



Department for
Regional Development
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Regional Development Strategy

RDS
2035

Equality Impact Assessment

Building a Better Future



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Executive Summary

The revised Regional Development Strategy (RDS) replaces the RDS that was published in 2001 and amended in 2008. A public consultation was carried on the draft revised RDS and the draft EQIA from 6 January 2011 to 31 March 2011. No responses were received in respect of the draft EQIA and therefore no amendments to the findings or conclusions have been made.

The final 10 year review of the RDS contains 12 Regional Guidance and 15 Spatial Framework Guidance under the headings of:

- Economy
- Society
- Environment
- The Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast
- A North West Region centred on Londonderry
- Hubs and Clusters of Hubs
- The rural area
- Gateways and corridors

The Guidance aims to provide long-term policy directions, from a strategic spatial perspective. The Strategy will inform and support the Programme for Government (PfG), Budget and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI). It does not provide a commitment to resources for any specific project.

The policies and projects which deliver the high level objectives of the RDS will be subject to further equality screening by other government departments and public bodies responsible for delivery.

As a high level strategy which applies to all people in Northern Ireland consideration was given during development of the strategy to potential impacts on all Section 75 Groups within the strategic guidance.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

Religious Belief

Several of the Strategic Guidance are location specific and therefore could impact on a greater proportion of one community background because of where they live. However, the RDS has focused guidance covering the whole of Northern Ireland and the overall impact is positive for people of all religious beliefs.

Political Opinion

There has been an historical tendency for voting preferences in Northern Ireland to closely reflect the religious affiliations of the population. This implies that those issues and differentials identified in relation to persons of different religion may also impact on persons of different political opinion. This being the case the comments above for religious belief are considered to also apply to political opinion.

Gender

The implementation of the revised RDS will have a positive impact on both males and females. Improvements in the transport system will impact particularly positively on women, as they are currently greater users of public transport than men. Promoting economic development opportunities will be positive for both men and women. There will be some positive impact on women in part-time work because of additional employment opportunities but the extent of this will be determined by affordable childcare and flexibility to care for older dependents.

Age

Implementation of the revised RDS has the potential to impact positively on people of all ages, for various reasons. Improving the local transport in rural areas will particularly impact on older people. Improving public transport will particularly impact on people under 25 who are key users of public transport.

People with Disabilities

Investing in the transport infrastructure will benefit all persons with or without a disability. However, enhanced provision of public transport, including improved access and the

enhancement of services, particularly at community level is likely to have a more positive impact on persons with a disability.

Marital Status

Investing in public transport will impact positively on those who are single as they are significantly more likely to use public transport than any other group. However, it is likely that this differential is linked to age as a large proportion of those who are single and never married are likely to be aged under 25.

People with Dependents

No differential impacts on people with and without dependents have been identified. For this reason it is anticipated that the revised RDS will have a positive impact on people regardless of whether or not they have dependents.

Race

Reflecting the differentials outlined previously, Irish Travellers are at greater risk of poverty, multiple deprivation and exclusion. The RDS guidance seeks to address the barriers to employment, within communities. It is anticipated, therefore, that the guidance will have a positive impact on Irish Travellers. There is no evidence of an adverse impact on other persons of different racial group.

Sexual Orientation

No differential impacts on people of different sexual orientation have been identified. For this reason it is anticipated that the revised RDS will have a positive impact on people, regardless of their sexual orientation.

An integrated transport system can help to promote a stronger more cohesive community.

SUMMARY

This EQIA has considered the potential for differential impacts on the 9 categories set out in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 against the strategic guidance. This assessment has concluded that the revised RDS will positively impact on all Section 75 categories.

Good Relations

There are key positive impacts for good relations within the guidance on Society, Economy, Londonderry and Belfast. This is due to the promotion of working together to share services and facilities and community integration. RG6 in particular encourages communities to work together in a co-ordinated approach towards urban renewal and regeneration and to achieve balanced communities. In addition a better integrated transport system can help to promote a stronger more cohesive community.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Section outlines the background to the review of the RDS and the purpose of this document.

Equality of Opportunity

1.2 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires the Department for Regional Development (DRD) in carrying out its functions relating to Northern Ireland to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, DRD must also have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

1.4 The Department is fully committed to complying with the statutory requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995) (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (Northern Ireland) Order 2006), the DRD is required when carrying out its functions to have due regard to the need to:

- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life ('the disability duties').

1.6 This document presents the findings of an EQIA on the 10 year review of the RDS.

1.7 It has been carried out in accordance with the guidance set down by the

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland in its Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment.

