

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 Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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.

Regulations made under the Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to provide additional animal welfare protections to Northern Ireland's puppies and kittens which are intended to be sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to new owners.

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 checked="" 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 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.

Introduction of regulations made under the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011, to provide additional animal welfare protections to Northern Ireland's puppies and kittens which are intended to be sold, given away, or otherwise transferred to new owners.

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

The aim of the proposed policy is to introduce a registration requirement for persons who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer ownership to new owners, puppies and kittens (i.e. canines and felines aged less than 6 months).

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.

Any person who intends to sell, give away, or otherwise exchange the ownership of puppies and kittens (i.e. canines and felines aged less than 6 months), will first be required to apply to their local council to be registered on a Register of Sellers and Suppliers of puppies and kittens. This will include people who operate as a business, and those who operate in a non-business capacity. He/she will be required to submit an application form, pay the required fee, and supply specified details, such as the address the animals were born at, and will be sold from. Upon granting of registration, he/she will be entered onto the councils Register of Sellers and Suppliers of puppies and kittens, and will required to adhere to specified conditions such as showing the puppies and kittens to prospective buyers, and rules about sales. Rules relating to sales made include, the registered person cannot sell, give away, or otherwise exchange the ownership of puppies and kittens he/she did not breed himself at the registered address; he/she cannot sell puppies and kittens that are aged under 8 weeks; and the sale of any puppy and kitten must be completed in the presence of the purchaser on the premises. Registration is valid for one year.

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.

N/A. The policy will impact on people in rural areas in the same way as it will impact on people in urban areas.

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 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 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.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).			<input checked="" 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.

The Department does not hold any information regarding location of Northern Ireland's licenced dog breeding establishments, nor does it hold information about location of citizens who sell, give away, or otherwise transfer the ownership of puppies and kittens. The USPCA Puppy Dog Fortunes, report on the puppy trade in Northern Ireland (<https://www.uspca.co.uk/media/uploads/uspca-puppy-dog-fortunes.pdf>) reports that there are at least 45 licensed breeders across Northern Ireland, and that there are illegal/unlicensed breeding establishments across both rural areas and urban areas. The Department has also carried out desktop research on online advertisements regarding puppies for sale. Research indicates advertisements relate to areas across NI, ranging from large urban areas, smaller towns, and rural areas alike.

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

The social and economic needs of people in rural areas in relation to this policy do not differ from the social and economic needs of people from urban areas.

IRO sellers and suppliers, all people will be required to apply to their local council, and their details will be held in a public-facing register, identifying them as a registered seller/supplier of puppies and kittens.

IRO new owners, at present, people who wish to buy/obtain a new puppy or kitten are susceptible to sellers/suppliers operating in an illegal/black-market capacity. The new owners are left dealing with sick animals and high vet fees arising from dealing with illnesses and complications which occur due to the poor conditions that the animals were bred in. This is NI-wide, and the Department is not aware of different needs of people in rural areas.

The Department will consider any evidence of a particular need of people in rural areas that may be brought to its attention during the public consultation process.

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?

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 social and economic needs of people in rural areas in relation to this policy do not differ from the social and economic needs of the people from urban 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.

N/A

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.

No rural needs have been identified. The Department will take account of any needs that might be identified during public consultation.

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:	Brenda Kelly
Position/Grade:	DP
Division/Branch	Animal Welfare and Dog Control Policy Branch
Signature:	B KELLY
Date:	24 April 2025
Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:	NEAL GARTLAND
Position/Grade:	GRADE 5
Division/Branch:	AHWPDP
Signature:	N GARTLAND
Date:	15 MAY 2025