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Appendix 1 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

Template

The equality duties require DAERA to develop an Audit of Inequalities and related Action Plan setting out the equality gaps at a strategic level in relation to its business functions. DAERA is committed to the fulfilment of these statutory obligations across all its business areas and has set out how we intend to do this in our Audit of Inequalities (AoI) and the related Action Plan.

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

Draft Audit of Inequalities 2021-2025 and Action Plan (After the consultation has been completed the word “draft” will be removed from the title of this document.

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.

Developing a Policy Strategy Plan

Adopting a Policy Strategy Plan

Implementing a Policy Strategy Plan

Revising a Policy Strategy Plan Designing a Public Service

Delivering a Public Service

X

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

Development of a new Audit of Inequalities 2021-2025 and Action Plan

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.

Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs

1A. Name of Public Authority.

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

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*Reasons why a definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.*

*Rationale for using alternative definition of ‘rural’.*

*Details of alternative definition of ‘rural’ used.*

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition). Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.

X

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

The NI Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) (2014-2020) and the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme is targeted specifically at people living in rural areas.

At the end of this funding period or at the development stage of future initiatives, the Department will consider any outcomes from reviews or consultations in relation to Section 75 Equality duties and polices/projects.

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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 development of the Audit of Inequalities and related Action Plan is likely to have a positive impact on people including those in rural areas. The AoI is a thorough analysis of inequalities which exist for DAERA service users and those affected by our policies. This audit helps inform our work in relation to the Section 75 equality and good relations duties as well as assessing the Departments progress on the implementation of the equality duties.

DAERA will allocate all necessary resources (e.g. people, time and money) in order to effectively implement its AoI and improve awareness and take up of the NI Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) (2014-2020) funding opportunities by people in the various S.75 categories in the rural and farming communities and take forward actions to remove those barriers which we are aware of which continue to prevent participation in RDP programmes.

Through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI), we will continue to create participation opportunities for people in the various S.75 categories by facilitating rural community transport solutions, social farming opportunities, grant aid for inclusion and access projects and enhancing a range of recreational sites (forest parks and community walkways).

As the AoI also applies to DAERA staff there are measures to incorporate learning for staff, this includes, Training for all Frontline staff.

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

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

X

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

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

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

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

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)

X

X

X

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

Individual DAERA business areas would have used all, or a combination of, the above information sources in order to identify and implement the different strategic priorities detailed in the AoI and Action Plan. For example, in relation to TRPSI, the Department completed the following - Various AFBI Rural research papers commissioned by DARD/DAERA including:

Policy Options to Improve Rural Household Income and Employment Growth - The Contribution of Key Basic Services to Rural Dwellers Quality of Life in Northern Ireland: A Baseline Review.

A rural stakeholder engagement exercise took place on Thursday 10th December 2015 at Loughry College, Cookstown. 31 people attended representing a wide range of rural stakeholder organisations both at regional and local level.

The report on the Evaluation of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development’s Tackling Rural Poverty & Social Isolation Framework 2011-15

Rural Statistics on DAERA website including statistics on employment and income, access to services, transport and telecommunications and the more recently published “Key Rural Issues, Northern Ireland 2019.”

The AoI is based on data and analysis from various research papers, statistics, reports, and a 5-year review of the previous AoI (2011-2016), among many other sources of information.

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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.

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).

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

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.

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

x

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?

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

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

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

As the AoI covers all business areas within DAERA, the economic needs of people in rural areas will have been considered where applicable, for example, additional costs of living in a rural area such as higher fuel or transport costs can have a greater impact on people on low incomes, while some groups such as young people or people with disabilities may experience greater difficulties accessing transport services in rural areas than in urban settings, consequently the TRPSI programme will have recognised this.

The Department have given an undertaken to provide all information in alternative formats upon request. There is also provision for extra help through contacting local DAERA Direct Offices which are in various geographical locations making them more accessible to rural communities. For example, people in rural areas are more likely to have limited or no access to services through digital means. In order to mitigate this, DAERA Direct Offices are available to help with access to DAERA online services.

The AoI is a thorough analysis of inequalities which exist for DAERA service users and those affected by our policies. These are extensively set out in the AoI under each of the Section 75 categories.

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

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As the AoI covers all business areas within DAERA, the social and economic needs of people in rural areas will have been considered, where applicable, by each business area, and strategic priorities identified and detailed within the AoI.

The Department has considered the impact of poverty and social isolation on vulnerable groups in rural areas and those listed under each of the Section 75 categories and considered how living in rural areas can exacerbate the effects of poverty and social isolation. In particular it has looked at effects that living in a rural area can have on accessing key services and social isolation and at potential measures for alleviating the effects, such as facilitating rural community transport solutions.

The Department has identified opportunities for public authorities to work together in seeking to address the issues identified around poverty and social isolation in rural areas and a need for a more flexible approach in identifying suitable measures. The Department has also recognised a need for more new and innovative approaches to dealing with the issues in rural areas which take account of particular circumstances which people, particularly vulnerable and disabled people, in rural areas face.

The AoI is a thorough analysis of inequalities which exist for DAERA service users and those affected by our policies. These are extensively set out in the AoI under each of the Section 75 categories.

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

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

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

As the AoI covers all business areas within DAERA the revision of the AoI will have had this action considered by each area. For example, in relation to TRPSI, the development of the new TRPSI Framework has taken account of the needs of people in rural areas, including vulnerable and disabled people, in relation to financial poverty, access poverty and social isolation by providing for the development of measures aimed specifically at alleviating the impact of financial poverty, access poverty and social isolation among vulnerable groups of people in rural areas. It also encourages public authorities to work with DAERA in designing and delivering such measures and promotes the sharing of information and best practice between public authorities to improve knowledge and understanding of the needs of people in rural areas. It also encourages the development of new and innovative solutions to addressing poverty and social isolation in rural areas which take account of the particular circumstances facing people in rural areas.

The AoI remains in draft format and will be subject to a 14-week consultation process (due to the December/January holiday period) whereby the Department will publish and circulate the draft AoI widely. This is to seek the views and opinions of our Section 75 consultees and those organisations representing the views and interests of people within the Section 75 categories. This targeted approach will include seeking views of people who live in rural areas.

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.

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

X

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?

**SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

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Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:

Russell McCurry

Position/Grade:

Deputy Principal

Division/Branch

Staff Engagement, Equality & Diversity Branch

Signature:

Russell McCurry

Date:

04 October 2021

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:

Colin Campbell

Position/Grade:

Grade 7

Division/Branch:

Staff Engagement, Equality & Diversity Branch

Signature:

Colin Campbell

Date:

20 October 2021

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

x

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.

**SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording**

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.