who live or work within the rural areas of the District, particularly in relation to access to services. Consequently, the Phased re-opening plan, facilitates the opening of four rural recycling centres which will allow people from the nearby rural communities to access the service without being dependent on having to travel to Enniskillen or Omagh. It is important to note that the plan is based on current guidance and regulation relating to unnecessary travel. The potential for the re-opening of the remaining rural recycling centres will be actively monitored. Any decisions made will consider staffing availability, the feasibility of ensuring safe operations for both staff and the public wishing to access the site, including traffic management arrangements, and future changes to relevant regional or national guidance.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Broadband or Mobile	
Development of Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Social Media Policy for Councillors.	No rural needs were identified. The Policy will be implemented consistently across the Council, and should not impact upon people in rural areas differently to people living in urban areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Feasibility Review and Economic Appraisal of District Play Park Provision.	The development of a Play Park Provision Plan for the District aims to ensure that people living in rural areas have access to open space and play areas for the adequate development, health and wellbeing of children and young people, regardless of their physical or mental abilities.

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 Plan recognises that play spaces have the potential to increase the opportunity for children and young people to connect with and be part of the community, especially where play facilities are provided in areas which are open and accessible to everyone. The Plan has been the subject of widespread consultation and the Council is keen to work with the Community and Voluntary Sector to address evidence-based need.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Development of a Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Corporate Sponsorship Policy.	No rural needs were identified. The Policy will be implemented consistently regardless of whether the applicant is rural or urban based.
Development of the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Events and Festivals Strategy 2020-2025.	No rural needs were identified. The Strategy and Action Plan will be implemented consistently regardless of whether the applicant is rural or urban based.

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development/Rural Businesses/Jobs or Employment	
<p>Rural Micro Business Development Grant Scheme.</p>	<p>Rural needs given due consideration through the screening exercise undertaken by the Council. The programme 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 Framework (TRPSI) the scheme will provide 9 rural micro businesses with a 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>In Northern Ireland 58% of businesses are based in rural areas. 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).</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>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Tourism/Rural Development	
<p>Hydebank Walking Trail.</p>	<p>The Hydebank proposal entails creating new basic services infrastructure in the form of a walking trail around the perimeter of the playing fields into a 1km looped walking trail which can be enjoyed by the entire community regardless of their location, age, race, gender, mobility etc.</p>

<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>The project will benefit both urban and rural dwellers equally. The facility is located on the urban /rural cusp and all local residents will have equal access to the trail. The trail will be hard surfaced and suitable for users of all abilities with a graduated descent and a short looped trail.</p> <p>The development of the Project is a result of the Councils commitment to the regeneration of the Hydebank Playing Fields site into a recreational hub that is inclusive to all residents regardless of their abilities and location. Through a long term programme which involves the Council working in partnership with other statutory and funding bodies, the Council recognise that Hydebank Playing Fields have immense potential for development and have committed to a four phase project initiative at the site to include the development of a children's play park, a walking trail, a 3G pitch and the provision of additional car parking.</p> <p>The proposed scheme is located close to Drumbo, Lisnabreeny, Moneyreagh, Drumbeg etc and will create an attractive location for both local and visitor pedestrian movement and footfall in the area. Furthermore, this project will have a positive impact on surrounding rural villages within a few miles distance by providing much needed recreational facilities. The project proposal was supported by local rural community groups.</p> <p>Given that the current location is already used as a walking trail, it supports the view that there is demonstrable need for the Council to allocate a budget to ensure this walking trail becomes a permanent fixture. The final result would be a walking trail which is inclusive not only to those with adequate mobility to make the descent and walk the loop in its current condition, but to those with mobility concerns, prams, young children with outdoor toys, or the elderly population who require a smooth flat surface. There is also a car park onsite which encourages visitors from further afield to avail of the walking trail.</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 primary need identified in relation to children and young people in the Community Plan for Lisburn Castlereagh area was for widespread provision of open, creative and green spaces to support their development.</p> <p>This supports research undertaken by Outdoor Recreation NI, in September 2020 they published findings from a detailed survey across Northern Ireland. Amongst the findings was the headline figure that 51% of the populous expect to spend more free time outdoors than they did pre-lockdown. A survey undertaken by Statista found that in 2019, 52% selected walking for recreation as the most popular sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland. On this basis, the walking trail targets people of all ages and levels of ability to undertake regular exercise and enjoy the multiple health benefits that can be attained from walking, thus complementing both primary and secondary research undertaken.</p> <p>The rationale for government intervention is primarily based upon the positive impact this service will have on rural communities to achieve equally effective and successful outcomes in the design and delivery of public services, regardless of their location. The plan will not impact people in rural areas differently, it will have a neutral impact as it effects town dwellers and rural dwellers equally.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development	
<p>Community Christmas Tree Switch On Events Funding Policy 2021-2023.</p>	<p>This grant is only for groups in the LCCC rural areas, small towns and villages that fall outside of the immediate 'area of benefit' for the Council's Civic Christmas Trees, located in Lisburn City Centre.</p> <p>This scheme provides all-inclusive Celebratory Christmas Events in local communities to bring people together to promote a sense of identity while contributing to the social wellbeing of the area.</p> <p>Fostering an all-inclusive sense of community unity and belonging. Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council recognises the importance that locally organised</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>community events can play in developing strong, connected and united communities.</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.</p> <p>These local switch on events enable the local community to come together, plan and organise a local tree lighting ceremony that is all inclusive and caters for the many needs within the community. It therefore encourages and strengthens community empowerment whereby friends, families and neighbours come together and share the excitement, fun and joy associated with the festive season and by lightning these rural villages and bringing life to them.</p> <p>The need has been identified for local communities to come together at Christmas to celebrate. The policy provides the opportunity to do so by offering a grant to local community groups to organise a Christmas all-inclusive event.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/ Rural Development	
Awakening the Gateways.	<p>The objectives of the Awakening the Gateways project include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create installations and/or illuminations that go beyond the provision of Standard Street lighting that will enhance the gateways to the city; • To provide installations and/or illuminations that will create vibrancy and activity in Lisburn by enhancing the physical and social fabric of the gateways; • To enhance connections across the City Centre through the use of public realm, interactive installations and lighting.

<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>Whilst this project is being carried out in Lisburn City Centre, many people living in rural areas either tend to work and/or shop in the businesses and facilities located in the City Centre. The purpose of the Awakening the Gateways project is to create a better sense of arrival to the city by implementing the following interventions such as planting which would create a more appealing environment for all residents and visitors, improved lighting would increase visibility for cars and pedestrians giving them more confidence to navigate the City Centre especially in the evening, and interactive installations would provide more attractions for young families and illuminated signage and banners as mentioned previously would benefit residents and visitors who may be visually impaired. Key locations on the approaches into the City Centre include the Train Station, the Bus Station and Union Bridge, acting as gateways to the city.</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 effect town dwellers and rural dwellers equally.</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>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</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 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 the gateways to Lisburn City Centre. By doing, the hope is that this would help extend and enrich the City Centre experience and help to provide a connection between the Centre and surrounding residential areas. A series of improvements to gateway spaces would aid this transition and create a sense of welcome to the City Centre at key points of arrival.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/Rural Development	
<p>Castlereagh Urban Framework (CUF).</p>	<p>The key objective of the Castlereagh Urban Framework (CUF) was to identify a series of high-level regeneration projects and investment priorities to help achieve the overall vision for the following urban areas: Carryduff, Dundonald and Forestside.</p> <p>Whilst this policy is being developed for Carryduff, Dundonald and Forestside, many people living in the surrounding rural areas either tend to work and/or shop in the businesses and facilities located in these nearby urban areas and would therefore benefit from the revision of this Framework.</p> <p>Benefits to people in rural areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more job opportunities; • improved linkages to encourage alternative modes of travel including cycling, walking and public transport; • improvements to existing community facilities; • town centre improvements and more. <p>The Framework will not primarily impact on people in rural areas differently, it will have a neutral impact as the Castlereagh Urban Framework (CUF) will effect urban and rural dwellers equally.</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 Framework identifies opportunities and investments within the urban areas mentioned. However, this will benefit all visitors and residents who work and shop local.</p> <p>Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) held a public consultation in order to inform the Castlereagh Urban Framework which was advertised via the Councils website. Consultation workshops were also held in the following urban areas Carryduff, Dundonald and Forestside. The consultation events were attended by Councillors, Council Officers, and statutory bodies representing the Council area and attended by residents across the Council area including many from the surrounding rural villages. The results of the consultation have been reflected where appropriate to inform the final Framework.</p> <p>Furthermore, the feedback received from the public consultation has informed the highlighted opportunities and investments in Carryduff, Dundonald and Forestside. Benefiting all visitors and residents in the Castlereagh area.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/Rural Development	
<p>COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Scheme.</p>	<p>The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Scheme was launched (August 2020) during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to help businesses address the operational challenges they faced in order to serve customers safely and to operate within Public Health Authority and other Government guidelines.</p> <p>In response to the challenges brought about by COVID-19, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC), in conjunction with the Department for Communities (DfC) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), offered businesses the opportunity to apply for financial assistance.</p> <p>The scheme was designed to aid the recovery of businesses on the high streets of the main urban centers and rural villages across the Council area and to help</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>them address the operational challenges faced in order to serve customers safely and to operate within Public Health Authority and other Government guidelines.</p> <p>Businesses situated within the urban centres of LCCC including: Lisburn, Carryduff, Dundonald and Forestside and within rural towns and villages, were eligible to apply for funding through the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Scheme. Therefore, having a positive impact on the rural economy and those who live in these areas.</p> <p>The plan will not impact on people in rural areas differently, it will have a positive impact as the businesses on urban and rural high streets are eligible to apply for funding. Rural applications are limited to those businesses operating in village centres.</p> <p>The project aims to revitalise high streets and increase footfall in urban and rural settlements.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/ Jobs or Employment	
Development Briefs 2020.	<p>The key objectives of the Development Briefs is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a quality, vibrant and mixed-use development; • enhancing the Conservation Area ; • contribute to economic resilience; • contribute to environmental sustainability. <p>Whilst this project involves the creation of a Development Brief for 2 sites in Lisburn City Centre, many people living in rural areas either tend to work and/or shop in the businesses and facilities located in the City Centre. The purpose of the Development Briefs is to set out clearly and simply the kind of place that should be created on the sites outlined in the Brief. This is done to ensure that the site is utilised to its full potential and advantageous to both the visitors and residents of the Council area.</p> <p>The Development Brief will not primarily impact on people in rural areas differently, it will have a neutral</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>impact as the gateways to the City Centre will effect urban and rural dwellers equally.</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 areas who wish to prosper from Tourism to Lisburn and Castlereagh will benefit if they utilise the opportunity to promote their businesses.</p> <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 there were a number of key sites for development in Lisburn City Centre. The Council strive to attract high quality and diverse developments, whilst maximising the contribution to other regeneration objectives, thus creating more opportunities for visitors and residents of the Council area, including the surrounding rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Local Development Plan 2032 Draft Plan Strategy.</p> <p>Addendum to Rural Needs Impact Assessment Screening Report, January 2021, Consultation on Focussed Changes Addendum.</p>	<p>The draft Plan Strategy (published for consultation in October 2019) contains a spatial strategy and operational policies which will apply across the Council area. The draft Plan Strategy aims to deliver on the three main pillars of sustainable development which are the economy, the environment and the needs and aspirations of our society. The impact therefore on rural areas will relate to these three themes.</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>Through its operational policies on topics such as housing, economic growth, retailing and town centres, tourism, the natural and historic environment and infrastructure, the draft Plan Strategy will have a direct influence on development which can lead to positive improvements, e.g. generating jobs in the rural area to help sustain rural settlements as vibrant communities.</p> <p>The spatial strategy and planning policies as set out in the draft Plan Strategy are aimed at encouraging sustainable growth across the rural area in an effort to sustain rural communities. The draft Plan Strategy seeks to address the issues of the rural needs identified and ensures that the entire Council area and its residents have the opportunity for better access to employment, housing, transport, public services and facilities and that the historic and natural heritage is safeguarded for future generations.</p> <p>After considering the representations made to the draft Plan Strategy, the Council proposed a number of changes to the published document and as a result, the proposed changes were screened to identify if further RNIA assessment was required and, if necessary, an assessment of any proposed changes that have not been screened out (where necessary).</p> <p>The proposed changes to the draft Plan Strategy do not introduce any new policies but provide amendments and clarification to the existing published policies to ensure coherence and consistency. The aims and objectives of the policies are unaltered and in reassessing the impact of the proposed changes, the outcomes remain unchanged from those originally identified and considered in the original RNIA.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Jobs or Employment/Broadband or Mobile Communications	
Economic Development Communications 2021-2022 delivered by the Business Solutions Section within Economic Development unit.	Within LCCC's communications strategy, Economic Development have content on the Council website as well as the Invest Lisburn Castlereagh website. The team also circulate a number of e-zines with information about the programmes and services on

<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>offer through the Business Solutions team or other organisations that may be of interest.</p> <p>The Business Solutions programmes and promotion of these through our website and e-zine will have a positive impact on the local business community and Council area as a whole.</p> <p>By supporting local business to develop and grow, we are benefitting people in rural areas through increasing employment opportunities and supporting local businesses and supporting business growth.</p> <p>Additionally a strong business base within the Lisburn Castlereagh City area will ensure that a broad range of services is easily accessible to the rural communities.</p> <p>Furthermore content of the websites and e-zine are focussed 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.</p> <p>The website and e-zines may require access to internet or broadband services. This may have an impact in some rural areas, however we have previously been involved with programmes such as LPWAN to improve connectivity to broadband across the Council area and promoted broadband voucher schemes for rural businesses.</p> <p>In addition to consideration of internal plans and strategies, such as Lisburn Castlereagh City Council Corporate Plan - Our Plan for Growth & Connecting 2018-2022 and beyond, and the Lisburn Castlereagh City Council Community Plan 2017 - 2032, we regularly review the NINIS, NISRA statistics and the NI Interdepartmental business statistics and Labour Market survey reports. We also use the Programme For Government document and Regional Development Strategy 2035. LCCC also actively engage with Elected Members representing 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>Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council 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>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Rural Tourism/ Jobs or Employment	
<p>Inward Investment and International Trade Projects 2021-2022 delivered by the Business Solutions Section within Economic Development unit.</p>	<p>There are a range of projects within this programme that include Property Forum, Trade Missions and Events including MIPIM (Property Market), Promotion Westminster (London Trade Development), China, Eastern European Corridor, Heathrow Hub, NI-NL (Netherlands Programme) and Investment Consultancy Support.</p> <p>The Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) reported that just under half of the population (47.2%) in the L&CCC area live in rural areas.</p> <p>The Business Solutions team aims to encourage inward investment across the Lisburn Castlereagh area and these projects are aimed at promoting the area to external investors.</p> <p>The Business Solutions Collaboration Programmes will have a positive impact on the local business community and Council area as a whole. By supporting local business to develop and grow, we are benefitting people in rural areas through increasing employment opportunities and supporting local businesses and supporting business growth.</p> <p>Additionally a strong business base within the Lisburn Castlereagh City area will ensure that a broad range of services is easily accessible to the rural communities.</p> <p>Furthermore nature of these inward investment projects are focussed on bringing a benefit to our local community in economic and social terms and a negative impact on our rural communities is not anticipated. There is no difference in the likely impact on people in urban, rural or mixed locations.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Businesses/Jobs or Employment	
<p>Collaboration Projects 2021-2022 delivered by the Business Solutions Section within Economic Development unit.</p>	<p>There are a range of projects within this programme that involve collaboration with other Councils or delivery partners. Programmes include: Business Awards, Fairtrade, Made in Lisburn Castlereagh, Global Entrepreneurship Week.</p> <p>The Business Solutions team aims to encourage business start-up and nurture growth of all local business through a comprehensive range of business support programmes, some of which are collaborative programmes with other Council area and delivery partners.</p> <p>The Business Solutions Collaboration Programmes will have a positive impact on the local business community and Council area as a whole. By supporting local business to develop and grow, we are benefitting people in rural areas through increasing employment opportunities and supporting local businesses and supporting business growth.</p> <p>Additionally a strong business base within the Lisburn Castlereagh City area will ensure that a broad range of services is easily accessible to the rural communities.</p> <p>Furthermore the collaborative nature of these projects with neighbouring Council areas or organisations, are focussed on bringing a benefit to our local community in economic and social terms and a negative impact on our rural communities is not anticipated. There is no difference in support offered to businesses in urban, rural or mixed locations.</p>
<p>Enterprise and Business Support Programmes 2021-2022 delivered by the Business Solutions Section within Economic Development unit.</p>	<p>There are a range of projects within this programme that include: SME (Small - Medium Enterprises) Mentor Growth; Digi Growth; Digital Innovation Programme; Sales and Export, Bid 2 Win, Support network for Social Entrepreneurs, SERC (South Eastern Regional College) plus the Business Entrepreneurs Network; Women in Business, Youth Enterprise and Princes Trust.</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 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>These business solutions support projects will also have a positive impact benefitting people in rural areas through increasing employment opportunities and supporting local businesses, encouraging business growth and ensuring a broad range of services is easily accessible to the rural communities.</p> <p>The Business Solutions team aims to encourage business start-up and nurture growth of all local business through a comprehensive range of business support programmes. The Business Solutions Programmes will have a positive impact on the local business community and Council area as a whole.</p> <p>By supporting local business to develop and grow, we are benefitting people in rural areas through increasing employment opportunities and supporting local businesses and supporting business growth.</p> <p>Additionally a strong business base within the Lisburn Castlereagh City area will ensure that a broad range of services is easily accessible to the rural communities. There is no difference in support offered to businesses in urban, rural or mixed locations.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Labour Market Partnership Interim plan 2021-2022 delivered by the Programmes unit.</p>	<p>The social and economic needs identified by Interim Local Rural Development Strategy (2016) and Lisburn Castlereagh City Council is subject to the Rural Needs Act 2016.</p> <p>The Labour Market Partnership, as a collaboration project between Department for Communities, local government and other local stakeholders will have a</p>

