

Appendix I - 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.

Department of Finance

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.

The Department is consulting on proposed amendments to technical booklet guidance to Part F (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.

1C. Please indicate 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>
Designing 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.

If adopted, the proposal will result in amended technical booklet guidance entitled:
 Technical Booklet F1 – Conservation of fuel and power in dwellings – 2021
 Technical Booklet F2 – Conservation of fuel and power in buildings other than dwellings - 2021

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

The policy proposes uplifts to the energy efficiency requirements for new buildings, providing a more robust standard for compliance with regulation 43B (Nearly zero-energy requirements for new buildings).

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 uplifted guidance will apply equally to new buildings being erected in both urban and rural locations. Rural buildings are likely to be off the gas-grid and consequently reliant on more carbon intensive fuels such as oil. The new policy will have a minor impact on buildings fuelled with more carbon intensive fuels. These will have to provide a greater degree of improvement to demonstrate the percentage 'betterment' on the current emissions requirements that the new policy will require. A likely outcome is that a small, additional amount of renewable generating technologies such as photovoltaics, would be applied where the more carbon intensive fuels are proposed at an estimated £300 of additional capital cost for a typical oil-fuelled semi-detached home, under the preferred option. These capital (capex) cost impacts are considered acceptable in the overall context of construction costs and the carbon reductions achieved but should normally pay back over the lifetime of the building. This interim step will also help mitigate further similar future adjustments, which may be required to take full account of the greater carbon intensity of oil and similar fuels. 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.

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 proposed policy will apply equally to both rural and urban areas. However, rural buildings are more likely to be off the gas-grid and reliant on more carbon intensive fuels (notably oil) compared to urban buildings. Therefore, people in rural areas are more likely to be impacted from this, with additional capex as noted at 2B and 4A.

However, there will also be proportionately greater benefits, as additional savings will accrue (See table in section 4A). The NIHE House Condition Survey (NIHE, 2016) notes higher levels of unfit dwellings in rural locations so consequential benefits are likely to be even greater in rural areas. This would extend to both monetised (excluding air quality, which is a less significant problem in rural areas) and non-monetised benefits noted in the Consultation Impact Assessment.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rural Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural Housing	<input checked="" 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"/>
Health or Social Care Services 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agri-Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please state)	<input type="text"/>

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	<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 Department has developed the proposals 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 12 meetings from late 2019-present with no objections raised in relation to rurality.

It was not believed proportionate to conduct further exercises to assess the social and economic needs as:

- i) the impact of the measures is likely to be minimal in relation to overall construction costs;
- ii) rural construction costs are typically considered to be less than urban areas, so the costs of the additional measures should not necessarily make a building more expensive to build than in an urban area, in absolute terms;
- iii) the existing regime is (by some degree) the most fuel neutral of all the administrations (including RoI) in that NI target requirements are adjusted upwards to permit more emissions when more carbon intensive fuels are used. It is as a result of this, that the percentage 'betterment' will subsequently increase the requirements on the more carbon intensive situations, to a minor degree;
- iv) the proposals are intended to improve energy efficiency in buildings and to reduce emissions. This should support rural society over the longer term.

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 principal issues considered, in terms of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas, are the capital costs and the long-term energy savings benefits. Carbon and air quality benefits are important in all circumstances, but are not included in this table as they do not directly benefit rural consumers financially.

	Option	extra capex cost (£) for oil/ (LPG in flats) vs gas homes	beneficial cost savings/yr (rural oil vs urban gas dwelling) (£)
Mid-terrace (104m ²)	Option 2	£105	£24
	Option 3	£385	£42
Semi-D or end-terrace (104m ²)	Option 2	£175	£37
	Option 3	£308	£21
Detached (190m ²)	Option 2	£315	£107
	Option 3	£532	£128
Flats (64m ²)	Both options	£0	£7 (LPG)

The initial impact costs should be recovered by additional savings where compared to a gas powered equivalent construction. The initial developer may be liable for the capital expenditure costs, with the benefits going to the occupier of the dwelling over the longer term. Overall, however a good rate of social return accrues through energy savings.

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.

Rural buildings are likely to be off gas-grid and reliant on more carbon intensive fuels. The current methodologies adjust for this and raise the target carbon dioxide emission rate where the more carbon intensive fuel is proposed, to the extent that an oil fuelled home is currently likely to be able to be built to a standard similar to a gas fuelled home. This is unlike other regions, where the factors would require a more onerous specification to take account of the increased carbon content of the fuel.

The proposals amend the previous local policy very slightly in that the buildings which would have been permitted to have higher emissions now have to make a larger saving to achieve the percentage betterment factor required. This is a modest adjustment and the design and level of the proposals ensures a reasonable pay back should generate an overall net benefit at the proposed levels.

The issue of a fuel-neutral approach will need to be further confronted in future uplifts, if we are to incentivise use of less carbon intensive fuels and if adopting the new software and methodologies currently under development by the UK Government. The proposed uplift begins to take this on board and balances carbon accounting with rural needs.

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:	Violeta Morosan
Position/Grade:	SPTO
Division/Branch	Building Standards Branch
Signature:	
Date:	23 rd August 2021
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	John Burke
Position/Grade:	PPTO
Division/Branch:	Building Standards Branch
Signature:	
Date:	23 rd August 2021