RURAL NEEDS IMPACT ASSESSMENT (RNIA)

Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

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

1A. Name of Public Authority
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough 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
This is the first ABC Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan developed in response to our ageing population to promote physical and social environments that support healthy and active ageing and a good quality of life for older people in the Borough.

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

	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Developing a	Policy		Strategy	x	Plan	
Adopting a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Implementing a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Revising a	Policy		Strategy		Plan	
Designing a Public Service						
Delivering a Public Service						

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
ABC Age Friendly Strategy & 3 Year Action Plan

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

Vision:
People in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area are valued regardless of age and are supported to age well and with confidence

Outcomes	How we might achieve this
Outcome 1: As we get older, we enjoy good physical and mental health	Scope, and collaborate to promote, physical activity
	Scope and collaborate to promote good mental health and wellbeing
	Promote opportunities among Alliance members and allied organisations for accessing funds, training and support to deliver projects and activities which meet the needs of older people
Outcome 2: As we get older, we participate meaningfully in community life	Map existing activities and services and activities (by WHO age-friendly domains) and Co-design a mechanism/s to publish and maintain the information, learning from other areas' experiences.
	Identify gaps in activities, services and communication channels and work together to improve
	Work to ensure that individuals know where to go to get advice, and information on social activities and training and learning opportunities
	Establish a sustainable network of providers and community navigators, social prescribers and similar individuals to enable referrals and partnership working in the delivery of a range of services.
	Support and promote the work of the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Loneliness Network, to encourage people to connect with each other
	Support and promote the work of the ABC Intergenerational Network to help increase capacity and raise awareness of the benefits of intergenerational practice
	Improve the experience of accessing services by those who are older by promoting dementia-awareness training for all front-of-house staff in Alliance partners
	Build understanding and commitment to provide age-friendly environments and services among providers such as banks, dentists and shops.
	Build understanding and commitment among care homes and their local communities to enable residents to continue to participate in community life
Outcome 3: As we get older, we are heard, valued and respected	Identify and apply suitable good practice guidelines for engagement of older people to ensure they are encouraged and enabled to influence decision making and to receive feedback on their contributions.
	Connect older people to influencing structures they can join and the decisions they can influence, eg. Older peoples Networks, Patient & Client Council, Pensioners Parliament
	Consider use of Participatory Budgeting initiative to support engagement activities
	Carry out an age-friendly survey every 3 years and share results widely including with targeted dissemination for older residents
	Explore options for a reference forum of people over 50 to be engaged in dialogue and consulted on plans, policies and strategies that affect them
	Ensure that the needs and aspirations of older people are consistently considered by identifying (and training where appropriate) champions for older people
	Secure commitment of Alliance partners to assess the age-friendliness of their facilities, public spaces such as parks, town centres and community and leisure centres, assessing their walkability and amenities such as seats and toilets. Where appropriate, work in partnership to take action to address issues.

	Support and build capacity of ABC Seniors Network to help the group represent the voice of older people in the Borough.
Outcome 4: As we get older, we are independent and involved in decisions that affect us	Connect our older people to services that will enable them to live independently for longer in their own homes
	Connect our older people to NIHE and Housing Associations to influence the development of appropriate housing options for different ages and needs
	Explore partnership initiatives to expose and support older people to access public and community transport
	Connect older people and prospective volunteers to training and support to improve digital inclusion of older people
Outcome 5: As we get older, we are well informed about things that matter to us	Agree a communications plan for Age-friendly Alliance members and supporters to publicly demonstrate their commitment to age friendly and to enable promotion of actions under outcomes 1 to 4
	Develop a mechanism to access a variety of communications platforms to disseminate agreed health and wellbeing and other relevant messages on behalf of the Age-friendly Alliance
	Develop a communications campaign which challenges the stereotypes of growing older

Cross-cutting themes:
- Inclusive and accessible - We are all growing older, but for some people, this will be more challenging. We will consider the different wants, needs and abilities of all our residents as they get older. And we will take practical steps to ensure that those most at risk of missing out can benefit in full.
- Collaborative - Age-friendly is about partnership or working better together. We will pool the collective influence, resources and expertise of the Age-friendly Alliance so that our work has a bigger impact for the people we want to benefit.
- Proactive - We will work together to identify new issues – and opportunities – and come up with solutions.
- Meaningful engagement -The Age-friendly strategy and action plan is based on what local people told us matters most in their lives. We are committed to continuing to engage with people in a meaningful way so that what they say helps shape how we deliver the actions in this action plan.

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).	x
Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).	
A definition of 'rural' is not applicable.	

Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used.

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	x	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 vision of the age friendly strategy and action plan is that all people in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area are valued regardless of age and are supported to age well and with confidence. The strategy is not exclusive to people in rural areas but will make a positive impact to them.

It will address barriers to services and community support and enhance targeting, communication and coordination of needs and referral pathways.

It will also address issues in regards to digital inclusion, rural transport, loneliness and social isolation, housing options all which impact on people living in rural areas.

There will also be actions to promote the uptake on mental health programmes including for those in rural hard to reach areas.

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.

Some of the issues that have come out of the Age Friendly Consultation that are more likely to impact on rural areas are:

- Digital Inclusion
- Transport Issues
- Loneliness and isolation
- Access to services
- Mental Health
- Community support and health services

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	
Rural Tourism	
Rural Housing	
Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas	
Education or Training in Rural Areas	
Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas	x
Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas	x
Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas	x
Poverty in Rural Areas	
Deprivation in Rural Areas	
Rural Crime or Community Safety	
Rural Development	
Agri-Environment	
Other (Please state)	

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	x	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	x	Published Statistics	X
Consultation with Other Organisations	x	Research Papers	
Surveys or Questionnaires	x	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.