<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>positive impact benefitting people in rural areas through increased training and employment opportunities while also supporting local businesses, encouraging business growth and enabling a ready and able workforce. LMP actions are influenced by the trends identified by labour market statistics - claimant count, workforce statistics and business needs across the Lisburn Castlereagh Council area.</p> <p>This collaboration is a response to the changing labour market as a result of the economic recession brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Between December 2019 and July 2020, the claimant count for the Local Government District almost tripled. It has since started to reduce once more. This is a direct result of the economic recession triggered by Coronavirus. While the geographical breakdown is unknown we can presume based on our population distribution that there has been a negative impact on our rural communities.</p> <p>Labour Market Partnership interventions aim to have a positive impact on the local business community and those facing redundancy and unemployment Council area as a whole.</p> <p>There is no difference in support offered to businesses in urban, rural or mixed locations or in the services offered to those seeking employment.</p> <p>However, those residents in rural areas may be adversely impacted by the change in labour market, for example travel to work or training opportunities - in relation to cost and frequency of public transport services. There may also be limited access to broadband which could impact on the ability to seek employment and participate in training services online.</p> <p>The benefit to individuals in rural areas who have been adversely impacted by the labour market change is through offering an increased training opportunities, support with job matching and identifying transferable skills.</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 businesses will have continued support through this Labour Market Partnership to encourage maintenance and growth due to the ready supply of a skilled workforce.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>NI Business Start Up Programme, A collaboration programme across all 11 local Councils, secretariat delivered by the Business Solutions Section within LCCC Economic Development unit.</p>	<p>The NI Business Start-Up programme aims to offer support to all those in NI considering self-employment as a route to the labour market, or in setting up businesses and drafting business plans.</p> <p>This programme is funded by the EU European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Invest NI and each council and contributes significantly to the achievement of each council's annual statutory jobs target. In 2020-2021 the GFI (Go For It) programme delivered 95 new businesses and 107 new jobs in the council area.</p> <p>As a result of the pandemic, there has been a major shift in the economy and labour market. Many businesses have been adversely impacted with increasing numbers of people in unemployment, as evidenced by the rising claimant count for LCCC area.</p> <p>This NI Business Start-Up Programme will offer opportunity to those in rural area to establish a business or consider self-employment. This NI Business Start-Up programmes will have a positive impact benefitting people in rural areas through opportunities 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.</p> <p>By ensuring a there is support available for new businesses to establish in the Lisburn Castlereagh area, rural communities will benefit by having access to a wider range of services and employment opportunities.</p> <p>There is no difference in support offered to individuals or startup businesses in urban, rural or mixed locations or in the services offered to those seeking employment.</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>However, those residents in rural areas may be adversely impacted by the change in labour market, for example travel to work or training opportunities - in relation to cost and frequency of public transport services. There may also be limited access to broadband which could impact on the ability to seek employment and participate in training services online.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Digital Sculpture Trail in Hillsborough Forest.</p>	<p>Rural needs given due consideration through the screening exercise at multiple phases, undertaken by the Council, including the development of Concept Plan, Phase 1 infrastructure works, Phase 2 Digital Sculpture Trail, and Woodland Themed Play Area.</p> <p>The Hillsborough Forest redevelopment project is a multi-phase project based on a visionary concept plan presented to council back in October 2016. Council took a 20 year lease on an area of the forest in April 2019 for the purposes of developing these areas to improve the tourism and recreation offering within the forest. Phase 1 infrastructure works have been completed and includes improved trails, new pedestrian bridges, new interpretive signage, larger car park, and new woodland themed play area. The project is based in a rural area but will benefit both urban dwellers and rural dweller. Both areas will have equal access to the forest and all elements will be fully accessible to residents and businesses from both urban and rural areas.</p> <p>Consultation on phase 1 infrastructure works included working closely with the local community, such as Downshire Primary School, Beechlawn Special School, residents and business owners. It was subject to a Full Green Book appraisal as part of the application for Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework (DAERA) funding. The project aim is to increase the number of visitors to the forest, from out of state visitors, to domestic visitors, urban and rural.</p> <p>Footfall counters have been erected to measure numbers and Phase 2 of the project which is 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>Digital Sculpture Trail will incorporate an App that will give an analysis of the origin of visitors.</p> <p>Hillsborough Forest is located on the outskirts of the award winning Hillsborough Village. The village is surrounded by green fields and very much rural. This development will attract new and repeat visitors to the area and will have a positive impact on rural Hillsborough Village and the local environs.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Tourism/Hospitality sector	
<p>Rural Tourism Collaborative Experience (RTCE) Programme.</p>	<p>The RTCE programme is an initiative part funded by DAERA and is aimed at tourism and hospitality businesses to encourage them to collaborate in an attempt to redress the current imbalance of tourism dwell time in rural and urban areas. The programme will also help build businesses up after the temporary closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The key aim of this programme is to bring together a number of rural businesses and other potential partners who will co-develop a combined experience to offer the visitor an end to end holistic product that meets the visitor's need, increasing dwell time in the area and driving economic growth.</p> <p>The programme will focus on Moira and Hillsborough, two rural villages in the LCCC area that have a rich history and a unique, high quality food offering.</p> <p>The sustainability and stability of businesses is very important in a rural context as these businesses sustain the local community. By engaging in the RTCE programme businesses will have the opportunity to explore ways of increasing sales, improving productivity and profitability.</p> <p>With almost half of the LCCC district being considered rural, the spread of tourism benefits to tourism and hospitality providers throughout the whole council area is well placed.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Tourism	
<p>Tourism & Hospitality Support Programme.</p>	<p>In response to the challenges that have been brought to the tourism and hospitality sector by the COVID-19 pandemic the Council offered a support grant to help businesses in these sectors. The aim of the grant is to help protect jobs, prevent closure and promote economic recovery. The amount of grant offered to each applicant was maximum £2,500.</p> <p>This grant was offered to all relative businesses throughout the LCCC area. It is widely accepted that rural areas have been negatively affected by the pandemic and it is anticipated that this support will assist with the re-building of hospitality businesses particularly in these areas.</p> <p>At the programme evaluation it was further noted that there were 25 businesses who availed of the grant with 19 of these being from rural areas. That means that 76% of the businesses being supported through this programme were from rural areas.</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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development	
Roundabout Sponsorship Policy.	Considered appropriate data; completion of screening and mitigation where appropriate.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care Services	
Accident and Incident Report Policy.	Considered appropriate data; completion of screening and mitigation where appropriate.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC) Collective Agreement.	No rural needs were identified. This is an internal document affecting employees within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. No rural needs were identified as being impacted during this process.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
Autism Friendly Borough.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs. Two important areas within our Borough, The Gobbins and Carnfunnock Country Park (both rural locations) have been identified as being a part of this initiative. It has been identified that any connotations from this initiative would have a positive impact.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Agile Working Policy.	No rural needs were identified. This is an internal document affecting employees within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. No rural needs were identified as being impacted during this process.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Government Job Retention Scheme.	No rural needs were identified. This is an internal document affecting employees within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. No rural needs were identified as being impacted during this process.

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Implementation of the Jobs Retention Scheme.	The decision to implement this Scheme will impact on Mid Ulster District Council staff only. Staff who are placed on the Scheme are workers who cannot complete their work from home. Therefore, any impact on staff who are rural dwellers cannot be avoided and this action is deemed by Mid Ulster District Council as an appropriate and reasonable response to the pandemic.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development	
Seamus Heaney Homeplace Trails Experience.	The trails experience is located in and around the village of Bellaghy. The concept has been designed in order to enhance the tourism offer in this rural area of the District.
Rural Business Development Grant.	This Rural Business Development Grant formed part of DAERA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation framework and was therefore designed specifically with the needs of rural businesses and communities in mind.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Delivery of Essential Services Only (COVID-19 Response).	Mid Ulster District Council has assessed the potential impact of the delivery of essential services only on rural dwellers and has determined it does not unlawfully directly discriminate in any way with respect of rural dwellers. Where provision might potentially indirectly impact on rural needs, Mid Ulster District Council considers the impacts are justified and a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aim of protecting the general public from a Coronavirus pandemic by increasing the capacity of public service systems and mitigating the spread of infection.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development	
Active Travel Capital Project.	This project will have a positive impact on rural areas. Five of the six projects are taking place in rural areas with only one being implemented in an urban 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.
	Coalisland. The projects will have a positive impact for people in rural areas as they will increase safety when walking by either putting in place lighting (Maghera & Coalisland) or creating new connections in existing footpath infrastructure (Clogher, Clonoe & Eglis) or putting in place new infrastructure to allow safe walking routes (Bellaghy).
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Dignity at Work.	Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff particularly those living in rural areas. If staff had an issue they do not necessarily have to travel to Council offices to speak with someone but rather contact one of the Confidential Advisors of the Policy by phone or e-mail and if a meeting is required, this could be arranged at mutually agreed Council location so that the staff member does not have too far to travel.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Tourism	
Allocation of Hanging Baskets.	Whilst Mid Ulster District Council will be providing Hanging Baskets in the 5 Primary Towns, including the rural town of Maghera. Council are conscious of the need to support our local villages and work in partnership with local groups/communities to create vibrant villages.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Managing Bereavement Policy.	Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff including those living in rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Tourism	
OM Dark Skies Facility.	Consultations are continually taking place with the local community groups/residents about the Davagh development. This provides an opportunity to allow the local residents and groups to have their say and be brought up to speed on the development of the site. The 2 main community groups in the area is the Broughderg Community Association and the Dunnamore Residents Association, Council have been working closely with the associations for several years and their opinions have helped to shape Davagh.

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 most recent community meetings took place on 27 February 2019 and 22 October 2019. The purpose of these consultations was to continually engage with the local community and provide an update on the progress of the Davagh Dark Sky Project, deliver a presentation on light pollution, and distribute copies of the light management plan and International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) compliant lighting guidelines. Additionally these meetings allow the community to get involved in the project and have their say on the way forward for the forest.</p> <p>In addition to the wider public consultations, Mid Ulster District Council Officers liaise directly with individual land owners, providing information and advice on light pollution.</p> <p>An on-line survey was published in December regarding the further development of the mountain bike trail within the Dark Sky Park, this survey had over 800 responses.</p> <p>Members of the local community were invited to view the site in February 2020 to view the developments taking place and to hear of future plans for the site.</p> <p>Council Officers have delivered a Davagh Dark Sky presentation, explaining the background to the project, educating on dark skies and the issues of light pollution, and explaining the preliminary sky quality measurements. To date this presentation has been delivered to various groups and stakeholders.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Management of Overtime Policy	Mid Ulster District Council has considered the needs of staff including those living in rural areas. The needs of staff are met by the policy aims and objectives in that the Council is committed to ensuring that all working arrangements are appropriately and effectively managed. Although it recognises that overtime working will occasionally be required, Council wishes to, where possible, reduce overtime working to a minimum.

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>Where unplanned overtime or call outs are required, staff who live in closest proximity to Council site (or location where staff member needs to attend) may be called upon as opposed to those living further away in more remote rural setting. This makes more business sense particularly where time is of the essence e.g. dealing with an emergency. However, by monitoring and properly managing overtime as part of this Council wide policy, the Council intends to reduce the overall need for overtime and therefore staff will not be disadvantaged with same staff being called upon all the time to work overtime/assist with call outs.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development	
Mid Ulster Town Centre Recovery.	<p>The Mid Ulster Towns Covid 19 Business Grant will impact on people in rural areas in a positive manner. The aim of Mid Ulster Towns Covid 19 Business Grant is to assist businesses to adapt to and implement social distancing measures to protect staff and customers in line with government guidance. The businesses located in the town centres in the Mid Ulster region (Cookstown, Coalisland, Dungannon, Maghera and Magherafelt) are owned and utilised by people living within the rural areas of Mid Ulster.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Review of Online Business Directory.	<p>Mid Ulster Council's Online Directory was developed in 2016 to align services to Council's corporate objective to move more services online, thereby increasing the Directory's accessibility, and the online registration process was also intended to simplify the process for businesses (regardless of location) to sign up. For those who may have poor broadband or difficulty completing an Online Form, staff post out the Registration Form and will then upload details on behalf of the business.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Mid Ulster Pilot Covid Recovery Start Up.	<p>The objective of this pilot Scheme is to stimulate entrepreneurship in Mid Ulster by maximizing engagement and uptake of the startup support available through the provision of a small payment to all who have completed the GoFort Programme.</p> <p>The Scheme takes account of the identified rural needs, primarily the access to services issue. Access to the support for all, regardless of location has been taken into consideration in its development - the Contractor is required to deliver the one-to-one support either at the individual or group's own premises or another suitably convenient location. This is to maximize opportunities for participation and engagement with rural communities and also those who may be located at a distance from the Contractor's base.</p>

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
Litter Bin Policy.	The policy and the associated procedures are to be applied across the Council area. The same procedures will be applied in both urban and rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Planned Leave Policy.	This is an internal corporate document which provides information on planned leave for all employees of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council regardless of where they live or are based within the district.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Leisure and Sport	
Leisure and Sports Services pricing schedule.	The proposed pricing schedule relates to Council's Leisure facilities. While some of the prices are site-specific in terms of the services that are available at different sites, it will be the same charge for service users regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Neighbourhood Services Directorate Emergency Business Plan October 2020-March 2021.	<p>Council gave consideration to the following in the development of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate Emergency Business Plan for the period October 2020-March 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More residents of our district live in rural areas than urban areas; • More young people (up to the age of 15) and older people (65+) live in areas designated as Rural; • 10 of NMDDC's rural SOAs are within the top 25% of the NI most deprived with 2 being within the top 10% most deprived. The majority are located in the Slieve Gullion District Electoral Area (DEA); • Geographic location and setting of hubs and services; • Service requirements should also be taken into consideration such as access to broadband and public transport;

