

## 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.

Fermanagh and Omagh District 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.

Development of the Councils annual Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26 as required by Section 87 of the Local Government Act.

#### 1C. Please indicate (with an 'X') which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to.

Developing a	Policy <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Design a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Delivering a Public Service	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### 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.

[Draft Performance Improvement Plan: Year 2 – 2025/26](#)

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

Fermanagh and Omagh is one of the most rural areas in Northern Ireland, with over 70% of the population living in rural settings. The unique needs, challenges, and opportunities of rural communities have been carefully considered in the development of the Performance Improvement Plan 2025/26 (PIP).

Section 87 of the Local Government Act Section 87 deals with consultation on improvement duties. Specifically, it outlines how councils must consult with various stakeholders, including the public, when developing and implementing their improvement plans. It ensures that councils involve the public and other relevant parties in shaping their improvement plans. This promotes transparency and accountability, as well as helping councils identify and address issues effectively.

This Plan aims to fulfil the Council's legislation obligation under Section to publish Improvement Objectives. The Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) sets out what we will do in the year ahead to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery and bring about improvement against at least one of the seven improvement areas as stipulated in Section 84 (2) of the Local Government Act: Strategic Effectiveness/ Service quality / Service availability / Fairness / Sustainability / Efficiency / Innovation.

It was agreed in the development of Performance Improvement Plan 2024-2025, to align the Council's IOs for the next four years to the core priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan, '[Our Council, Our Plan 2024-2028](#)'. The four objectives agreed are:

- We will prioritise the Council progressing towards Net Zero.
- We will work in partnership to tackle disadvantage to ensure our people have access to opportunities.
- We will work in partnership to achieve a more inclusive economy and to promote shared prosperity across our district
- We will seek to innovate and advance our governance and digital capabilities to improve the quality of our services and the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council.

The Council has reviewed the progress made to date in its 'Taking Stock Report 2024-2025' and is proposing to continue with its current IOs for 2025/26 to build on the progress already achieved but have refined some of the associated actions. By maintaining a consistent approach, the council aims to ensure the efficient use of resources, enhance service delivery, and support long term approaches to build on economic development, environmental sustainability and community wellbeing.

**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).

☐

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

☐

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

n/a

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

n/a

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

n/a

## 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.**

The Plan aims to reflect the needs of society, in both urban and rural settlements in Fermanagh and Omagh. It is based on a shared and strategic vision, as outlined in the Fermanagh and Omagh 2030 Community Plan, which aims to improve wellbeing for all. The Plan will have the same positive impact on people in rural and urban areas.

The Plan is aligned to the Fermanagh and Omagh 2030 Community Plan and the Council's Corporate Plan 'Our Council , Our Plan 2024-2028' which recognises that the Fermanagh and Omagh District is the largest geographically of all 11 Councils districts in Northern Ireland, covering 3,000km<sup>2</sup>. It also has the smallest population (116,812 in 2021), 70% of whom live outside the two main towns of Enniskillen and Omagh.

The objectives and actions outlined in the Plan are designed to benefit all residents, ensuring equity in service delivery, support, and opportunities regardless of geographic location.

The positive impacts of the Plan for everyone in the district include:

**1. Progressing Towards Net Zero**

- The determination of the Energy Performance Rating (EPC) for Council-owned buildings will lead to improved energy management and efficiency, reducing carbon footprints and contributing to a cleaner environment for all communities.
- Increased household waste recycling and composting will enhance sustainability efforts, benefiting both rural and urban residents by promoting responsible waste management.
- Reducing the Council's fleet emissions by utilising sustainable fuels will contribute to cleaner air and a healthier living environment across the entire district.

**2. Tackling Disadvantage and Ensuring Equal Access to Opportunities**

- Immediate support for people living in poverty will be available to all those in need, irrespective of location, ensuring that vulnerable individuals and families receive necessary assistance.
- Increased participation in physical activity will target groups facing barriers to engagement, including those in rural and urban areas, promoting health and well-being for all.
- Promoting positive attitudes to end violence against women and girls will create a safer and more supportive community throughout the district.