1.8 This EQIA considers the impact that the final 10 year review of the RDS may have for the Section 75 Groupings.

2.0 Background

2.1 The RDS is the spatial strategy of the Executive. The Strategy is critically important to the future development for the whole community. It seeks to balance the needs of a resilient, outward looking, more dynamic economy whilst preserving and sustaining that essential quality of life. It provides a framework within which choices can be made on key decisions about the infrastructural development of Northern Ireland.

2.2 The final 10 year review of the RDS replaces the RDS that was published in 2001 and amended in 2008.

2.3 The Strategy contains Regional Guidance and Spatial Framework Guidance. They aim to provide long-term policy directions, from a strategic spatial perspective. The Strategy will inform and support the Programme for Government (PfG), Budget and Investment Strategy NI (ISNI).

2.4 The RDS aims are set out below:

- **Support strong, sustainable growth for the benefit of all parts of Northern Ireland**

Strong economies, regionally and locally, recognise that urban and rural areas are dependent on each other. The ability to sustain and grow the economy across the Region, within both urban and rural areas, relies upon our ability to collaborate and develop a co-ordinated approach including the prioritisation of investment.

- **Strengthen Belfast as the regional economic driver and Londonderry as the principal city of the North West**

Successful regions have strong and vibrant cities at their core. Belfast drives much of the economic growth and shares its wealth across the Region. Londonderry, as the regional capital of the North West, has the capacity and potential for strong economic growth.

- **Support our towns, villages and rural communities to maximise their potential**

Rural areas contain many unique assets that have been under-developed. There are real opportunities to maximise the potential of rural communities and areas. Towns and villages have a key role in supporting the Region.

- **Promote development which improves the health and wellbeing of communities**

A healthy community is better able to take advantage of the economic, social and

environmental opportunities which are open to it. Improved health and wellbeing is derived not only from easy access to appropriate services and facilities, although this is important, but also from the creation of a strong economy set within a safe and attractive environment. The provision of more social and affordable housing also helps to build strong communities.

- **Improve connectivity to enhance the movement of people, goods, energy and information between places**

Connectivity improvements will support the network of towns and their associated hinterlands. Neighbouring towns support each other and their hinterlands in the provision of services. Good linkages between towns and rural areas for access to services and business opportunities are vital.

- **Protect and enhance the environment for its own sake**

Protecting the environment is essential for the quality of life of current and future generations. The Region's environment is one of its greatest assets, with its stunning landscapes, an outstanding coastline, a complex variety of wildlife and a rich built and cultural heritage for the eco systems services it provides, and its sense of place and history for all.

- **Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change**

It is recognised that climate change is one of the most serious problems facing the world. We are all contributors to global warming and need to play our part to reduce and offset our impact on the environment. Reducing harmful carbon dioxide emissions is of great importance and by reducing our carbon footprint can reduce the threat of climate change. Therefore, where it is necessary to use resources, it should be done in sustainable ways. Waste needs to be reduced, reused and recycled and everyone should contribute to reducing the Region's environmental footprint.

- **Strengthen links between north and south, east and west, with Europe and the rest of the world**

There is already collaboration on a north/south basis promoting the development of gateways and cross border connections. Opportunities exist to further develop this collaboration. East/West linkages are also being developed. In a rapidly expanding and interdependent global marketplace opportunities exist to compete and trade with Europe and the rest of the world. In order to achieve this accessibility, communications, education and employability within the population need to improve.

2.5 The final 10 year review of the RDS contains 12 Regional Guidance and 15 Spatial Framework Guidance under the headings of:

- Economy
- Society
- Environment
- The Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast
- A North West Region centred on Londonderry
- Hubs and Clusters of Hubs
- The rural area
- Gateways and corridors

2.6 Under the Strategic Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 Government Departments are required to have regard to the Regional Development Strategy in exercising any development function. It will be the responsibility of Departments to carry out EQIAs in accordance with statutory requirements.

2.7 Developing policy also means thinking carefully across overarching policy issues. We have taken into account equality and Lifetime Opportunities, the government's Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland. Separate assessments are being conducted for the environment, health and rural impacts. The policies and projects which deliver the high level objectives of the RDS will be subject to further equality screening by other government departments and public bodies responsible for delivery.

Engagement with key groups

2.8 The RDS is cross-cutting. We have therefore been actively involved with a number of key groups to assist in the Review.

- **External Working Group**

This Group ensured that the work was carried out in a robust and open manner. The group represented business, trade unions, local government, the environment, rural development, house builders, academia, the planning profession, industry and investment and a member of the Department's Equality Forum.