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"> • Urban and rural differentials between business size bands, type and location of same; • Lower income in rural areas; • Location of current available housing stock and its implication for future planning applications; • Profile of crime in rural areas differs from crime in urban areas; and • At both local and regional level, rural dwellers experience better health outcomes in general with lower occurrences of health problems across rural dwellers compared to those in urban areas. <p>Data from Council’s Residents’ Survey conducted in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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%); • Residents living in rural areas were more likely to say they regularly take part in local groups or community activities compared to in urban areas (28% vs. 20%); • Only 23% of residents living in rural areas feel they can have a say on things happening or how services are run in their local area compared to 28% in urban areas; and • 73% of rural residents support more services being available online compared to 54% of urban residents. <p>The Neighbourhood Services Directorate Emergency Business Plan clearly set out the planned and proposed outputs/outcomes for the period October 2020-March 2021.</p> <p>One named outcome/output detailed in the Emergency Business Plan was the phased reopening of all Council’s household recycling centres, and it was acknowledged further COVID-19 restrictions would negatively impact the reopening of the facilities.</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>Having witnessed a change in restriction levels since March 2020, Council continued to be mindful that any future restrictions put in place during the period October 2020 - March 2021 could have potential to adversely impact service delivery for residents whether they live in an urban or rural area.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
<p>Policy for the payment of professional fees.</p>	<p>No rural needs were identified. This is an inward-facing policy for Council and Council employees which sets out the arrangements for the payment of professional fees to employees of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.</p> <p>The reimbursement of professional fees is an illustration of the Council's commitment to the continuous development of its employees and enables employees to develop their full potential in delivering professional advice, guidance and services to customers.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
<p>Policy on artworks and or sculptures on Council property.</p>	<p>The aim of this policy is to provide the framework for a consistent approach to consideration and decision-making in relation to requests received for the installation of new public artworks/sculptures on council property.</p> <p>The corporate approach detailed in the policy will not have a greater impact on residents designated as living in rural areas. The process undertaken will place no restrictions on requests from individuals living in rural areas. The process is clearly defined in the policy, regardless of where the applicant lives in the district.</p>
<p>Policy on naming Council facilities.</p>	<p>The aim of this policy is to provide the framework for a consistent approach to decision-making in relation to naming of Council facilities and requests related to these. The scope of the policy also addresses requests regarding park benches and plaques on Council property.</p> <p>There is no restriction in making a request regardless as to whether people live in rural and urban areas within the district.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
Policy on requests to plant a tree on Council property.	<p>The corporate approach detailed in the policy will not have a greater impact on residents designated as living in rural areas.</p> <p>The process undertaken will place no restrictions on requests from individuals living in rural areas. The process is clearly defined in the policy, regardless of where the applicant lives in the district.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Promoting Safer Cycling August 2020.	<p>This document is for all citizens of the district and its aim is to encourage more citizens to take up cycling. It does not impact differently for those citizens living in rural areas.</p>
Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025.	<p>To develop this strategy Council undertook an economic profile of the District, looking at demographics across both urban and rural areas. This considered, population, multiple deprivation, employment, labour market, business births and growth, business base, connectivity and infrastructure, and an economic outlook. The strategic focus and objectives of the strategy are based on findings of need.</p> <p>The strategy will positively impact on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) across the District of Newry, Mourne and Down. Many of the larger businesses are located in our urban centres of Newry, Downpatrick, Newcastle, Kilkeel, and Warrenpoint with a significant proportion of our business base located in the rural towns and villages.</p> <p>The demographics of the rural business base is largely micro in scale; micro businesses will be key beneficiaries of the objectives outlined within this 5-year strategy.</p> <p>The support offered to rural based businesses is the same offering to urban based businesses; therefore, no differential impact is anticipated.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Sport and Leisure	
Reopening of indoor leisure facilities reintroduction of charging structures.	The restrictions in place for the phased reopening of the leisure facilities, limited services and charging structure impacted on all leisure users regardless of where they lived within the district.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
Safe Place Plan.	<p>This plan does not distinguish between rural and urban areas. It is a council wide service that's purpose is to promote safe experiences and support for all within the district.</p> <p>All people in rural areas will be afforded the same opportunities to avail of Safe Place as those in urban areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Sustainability	
Sustainability Policy.	<p>The needs of all residents of the district has been considered in the development of the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (NMDDC) Sustainability Policy.</p> <p>The Policy clearly states Sustainability is about creating opportunities for all residents in Newry, Mourne and Down to prosper without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>The Sustainability Policy gives a commitment that the Council will embed sustainable development within all its activities and functions.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other- Environment	
Volunteer Policy.	<p>The primary aim of the Volunteer Policy is to develop and promote best practice in the involvement and support of volunteers in the work of the Council, the policy and associated volunteer agreement/procedure also address specific policy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage development of volunteering in all appropriate areas of the Council; • Recognise and promote the importance of volunteering to the 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.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide clear guidance to individuals, groups and corporate organisations considering volunteering opportunities with Council; • Identify standards to which Council staff and volunteers are expected to adhere. <p>The policy has no differential impact whether the volunteers live within an urban or rural area.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Active and Healthy Communities Emergency Business Plan October 2020-March 2021.</p>	<p>Council gave consideration to the following in the development of the AHC Emergency Business Plan for the period October 2020-March 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More residents of our district live in rural areas than urban areas; • More young people (up to the age of 15) and older people (65+) live in areas designated as Rural; • 10 of NMDDC's rural SOAs are within the top 25% of the NI most deprived with 2 being within the top 10% most deprived. The majority are located in the Slieve Gullion DEA; • Geographic location and setting of hubs and services; • Service requirements should also be taken into consideration such as access to broadband and public transport; • Urban and rural differentials between business size bands, type and location of same; • Lower income in rural areas; • Location of current available housing stock and its implication for future planning applications; • Profile of crime in rural areas differs from crime in urban areas; and • At both local and regional level, rural dwellers experience better health outcomes in general with lower occurrences of health problems across rural dwellers compared to those in urban 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>Data from Council's Residents' Survey conducted in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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%); • Residents living in rural areas were more likely to say they regularly take part in local groups or community activities compared to in urban areas (28% vs. 20%); • Only 23% of residents living in rural areas feel they can have a say on things happening or how services are run in their local area compared to 28% in urban areas; and • 73% of rural residents support more services being available online compared to 54% of urban residents. <p>The Emergency Business Plan clearly set out the planned and proposed outputs/outcomes for the period October 2020-March 2021.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, having witnessed a change in restriction levels since March 2020, Council continued to be mindful that any future restrictions put in place during the period October 2020 - March 2021 could have potential to adversely impact service delivery for residents whether they live in an urban or rural area.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Communication	
Bilingualism Policy.	<p>The Bilingualism policy sets out the Council's commitment to facilitate and encourage the promotion and use of both the Irish language and the English language in the Council area. Council approves this policy to ensure linguistic equality for all who avail of and/or provide Council services as far is reasonably possible.</p> <p>The Bilingualism Policy applies to all Council Departments with regard to the functions they deliver and applies to all communication and engagement between internal and external 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Transport Services or Infrastructure	
<p>Bus Shelter Policy.</p>	<p>In terms of the policy, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council will consider the erection of a bus shelter following local representations where there is shown to be a “need”, providing the location does not present a safety or nuisance problem, has local community support and adequate funding is available.</p> <p>In terms of assessment and decision-making on the “need” for a bus shelter, “need” for people in rural areas will be defined as the usage being a minimum 10 passengers over the period of a day as opposed to 20 passengers over the period of a day in urban areas.</p> <p>This information must be confirmed by Translink or other recognised service provider such as the relevant Education Authority.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Chief Executive Department Emergency Business Plan October 2020- March 2021.</p>	<p>Council gave consideration to the following in the development of the Chief Executive Departmental Emergency Business Plan for the period October 2020-March 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More residents of our district live in rural areas than urban areas; • More young people (up to the age of 15) and older people (65+) live in areas designated as Rural; • 10 of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council’s rural Super Output Areas are within the top 25% of the NI most deprived with 2 being within the top 10% most deprived. The majority are located in the Slieve Gullion District Electoral Area; • Geographic location and setting of hubs and services; • Service requirements should also be taken into consideration such as access to broadband and public transport; • Urban and rural differentials between business size bands, type and location of same;

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"> • Lower income in rural areas; • Location of current available housing stock and its implication for future planning applications; • Profile of crime in rural areas differs from crime in urban areas; and • At both local and regional level, rural dwellers experience better health outcomes in general with lower occurrences of health problems across rural dwellers compared to those in urban areas. <p>Data from Council's Residents' Survey conducted in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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%); • Residents living in rural areas were more likely to say they regularly take part in local groups or community activities compared to in urban areas (28% vs. 20%); • Only 23% of residents living in rural areas feel they can have a say on things happening or how services are run in their local area compared to 28% in urban areas; and • 73% of rural residents support more services being available online compared to 54% of urban residents. <p>The Chief Executive Departmental Emergency Business Plan clearly set out the planned and proposed outputs/ outcomes for the period October 2020-March 2021.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, having witnessed a change in restriction levels since March 2020, Council continued to be mindful that any future restrictions put in place during the period October 2020 - March 2021 could have potential to adversely impact service delivery for residents whether they live in an urban or 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Complaints, Comments and Compliments Policy.	This is an internal document ensuring a consistent approach by all employees for all customers who avail of this council service. There is no differential impact upon whether the customer is from a rural or urban area.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Corporate Plan 2021-2023.	<p>The Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2023 sets out eight overarching strategic objectives which will be delivered across the Council area to all residents in relation to specific key actions which have been subject to public consultation.</p> <p>As part of public engagement, specific key headline actions identified for people living within rural areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing priority projects identified within masterplans and village plans. • Continuing to develop the District's bid to achieve the UNESCO Global Geopark designation by summer 2021. • Implementing priority projects identified within AONB action plans and protecting our biodiversity.
Corporate Services Directorate Emergency Business Plan - October 2020-March 2021.	<p>Council gave consideration to the following in the development of the Corporate Services Emergency Business Plan for the period October 2020- March 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More residents of our district live in rural areas than urban areas; • More young people (up to the age of 15) and older people (65+) live in areas designated as Rural; • 10 of NMDDC's rural SOAs are within the top 25% of the NI most deprived with 2 being within the top 10% most deprived. The majority are located in the Slieve Gullion DEA; • Geographic location and setting of hubs and services;

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"> • Service requirements should also be taken into consideration such as access to broadband and public transport; • Urban and rural differentials between business size bands, type and location of same; • Lower income in rural areas; • Location of current available housing stock and its implication for future planning applications; • Profile of crime in rural areas differs from crime in urban areas; and • At both local and regional level, rural dwellers experience better health outcomes in general with lower occurrences of health problems across rural dwellers compared to those in urban areas. <p>Data from Council's Residents' Survey conducted in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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%); • Residents living in rural areas were more likely to say they regularly take part in local groups or community activities compared to in urban areas (28% vs. 20%); <p>Only 23% of residents living in rural areas feel they can have a say on things happening or how services are run in their local area compared to 28% in urban areas; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73% of rural residents support more services being available online compared to 54% of urban residents. <p>The Corporate Services Directorate Emergency Business Plan clearly set out the planned and proposed outputs/outcomes for the period October 2020-March 2021.</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>Notwithstanding this, having witnessed a change in restriction levels since March 2020, Council continued to be mindful that any future restrictions put in place during the period October 2020 - March 2021 could have potential to adversely impact service delivery for residents whether they live in an urban or rural area.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Corporate Social Media Policy.	<p>Whilst this is an internal corporate document, consideration has been given to the following data which was extracted from NMDDC residents survey conducted in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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%); • Only 23% of residents living in rural areas feel they can have a say on things happening or how services are run in their local area compared to 28% in urban areas; and • 73% of rural residents support more services being available online compared to 54% of urban residents.
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy.	<p>This Policy does not distinguish between rural and urban areas. It is a Council wide practice and its purpose is to promote safe experiences and support for all within the workplace and district.</p> <p>All people in rural areas will also be afforded the same opportunities to avail of Safe Place as those in urban areas.</p>
Down County Museum Forward Plan 2020-2023.	<p>In respect of how the Forward Plan for Down County Museum will impact upon people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas, the plan includes provision for outreach to rural communities through its outreach activities and PEACE IV Projects. The Museum has a Community and Outreach Manager dedicated to reaching out to rural and coastal communities.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Draft Assessment Performance and Improvement Objectives 2021-22.	<p>The data collation process revealed that the majority of the population of the District live in rural areas and may therefore experience levels of deprivation, particularly in terms of the Access to Services domain, transport connections and digital connectivity.</p> <p>The 2018-19 and 2019-20 consultation and engagement processes on the performance improvement objectives and corporate priorities also highlighted the following issues in relation to rural areas and rural communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More investment in coastal and rural areas; • More community clean ups in towns and villages to encourage civic pride. <p>The Council has considered the issues raised and included 'supporting actions' around the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of new jobs and businesses in coastal areas; • Support and assistance towards community clean ups across the District.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Draft Health and Safety Policy.	This is a corporate internal document. This policy applies to all employees of the Council, Elected Council Members, contractors, seconded staff, placements, agency staff & customers regardless of where they live or which council facility they are based in or attending.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
ERT Emergency Business Plan October 2020-March 2021.	<p>Council gave consideration to the following in the development of the ERT Emergency Business Plan for October 2020- March 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More residents of our district live in rural areas than urban areas; • More young people (up to the age of 15) and older people (65+) live in areas designated as 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.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 of NMDDC’s rural SOAs are within the top 25% of the NI most deprived with 2 being within the top 10% most deprived. The majority are located in the Slieve Gullion DEA; • Geographic location and setting of hubs and services; • Service requirements should also be taken into consideration such as access to broadband and public transport; • Urban and rural differentials between business size bands, type and location of same; • Lower income in rural areas; • Location of current available housing stock and its implication for future planning applications; • Profile of crime in rural areas differs from crime in urban areas; and • At both local and regional level, rural dwellers experience better health outcomes in general with lower occurrences of health problems across rural dwellers compared to those in urban areas. <p>Data from Council’s Residents’ Survey conducted in 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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%); • Residents living in rural areas were more likely to say they regularly take part in local groups or community activities compared to in urban areas (28% vs. 20%); • Only 23% of residents living in rural areas feel they can have a say on things happening or how services are run in their local area compared to 28% in urban areas; and • 73% of rural residents support more services being available online compared to 54% of urban residents.

