

Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

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

1A. Name of Public Authority

Belfast City Council

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

Developing a corporate consultation and engagement framework for Belfast City Council

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

Developing a	Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adopting a	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementing a	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revising a	Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designing a Public Service		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering a Public Service		<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Draft Consultation and Engagement Framework

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

The draft framework outlines Belfast City Council's approach to consultation and engagement. It sets out a clear vision with underlying principles and standards and explains how we will seek to inform, consult and involve. It is supported by an action plan and a number of officer toolkits.

The purpose of the framework is to improve the quality, value and effectiveness of our consultation and engagement, ensuring we consistently meet expectations and our statutory duty. It represents a further step towards embedding meaningful consultation into the council's planning and decision-making processes and supplements the commitments in our Equality Scheme and our responsibilities to consult under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Specifically the framework aims to:

- Make our consultation and engagement processes **Meaningful and Fit for Purpose**
- Ensure our consultation and engagement is **Inclusive** and gives all people **Equal Opportunity** to contribute, enabling greater access and participation
- Build trust and confidence in council through **Fair, Open and Transparent** consultation and engagement

- Provide **Value for Money**, reducing costs and avoiding duplication
- Strengthen strategic planning through a consistent and continually improving use of consultation and engagement - **A 'One-Council' Coordinated Approach**

Our aspiration is to ensure all our consultation and engagement:

1. **Respects people** and acts fairly – it has a meaningful purpose and values people’s time and contributions
2. Gives people **equal opportunity** to contribute – is clear, accessible and inclusive
3. Uses **fit for purpose** methods that are commensurate to need, visible, well designed and provide value for money
4. **Keeps people informed** throughout – including feeding back on results and decisions

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 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.

Positive impact.

The corporate framework is designed to increase civic participation and engagement generally. It recognises that some people may face barriers to their participation and encourages officers to take reasonable steps to mitigate this and ensure equality of opportunity in terms of participation. Belfast has a rural population of approximately 1,484 residents living within the small settlements of Edenderry, Hannahstown and Loughview. Although the rural settlements in Belfast do not face the same challenges as other rural communities in Northern Ireland, for example, in terms of digital access and other physical barriers, the framework requires council officers to be aware of potential barriers or impacts on our residents and stakeholders and, where appropriate, to take steps to ensure that people can participate. We believe, therefore, that the framework will provide a mechanism for enabling improved civic engagement for all people including our rural communities.

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.

This is a guiding policy and framework for informing good practice consultation & engagement. It seeks to ensure equality of opportunity for all in terms of participation. There is no evidence to suggest that people in rural areas will be impacted differently, for example in terms of access to council communications through City Matters or digitally. (For example see: [Internet Access](#);

[Home Internet Access](#) – Northern Ireland and Statistics research from 2018/19 indicates 85% of rural households surveyed have access to home internet compared to 86% of urban households.

In addition, the framework requires that each consultation or engagement is tailored to each unique circumstance. Therefore, where appropriate, this means ensuring that targeted engagement is facilitated within our rural settlements. For example, targeted meetings were held with rural stakeholders in the Edenderry Village (Edenderry Residents' Association) and Hannahstown (Hannahstown Community Association) areas as part of the village renewal scheme consultations at Edenderry and Hannahstown, and also as part of the Belfast Agenda engagement programme. Differential impact and/or specific stakeholder needs will continue to be assessed at an individual consultation level, including where appropriate consideration of impact on or access for people in rural communities.

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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education or Training in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deprivation in Rural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Crime or Community Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Civic Engagement and Participation

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Published Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation with Other Organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surveys or Questionnaires	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input type="checkbox"/>

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.

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

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?

The framework is about improving internal process and our policy approach to engagement; it is not designed to specifically address the wider social or economic needs of people in rural areas, nor those of the wider Belfast population. Social need in terms of enhancing civic participation and involvement, has been considered above, and will be factored into individual exercises.

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.

Not applicable

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

5A. 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?

Not applicable

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.

The framework is about improving internal process and our policy approach to consultation and engagement. It seeks to ensure equal opportunity to participate across all our communities, and at this high level, there is no evidence to suggest that our 3 rural settlements have substantially different needs from the wider Belfast population in terms of access to our main communication and engagement channels. However, the approach to inclusion and stakeholder mapping outlined in the framework and guidance, will require council officers to be conscious of end users or those who may be impacted by decisions when developing and undertaking consultation and engagement, including where appropriate rural communities. This awareness should lead to a better understanding of rural need and implications for participation, which in turn should lead to more inclusive engagement and better decision-making. As individual consultations and engagements are designed, it will be the responsibility of the relevant service to ensure that any specific rural needs implications are assessed.

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:	Patricia Flynn
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Division / Branch:	Strategy, Policy and Partnerships
Signature:	
Date:	26th November 2019
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	Christine Robinson
Position / Grade:	Strategy, Policy and Partnerships Manager
Division / Branch:	Strategy, Policy and Partnerships
Signature:	
Date:	26th November 2019