

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

Empty to Occupied Programme

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	X	Strategy		Plan	
Revising a	Policy		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

Empty to Occupied Programme

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

The Scheme is a grant scheme which aims to encourage vacant commercial property owners to invest in their buildings, attract tenants and reduce long term vacancy.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (the 'Council') have committed to deliver the Scheme to support property owners and occupiers in bringing vacant properties back in to commercial or residential use. The scheme will create opportunities for tenants and improve the vitality and vibrancy of our towns and villages.

Property owners wishing to undertake external and internal property improvement works to enhance the lettable, functionality and appearance of their property are encouraged to apply for grant assistance through the Scheme.

The Scheme outcomes will:

- Tackle prominent long-term vacant properties within the Borough's 'Settlement Development Limits'
- Impact positively on the streetscape of our cities, towns and villages.
- Provide good high specification buildings.
- Create buildings that are fit for purpose and ready to occupy.
- Create potential to attract meanwhile or long-term tenants.
- Bring floor space back into use.

The scheme fits with the Corporate Priority under Place Directorate

'Support business development and business growth'.

'Increase the tourism, hospitality and entertainment economy'.

Tackle physical and social deprivation: PR1

Secure investment in infrastructure and connectivity: PR2

Ensure our neighbourhoods are more attractive, healthier, safer and cleaner: PR3

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

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition).	
Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).	X
A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.	

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

Urban Town surrounded by rural hinterland

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

Some eligible settlements have both an urban and rural form, and are surrounded by a rural setting. The effects of this policy will have a positive effect on the surrounding rural hinterland.

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	Y	No	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.

This grant scheme will benefit people within our City, Towns and villages and the rural area surrounding them through the enhancement of the physical environment within the Borough's Settlement Development limits.

The grant scheme will:

- Tackle prominent long-term vacant properties within the Borough's 'Settlement Development Limits'.
- Impact positively on the streetscape of our cities, towns and villages.
- Provide good high specification buildings.
- Create buildings that are fit for purpose and ready to occupy.
- Create potential to attract meanwhile or long-term tenants and bring floor space back into use.

The grant scheme will encourage projects that will enhance the physical appearance of the streetscape within eligible settlement development limits, and this will benefit all users.

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.

N/A

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	X
Rural Tourism	X
Rural Housing	X
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	X
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	X
Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Rural Development	X
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.

SECTION 3

Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

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

Yes		No	X	If the Response is NO GO TO Section 3E .
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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		Research Papers	
Surveys or Questionnaires		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.

N/A

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

N/A

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?

This scheme is an innovative grant scheme which aims to encourage vacant commercial property owners within the settlement boundaries to invest in their buildings, attract tenants and reduce long term vacancy, but it has positive effects on the surrounding rural hinterland.

SECTION 4

Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas

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

SECTION 5

Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service

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

Yes		No	x	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.

N/A

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.

This scheme is an innovative grant scheme which aims to encourage vacant commercial property owners within settlement boundaries to invest in their buildings, attract tenants and reduce long term vacancy, but it has positive effects on the surrounding rural hinterland.

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.	X
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Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Laura McGahan
Position/Grade:	Development Officer
Department/Directorate	Regeneration Department
Signature:	
Date:	19/02/2021
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Samuel Dalzell
Position/Grade:	Development Manager
Department/Directorate	Regeneration Department
Signature:	
Date:	30/03/2021