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 Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism Directorate Emergency Business Plan clearly set out the planned and proposed outputs/outcomes from the period October 2020-March 2021.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, having witnessed a change in restriction levels since March 2020, Council continued to be mindful that any future restrictions put in place during the period October 2020 - March 2021 could have potential to adversely impact service delivery for residents whether they live in an urban or rural area.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Geopark Development Plan.	<p>The Geopark Development Plan will focus activity in the Geopark area which is primarily the Rural area of NMDDC and includes the Slieve Gullion District Electoral Area which is in the top 10% of most deprived areas in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Geopark Development Plan will seek to deliver key initiatives and programmes to assist in addressing rural deprivation. With projects such as encouraging sustainable tourism development, opportunities will exist for micro businesses such as local tour guides, self-catering operators, crafters, brewers etc.</p>

OTHER PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Reporting Period: 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021



The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
<p>Proposal for Seaview Primary School to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2021, or as soon as possible thereafter; linked with:</p> <p>Proposal for Seaview Primary School to transform to Controlled Integrated Status, with effect from 1 September 2021, or as soon as possible thereafter.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Schools Policy, 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 St Mary's HS, Brollagh to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.</p> <p>(approved with modification to closure date - amended to 31 August 2021 or as soon as possible thereafter).</p>	<p>The Sustainable Schools Policy, 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>

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>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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
<p>Proposal for Barnish Primary School to discontinue with effect from 31 August 2020 or as soon as possible thereafter.</p> <p>(Approved with modification to closure date - amended to 31 August 2021 or as soon as possible thereafter).</p>	<p>The Sustainable Schools Policy, 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)</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.
	2016 in mind. The decision, the case for change, and supporting documentation, are available on the Department of Education Website.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
<p>Proposal for St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge to increase its admissions number from 58 to 75, with an annual phased increase in the enrolment number from 407 to 525, with effect from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Schools Policy, 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>

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
EA response to the COVID-19 pandemic - March 2020 onwards.	Households trying to access internet both for home schooling and for work purposes facing impacts in relation to connectivity. Rural households have comparable access to the internet at home as their urban equivalent. The most recent data from 2016 indicates that a greater proportion of rural households have internet access than either Northern Ireland as a whole or urban households in particular. Compared to rural areas in the UK as a whole, rural Northern Ireland has faster average broadband download speeds. Furthermore, with regard to mobile internet access, Northern Ireland has a lower level of geographic data 'not spots' (network coverage black spots) as compared to the rest of the UK, which theoretically increases the potential of mobile internet usage within rural areas. Line managers are to be made aware of sporadic coverage and all parties to work together and to communicate regularly.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other-Security Checks	
Pre-Employment Checking Service (PECS).	No negative impacts have been identified and the equality considerations are as outlined for the Section 75 categories and also the needs of rural dwellers.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Guidance On Supporting Staff To Return To Schools.	Staff living in rural areas and urban areas will be impacted upon as schools continue to reopen. No negative impacts specifically for rural communities have been identified at this stage, however the guidance will be kept under review.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
LYNC - Linking Youth to New Careers Programme.	Young people living in rural communities have less access to education or employment opportunities. Youth Service provision is offered across NI, including rural areas to support young people living in these areas, to close the gap on educational inequalities.

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>LYNC roles are to be offered on a NI wide basis and in each council area, which will include roles in rural areas (Cookstown, Enniskillen, Omagh, Limavady)</p> <p>Base locations will be offered in a location to suit the young person where at all possible, with induction and training also completed here.</p> <p>Travel expenses will be provided at casual user rate to ensure young people can maintain attendance and if they do not drive public transport will be paid for.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Education or Training	
A Framework for Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools.	<p>Census figures for 2011 highlight that more than one third of young people from Northern Ireland live in communities that have been defined as rural.</p> <p>The proposal will provide a positive impact in providing children with Special Educational Needs greater opportunity to access their education in a school in their local area and will reduce parental uncertainty at transition points across a child's educational journey.</p>
Special Schools Area Planning Framework.	<p>The proposal will provide a positive impact in providing children with Special Educational Needs greater opportunity to access their education in a special school in their local area and will reduce parental uncertainty at transition points across a child's educational journey.</p>
Implementation of common Article 60 Delegated funding formula for all Special Schools funded by the Education Authority in Northern Ireland.	<p>There will be a positive impact on rural communities as a common formula applied by EA would offer more consistency across all locations.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Broadband or Mobile Communications	
Digital Admissions.	<p>The Communications Market Report produced by Ofcom in 2017 records that more than eight in ten (83%) households in Northern Ireland have access to the internet. Almost eight in ten households (79%) have access to fixed broadband at home, and two thirds (68%) of adults in NI use the internet through a mobile phone.</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>76% of adults in NI personally use a smartphone and 62% of households in NI own a tablet computer in 2017.</p> <p>Smartphone and tablet ownership do not vary significantly by urban or rural location in NI.</p> <p>Rural households have comparable access to the internet at home as their urban equivalent. Data from 2016 reveals that a greater proportion of rural households have internet access than either Northern Ireland as a whole or urban households in particular.</p> <p>Compared to rural areas in the UK as a whole rural Northern Ireland has faster average broadband download speeds. Furthermore, with regard to mobile internet access, Northern Ireland has a lower level of geographic data ‘not spots’ as compared to the rest of the UK, which theoretically increases the potential of mobile internet usage within rural areas.</p> <p>Broadband Improvement Project</p> <p>The broadband scheme will lay new fibre optic telephone lines to cabinets and in some cases to premises in many areas across Northern Ireland. This will improve telecommunications infrastructure provided through telephone lines.</p> <p>Depending on where you live in Northern Ireland, the broadband scheme should allow you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access superfast broadband; • choose a supplier from several competing broadband companies in areas which have superfast broadband; and • access other services such as video on demand or subscription television. <p>Superfast broadband speed is more than 24 megabits per second.</p> <p>Timetable for improvements</p> <p>The improvement scheme was rolled out in three phases. The end dates of the phases were December</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>2016, June 2017 and June 2018. Improvement work was to be complete in June 2018. - The £150m of public funds allocated through the confidence and supply agreement saw more money being pledged to continue work until 2021.</p> <p>Openreach, the largest digital infrastructure provider in Northern Ireland, announced in September 2020 that over 50% of homes and businesses can now access ultrafast Full Fibre broadband, making Northern Ireland the most digitally connected region of the UK.</p> <p>There could also be access to a computer terminal at local schools where applications can be submitted. Every school in NI has access to the internet and EA will seek to secure the support of schools in making access available to parents if their rural broadband is lacking. The COVID-19 Pandemic will impact on schools making computers available to parents in 2021.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>Planned Interventions: groups funded in 2020/21.</p>	<p>This funding provides opportunities to create positive, and in some cases life-changing alternatives for young people during the summer period. This can ease the pressure on communities, and there is also a positive impact on the cost to other services, who are maintaining normal day to day interventions for those in areas of high tension or community conflict, including PSNI, Fire and Ambulance Services. Groups were able to deliver, mainly online, developmental opportunities for engagement of young people at risk of anti-social behaviour or criminal intent in areas of increased tension over the summertime.</p> <p>257 beneficiaries (23%) were aged 10 to 13 years; 659 beneficiaries (58%) were aged 14 to 16 years; 179 beneficiaries (16%) were aged 17 to 18 years; 15 (3%) were 19 years and above.</p> <p>Male participants (755) were 67% of the total number. Female participants (374) were 33% of the total number.</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>Location of projects:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>District council</th> <th>Number of projects</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Armagh Banbridge Craigavon</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Antrim and Newtownabbey</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ards and North Down</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belfast City</td> <td>39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Derry and Strabane</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mid and East Antrim</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Newry Mourne and Down</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	District council	Number of projects	Armagh Banbridge Craigavon	8	Antrim and Newtownabbey	1	Ards and North Down	1	Belfast City	39	Derry and Strabane	27	Mid and East Antrim	1	Newry Mourne and Down	5
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T:BUC Camps.	<p>The Programme is about building positive relations and long-lasting friendships among young people across all parts of the Northern Ireland community. Camps therefore bring diverse groups together to get to know each other, try new experiences and help build longer term relationships between young people. Good Relations learning must be at the heart of every Camp.</p> <p>Final evaluations for 2020/21 are not yet complete, but 81 groups, located across NI, completed a revised programme of activities mainly online. These were focused on the delivery of Good Relations and young people engaged from across the traditional communities in NI. The numbers below indicate the anticipated numbers participating in 2020/21:</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number of Young People Participating by November 2020</td> <td>950</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number of Young People Expected to Participate by January 2021</td> <td>862</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Young People Expected to complete in 20/21</td> <td>1812 +</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Number of Young People Participating by November 2020	950	Number of Young People Expected to Participate by January 2021	862	Total Young People Expected to complete in 20/21	1812 +										
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The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: People of employment age	
EA CATALYST Placement Schemes.	A suite of Placement Schemes covering Apprenticeships, Disability, Graduate, Long-term unemployed; and Young people commenced development in 2020-21. These Schemes will offer job training opportunities across all functions with a view to opportunities for substantive employment within EA.

