



Rural Policy and Delivery Branch
Ballykelly House
111 Ballykelly Road
Ballykelly
Limavady BT49 9HP
ruralpolicydelivery@daera-ni.gov.uk

Date: 7 July 2021

Dear Consultee,

LAUNCH OF THE CONSULTATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW RURAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

We are writing to invite you to share your views on the new Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland which will launch for an **eight week** formal online public consultation on Wednesday 7 July 2021.

Background

For a number of years DAERA has funded a range of initiatives and projects through the Priority 6¹ element of EU funded NI Rural Development Programme (NIRDP) 2014-2020 (hereinafter Priority 6). The objective of this programme was to deliver better outcomes for people in rural areas and make rural communities more sustainable with funding of around £80 million provided over the course of the programme's lifetime. The cessation of funding via Priority 6 provided an opportunity for the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to embark on a review of rural policy and evaluate what are the key challenges and opportunities that face our rural dwellers. It is clear that new opportunities now exist to proactively respond to rural needs in a flexible more responsive way going forward and this has been magnified further by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A draft Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland has been developed collaboratively over the last two years with a wide range of stakeholders including across Departments,

¹ Priority 6 (promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas) includes LEADER and Rural Tourism aspects of the EU approved Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and any subsequent EU Common Agricultural Policy development post 2020.

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the wider public, private, and voluntary and community sector. The Framework was drafted in the context of the following main strategic drivers:

- The impact of COVID-19 on rural communities, in particular the need for flexibility to respond quickly to emerging needs;
- Green Growth including the need for access to nature whilst ensuring sustainability in a post COVID-19 era;
- Opportunities for new ways of working and funding post priority 6 funding under EU Rural Development Programme;
- The priorities set out in the draft Programme for Government (PfG); and
- The New Decade, New Approach Deal.

The Framework aims to create a sustainable rural community where people want to live, work and be active. The framework focuses on five thematic pillars and associated priorities and will be a living document, flexible enough to respond to emerging rural issues as they happen.

The Department is now seeking views on this Framework from across a much broader range of stakeholders and the general public, to finalise and bring forward a Rural Policy Framework that can meet the current and future needs of rural dwellers.

Some of the challenges identified to date facing rural society will be led by DAERA through support for rural Businesses and Communities. However other issues will require intervention across Government, Local Government and statutory bodies.

Consultation

The consultation will run for an 8 week period from **Wednesday 7 July 2021** and the deadline for responses to this consultation is **Monday 6 September 2021**. All responses should be received by then to ensure they can be fully considered.

The consultation documents are available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rural-policy-framework-northern-ireland-consultation> and the consultation pack includes:

- Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland Consultation Document
- Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland Consultation Document (Abridged Version)
- Rural Policy Framework for Northern Ireland Consultation Response Template
- Equality and Human Rights Screening Template
- Rural Needs Impact Assessment

DAERA would welcome any comments you wish to make on all of the proposals or on those issues that are of particular interest to you in the consultation. If you wish to take part in the consultation, once you have considered the proposals, you should respond

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online, through our survey which can be accessed here:

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/daera-central-services-and-rural-affairs/rural-policy-framework>

The survey is quick and simple to complete, and provides for views focusing on the draft Framework and the Key Priority Interventions.

A copy of the survey is also available for you to download at the following link:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/daera/20.21.042%20Rural%20Policy%20Framework%20NI%20-%20Response%20Template%20final.PDF>

Completed hard copy survey questionnaires and general written responses can be sent to us by:

E-mail at: ruralpolicydelivery@daera-ni.gov.uk

Or

Post at: Rural Policy and Delivery Branch
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Rural Affairs Division
2nd Floor, Ballykelly House
111 Ballykelly Road
Ballykelly
Limavady
BT49 9HP

Responses to this consultation are invited until 23:59 on Monday 6 September 2021.

Virtual Engagement Events

We are providing the opportunity for face-to-face discussion and engagement via online engagement events with members of the Rural Policy and Delivery team within DAERA. At these events, the Rural Policy and Delivery team will provide an overview of the work that we have undertaken to date in the development of the draft Rural Policy Framework and answer any questions you may have in advance of you completing your consultation response via our online survey. We will hold 7 virtual consultation events. The dates and consultation event themes are outlined below:

Virtual Consultation Event	Consultation Event Date
Overview of Rural Policy Framework for NI	Monday 19 July at 7pm
Thematic Pillar 1: Innovation & Entrepreneurship	Tuesday 27 July at 7pm
Thematic Pillar 2: Sustainable Tourism	Wednesday 4 August at 7pm
Thematic Pillar 3: Health and Wellbeing	Thursday 12 August at 7pm
Thematic Pillar 4: Employment	Tuesday 17 August at 7pm
Thematic Pillar 5: Connectivity	Wednesday 25 August at 7pm
Recap of Rural Policy Framework for NI	Tuesday 31 August at 7pm

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NB: Registration for each event will open approximately 1 week before the event. For more information on each event and how to register visit: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rural-policy-framework-northern-ireland-consultation>

Further Information

We look forward to hearing from you and are keen to engage with you. If you want to speak to a member of the Team about the draft Rural Policy Framework, the approach being taken or to request an alternative version of the consultation document or if you or a group you are involved with would like to participate in a Rural Policy and Delivery engagement event, please do let us know. You can contact us by email at: ruralpolicydelivery@daera-ni.gov.uk or if you are unable to access e-mail, you can telephone us on 028 7744 5113. Please note this is a voicemail service and a member of the team will call you back.

Rural Policy and Delivery Branch
Rural Affairs Division
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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