The discussion document and pre-consultation outlines potential future steps in technical detail and explores the associated opportunities and challenges associated with each. The aim of the document is to present a detailed technical overview to stakeholders and offer the opportunity to respond to a series of questions that will help inform subsequent uplifts.



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Appendix 1 - Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

Template

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

Review of energy efficiency requirements and related areas of Building Regulations. Discussion document and pre-consultation on next steps.

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.

The Department is issuing a discussion document and pre-consultation on energy efficiency requirements and related areas of the Building Regulations.

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 Finance.

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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N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

*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 proposed policy options would apply equally to both rural and urban areas. However, rural buildings are more likely to be off the gas-grid and are traditionally more reliant on more carbon intensive fuels (notably oil) compared to urban buildings. It is anticipated that future uplifts to standards would exclude oil boilers from being installed in new buildings. The Department anticipates that LPG fuelled boilers or the use of heat pumps would provide an alternative means of heating in this scenario, but these solutions will have additional capital and running cost implications compared to urban situations with access to mains gas. Therefore, people in rural areas are more likely to be impacted from future uplifts to energy efficiency standards.

There are also likely to be impacts around electricity grid reinforcement, as increased electrification of heat and use of on-site renewables increases. Please see Annex B of the main document for a detailed initial overview of potential running cost and emissions impacts. Additional work will be needed to ascertain relative capital cost impacts and assessments will be undertaken as part of subsequent phases.

Potential changes to energy efficiency standards are expected to apply equally to new and existing buildings in both urban and rural locations. However, rural buildings are likely to be off the gas-grid and are traditionally reliant on more carbon intensive fuels such as oil. It is anticipated that future uplifts to standards would exclude oil boilers from being installed in new buildings. The Department anticipates that LPG fuelled boilers or the use of heat pumps would provide an alternative means of heating in this scenario but these solutions will have additional capital and running cost implications compared to urban situations with access to mains gas.

There are also likely to be impacts around electricity grid reinforcement, as increased electrification of heat and use of on-site renewables increases. Annex B of the main consultation document provides an initial overview of options with running cost and emissions impacts. This policy will assist the transition to less carbon intensive fuels and limit emissions to help meet the UK target of net-zero by 2050. The proposals are intended to improve energy efficiency in buildings, improve energy security and to reduce emissions. This should support rural society over the longer term.

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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.

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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N/A

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.

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The Department has developed a discussion document and pre-consultation in close consultation with its Building Regulations Advisory Committee, which formed a Technical sub-committee for Part F. The sub-committee included expertise from builders and housing developers (social and private sector) operating in both rural and urban situations. It also included district council building control expertise from within and from outside Belfast. The issue and additional costs for various solutions was reviewed over a series of meetings.

Nonetheless it is expected that further work may be needed to assess impacts in areas without access to mains gas and/or where the electricity network may not readily support the new requirements.

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

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.

The principal economic needs related to the Department’s review is affordability, from both a capital and running cost perspective.

From a social perspective, it would be important that the increased capital costs should not unduly limit the capacity of rural communities to carry out building work.

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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The principal issues considered, in terms of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas, are running costs and carbon emissions. Air quality benefits are important in all circumstances, but are not included in this table as they do not directly benefit rural consumers financially.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Scenario | running cost (£) – regulated only using local prices | Carbon emissions (KgCO₂ₑ/yr) |
| Semi-Detached (104m2) | **Scenario 1**  Typical Existing Build  (SAP 60D)- gas boiler | 2,726 | 5069 |
| **Scenario 2**  Current Part F (Gas boiler & 1.51kWp PV System) | 503 | 1360 |
| **Scenario 3**  Current Part F (Oil boiler & 1.95 kWp PV System) | 158 | 1992 |
| **Scenario 4**  Option 1 Notional Dwelling  Gas boiler, improved fabric & PV to 40 | 153 | 1052 |
| **Scenario 5**  Option 2 Notional Dwelling  ASHP & improved fabric | 765 | 388 |
| **Scenario 6**  LPG boiler, very high fabric & PV to 40% roof | 176 | 1052 |
| **Scenario 7**  HVO boiler, very high fabric & PV to 40% roof | 536 | -88 |
| **Scenario 8**  ASHP, very high fabric & PV to 40% roof **[Potential future Notional Dwelling for Phase 4/5?]** | 71 | 5 |

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.

Rural buildings are likely to be off gas-grid and are currently reliant on more carbon intensive fuels such as oil. Expected uplifts would mean that oil boilers can no longer be used in new build situations due to unacceptably high emissions. The Department expects that in these situations it is likely that LPG boilers or heat pumps would the preferred heat source. These considerations are ongoing and are liable to influence subsequent steps.

A future uplift to energy efficiency standards is anticipated for no later than 2026/27 and it is expected that at this point all new-build homes would be fitted with low carbon forms of heating (i.e. heat pumps or equivalent). Under this scenario, location would be less influential.

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:

Ronan Casey

Position/Grade:

SPTO

Division/Branch

Building Standards Branch

Signature:

Date:

27 June 2023

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:

John Burke

Position/Grade:

PPTO

Division/Branch:

Building Standards Branch

Signature:

![A close-up of a signature

Description automatically generated with medium confidence]()

Date:

28 June 2023

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**

N/A

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.