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
Going Dutch Programme.	<p>The Going Dutch programme is an Export Capability Development programme for first time exporters. The programme is specifically designed to help companies to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence required to sell into a new export market. The objective of the programme is to help first-time/early stage exporters to achieve their first international sales, specifically in the Dutch market.</p> <p>The programme is promoted throughout Invest NI's Regional Office Network, in order to attract companies from all regions in Northern Ireland. Our Client Facing teams within Invest NI's Regional Offices, in turn promote the benefits of the programme to their Customers, and nominate suitable companies to attend a programme Recruitment Seminar.</p> <p>Interested companies are screened and selected on the basis of their export readiness/suitability for the programme, regardless of their geographical location.</p> <p>No specific rural needs were therefore identified.</p>
Energy Efficiency Capital Grant.	<p>The Energy and Resource Efficiency Programme (EREAP) aims to deliver support to Northern Ireland businesses to identify and implement cost savings in the use of energy, water, material and waste through advisory support in Technical Consultancy and Industrial Symbiosis resource matching support. Invest NI has developed the Energy Efficiency Capital Grant scheme within this programme of support. The grant was developed as an interim scheme following the closure of the Invest NI funded Carbon Trust Loan Fund in 2018.</p> <p>There was a rural uptake of 45.18%, demonstrating there are no barriers to delivery in rural areas.</p> <p>The only additional cost for delivery in rural areas may be additional mileage expenses incurred by 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>programme team. All procurements ask for contractors to account for this in their pricing.</p> <p>No additional rural needs were identified.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment	
<p>Procurement of Syndicated Consumer Panel Data.</p>	<p>The main objective of the proposed activity is to provide access to syndicated consumer panel data for UK and Ireland for food and drink grocery categories including pet food. 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 would anticipate a positive impact.</p> <p>The delivery of the service to Clients, using the Consumer Panel Database, will be online via a digital platform, consequently it does not require attendance at the Client premises or attendance at events.</p> <p>No specific rural needs were therefore identified.</p>
<p>Market Intelligence Worldwide.</p>	<p>The main objective of the proposed activity is to access an export market focused market intelligence platform that has the granular level of detail required for Food and Drink companies, and product launch case studies and trend analysis to inform NPD.</p> <p>Food and Drink companies are located across Northern Ireland and are not disproportionately located in Rural areas. No specific rural needs were therefore identified. However, where businesses in this sector are located in these areas, we would anticipate a positive impact.</p> <p>The delivery of the service to Clients, using the Market Intelligence Worldwide Database, will be online via a digital platform so it does not require attendance at the Client premises or attendance at events.</p> <p>No specific rural needs were therefore 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.												
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Jobs or Employment													
Northern Ireland Aerospace Customer Diversification Programme.	<p>The strategic context for the introduction of this programme is to contribute to the aims and objectives of the wider governmental industrial strategies and Invest NI's business and international strategies, which are inclusive of the whole Northern Ireland community.</p> <p>There is no specific rural impact on the social or economic needs of people in rural areas.</p>												
Supply Chain Resilience and Development Framework.	<p>The SCRDF service forms a key element of the objective of Invest NI facilitating the development of a Northern Ireland supply chain ecosystem for agreed sectors. We work directly with Invest NI customers to provide a framework to build resilience into their supply chain in response to COVID-19/EU Exit. We provide a graduated/tailored framework of support including identifying supply chain risks, resilience planning, identifying supply chain opportunities and capability development initially in light of COVID 19 and EU Exit impacts. Ultimately creating competitive advantage for those businesses operating in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The service is available to all Invest NI customers. Invest NI have historically provided limited supply chain advice through the Operational Excellence Team and there has been a good geographical spread with this with in excess of 1000 referrals have been received.</p> <p>On an on-going basis the SCRDF Service will typically be engaged with over 80 Invest NI customers on a 1-1 basis. Evidence from the INI COVID-19 Customer Survey 2020 has also highlighted that supply chain impact was a significant concern across a wide range of sectors which ensures a broad geographical spread.</p> <p>The engagement with Invest NI customers will fluctuate over a period of time, however the current geographical spread (% of total by County) of this is:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Antrim</th> <th>Armagh</th> <th>Down</th> <th>Fermanagh</th> <th>Tyrone</th> <th>L'derry</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>33%</td> <td>20%</td> <td>17%</td> <td>9%</td> <td>11%</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Antrim	Armagh	Down	Fermanagh	Tyrone	L'derry	33%	20%	17%	9%	11%	10%
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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>Part of the service involves the delivery of a range of workshops, awareness raising events, where these are not delivered in-house on company premises these will be arranged to be held either on a regional basis, virtually or in a central location (i.e. Belfast International Airport vicinity).</p> <p>As the spread of customers and referrals demonstrates there are no barriers to delivery in rural areas and no specific rural needs were identified.</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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Replacement Command & Control Mobilising system.	Operational Emergency Response. Designing - Inclusion of Road Network data layer within C&C GIS to ensure dynamic mobilising of nearest resource to meet emergency response across all areas of Northern Ireland. No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Broadband or Mobile Communications	
Maintenance/ Replacement programme for On Call pagers to maintain Service Delivery.	Operational Emergency Response. Implementing- On Call Firefighters mostly support NIFRS Service Delivery in remote/rural areas of Northern Ireland as opposed to Wholetime firefighters who tend to be located in larger towns and cities. No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
Learning and Development Centre (LDC) Cookstown Phase Two.	Development of facilities. 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. 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Property Asset Management Plan (PAMP) 2020-21.	Management of facilities. Developing - The PAMP was developed to manage the assets more economically. 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Transport Services or Infrastructure	
New build programme.	<p>Development of facilities.</p> <p>Developing and implementing - NIFRS estate investment is ongoing to ensure a high level of service provision across all areas of Northern Ireland. In 2020-21 a new build business case has been commenced for Cushendall Fire Station, and we plan to commence business cases for Fintona and Newtown Stewart in 2021. Cushendall, Fintona and Newtown Stewart should be completed by March 2025.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified.</p>
Property refurbishment programme.	<p>Development and maintenance of facilities</p> <p>Developing and implementing - NIFRS estate investment is ongoing to ensure a high level of service provision across all areas of Northern Ireland. In 2020-21 NIFRS completed refurbishments at Banbridge, Ballyclare and Magherafelt fire stations and to Omagh drill tower.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Welfare facilities upgrade programme.	<p>Development of facilities</p> <p>Developing and implementing – NIFRS estate investment to ensure sufficient facilities for staff. In 2020-21 welfare facilities were upgraded at Ballyclare, Banbridge, and Magherafelt.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified.</p>
Energy reduction scheme.	<p>Management and reduction of energy consumption</p> <p>Developing and implementing - systems were put in place relating to building management systems, energy metering, boiler conversions, water metering and installation of cavity wall insulation to improve levels of energy consumption at various sites.</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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
NIFRS IT COVID-19 Response.	<p>COVID-19 Response.</p> <p>Developing and implementing - NIFRS deployed over 200 corporate laptops to NIFRS employees and implemented and updated various IT services such as MobilePass, Pexip and other specialist applications to allow for remote working.</p> <p>No rural needs were identified.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety/Health and Safety	
NIFRS COVID-19 Response.	<p>COVID-19 Response</p> <p>Developing and implementation - NIFRS stood down various operational training, conferences and planned work activities to focus on maintaining operational response and to minimize the risk of virus spread to our employees and local communities.</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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Housing	
Developing the Irish Travellers Accommodation Strategy.	<p>The Strategy will not differentially impact on Irish Travellers located in rural locations.</p> <p>The situation for Travellers is not dependent or affected by whether they live in a rural or urban location. Individual Traveller households are not always identified on official records but our research has found most (almost 80%) live in the settled community. Those not in the settled community are often living for extended periods of time on serviced sites and there are only a minority that actually travel and lead a nomadic lifestyle. The issues of rural/urban locations do not therefore impact differently on Irish Travellers compared to the settled community. The issues impacting Irish Travellers are as a consequence of their lifestyle and stigma.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Revising the Legionella Policy.	The policy applies equally to all Housing Executive work premises, whether they are based in an urban or a rural location. A recent risk assessment contract did not identify any increased risks in rural properties and therefore no mitigating actions are required.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Housing	
Revising Regeneration, Redevelopment & Vesting Policy.	<p>There are a number of aspects to consider when determining the potential rural impact of the Regeneration, Redevelopment and Vesting Policy. These are the applicability/availability of redevelopment areas and vesting in rural areas, the adequacy of communication channels for reaching people in rural areas affected by proposed redevelopment or vesting and the adequacy of inquiry and objection procedures for people in rural areas.</p> <p>In examining these issues and the flexibilities that the policy offers to allow the characteristics of 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>to be accounted for, it is considered that the policy treats people from rural areas in an equitable way.</p> <p>Additionally, Housing Executive staff who administer the Regeneration, Redevelopment and Vesting Policy will not be impacted differentially. All Housing Executive staff involved, be they from rural or urban areas, work within 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>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime and Community Safety	
Developing the Community Safety Strategy.	<p>The majority of actions in this strategy will have a positive impact irrespective of geographical location and enable fair and equitable treatment for all. However, we recognise there are issues with digital connectivity in some rural areas which could render some of the communication proposals less effective in rural areas.</p> <p>In addition to new communication channels developed, traditional communication channels will be maintained with our tenants so they will not be detrimentally affected by not having internet access e.g. local press, leaflets etc.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Deprivation	
Developing the Small Pockets Of Deprivation (SPOD) Policy and Procedures.	<p>The purpose of this policy and procedures is to put in place effective mechanisms for the delivery of the program. It is not to review or revise the broader purpose of SPOD or the areas to be targeted. The Department for Communities determine the areas that must be targeted by SPOD funding and the initial allocation of funding for each area. The Housing Executive's SPOD Policy and objectives are equally applicable in urban and rural areas. The procedural approach to administering the programme does include the use of the email. We recognise in certain rural areas that internet connectivity can be a barrier. However, the Strathfoyle delivery organisations are confirmed to have access to sufficient internet facilities to ensure that this is not a barrier for 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.
	Therefore the Policy and Procedure will result in a consistent and equitable approach to the management and administration of SPOD funding, whether the SPOD area is located in an urban or rural area. All identified SPOD areas have an equal opportunity to apply for SPOD funding. Under this approach, people in rural areas (Strathfoyle area) will benefit equitably from the regeneration opportunities available through SPOD funding.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Developing the New and Expectant Mothers Health and Safety Policy.	This policy applies to all New and Expectant Mothers regardless of geographical location.
Revising the Ground Rent Redemptions policy.	This policy and procedure is an entirely internal one to the Housing Executive, which sets out how our staff should apply to Land Registry to seek recovery of the compensation due to the organisation when a leaseholder buys out the ground rent on a property for which the Housing Executive is the rent owner. It does not directly involve people in rural areas, it solely relates to an internal organisational administrative process and engagement with another public body. Therefore it cannot impact differentially on people external to the Housing Executive, be they rural customers, rural stakeholders or the wider population in rural areas.
Revising the Signing and Sealing policy.	This policy and procedure is an entirely internal one to the Housing Executive. It only sets out the process for how the Housing Executive Seal should be applied. It is exclusively administrative and does not in any way inform or affect the approval of the specific relevant decisions being taken.
Revising the Title Deeds Handling policy.	This policy and procedure is an entirely internal one to the Housing Executive, which sets out how to carry out Title Deeds handling, Title clearance and cataloguing. It solely relates to an internal organisational administrative process. Therefore it cannot impact differentially on people external to the Housing Executive, be they rural customers, rural stakeholders or the wider population 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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Housing	
Developing the Acquisition Under Blight policy.	The Housing Executive may acquire a property by agreement in any location, urban or rural, where it has in place an approved strategy or plan, under which compulsory purchase powers would otherwise be used to acquire property e.g. the Tower Block Strategy. The Housing Executive will also acquire property upon being served with a valid Blight Notice regardless of its geographical location.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other - Environment	
Revising the Asbestos Notification policy.	This policy and procedure only covers one administrative aspect of the House Sales Scheme, not the House Sales Scheme in its entirety. It only relates to how any applicant will be notified of the presence of asbestos in their property as part of their application to purchase their home.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Developing the Working at Heights Policy.	The nature of this policy applies to staff who are required to work at heights as part of the maintenance or repair of any properties and buildings under the control of the NIHE. 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.
Revising the Transaction Approvals policy.	This policy and procedure is an entirely internal one to the Housing Executive, which sets out how to obtain approvals for Land and Regeneration Services business/transactions at the relevant level of authority within the organisation. It is exclusively administrative and does not directly involve the people in rural areas who may be a party to the transaction being approved.
Developing the Organisational Change policy.	The policy discusses relocation as a possible outcome of staff redeployment. For someone living in a rural area and working in their nearest local office, relocation to another office may have a greater impact than for someone living and working close to an area or regional 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.
	<p>In order to mitigate the impact of this, staff are entitled to excess mileage costs i.e. an allowance to cover the increased cost of travelling to work. Officers who live outside a 25 mile radius of their new permanent work location may be advised to move home within twelve months of their new appointment. Officers who agree to move home are eligible for relocation allowances. If an officer does not agree to move home they can continue to claim excess mileage costs.</p> <p>There is also an appeals process if an officer is dissatisfied with the Housing Executive's decision as to whether it is necessary for them to move home.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Implementing the Career Break policy.	<p>The needs of staff in rural areas with regards to the Career Break Policy are the same as for staff in urban areas.</p> <p>Staff have a need for a mechanism that facilitates an unpaid period from work that enables equitable treatment regardless of their geographical location.</p>
Implementing the Manual Handling policy.	<p>The NIHE will, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide a safe place of work to all employees, contractors, visitors and other persons.</p> <p>This applies if our staff are from a rural area or are working in a rural area.</p>
Revising the Energy Performance Certificates policy.	<p>In relation to this policy and procedure the need of rural applicants to the Statutory House Sales Scheme is the same as for urban applicants, which is to be provided with a current Energy Performance Certificate when purchasing their home.</p>
Developing a Human trafficking and modern slavery policy.	<p>This is principally an internal policy and would not impact differentially on people in a rural area as compared to people in an urban area.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Housing	
Grants review of Home Improvements Grants Service.	<p>The project looked at previous performance across the whole service. Improvements were implemented for all customers therefore no group was disadvantaged.</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 project team were based in West Grant office / Omagh which ensured that the needs of customers in rural areas were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Revising the First Aid at Work policy.	All areas, urban and rural will need to undertake a first aid needs assessment to determine their first aid provision requirements. This is a positive undertaking with no detrimental impact on either.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Housing	
Delivery of Rent Increase.	The proposal to increase NIHE rents would be applicable to tenants located in both urban and rural locations and based on the attributes of the property rather than the location.
Developing the Strategic Housing Market Analysis (SHMA) for Belfast.	Rural needs were identified and analysed as part of the SHMA process. This included statistical analysis, qualitative analysis and consultation with the Rural and Regeneration Unit, PlaceShapers and Council Planners. If SHMA needs assessment replaces the Net Stock Model, the risk that rural needs would not be identified adequately could be minimised by retaining a rural target within the Strategic Guidelines.
Developing the Supporting People Three Year Strategy.	There are no apparent barriers at strategic level in terms of the delivery of a fair and equitable outcome for people in rural areas. The Supporting People Strategy 2021-2024 aims to have a beneficial impact on people in rural areas. The strategic priorities involve strategic reviews, pilots, changes in models, and exploration of accommodation and floating support options etc. As the strategy develops there may be barriers which arise in relation to the delivery of a fair and equitable outcome for people in rural areas.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Other-Social Isolation	
Developing an Older Persons Strategy.	The strategy outlines how we will support, through the work of other community based strategies, opportunities for older customers (including those in rural areas) to improve digital capability which may also help address loneliness and social isolation. In addition

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>to promoting digital capability, we continue to provide our services across a variety of channels including through face to face contact with Patch Managers and Housing Advisors in our customers' homes, through the phone and through our network of local offices.</p> <p>We will continue to develop new, and build on existing relationships with partners both at a community level and at a statutory level to ensure that the needs of rural older customers are considered.</p> <p>We will maintain our traditional methods of contact such as phone, face to face and through our local offices to ensure that those in rural areas, who are not digitally enabled, are not adversely affected. This will also provide a service channel for those who lack transport to local offices</p> <p>In many instances, our extensive Housing Community Network (HCN) and its representatives at the various tiers do have a key role to play in liaising with and updating elderly neighbours and community group members of initiative/support available to them and advising them how to benefit from this. In addition to this, there is potential to update the Central Housing Forum/HCN through the duration of the strategy so that any useful information could be disseminated there.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Housing	
Revising the Conveyancing manual.	This policy and procedure only covers one administrative, legal aspect of the House Sales Scheme, not the House Sales Scheme in its entirety. It only relates to the legal process that has to be completed to transfer ownership of the property from the Housing Executive to the tenant purchaser.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Revising the Dignity at Work policy.	<p>The needs of staff in rural areas with regards to the Dignity at Work Policy are the same as for staff in urban areas.</p> <p>Staff have a need to be treated with dignity and respect and for there to be a procedure for dealing with unwanted, unreasonable and offensive conduct regardless of their geographical location.</p>

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Crosscutting	
Review of Children and Young People's Services Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to the provision of services for children and young people.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Engaging with Culture and Creativity Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to culture and creativity offering.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Heritage Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to the provision of heritage services.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Information and Learning Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to the provision of information and learning services.	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Review of Student Work Placement Policy which sets out the principles and conditions for student work placement opportunities in Libraries NI.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Anti-Fraud Policy which confirms that Libraries NI has a zero tolerance towards fraud and sets out details of responsibilities regarding its prevention.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Anti-Bribery Policy which confirms that Libraries NI has a zero tolerance towards bribery and sets out details of responsibilities regarding its prevention.	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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Review of the Health and Safety at Work Policy, the purpose of which is to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, that no person is placed in a situation where injury or ill health may occur as a result of the Authority's undertaking and that any such risks are assessed and appropriately controlled.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Lone Working Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to the management of lone working situations and the management of the safety and wellbeing of staff in circumstances where lone working is necessary.	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Libraries	
Review of Volunteer Policy which sets out the approach to the involvement of volunteers within Libraries NI.	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Crosscutting	
Review of Managing Unacceptable Behaviour Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to Managing Unacceptable Behaviour.	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Libraries	
Review of Cultural Heritage Provision in Co. Armagh.	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Crosscutting	
Review of Policy for the Loan and Use of Heritage and Other Assets which sets out Libraries NI's approach to the loan and use by others of heritage assets.	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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Review of Payment of Travel and Subsistence Expenses Policy which provides a framework for the management and settlement of legitimate expense claims incurred by employees and Board Members in the performance of their duties.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Digitisation Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to the digitisation of its collections.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Media Handling Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to working with the media in a way that achieves the objectives of Libraries NI.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Application Security Policy which lays down standards applicable to applications used in Libraries NI.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Information Technology Security Policy which provides direction and guidance to users of Libraries NI's information and information systems and the security controls that are to be implemented and complied with.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Internet Security Policy which lays down the minimum security standard applicable to the interconnection of the Libraries NI IT environment to the Internet.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Library Computers Conditions of Use Policy which sets out how Libraries NI will manage and monitor the use of its information assets and systems and	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.
the standards it requires from its users.	
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Review of Microsoft Windows Client Security Policy which lays down the minimum-security standard applicable to Microsoft Windows based PCs, supplied by Libraries NI and operating within Library sites.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Network Security Policy which lays down the minimum security standard applicable to components that form the Wide Area and Local Area Networks within the Libraries NI IT environment.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Server Security Policy which lays down the minimum security standard applicable to all Microsoft Windows Servers within the Libraries NI IT environment.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Staff Acceptable Use Policy which sets out how Libraries NI will manage and monitor the use of its information assets and systems and the standards it requires from its users.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of the Customer Feedback Policy which provides a framework for the handling of customer feedback including complaints.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of the Discipline Policy which provides a clear standard of conduct and discipline which Libraries NI's staff is expected to adhere to.	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.
Development of a Workplace Menopause Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to supporting staff during menopause.	No rural needs were identified.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Libraries	
Implementing 'Operation ReConnect', a strategy to reconnect customers safely and in line with public health regulations with Libraries NI, following the closure of all libraries in March 2020 due to COVID-19 and a pivot to online only service delivery, by reopening branch libraries and providing a range of additional parallel services.	<p>The key issues considered were: the impact of increasing the proportion of the service offer which is delivered online; connectivity in rural areas; the increased difficulty that rural dwellers may face in travelling to library locations as a result of COVID-19; and the impact of reopening libraries with reduced hours.</p> <p>The Bookbox service was developed to provide a service to vulnerable rural dwellers who may not be able to access branch libraries in the normal way. Reductions in opening hours in libraries based in rural communities were kept to a minimum.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Review of Vehicle Management Policy which provides the framework whereby the operation of vehicles by Libraries NI is undertaken in a safe and legal manner.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Use of Privately Owned Vehicles for Business Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to the management of the use of privately owned vehicles for business use by employees.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Data Protection Policy which sets out how Libraries NI will implement its commitment to protecting the personal information it holds.	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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Review of the Capability Policy which sets out Libraries NI's policy and procedures for dealing with underperformance in a supportive, fair and consistent manner.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Environmental Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach in minimising the environmental impact of its activities and supporting sustainable development.	No rural needs were identified.
Review of Assets Management Policy which sets out Libraries NI's approach to the management and development of our physical assets.	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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Tourism	
<p>Implementing a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Six Monthly Assurance Statement Of Internal Control And Risk Management.</p> <p>Rural Tourism.</p>	<p>Tourism NI incorporates compliance with the Rural Needs Act in their Assurance Statement Of Internal Control And Risk Management.</p>
<p>Developing a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>New Web Development Funding Programme.</p>	<p>Delivery of another Web Development Funding Programme, based on the successor its predecessor in 2020, with funding support from DAERA and to support objectives as part of the Rural Policy Framework.</p>
<p>Developing a policy, strategy or plan.</p> <p>Prospective new Rural Tourism Capital Fund.</p>	<p>Collaboration with DAERA 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.</p>