- **The Regional Development Committee(RDC)**

The RDC provided important inputs throughout the process in developing the revised draft strategy.

- **Ministerial Sub Group**

Given the cross-cutting nature of the Strategy an Executive Sub-Group of Departmental Ministers chaired by the DRD Minister was established.

- **Inter Department Steering Group**

This Group is a working group of senior officials from all Government Departments.

- **Sub Regional Workshops**

Pre consultation workshops were held in November and early December 2008 in 11 locations across the Region. The purpose of the workshops was to share with stakeholders the work that had been done to date in reviewing the Strategy and to listen to views and ideas about specific areas.

- **Shaping the Strategy**

2.9 The information gathered from across government departments has helped build the linkages with other key government policies on the economy, sustainability, neighbourhood renewal, rural development and transport.

2.10 A public consultation on the draft strategy was carried out for a three month period from 6 January 2011 until 31 March 2011. A total of 129 written responses were received and analysed to inform preparation of the final strategy and this final EQIA.

2.11 Eleven public meetings, a mixture of morning, afternoon and evening, were held during the public consultation period. In addition, the Department met with a number of stakeholders during the consultation period to provide further clarification of the strategy proposals.

3.0 Consideration of Available Data and Research

3.1 We looked at the following quantitative and qualitative sources of data:

- Information from a series of pre-consultation workshops.
- Information from the public consultation responses.
- Information from the stakeholder meetings during the public consultation.
- Information from the External Working Group.
- Northern Ireland Census 2001 – Key Settlements Report.
- The Draft Equality Impact Assessment of the Programme for Government 2008-2011.
- The Equality Impact Assessment of the Accessible Transport Strategy 2005.
- Translink Customer Survey – Autumn 2008.
- 2008 Labour Force Survey.
- 2007/08 School Leavers Survey.
- Department of Education (DENI) statistics on the Indicators of Traveller Education.
- Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment (DETI) Quarterly Labour Force Survey April 2007 - June 2007.
- 2010 Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM)
- NI Travel Survey 2006 – 2008
- Northern Ireland Survey of People with Activity Limitations & Disabilities (NISALD) – 2007
- Continuous Household Survey 2009-10

3.2 Pre-Consultation Workshops

Eleven pre-consultation workshops were held throughout Northern Ireland in November and early December 2008. The purpose of the workshops was to share with stakeholders the work that had been done to date in reviewing the Strategy and to listen to their views and ideas about their specific areas.

3.3 Approximately 640 invitation letters were issued to local government, public, private and voluntary/community sector. All MLAs were invited. Advertisements were placed

in the main daily and weekly papers. A total of 274 people from all sectors attended the workshops.

3.4 After a location specific presentation the groups were asked to consider 5 questions. One of these questions was to identify equality issues. The question and summary of feedback from each location are detailed below.

Pre Consultation Workshops Question:

Are there any particular equality or health issues in your area that need to be considered?

Feedback

Antrim Borough Council and Newtownabbey Borough Council

- Encourage greater equality of opportunity in education as a high percentage of Catholic students are transported to Magherafelt due to school closure. Potential for integrated school in the area.
- Need to build sustainable communities.
- Needs of ethnic minorities.

Ballymena Borough Council, Larne Borough Council and Carrickfergus Borough Council

- Lack of access to health services with poor public transport to main hospitals at Mid-Antrim and Coleraine.
- Natural typography makes access to hospitals difficult resulting in longer response times of ambulances.
- Development of more neutral/shared space.
- Still exists pockets of deprivation – socio-economic, education, access to services.

Omagh District Council and Fermanagh District Council

- Access to specialised health services.
- Access to basic health services (A & E).
- Ageing population.
- Rural isolation.

- Lack of social housing.
- Government policies urban orientated and not properly rural proofed.
- Good community relations but invisible walls.
- Rural schools under threat.
- Too cost focused and not enough on value.

Lisburn City Council and Castlereagh Borough Council

- Issues with closure of services in Lagan Valley Hospital.
- Lot of older people.
- Accessible transport for older people and rural areas.
- Healthcare across boundaries.
- Access to education.
- Need for social housing for singles and older people.

Magherafelt District council, Cookstown District Council and Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council

- Rural NeedsHousing
- Social housing
- Rural towns and villages dying
- Health
- Lack of acute services
- Lower life expectancy
- Isolation, particularly those with disabilities with lack of access of health services
- Health Impact Assessment for the Area under the RDS

Newry and Mourne District Council and Down Borough Council

- Isolation of elderly in rural areas impacting on health.
- Hospital facilities.
- Closure of rural schools and facilities.