Consultation Process

People we spoke to included a good range of people living in the city, towns, villages and countryside; people living alone, with family or in residential care; and people of different ages, from their early fifties to their late nineties.

- 593 age friendly surveys were completed from July 22 – August 22. (283 of which were hard copies)
- A wide representation of all age groups 50+ up to people aged 85 and over
- 30% of respondents were male with 68% females giving their views.
- 49% of respondents lived in the countryside or village with 49% stating they lived in a town or city.
- More in-depth interviews with over 50 older people
- 5 focus groups with rural older peoples groups, BME groups and Mens Sheds

- 4 workshops with age friendly alliance members

Research

Desk research was carried out into what has worked well in age-friendly communities, we also asked our Age-friendly Alliance partners to share good examples of their work, and of work they have come across elsewhere. These projects are reflected in the strategy and action plan.

WHO Age Friendly Communities Framework

Stats
- Census 2011 – NISRA
- Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 - NISRA

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

Results from the 2011 Census show that just over half of the borough's population (51%) lived in urban areas while just under half (49%) lived in rural areas. This is based on the NISRA default urban/rural settlement classification where settlements with a population greater than or equal to 5,000 are classified as urban while those with a population less than 5,000 are classified as rural. This compares to 63% urban and 37% rural for Northern Ireland overall. Craigavon Urban Area (which includes Central Craigavon, Lurgan and Portadown), Banbridge, Armagh and Dromore are the four urban areas within the borough, all other settlements are classified as rural according to the NISRA default classification.

The NI Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2017 provides information on seven distinct types of deprivation, known as domains, along with an overall multiple deprivation measure (MDM). Results are available for the 890 Super Output Areas in Northern Ireland, ranked from 1 most deprived to 890 least deprived.

The Access to Services Domain which measures the extent to which people have poor physical and online access to key services is particularly relevant to rural areas. The borough has nine SOAs (10% of the total 87 SOAs in the borough) in the top 100 most deprived in Northern Ireland on the Access to Services Domain, each of which are defined as rural on the NISRA default classification. Twenty SOAs in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough (23% of the total 87 SOAs in the borough) are in the top 20% most deprived SOAs in Northern Ireland in terms of Access to Services. All twenty are classified as rural. The purpose of the Income Deprivation Domain is to identify the proportion of the population on low income. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough has nine SOAs (10% of the total 87 SOAs in the borough) in the top 100 most deprived in Northern Ireland on the Income Deprivation Domain. Three of these nine are rural areas according to the NISRA default classification.

What matters most to people here as they grow older in the ABC area

Social participation

Participation in culture, arts and sport tends to decrease with age: 73 per cent of people aged 65 and over took part in 2020/21 compared to 96 per cent of those aged 25 to 34.[i] But people we surveyed told us they wanted more and a greater variety of things to do. They also felt that activity that is already happening could be promoted better.

Health

In the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon area, people aged 50 and over may be less likely to rate

their health as good or very good than the population in general.[ii] They also ranked their life satisfaction now as 7.1 out of 10 compared to 7.9 for the whole Northern Ireland population in 2019/20.[iii] This is likely to be at least in part because of Covid-19.

Loneliness and isolation were already issues, but they were made worse by the pandemic. Nearly a third of people we surveyed told us that they often felt lonely, and half told us they sometimes felt lonely.

Housing

Most people we spoke to could afford to keep their home warm and pay their household bills.[iv] But housing was a major concern, particularly among those planning for or recently retired. Homes may be too large, have stairs or not be easily adaptable for future needs. Others wanted to understand their long-term care options so they could plan for later life.

Outdoor spaces and buildings

Many people we spoke to felt that the public realm was not accessible as they grew older. They would like to see pavements better maintained to prevent slips, trips and falls; more road crossings; and more seating and public toilets.

Transport

Most older people still drive, and they worry that they will lose their independence if they have to stop. 43 per cent had never used public transport, although others recognised it as a lifeline to help them stay connected.[v]

Information and inclusion

Just over half the people we surveyed don't know or aren't sure where to go to get advice about their rights. Just over a third don't find that information they get from the council and other government organisations is easy to understand. And only 16 per cent of respondents felt that their opinion is valued by government.

Older people have a wealth of experience and expertise to offer, and they want to be engaged more in decision making – by government, the health service and others – so that policies and services make a real difference in their lives.

3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?

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.

Digital Inclusion

Transport Issues

Loneliness and isolation

Access to services

Mental health

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	x	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.

Digital Inclusion - Connect older people and prospective volunteers to training and support to improve digital inclusion of older people

Transport Issues - Explore partnership initiatives to expose and support older people to access public and community transport

Loneliness and isolation - Support and promote the work of the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Loneliness Network, to encourage people to connect with each other

Access to services:

Map existing activities and services

Work to ensure that individuals know where to go to get advice, and information on social activities and training and learning opportunities

Connect our older people to services that will enable them to live independently for longer in their own

homes

Mental health

Action Plan Scope and collaborate to promote good mental health and wellbeing

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.

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.	X

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:	Stephanie Rock
Position/Grade:	Age Friendly Officer
Department/Directorate	EH
Signature:	S.Rock
Date:	23/3/22
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	
Position/Grade:	
Department/Directorate	
Signature:	
Date:	