The 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) training in the community across Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>The focus of the Public Health Agency in addressing the needs of young people will be to work collaboratively with partners to provide the RSE in the Community Service. This Service will benefit young people in rural areas by reducing social isolation and increase their access to information and peer support around health issues. This Service will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes in rural areas and reduce health inequalities by enabling participation, empowerment and the growth of self-efficacy. Provider organisations will be required to deliver the RSE programmes with young people which are age appropriate, accessible and evidence based with the aim of ensuring that young people in rural areas are supported to access the programme. The evidence is clear that there is a need to continue to offer the RSE in the Community programmes to young people aged 12-19 in both rural and urban communities. The PHA will continue to monitor the geographical spread of service delivery by asking Providers to use an online mapping tool to ensure a balance between rural and urban areas. They will also monitor accessibility of sessions for all young people including those with a disability and how Providers work with local organisations to target young people. Providers will need to link with local community organisations and others working in related areas such as drugs and alcohol, mental health etc. In planning the Service, Providers will consider the timing of the Programme as provision in winter months and during inclement weather would be challenging in rural areas with limited public transport options, which may impact on the numbers of young people attending. Other seasonal considerations during the year will also be taken into account.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Cross-cutting	
<p>Addressing Inequalities in Cancer Screening Through Promoting Informed Choice.</p>	<p>A variety of social and economic needs have been identified through the evaluation of the service and contract monitoring which may impact the ability of rural inhabitants to avail of this service.</p> <p>Although the awareness sessions are free to attend, the cost of travelling to the sessions may be higher due to further distance to travel to community or women's centres where the session is generally hosted. The current contract holders will reimburse attendees if travel is a barrier however generally the sessions are delivered in local communities. All fourteen women's centres based in Northern Ireland are in cities or large towns, with the majority based in Belfast; however a range of community centres and other venues will be used to host sessions.</p> <p>Childcare may present a problem for session participants, although where possible, childcare is currently provided to allow participants with child care responsibilities to attend. Not all community groups who have taken part in the programme have a crèche/ child-minding facility.</p> <p>Those who rely on public transport may be less likely to access the service if the programme is delivered at a time that has limited transport availability.</p> <p>The service providers will endeavour to offer sessions at a time most suitable to attendees, including morning, afternoon or evening sessions. It is also important to note that a target group of the service is people with physical disabilities and in rural areas they may experience greater difficulties in accessing appropriate transport services, although transport costs will be provided.</p> <p>In the evaluation of the current service, adverse weather was noted to have impacted on turn-out at sessions - this may have a greater impact on people in very rural communities where roads may be less accessible and driving conditions poor.</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 current contract stipulates that a minimum of 10 participants must attend in order to run an awareness session. In rural areas population density is lower; therefore this number may be less achievable and has been identified as a hindrance when recruiting community groups. This may also be an issue for groups with additional support needs, e.g. those with disabilities or from the traveller community, where turn out may well be low. The PHA has agreed not to stipulate a target number of attendees for individual sessions in the next iteration of the contract.</p> <p>The design and delivery of the new contract for the provision of a service to address inequalities in cancer screening through promoting informed choice has been influenced by the rural needs identified above and by those previously identified in the Ipsos MORI evaluation and Health Intelligence Report 2017. Some changes have already been implemented, and others will be stipulated in the service specification for the new contract.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care Services	
<p>Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) As Replacement Test for the Faecal Occult Blood (FOB) Test.</p>	<p>The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) recommended that quantitative faecal immunochemical testing (FIT) should be adopted by the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme as the primary screening test for bowel cancer. Evidence suggests screening using FIT will be a more effective way of detecting cancerous and pre-cancerous lesions in the bowel. The bowel cancer screening test is posted to eligible individuals for them to complete at home. The completed test is posted in a prepaid envelope once completed. All tests are processed in a single laboratory, based at Causeway Hospital.</p> <p>It is not considered, at this time, that the proposal to change the type of test being used in the NIBCSP would have any adverse impact on people living in rural areas and the further understanding of social and economic needs is not pertinent at this time. It is hoped that an in depth analysis of the NIBCSP data will</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>be undertaken to provide more granular information to examine uptake in rural areas. This change in test is being undertaken at the same time as work to address inequalities in screening through promoting informed choice is proceeding. Results of the analysis will assist in targeting this work.</p>
<p>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care Services</p>	
<p>Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) of SARS-CoV-2.</p>	<p>This service is to determine viral strains and pathogens to assist with public health advice, in particular for SARS-COV-19 and has no direct impact on individuals and is therefore not likely to impact on people in rural areas.</p> <p>Sequencing occurs on test samples to determine viral strains and pathogens and when it occurs is based on a prioritisation protocol based on the virus presenting, cluster management, possible vaccine failure and travel history. Sequencing is not determined on the individual who has provided the sample or their place of dwelling.</p> <p>The only potential area for impact on people in rural areas is the availability of testing which is outside of the remit of this impact assessment. However it should be noted that for SARS-COV-19 testing, a range of measures have been put in place to ensure wide availability of testing for all people in Northern Ireland. As well as regional test sites and in-hospital testing, there are also mobile testing units deployed to areas of potential outbreak and a postal testing service.</p>
<p>NI Contact Tracing and Advisory Service.</p>	<p>There has been no specific rural needs identified. As the service is primarily a telephone/SMS based and available across all of NI this will ensure that all confirmed cases have equal access to the Service regardless of a person's locality. It is not anticipated that this Service will impact on the needs of rural dwellers any more than people from urban areas.</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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Transport Services or Infrastructure	
Everybody Active outdoor spaces - Upgrade and link existing network of paths in the Devenish area between Erne Health Centre and Donnelly's Field in the Devenish area of Enniskillen through the provision of new paths, a ramp and a bridge.	Due to the nature of the programme the majority of projects would be situated in rural areas.
Investment into upgrading of control rooms at designated sports grounds.	The investment took place at sports grounds where health and safety issues had been identified. Rural or urban location was not a factor.
Minor capital stadium works at designated sports grounds.	The investment took place at sports grounds where health and safety issues had been identified. Rural or urban location was not a factor.
Health and Safety Works at St Johns GAC - urgent investment needed to fix retaining wall.	The investment took place at sports grounds where health and safety issues had been identified. Rural or urban location was not a factor.
Tartan Track, St Michaels Playing Fields, Enniskillen - Provide a 6 lane Tartan Track with a 6 lane 400m lanes and a 100m lane.	Due to the nature of the programme rural or urban location was not a factor.
Your School Your Club - including St Marys and Kilkeel. Investment to add new facilities.	Due to the nature of the programme rural or urban location was not a factor.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development	
Supporting Sport to Build Back Better: Sporting Clubs 2021-22 Extension.	Support Governing Bodies to manage club membership fluctuations following significant impact due to a global pandemic.
Supporting Sport to Build Back Better: People Development - Club Experience Support Service.	Develop increased knowledge, skills and awareness among clubs and their workforce, in relation to positive sport experiences for club participants and parents.

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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Development	
To support the implementation of Community Planning across the 11 Community Planning partnerships in the context of recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic (2020/21).	This investment aims to support the implementation of Community Planning across the 11 Community Planning partnerships in the context of recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic; it encompasses both Urban and Rural areas in Northern Ireland encouraging participation in sport and active recreation.
Supporting Sport to Build Back Better - Innovation Grant Programme.	This investment aims to support the sporting sector during the COVID-19 Pandemic through supporting sport to Build Back Better, including Building Capability, Sporting Clubs and the Governing Body Support Programme; it encompasses both Urban and Rural areas in Northern Ireland encouraging participation in sport and active recreation.
Supporting Sport to Build Back Better: People Development - Club Experience Support Service.	Develop increased knowledge, skills and awareness among clubs and their workforce, in relation to positive sport experiences for club participants and parents.
Sporting Winners 2021-22 Extension.	To manage the continued support of performance programmes towards Olympic and Paralympic Games, World Championships, European Championships and Commonwealth Games, to overcome the uncertainty and adaptations necessitated through the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Death in Service.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Operation Redfield.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Police Pay and Allowances - Meal Expenses.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Career Break and Unpaid Leave.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Spit and Bite Guard (Revised).	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocacy Scheme.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Trainee Investigator/Aideship Selection Process.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Sergeant and Inspector Promotion Process (Reschedule).	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Custody Health Care.	The policy was not influenced by rural needs.
Covid 19 Fixed Penalty Notice.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Strategic Engagement and Communication Strategy.	PSNI digital approach will enhance communications/ engagement methods working closely with Partner agencies to promote joint initiatives to address rural specific issues.
Biometrics.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service identified no specific rural needs.
Covid 19 Statements.	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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Chief Superintendent Promotion Process.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Promotion Process.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Parental Leave.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Flexible Working.	Recommendation to monitor delivery internally and report to the Neighbourhood Policing Delivery Board.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Forensic Submission Automation Process.	The project will monitor the forensic evidence in rural and urban areas to ensure an equal quality of service.
Neighbourhood Policing.	Recommendation to monitor delivery internally and report to the Neighbourhood Policing Delivery Board.
HR Automation.	The project will enhance the number of detections of crime in both urban and rural areas.
Automatic Number Plate Recognition.	The project will enhance the number of detections of crime in both urban and rural areas.
Protected Learning.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Formation of Community Safety Department.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Reserve Forces.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Gender Neutral Toilets.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Eyecare.	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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Spit and Bite Guard (Revised).	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Explosives Blasting.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Rugged Laptops.	It is expected that rural areas will benefit, meaning the fear of crime should reduce with increased patrolling, and crime levels, particularly agricultural crime should reduce due to increased live information.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Temporary Promotion Staff.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Rural Crime or Community Safety	
LIB Family Engagement Policies.	The policy/strategy/plan/public service was not influenced by rural needs.
Unmanned Aircraft.	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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
Changes to the NI Regional Capitation Formula: Acute Services.	Acute Services: The differential costs of health service provision in rural areas are addressed in the Rurality and Economies of Scale cost adjustments in the Regional Capitation Formula.
Procurement of Shared Lives NI for Older People available at www.communityni.org .	<p>The aim of Shared Lives is to deliver an accessible regional service for Older People which will provide an alternative to day opportunities, short breaks or long term care for some adults in need of support.</p> <p>Shared Lives will have a positive impact on people in rural areas. The very nature of this service means that it is accessible to rural communities and is suited to rural circumstances. The needs and special considerations of rural communities and areas have been objectively considered as part of the development process. This approach offers a model of social care that is based on relationships which enables service users to remain living in their communities (rural and urban), build long term sustainable relationships and reduce social isolation.</p> <p>A number of methods and sources were used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including: ‘Shared Lives NI Annual Report 2017-18, Demographic analysis of Northern Ireland’ for targetable host carer recruitment (June 2019); potential suppliers; 5 HSC Trusts and service users.</p> <p>Taking account of the above several proactive key actions will form part of the tender specification and contract terms of reference e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising of the specification will be communicated via Rural Support Networks, RDC and RCN; • Development of a wide range of communication mediums to raise awareness of the scheme to potential service users and host carers in rural areas; • Data system developed to ensure monitoring of geographical location of service users and host carers.

Belfast 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
Establishment of a Dedicated Clinical Service for People Who Have Red Cell Disorders - May 2020.	The BHSCT Haematology service has undertaken an analysis of the areas of residence of all patients who are likely to access the newly established red cell disorder service. Of the 19 individuals included in this exercise, none currently live in a rural area as per the definition outlined at section 1D. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest that the planned initiative would have any substantive impact with regards rural communities.
Rebuild Plan-July to Sept 2020.	<p>An overarching rural screening to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures to deliver services post COVID-19 surge. Many of the 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 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.</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.
	Our plan will be continuously reviewed, informed by service user feedback and aligned to regional discussions and priorities.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
Resilience Plan-Sept 2020.	<p>An overarching rural screening to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures of what we will need to do to respond to additional demand from the pressures of winter 2020/2021 alongside any subsequent waves of COVID-19.</p> <p>The majority of the Trust’s services are delivered to people not from a rural community. However, we do deliver regional services.</p> <p>Many of the measures within the Plan will constitute temporary changes to facilitate service delivery where it is most needed but also to facilitate an agile response to a further surge. If any of the changes remain permanent further rural needs assessments will be completed.</p> <p>Our Plan (which involve 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</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.</p> <p>Our plan will be continuously reviewed, informed by service user feedback and aligned to regional discussions and priorities.</p>
Covid Surge Plan-Jan 2021.	An overarching rural screening to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures to deliver services post COVID-19 surge.

<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>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>Many of the 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. The Trust remains wholly committed to engage, comprehensively impact assess and consult should we wish to make any of these changes permanent.</p> <p>There has been significant innovation successfully implemented across hospital and community services, including widespread use of telephone triage, virtual clinics and video calls, 24-hour patient transport services and phlebotomy and glaucoma drive-through services which will enhance accessibility to regional services for those living in rural areas. However, the Trust is mindful of the need for good connectivity and so will continue to monitor this innovation through feedback from service users</p> <p>Our Plan (which involve 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.</p> <p>Our Plan has been written to address the following principles stipulated by Department of Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Equity of Access for the treatment of time-critical patients across Northern Ireland, as per regional prioritisation;

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"> • Minimise the transmission of COVID-19; • Protect the most urgent services.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
Virtual Consultations Guidance - March 2021.	<p>New Guidance for the management of Virtual Consultations in Outpatients in BHSCT</p> <p>Positive impact: 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>Negative impact: Inability to access virtual consultations due to lack of, or poor connectivity, to mobile/broadband services. IT connectivity may limit the availability of virtual consultations for people who live in rural areas.</p> <p>Accessibility of virtual consultations - 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>

In the interests of openness and transparency, the Trust has provided the following hyperlink to S75 equality screenings of Trust policies. An online version of these reports can be found [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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
<p>Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) response to outbreak of COVID-19.</p>	<p>The Trust's response to COVID-19 includes actions that relate to the temporary standing down of services to allow for capacity to be created dealing with the pandemic - this will impact on people living in both rural and urban areas. The RNIA concentrates on services created or existing services still being provided but where the location of these services has changed Impact on people living rurally includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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); • For staff redeployments - availability of public or community transportation (mitigation is that travel costs will be reimbursed); • Access to adequate Broadband or mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services (mitigation is the use of hybrid service delivery models).
<p>The Trust's Rebuilding HSC Services - Phase 1 Plan (June 2020).</p>	<p>The Trust's Phase 1 Plan includes actions that relate to reinstating services in an incremental way while ensuring the delivery of high quality and safe patient/client services. It is acknowledged that COVID-19 is still infecting people in our community. This will continue to impact on people living in both rural and urban areas. This RNIA concentrates on services created, services being delivered remotely to accommodate social distancing by use of broadband or mobile technology or existing services still being provided but where the location of these services continues to be changed.</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>Mitigations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors - all general hospital visiting stopped with some exceptions to these restrictions, for example critical care areas and palliative (end of life) care. As mitigation, we have made local arrangements (telephone and video conferencing) to ensure our patients and residents can remain in contact with loved ones; • Staff who were redeployed gradually have been returning to original roles - mitigation in place until their return as additional travel expenses being reimbursed; • Services utilising virtual consultations have arrangements in place to offer alternative method of delivery if required to ensure access to services.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
<p>The Trust's Rebuilding HSC Services - Phase 2 Plan (July to Sept 2020).</p>	<p>The Trust's Phase 2 Plan includes actions that relate to reinstating services in an incremental way while ensuring the delivery of high quality and safe patient/client services. It is acknowledged that COVID-19 is still infecting people in our community. This will continue to impact on people living in both rural and urban areas. This RNIA concentrates on services created, services being delivered remotely to accommodate social distancing by use of broadband or mobile technology or existing services still being provided but where the location of these services continues to be changed. 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.</p> <p>Appropriate mitigations have been put in place where available.</p>
<p>Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) resilience plan to address Winter Pressures and any subsequent waves of COVID-19 Pandemic 2020/2021.</p>	<p>The Trust's resilience plan includes actions that relate to the temporary standing down of services to allow for capacity to be created dealing with the pandemic - this will impact on people living in both rural and 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>This RNIA concentrates on services being created, services being delivered remotely or virtually to accommodate social distancing by use of broadband or mobile technology or existing services still being provided but where the location of these services continues to be changed.</p> <p>Marked increase of virtual appointments, activities, telemedicine and consultations in this plan. Mitigation by blended model of delivery including face to face where this is possible.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
<p>NHSCT response to No More Silos Regional Plan - Phase One.</p>	<p>Phone First, the first point of contact and triage which will have direct access to 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>Consideration has been given to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including, for example, access to services in terms of economic cost, availability of public transport and broadband/internet/mobile communication access. The Trust is cognisant of the need to consider and mitigate any potential adverse impact. The Trust's plan will be kept continually under review, given the fluidity of the situation, and in order to respond to emerging needs and challenges. This approach has been assessed as an on-going assessment to monitor the impact of the proposals on an on-going basis to ensure that the impact is not more significant than initially anticipated. See consideration and mitigating measures for potential impact on people in rural areas below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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;