**3. Building a More Inclusive Economy and Promoting Shared Prosperity**

- The development and implementation of a Sub-Regional Economic Action Plan will support economic growth and job creation, benefiting businesses and individuals in both urban centres and rural communities.
- Support for entrepreneurs, micro, and small businesses will foster economic resilience and growth, encouraging business development across the district.
- Efforts to create job opportunities for those furthest from the labour market will ensure inclusive economic participation, reducing unemployment and underemployment across all areas.

**4. Enhancing Governance and Digital Capabilities**

- A 'whole Council approach' to customer service transformation will ensure improved accessibility and responsiveness of Council services for all residents, regardless of location.
- Maximising the capability of the Council's IT system will streamline processes, benefiting employees and enhancing service efficiency.
- Enhancing digital connectivity across Council facilities will provide improved access to technology-enabled services, particularly benefiting those in rural areas who may face connectivity challenges.

Overall, the Plan is structured to benefit all residents of Fermanagh and Omagh District. The Plan ensures that both urban and rural communities experience improved quality of life, enhanced service provision, and increased opportunities for participation and prosperity.

**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 Policy will not impact upon people in rural areas differently than people in urban areas. As mentioned previously the Plan will have the same positive impact on people in rural and urban areas.

**2D. Please indicate (with an 'X') 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

Rural Housing

Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas

X

Education or Training in Rural Areas

X

Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas

Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas

x

Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas

X

Poverty in Rural Areas

X

Deprivation in Rural Areas

X

Rural Crime or Community Safety

X

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.

n/a

### 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

☐

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

☒

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.**

Continuous engagement took place during the 2024-2025 financial year which the development of the PIP 2025/26 draws on. The relevant engagement linked to the IOS for 2025/26 are listed below:

Continuous consultation and engagement carried out by FODC throughout the year which was also considered in the refinement of improvement objectives (IOs) and associated actions are outlined below.

- Labour Market Partnership - Consultation of the new Action Plan developed through discussions with 12 members including rural representation.
- TPI consultation process. 7 One-to-One interviews and 32 attendees at workshops from amongst the business, statutory and CVS sectors including rural representation.
- Call for sites consultation by the Planning Department.
- Age Friendly Strategy Consultation which specifically focused on the impact of social isolation and infrastructure and access to services.
- Anti-Poverty Strategy Development Consultation which considered the impact of rural living on residents and implications such as infrastructure and access to services.

Common themes that were observed include longer travel times to services including to healthcare appointments which was further exacerbated with limited access on occasions to public transport, increasing dependence of private vehicle ownership. Social isolation was a key concern. Another key issue identified was the need to address the unique needs of farmers, small businesses, and tourism providers in economic actions specifically relevant to the Department for the Economy (DfE) Sub Regional Economic Plan.

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

Fermanagh and Omagh is one of the most rural areas in NI, with over 70% of the population living in rural settings. The unique needs, challenges and opportunities of rural communities have been carefully considered in the development of this Performance Improvement Plan.

- Access to services for rural residents must be considered when delivering all interventions
- Remote working and support entrepreneurship through digital hubs and business networks.

**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?**

n/a

**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 Council is committed to developing a Performance Improvement Plan based on the meaningful change the Council hopes to drive forward this year. It aims to improve wellbeing for all including the needs of people living 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 ☐ 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.**

Data and evidence at District Council level – and lower tier geographies - has been analysed to inform and support the strategic direction of the plan. This includes published statistics and internal data from management information systems.

**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.**

n/a

**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:**  
**Kim Weir**

**Position:**  
**Strategic Planning and Performance Manager**

**Department:**  
**Strategic Planning and Performance**

**Signature:**  
**Kim Weir**

**Date:**  
**24/04/2025**

**Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:**  
**Alan Mitchell**

**Position/Grade:**  
**Lead Officer – Data Science and Intelligence | Strategic Planning and Performance (interim)**

**Division/Branch:**  
**Data Science and Intelligence and Strategic Planning and Performance**

  
**Signature:**

**Date: 29/04/2025**