

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

Provision of financial assistance to organisations/individuals across the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon borough.

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

Developing a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Adopting a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Implementing a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Revising a	Policy	X	Strategy		Plan	
Designing a Public Service						
Designing a Public Service						

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

Financial Assistance Policy

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

The Financial Assistance Policy for Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council details the process by which Council offers financial support to those organisations and individuals who can contribute to delivering the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

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).

x

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

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		No	x	If the response is NO GO TO Section 2E .
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2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

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.

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	
Rural Housing	
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	
Education or Training in Rural Areas	
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	
Poverty in Rural Areas	
Deprivation in Rural Areas	
Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Rural Development	
Agri-Environment	
Other (Please state)	

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.

The revisions to the policy will not have any impact on people in rural areas. The removal of the Rural Linkages Grant programme is mitigated by the fact that groups can apply to the Community Development Grant programme for the same projects and costs that were available under the Rural Linkages Grant programme. All revisions to the policy are communicated to potential applicants through information sessions delivered when calls for applications are opened, and through the relevant Applicant Guidance Manual.

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	x	No	If the Response is NO GO TO Section 3E .

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.			
Consultation with Rural Stakeholders	x	Published Statistics	
Consultation with Other Organisations	x	Research Papers	
Surveys or Questionnaires	x	Other Publications	
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.
<p>This original policy has been developed as a result of an extensive consultation exercise undertaken across the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council areas.</p> <p>To ensure maximum participation, consultation events were organised in each Council area with afternoon and evening sessions in each area. Two were held in Banbridge Town Hall, two in Armagh's Market Place Theatre and two in Craigavon Civic Centre. Through the three Councils, all community groups and other voluntary sector organisations on the Councils' Database were notified about the events. In addition adverts were placed in seven local newspapers. Those contacted were given the opportunity to contribute by a number of methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through a link to an online questionnaire – this provided an opportunity to offer detailed information about current organisational needs and future priorities. The organisations that participated in this online questionnaire deal with issues which include disability, youth, early years, school children, older people, women, good relations, ethnic minorities and faith. • Through the six public consultation exercises - these were facilitated by Williamson Consulting and sought to focus specifically on views relating to the current Grant Aid programmes, future priorities and principles and any other information groups wished to contribute • By e-mail directly to Williamson Consulting • By telephone to Williamson Consulting • In addition, face to face meetings were held with network organisations in the area <p>There was little disagreement about the key issues and groups consulted tended to provide similar responses, suggesting that the consultation is likely to be representative of the wider sector. Following subsequent amendments to the policy and procedures, workshops were held with potential applicants highlighting the changes and a section was included in the Applicant Guidance Manuals detailing the changes.</p>

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

A common theme that arose through the community consultation was that of rural isolation and the difficulty of connecting people with provision. This usually centred on transport needs, particularly for young people and older people. The policy initially sought to address this need by introducing the Rural Linkages Grant programme. However, due to lack of uptake and the ability of applicants to apply for the same costs through the Community Development grant programme, the Rural Linkages Grant was closed. Groups were made aware of this change and the ability to apply to the Community Development Grant programme through a series of information sessions and details of changes highlighted in the relevant Applicant Guidance Manuals.

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?

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 social needs of people in rural areas in particular has been considered in devising the policy. The borough has significant areas classified as rural and so the policy seeks to support community and voluntary sector organisations to address some of the particular issues experienced by rural communities, for example:

- Rural isolation
- Lack of access to services
- Social exclusion

These barriers manifest themselves in lack of transport, poor or non-existent community facilities, little or no services to meet community needs.

SECTION 5

Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

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

Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No		If the response is NO GO TO Section 5C .
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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.

The rural needs identified have underpinned the need to continue to ensure that access to financial assistance for groups serving rural areas and meeting rural needs is not adversely affected by any revisions.

As a result, while the Rural Linkages Grant is no longer available, groups who would or could have applied to it can still apply for the same projects and costs through the Community Development Grant programme.

Specific grant programme objectives which may have particular relevance for groups operating in rural areas or seeking to meet rural needs have been retained, including:

- Increased social inclusion (tackling marginalization)
- Reduced social isolation
- Better services for those in need
- Improved community cohesion
- Improve facilities, access or services

In respect of eligibility to apply for annual core running costs, rural development associations are specifically named as an eligible group. Similarly, projects that are eligible for funding for capital funding specifically include "capital expenditure to facilitate the provision of mobile services in rural areas".

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

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

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.	
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Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Robert Stockley
Position/Grade:	Financial Assistance Programme Manager
Department/Directorate	Community Development Department
Signature:	
Date:	20.2.20
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Seamus McCrory
Position/Grade:	Head of Community Development
Department/Directorate	Community Development Department
Signature:	
Date:	5.3.20