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"> • 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; • 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; • 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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
<p>Response to COVID-19 - virtual consultations/Clinics/visiting.</p>	<p>Virtual consultations depend on the service users/ patients having access to adequate landline or mobile technology. People living in rural communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISRA - dataset on Home Internet and Broadband Access; • OFCOM - Connected Nations Report. <p>In Northern Ireland, for the latest dataset available on NISRA (2018), 16% of households had no home broadband and 15% had no home internet access. These households will not be able to avail of services being delivered remotely using technology. In addition. the OFCOM Connected Nations report (2019) acknowledges that more work is needed to improve services in rural areas where some customers who do have access to broadband experience slower speeds that in towns or cities and, further, that 19% of rural dwellers are unable to receive decent broadband.</p> <p>Positive impact: 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>

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>Negative impact: Inability to access virtual consultations due to lack of, or poor connectivity, to mobile/broadband services.</p> <p>Appropriate mitigation included in the virtual clinics protocol e.g. Offering of choice of method of delivery upon first contact with service user, including alternative methods of delivery in virtual consultations protocol.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
<p>Nightingale at Whiteabbey - Enhanced Nursing and Therapies Rehabilitation and Step Down unit (regional service).</p>	<p>This is a regional facility, based in Whiteabbey, servicing all of the population of Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Patients in this facility will be drawn from across acute hospitals in Northern Ireland; some families and carers are likely to live at some distance apart from this facility including rurally.</p> <p>Differential impacts identified as being both positive and negative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatment being provided at regional rehabilitation centre may have an impact in terms of travel on some rural service users and their families. Potential visiting difficulties. However, during COVID-19 times there are substantial restrictions on physical visiting to health facilities with mitigations in place to allow family members to connect with patients virtually or remotely using tablets and virtual technology such as ZOOM; • 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; • Potential to impact people in rural areas differently as the use of technology involves internet or

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>broadband connectivity; people who live rurally are more likely to have no broadband or internet access or limited access than urban dwellers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • Increased care provided in community settings after discharge is likely to have a positive impact in terms of reduced travel times.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
Community Beds Policy NHSCT/20/1487.	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.
Relocation of Randalstown Satellite Podiatry Clinic to Permanent Full time Clinics.	<p>Cost of travel to permanent clinics which are based in urban areas.</p> <p>Ability of individuals in service catchment population to travel to clinics which are based in urban areas.</p> <p>Commitment to provision of domiciliary visits to service users who are unable to travel to alternative clinics due to age, infirmity or inability to meet cost of additional travel - domiciliary visits to be provided where no alternative means of travel can be provided either privately, by family support or community transport.</p>
Relocation of Garvagh Satellite Podiatry Clinic to Permanent Full time Clinics.	<p>Cost of travel to permanent clinics which are based in urban areas.</p> <p>Ability of individuals in service catchment population to travel to clinics which are based in urban areas.</p> <p>Commitment to provision of domiciliary visits to service users who are unable to travel to alternative clinics</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.
	due to age, infirmity or inability to meet cost of additional travel - domiciliary visits to be provided where no alternative means of travel can be provided either privately, by family support or community transport.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
Flexible Working Policy and Homeworking Guidelines.	This relates to staff employed by the Trust. Positive impact in relation to commuting to/from work and remote working. Possible negative impact in areas of poor internet connectivity. Choice to continue working from office where this is an issue.

In the interests of openness and transparency, the Trust has provided the attached S75 equality screening outcome reports which includes the outcome of screening of all Trust policies. An online version of these reports can be found [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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
Regional procurement of independent sector foster care placements.	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out.</p> <p>No adverse impact has been identified for people living in rural areas. This proposal will result in adequate provision of foster care placements across the Trusts region including rural localities to meet the needs of looked after children from rural backgrounds.</p>
Southern Trusts response to the outbreak of COVID-19 virus.	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out.</p> <p>The temporary measures put in place in response to COVID-19 are likely to impact on people living in both rural and urban areas.</p> <p>Consideration and mitigating measures for potential impact on staff and service users living in rural areas are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 4000 staff do not have access to the Trust network. SHSCT developed a Staff App which is now available for all staff to download onto any electric device which gives access to Covid 19 updates, training, podcasts, updates re hospital services, staff support re health & wellbeing. • Travel time to be included as a provision for staff redeployed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff were eligible to claim payment for an additional travel time incurred. • Telephone (land line or mobile) or video calls are available to health and care professionals as an alternative to face to face contact. • Regular communication and updates are provided to staff and service users through all available communication channels. • Remote access has been made available to facilitate staff to work from home.

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"> • Ipad were made available on all wards for friends and family to video call inpatients to increase contact as visiting restrictions have been implemented across the wards.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>The Trusts Rebuilding HSC Services - Phase 1 Plan (June 2020) describes how the Trust will rebuild health and social services following first peak of COVID-19 outbreak.</p>	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out.</p> <p>The Trust's Phase 1 Plan includes actions that relate to reinstating services in an incremental way while ensuring the delivery of high quality and safe patient/client services. It is acknowledged that COVID-19 is still infecting people in our community. This will continue to impact on people living in both rural and urban areas.</p> <p>This screening for rural needs concentrates on services created, services being delivered remotely to accommodate social distancing by use of broadband or mobile technology or existing services still being provided but where the location of these services have changed.</p>
<p>The Trust's Rebuilding HSC Services - Phase 2 Plan (July to Sept 2020) describes how the Trust will rebuild health and social services following first peak of COVID-19 outbreak.</p>	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out.</p> <p>In line with the Trust's Phase 1 Plan, in this second phase, the Trust will continue to build on new ways of working and innovations to provide safe and effective care during July through September 2020. It is acknowledged that COVID-19 is still infecting people in our community.</p> <p>This will continue to impact on people living in both rural and urban areas.</p> <p>Recognising that there has been a vast amount of innovations successfully implemented including widespread use of telephone triage, virtual clinics and video calls, building on this will involve working closely with our primary care and community partners and our clinical leaders, using flexible and remote working where appropriate and rapid scaling of technology.</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.
	While the Trust continues with its collective leadership approach, mitigating measures remain in place during Phase 2.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
Trust Resilience Plan to address winter pressures and and/or any subsequent waves of COVID-19 Pandemic 2020/2021.	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out.</p> <p>The Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) Resilience Plan outlines initiatives required to help respond to additional demand pressures arising during Winter 2020/2021 and through any subsequent waves of COVID-19 Pandemic. Winter pressures impact mainly on our urgent and unscheduled care services however this along with a second COVID 19 surge has the potential to have a wider and more profound impact on services.</p> <p>This will continue to impact on people living in both rural and urban areas.</p> <p>Consideration and mitigating measures are in place for potential impact on people in rural areas such as the Trust's intention to move towards providing increased care in homes and community settings which has the potential to benefit rural service users in terms of reducing travel to hospital settings; the Trust services continue to offer service users alternatives to video calls depending on access to technology/broadband e.g. telephone calls; 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 being redeployed from rural to urban areas; the Trust continues to engage with frontline staff, key partners, service users and carers to ensure that plans are representative of and include the valuable input of those who use its services; the Trust continues to facilitate virtual visiting for families/carers.</p>
The procurement of a range of advocacy services across the Southern Health & Social Care Trust area for adults in receipt of Mental	<p>A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out.</p> <p>No adverse impact has been identified for 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.
Health & Disability services and those aged 17.5 transitioning to these services.	Advocacy service providers will deliver services from appropriate facilities that are accessible to service users across each of the Trust geographical areas. The provider will take into account the rural nature of each geographical area and will ensure equity of access to services for those living in both rural and urban locations. The Provider must be able to deliver services from appropriate non-Trust facilities. These facilities must be accessible to service users across the Trust area, in line with service user choice of location and at neutral venues.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
The procurement of a design and delivery contract for a support service for adult carers residing within the Southern Health and Social Care Trust 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.</p> <p>The service will be available to carers in both rural and urban areas across each of the Trust geographical areas and will take into account the rural nature of each and will ensure equity of access to services for those living in both rural and urban locations, depending on identified carer need. Actions taken by the provider to encourage new carer referrals will be evidenced at quarterly review meetings.</p>

In the interests of openness and transparency, the Trust has provided the following hyperlinks to S75 equality screenings of Trust policies. An online version of these reports can be found [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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
SEHSCT COVID-19 Response.	<p>An overarching rural screening to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures and key actions taken to facilitate service delivery and an agile response to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19.</p> <p>The Trust's initial response to COVID-19 included actions that relate to the temporary cessation of services to allow for capacity to be created in order to manage the pandemic. These actions will have had impact on people living in both rural and urban areas. In particular key actions identified with likely impact to people living in rural areas included 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 service users and staff 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. Due to the identification of potential internet challenges for people living in rural areas, services users were also given the option to be contacted by health professionals via landline telephone where available, and if network issues existed; regular communication and updates were provided to staff and service users via the internet (e.g. SEHSCT 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.</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>Various evaluations to assess service users' experience of telephone/video consultations and support provided by the Trust; consideration of travel time as a provision for staff redeployed during the COVID-19 situation (this is outside normal Terms and Conditions). Transport provision for staff to travel from Downpatrick to the Ulster Hospital. The bus times have been subsequently reviewed and amended to accommodate shift times.</p> <p>This plan has been continuously reviewed, informed by service user feedback and aligned to regional discussions and priorities.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>SEHSCT Rebuilding HSC Services - Phase One.</p>	<p>An overarching rural screening to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures to facilitate ongoing service delivery and an agile response to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19.</p> <p>Working together with our partners across Northern Ireland to implement the recovery of Non-COVID-19 HSC Services, The Trust continues to plan services using an agreed regional approach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Equity of Access for the treatment of patients across Northern Ireland; • Minimise the transmission of COVID-19; and • Protect the most urgent services. <p>Many of the measures within this rebuilding plan constituted an incremental attempt to return to service provision, as was, prior to COVID -19 whilst others constituted the introduction or continuation of temporary changes to facilitate ongoing service delivery and also an agile response to further COVID-19 surges.</p> <p>These measures will have had impact on people living in both rural and urban areas. In particular key actions identified with likely impact to people living in rural areas included, 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</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>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 mitigating measures. These included offering service users the choice of telephone/video call depending on preference and the availability of Broadband/mobile communication. Due to the identification of potential internet challenges for people living in rural areas, services users were also given the option to be contacted by health professionals via landline telephone where available, and if network issues existed; regular communication and updates were provided to staff and service users via the internet (e.g. SEHSCT 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. Various evaluations to assess service users' experience of telephone/video consultations and support provided by the Trust; consideration of travel time and transportation as a provision for staff redeployed during the COVID-19 situation.</p> <p>This plan has been continuously reviewed, informed by service user feedback and aligned to regional discussions and priorities.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
SEHSCT Rebuilding HSC Services - Phase Two.	<p>An overarching rural screening to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures to facilitate ongoing service delivery and an agile response to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19.</p> <p>Working together with our partners across Northern Ireland to implement the recovery of Non-COVID-19</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>HSC Services, The Trust continues to plan services using an agreed regional approach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Equity of Access for the treatment of patients across Northern Ireland; • Minimise the transmission of COVID-19; and • Protect the most urgent services. <p>Many of the measures within this rebuilding plan constituted an incremental attempt to return to service provision, as was, prior to COVID -19 whilst others constituted the introduction or continuation of temporary changes to facilitate ongoing service delivery and also an agile response to further COVID-19 surges.</p> <p>These measures will have had impact on people living in both rural and urban areas. In particular key actions identified with likely impact to people living in rural areas included, 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 mitigating measures. These included offering service users the choice of telephone/video call depending on preference and the availability of Broadband/ mobile communication. 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 via landline telephone where available, and if network issues existed; regular communication and updates were provided to staff and service users via the internet (e.g. SEHSCT social media sites). Other forms 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>communication have also been used e.g. regular briefings provided to Elected Representatives across the Trust area, including rural areas. Various evaluations to assess service users' experience of telephone/video consultations and support provided by the Trust; consideration of travel time and transportation as a provision for staff redeployed during the COVID-19 situation.</p> <p>This plan has been continuously reviewed, informed by service user feedback and aligned to regional discussions and priorities.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>Trust Resilience Plan to address winter pressures and/or any subsequent waves of the COVID-19 pandemic 2020/21.</p>	<p>An overarching rural screening to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures of what we will need to do to respond to additional demand from the pressures of winter 2020/2021 alongside any subsequent waves of COVID-19.</p> <p>Measures outlined within the resilience plan outline potential impacts on people living in both rural and urban areas. In particular key actions outlined as likely to impact people living in rural areas included the Trust's intention to move towards providing increased care in homes and community settings which has the potential to benefit rural service users in terms of reducing travel to hospital settings. With regards to virtual appointments, Trust services continued to offer service users alternatives to video calls depending on access to technology/broadband e.g. telephone calls. It was also acknowledged that virtual appointments may be more convenient and reduce barriers in terms of travel for some rural service users.</p> <p>In the case of staff being redeployed from rural to urban areas, staff continued to be supported including for example, consideration of travel time and the facilitation of flexible working policies where feasible. 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. Each case is treated on an individual basis.</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>Other measures constituted the introduction or continuation of temporary changes to facilitate ongoing service delivery and also an agile response to further COVID-19 surges. Consideration was also given to the enhancement or extension of impacted services including for example urgent and emergency care services and phlebotomy services.</p> <p>This plan has been continuously reviewed, informed by service user feedback and aligned to regional discussions and priorities.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Programme.	<p>This screening outlines a pilot programme aimed at addressing lifestyle changes for clients who attend Emergency Department or GP services with chest pain and subsequently have a CT scan which shows a coronary artery stenosis of between 30-70% and do not meet the criteria for secondary care intervention, to help prevent further stenosis and the risk of future cardiovascular events.</p> <p>There are several areas within the plan which have been identified and considered which may impact on people from rural areas. These include; travel and transport options for people living in rural areas and associated cost of transport options. Due to COVID-19, sessions being delivered virtually via the 'Zoom' platform may have a positive impact on accessibility for people living in rural areas, though consideration is also given to the fact that some residents in rural areas may face challenges internet connectivity issues.</p> <p>Impacts will continue to be taken into consideration during ongoing implementation, roll out and evaluation of the pilot programme including offering virtual appointments where appropriate and location considerations.</p>
Large Vaccination Fixed Site Requirements - Checklist and implementation within SEHSCT.	Rural screening to assess the impact of plans for large vaccination fixed site requirements within SEHSCT as part of the Northern Ireland plans and programme for the deployment of the COVID-19 vaccine.

