

Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) Template

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

1A. Name of Public Authority.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council

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

Armagh Place Plan

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

Developing a Plan

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

Armagh Place Plan

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

The aim of the Armagh Place Plan is to create a locality plan for the City that aligns strategically with the Community Plan for the Borough. It will be achieved via four outcomes:

A Connected City: Armagh is a connected city; physically, digitally and socially

A Green City: Armagh is leading the way in sustainable and green thinking; including reducing its air pollution and building climate resilience.

An Engaging City: Armagh engages those who live, work and visit it

A Healthy City: Armagh is an inclusive and healthy city

The plans identified **31 actions** for implementation to help deliver the above outcomes.

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

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

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

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

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

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

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

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

Protecting rural communities and food production is vital for preserving biodiversity, improving health, ensuring food security, maintaining rural (and urban) livelihoods, and protecting the environment. The Armagh Place Plan advocates a sustainable urban development approach that seeks to protect the rural landscape allowing vital services and activities that need to take place there can continue. The Armagh Place Plan offers many actions for an enhanced and improved city that caters for rural dwellers that use the city regularly to gain access to services.

The Place Plan will reinforce and enhance rural and urban connections by

- Giving more opportunities for rural businesses to showcase themselves in the city
- Develop a better and more integrated transport system in and out of the city
- Design green and blue infrastructure that connects the wider rural area into the city

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

The proposals contained within the plan will be beneficial to both urban and rural dwellers. Due to a number of transport improvement actions, rural dwellers will benefit more so than urban dwellers from improved transport infrastructure that connects them into the city.

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

Rural Businesses

Rural Tourism

Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas

Agri-Environment

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

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

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

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

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

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

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders

Published Statistics

Consultation with Other Organisations

Surveys or Questionnaires

Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).

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

- Area wide survey that gathered 136 responses, many of which came from outside the settlement of Armagh in July 2021
- Engagement sessions online in March 2021 which involved a number of rural dwellers
- 1 to 1 discussion with a farmer living in the rural area around Armagh in February 2021
- Analysis of socio-economic statistics for the Armagh area including the rural hinterland in January 2021.
- Engagement with team developing agricultural strategy for the Borough.
- The agreed Draft Armagh Place Plan was issued for a 12 week public consultation period 1 Nov 2021 until 23 Jan 2022. The documents were published on the Consultation Hub and the public survey received 85 returns, the survey was open to the public for all residents in the borough to take part.

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

- Access to services
- Rural businesses being able to access suitable accommodation in the city to showcase their products
- Better transport connectivity across the south west region
- More opportunities for quality business and professional services through a revived city centre of Armagh

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

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

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

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

The following issues were considered in relation to the needs of people in rural areas:

- Social isolation and the need to more integrated public transport provision
- Access to services in the city and not competing with rural settlements providing essential more regular services than in Armagh city
- Employment and access to jobs and opportunities in the city

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

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

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

Transport through the rural area of Armagh has been addressed by proposals being developed that will reduce congestion and improve the road infrastructure surrounding the city.

More and better alternative transport options for getting into and out of the city have been incorporated into the plan to include exploring the feasibility of reopening the railway station in Armagh, implementing more greenways to connect cyclists into and out of the city, and new roads to alleviate congestion on some smaller rural routes into the city.

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

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

SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording

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

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

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Mura Quigley
Position/Grade:	Associate Director

Division/Branch	USI on behalf of the Community Planning Team
Signature:	<i>Mura Quigley</i>
Date:	28/2/2022
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Elaine Gillespie
Position/Grade:	Head of Community Planning Dept
Division/Branch:	Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
Signature:	
Date:	28/2/2022