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>Northern Ireland along with the other Devolved Administrations will adhere to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on prioritisation of the vaccine.</p> <p>In order to facilitate maximum vaccine deployment and uptake, overall the vaccination model included Trust mobile and roving teams who will focussed on those groups for whom travel to a vaccination centre would be challenging, such as the elderly and care home residents or a supported living centre where the clinical risk was considered to be similar to a care home. When these Trust mobile teams were present at a care home they also offered vaccination to all staff as well as residents.</p> <p>In the case of staff being redeployed from rural to urban areas, staff continued to be supported including for example, consideration of travel time and the facilitation of flexible working policies where feasible. 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. Each case is treated on an individual basis.</p> <p>Subject to the availability of a suitable vaccine, from early January 2021, it was intended to roll out the programme through primary care led vaccination clinics, responsible for the vaccination of the vast majority of eligible individuals with improved access provided for people living in rural areas. This was in addition to hospital and community transportation eligibility and availability.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>COVID-19 Surge Three Capacity Plan.</p>	<p>An overarching rural screening to gauge the cumulative impact of the measures outlining required service arrangements to meet the needs of our local service users whilst contributing to the regional response for the wider health and social care system pressures being encountered.</p> <p>This focus, on ensuring sufficient unscheduled care capacity was in place to enable SEHSCT to support</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>COVID-19 delivery response, impacted on the Trust's ability to support elective care. SEHSCT has been committed to enabling these services to sustain more normal levels of activity as soon as possible with regular senior operational and clinical review of the decisions to stand down theatre sessions and outpatient activity conducted.</p> <p>Measures outlined within the COVID-19 Surge Three Capacity Plan outlined potential impacts on people living in both rural and urban areas. In particular key actions likely to impact people living in rural areas included potential for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients re-directed/transferred to alternative hospital sites for care based on the capacity of services. Depending on the location of the site in relation to where service users/carers reside, this may have had an impact; • Patients signposted to the most appropriate location to receive care (e.g. GP Out of Hours, Minor Injuries Units etc.), which may have an impact with regards to travel times; • Further redeployment of staff. This may have had an impact on staff residing in rural areas if redeployed to a Trust facility in an urban area. Support continued to be made available to redeployed staff and the Trust has continued to work closely with our Trade Union colleagues in this regard; • The delivery of increasing community capacity for step-down and delirium pathways for discharged patients and arrangements for maintaining support for the most vulnerable in our community - likely to reduce barriers regarding travel for some rural service users; • Postponed elective activity with intention to reschedule as soon as possible. A regional approach has been established to ensure that any available theatre capacity across 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.
	<p>is allocated for those patients most in need of surgery, both during surge and as we come out of this surge. This may mean patients travelling further for their surgery, having an impact on some patients living in rural areas and their families.</p> <p>In the case of staff being redeployed from rural to urban areas, staff continued to be supported including for example, consideration of travel time and the facilitation of flexible working policies where feasible. 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. Each case is treated on an individual basis.</p> <p>This plan has been continuously reviewed, informed by service user feedback and aligned to regional discussions and priorities.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>COVID-19 Vaccination Centre - SSE Arena, Belfast.</p>	<p>Rural screening to assess the impact of plans for COVID-19 Vaccination Centre, SSE Arena, Belfast, managed by SEHSCT as part of the Northern Ireland plans and programme for the deployment of the COVID-19 vaccine.</p> <p>Northern Ireland along with the other Devolved Administrations will adhere to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on prioritisation of the vaccine.</p> <p>As part of the overall programme and in order to facilitate maximum vaccine deployment and uptake, vaccinations have been administered by HSC Trusts mobile and roving teams focussing on those groups for whom travel to a vaccination centre would be challenging, such as the elderly and care home residents or a supported living centres where the clinical risk was considered to be similar to a care home.</p> <p>In the case of staff being redeployed from rural areas to the SSE Arena Belfast, staff will continue to be</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>supported including for example, consideration of travel time and the facilitation of flexible working policies where feasible.</p> <p>A range of transport options have also been considered. accessibility is also increased for people living in rural areas due to the wider vaccination programme roll-out through primary care led vaccination clinics and community pharmacies.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health or Social Care	
<p>Programme to reduce risk of Type 2 Diabetes amongst service users within the SEHSCT geographical area until March 2022.</p>	<p>This screening outlines a programme to reduce risk of Type Two diabetes. Rural populations attending the programme 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. Mitigation includes the choice of venues on main transport links for those dependent on public transport. Venue location planning has been adapted to suit needs of patients and advice from GPs. An additional location was added in the Newcastle area of Downpatrick over 20 miles away and not on any convenient bus routes. Special consideration will also be given in the rural Ards Peninsula area.</p> <p>All venues will continue to be reviewed with coaches and the Diabetes Prevention Programme manager.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, sessions being delivered virtually via the 'Zoom' platform may have a positive impact on accessibility for people living in rural areas, though consideration is also given to the fact that some residents in rural areas may face challenges internet connectivity issues.</p>

In the interests of openness and transparency, the Trust has provided the following link to S75 equality screenings of Trust policies. An online version of these reports can be found [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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
<p>Western Health & Social Services Trust response to the Outbreak of COVID-19.</p>	<p>The Trust's response to Covid 19 required the Trust to adopt new ways of working to balance the challenges of protecting the health of the population and safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable people in the community, whilst also continuing to deliver a high quality safe patient/client services and a safe working environment for staff and all those who come into contact with our services.</p> <p>The Trust has worked hard to identify and support those most in need and ensure that there are robust arrangements in place to support individuals at this time. Changes to service delivery included actions that relate to the temporary standing down of services to allow for capacity to be created to deal with the demands of the pandemic. This will impact on people living in both rural and urban areas. Impacts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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); • Access to adequate Broadband or mobile communication in rural areas for remote access to services e.g. virtual clinics (mitigation is the use of hybrid service delivery models); • For staff redeployments - availability of public or community transportation (mitigation is that travel costs will be reimbursed).
<p>Western Health & Social Services Trust COVID-19 Vulnerable Isolated Person (VIP) Support.</p>	<p>To support the most vulnerable patients, to include those living in rural areas, who were instructed to shield for a 12 week period, the Western Health Social Care Trust established a Virtual Call Service for Vulnerable Isolated People (VIP) across the Western Trust 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.
	<p>The service aims to ensure that those who are identified as most vulnerable and residing in the WHSCT area have adequate practical, emotional and social help and support to self-isolate at home during the COVID-19 outbreak. Following the initial referral from Advice NI, an assessment is carried out and a range of support is offered under the key themes of the shielding package which include food, fuel, medication and social contact. The service was delivered in partnership with Derry City and Strabane District Council, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Community and Voluntary Sector, Advice NI and the Department of Communities.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
<p>Western Health & Social Services Trust COVID-19 Response: Rebuilding Plan Stage 1: 1st June 2020 - 30th June 2020.</p>	<p>The first peak of the COVID-19 outbreak in Northern Ireland has now passed and the incidence of COVID-19 in our acute hospitals is reducing daily. Across NI and the UK the focus has shifted to planning how to restart services, while remaining sufficiently flexible that services can respond to further waves of this disease. It is accepted that COVID-19 remains a public health risk to our population, impacting on people living in both urban and rural areas and, a phased and flexible approach is needed to restarting services. The Department of Health asked Trusts to publish plans on 1 June 2020 to implement the first stage of the recovery for non-COVID-19 HSC Services (for the period 1 - 30 June 2020).</p> <p>Plans include services created, testing new ways of working during the period which support the aims of providing care at home rather than in hospital, accommodating social distancing requirements by use of technology for telephone or video care clinics. Mitigations include;</p> <p>Visitors - whilst general hospital visiting stopped (with some exceptions) mitigation included telephone and video calls to allow contact between patient/residents and families/friends.</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.
	Services using telephone or video call clinics have alternative arrangements in place to ensure access to services.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care	
Western Health and Social Care Trust COVID-19 Response: Rebuilding Plan Stage 2 - 1 July 2020 - 30 September 2020.	<p>The Western Trust continues to assess and manage the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for our service users, patients, clients and staff. We have made an assessment of the direct impact that managing COVID-19 has had on our capacity in hospitals and access to a wide range of services for our community.</p> <p>The Trust recognises the impact resulting from the short phase of our plan particularly for older people, carers and those with a disability and people living in rural areas.</p> <p>The Western Trust has set out a high level overview of the services that we plan to maintain and rebuild as part of the COVID-19 response during July, August and September 2020.</p> <p>Similar to stage 1, during July, August and September 2020, we will continue to build on new ways of working to continue to provide safe and effective care. This involves working closely with our partners and professional and managerial leaders, using flexible and remote working where appropriate and using technology such as telephone and video calls. We are engaging with our staff to reflect on the many 'lessons learned' and further work on this will be crucial to inform our plans going forward. This learning and sharing of best practice will shape our longer-term operational, strategic and financial planning and we will be asked to work collectively with other Trusts and deliver on wider regional priorities.</p>
Western Health & Social Care Trust Resilience Plan to address Winter Pressures and/or any subsequent waves of COVID-19 Pandemic 2020/2021.	<p>The Trusts Resilience plan describes how the trust will respond to the addition depend pressures arising during winter 2020-2021 and/or through any subsequent waves of the COVID-19 Pandemic.</p> <p>The focus of this combined Winter and COVID-19 Surge Resilience Plan 20/21 is to put in place</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>reasonable measures and processes that will help ensure patient/client safety, safe and effective workforce plans, and provide an assurance that contingency plans are in place to address periods of increased unscheduled care demand over the Winter and any further surges of COVID19. The plan includes actions that relate to the temporary standing down of services to enable capacity to be created to deal with the Pandemic, this will impact on people both living in rural and urban areas. Virtual appointments and consultations will continue, however there will be a blended model including face-to-face where possible.</p>
<p>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care</p>	
<p>Large Vaccination Fixed Site Requirements - Checklist and implementation within WHSCT.</p>	<p>A coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine developed by Pfizer/BioNTech has been approved for use in the UK. The vaccine is available in Northern Ireland from week commencing 14 December 2020. Northern Ireland has been planning for the deployment of the COVID-19 vaccine for many months. This has involved collaborative working across the Health and Social Care system in conjunction with wider stakeholders and partners.</p> <p>In the initial phase of the vaccination programme, given the constraints of the deployability of the Pfizer-BioNTech product, the vaccine will be administered mainly through vaccination centres operating under the direction and governance of Health and Social Care Trusts.</p> <p>The model for vaccine deployment has been designed to be pragmatic, agile and flexible. Teams of vaccinators have been trained from a range of professional backgrounds in addition to extant HSC staff and primary care staff.</p> <p>The 3 sites chosen for the delivery of the vaccination are close to each of the Trust Hospital sites in Omagh, Enniskillen and Londonderry, in order to facilitate maximum vaccine deployment and uptake, covering a geographical area of 4,842Km², with a mix of highly urbanised and extensive rural communities.</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 Vaccination Centres are required to meet regulatory pharmacy standards in relation to the receipt, storage, management and use of the vaccinations and this has been factored into the development of the facilities schedule of accommodation. The Centre's will meet all relevant statutory standards for the delivery of the vaccination programme.

In the interests of openness and transparency, the Trust has provided a hyperlink to S75 equality screenings of Trust policies: An online version of these reports can be found [HERE](#)

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.
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care Services	
Strategic Response to COVID-19 Pandemic.	<p>People in rural areas may be differentially and adversely impacted by the temporary reconfiguration of Trust services. Impact of Covid-related decisions remains under ongoing review and considered on a rolling basis. For example, the temporary suspension of services provided by Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts, and the consequential temporary redeployment of Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Patient Care Service (PCS) staff and resources, may have a differential impact on people in rural areas. Service users who rely on PCS to transport them to appointments are likely to be impacted by the temporary redeployment of staff. People in rural areas may have less access to public transport, and live further from the location of their hospital appointment, than their urban counterparts. Therefore, the reconfiguration of PCS services may impact differently on people in rural areas who rely more on those services. The decision to reconfigure PCS services was taken because Trust outpatients' appointments and clinics were cancelled as part of their response to COVID-19. This allowed PCS staff and resources to be redeployed into roles in support of emergency services which came under unprecedented pressure.</p>
Development of 'Caring for Today, Planning for Tomorrow - Our Strategy to Transform: 2020-2026'.	<p>The Strategy was designed to transform and optimise the services provided by the Trust for the whole population, including people in rural communities. The Trust's limited resources are deployed in a way that optimises response to emergency calls for the whole population. This can mean that people in rural communities may sometimes experience a longer response time as a consequence of the proximity of the closest available ambulance resource and hospital to their location. Historic response rates for calls in 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.
	<p>and rural areas were considered in the development of the Strategy. A critical consideration in assessing the rural impact was the ratio of cardiac arrests. Figures for 2017/18 suggest that around two-thirds of cardiac arrests occurred in urban areas. The Strategy should result in an improvement in appropriate and effective ambulance response for service users in rural communities.</p>
<p>Policy for Reporting Incidents under Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (NI) 1997 (RIDDOR).</p>	<p>The policy has been developed to meet the statutory requirements of RIDDOR which sets out the need to have a system of formal reporting of specified incidents to the appropriate enforcing authority. The policy aims to ensure staff have established safe systems of work to minimise the impact of risks and incidents. The aim is to ensure compliance with legislation. The policy is designed to protect staff, service users and the public from risk whilst safeguarding the welfare of patients, carers and members of the public. This policy covers all areas of the organisation's business, and applies across the entirety of the region, with no differential application in rural areas.</p>
<p>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal</p>	
<p>Personal Protective Equipment (Body Armour) Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).</p>	<p>The purpose of the Personal Protective Equipment (Body Armour) SOP is to provide information and guidance on the provision and use of body armour issued by the Trust. NIAS has both a moral and a legal obligation to safeguard its employees. In particular, under health and safety legislation, NIAS must protect its staff whilst on duty as far as is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>The procedure aims to provide appropriate protection for all staff by minimising risk and ensuring compliance with legislation. It is intended to ensure the impact of any risks to staff are reduced and managed, with monitoring/reporting processes in place to protect staff and service users. The procedure applies across the entirety of the region, with no differential application 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 rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal	
<p>Display Screen Equipment (DSE) - Ambulance Service Health and Safety Procedure.</p>	<p>The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all managers and staff are aware of, and adhere to, their responsibilities under The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations (NI) 1992. The implementation of this procedure will reduce risk to staff who work with DSE.</p> <p>The aim of the Procedure is to ensure compliance with legislation, provide strategic direction, and establish procedures for managing incidents. The procedure aims to provide appropriate protection for all staff by minimising risk and ensuring compliance with legislation. It is intended to ensure the impact of any risks to staff are reduced and managed, with monitoring/reporting processes in place to protect staff. The procedure will have no differential impact for service users in rural areas.</p>
The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Health and Social Care Services	
<p>GoodSAM App live streaming.</p>	<p>The GoodSAM application provides a video streaming platform that will allow, with the patient's consent, frontline NIAS staff and members of the public to instantly share their location, as well as what they are seeing at the scene of an incident, with the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) Paramedic on the Airdesk via the camera on their mobile phone. The policy will not have a differential impact on people in rural areas. There is a potential benefit, as use of video streaming can help HEMS assess the patient and ensure that potentially life-saving advice is followed.</p>
<p>Violence Prevention & Reduction Strategy.</p>	<p>The purpose of the Strategy is to set out how NIAS will address the significant and ever increasing risk to staff from violence and aggression by members of the public. This will support staff to work in a safer and more secure environment, which safeguards against abuse, aggression and violence.</p> <p>The aim of the Strategy is to ensure compliance with legislation, provide strategic direction and establish</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>procedures for managing health and safety. The Strategy has been designed to protect staff, service users and the public from risk whilst safeguarding the welfare of patients, carers and members of the public. The strategy will apply regionally and will not have a differential impact on people in rural areas.</p>
<p>The rural policy area(s) which the activity relates to: Internal</p>	
<p>Supporting Staff Involved in Incidents, Complaints, Claims and Coroners' Inquests.</p>	<p>The aim of this policy is to set out the framework for the provision of support and advice to staff prior to, during and after their involvement in Incidents, Complaints, Claims and Inquests. The policy will apply to all NIAS staff across the region. The Trust has not identified any potential adverse or differential impacts for the people in rural areas. The Trust will monitor the application of the policy and review regularly.</p>
<p>Skin Care Policy.</p>	<p>The policy aims to describe how the Trust intends to prevent or minimise the risk of staff developing a skin complaint a result of their work. It will ensure compliance with legislation and establish procedures for managing skin complaints. The policy is designed to protect staff from risk whilst safeguarding the welfare of patients, carers and members of the public. The policy will apply regionally and will not have a differential impact on people in rural areas.</p>

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