North Down Borough Council and Ards Borough Council

- Bamford Report on mental health.
- Paramilitary influence still exists.
- Current health provision not meeting areas needs.
- TSN policy of InvestNI is ineffective.
- Some very deprived pockets – housing quality.
- Access to services in rural Ards peninsula poor.
- Out of hours GP service poor.
- Pockets of ageing population with associated care needs.

Armagh City and District Council, Banbridge District Council and Craigavon Borough Council

- Area hospital.
- Good leisure facilities – preventative care.
- Problems of flags and emblems.
- Growth of proportion of pensioners – protect their needs with adequate funding/ facilities.
- Physical barriers – religion and political opinion.
- Suicides – young males.
- Good health services but need to be more proactive.

Coleraine Borough Council, Ballymoney Borough Council, Limavady Borough Council and Moyle District Council

- Poor public transport makes accessing health clinics and hospitals very difficult in a predominantly rural area.
- Isolation of the elderly due to the high number of unoccupied second homes. Can include disabled residents.
- Limited facilities at Causeway Hospital which does not offer the specialist services required by an aging population eg cancer and renal unit. Residents need to travel to Londonderry, Belfast or Antrim for specialist care.
- Equality of opportunity for economic development not as good in this area due to disproportionate amount of public investment.

Belfast City Council

- Pockets of social exclusion, tribalism and racism within a segregated society.
- High level of poverty which impacts on health.
- High level of unemployment in some areas which can impact on social housing.
- An aging population impacts on health.
- Current services and infrastructure are designed for car owners.
- Invest in community based health.
- Improve social-community agenda.
- Option for electronic participation in government policy development by citizens throughout the process rather than merely organised pre and post consultation exercises.
- Air quality and the quality of the environment.

Derry City and Strabane District Council

- Health provision.
- Access to NHS dental services
- Regional health authority – cross border basis.
- Lone parent opportunities and support.
- Fuel poverty.
- Lack of female representation (some dispute over this).
- Perception in terms of religion to jobs and education.

3.5 The draft EQIA asked the following questions:

- Is there any other relevant qualitative or quantitative information you consider should have been taken into account in the analysis of equality impacts?
- Do you have any general comments on the aspects of equality covered in this draft assessment?
- Are there any other issues that have not been addressed? If so, what are they?

3.6 A copy of the Draft EQIA was issued to the consultees listed in Appendix D and there were no responses.

3.7 Of the 129 responses to the public consultation there were no comments made in relation to the EQIA.

4.0 Assessment of Impacts

4.1 The RDS recognises the major challenge of providing and sustaining a high quality of life for all its citizens in the 21st Century and has a role in helping resources and services be better targeted to address disadvantage. As already mentioned, the RDS contains Regional Guidance and Spatial Framework Guidance and long term policy directions. It does not provide a commitment to resources for any specific project.

4.2 The policies and projects which deliver the high level objectives of the RDS will be subject to further equality screening by other government departments and public bodies responsible for delivery.

4.3 As a high level strategy which applies to all people in Northern Ireland consideration was given to potential impacts on all the Section 75 Groups and in respect of good relations against the strategic guidance during development of the Strategy.

4.4 The assessment considered the 9 Section 75 categories against the Regional Guidance and the Spatial Framework Guidance which is grouped under the following headings:

- Economy
- Society
- Environment
- The Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast
- A North West Region centred on Londonderry
- Hubs and Clusters of Hubs
- The rural area
- Gateways and corridors

4.5 There are 12 Regional Guidance (RG) and 15 Spatial Framework Guidance (SFG) within the draft Strategy and for ease of reference this assessment has listed them from RG1-RG12 and SFG1-SFG15. The guidance, which is listed below, is explained first, the equality issues are then discussed and an assessment made of the equality and good relations impacts.

REGIONAL GUIDANCE

The Economy (RG1-5)

To underpin economic growth, Northern Ireland needs a modern and sustainable economic infrastructure. Guidance in this section is aimed at ensuring people can connect with a range of facilities and services and how they get to places of work.

RG1: Ensure adequate supply of land to facilitate sustainable economic growth

This means assessing the quality and viability of sites zoned for economic development uses in the area plans, protecting zoned land, promoting a balanced spread of economic development opportunities across the region and providing a network of economic development opportunities.

RG2: A balanced approach to transport infrastructure

The focus is on managing the use of road space and how we can use our network in a better, smarter way. This means maximising the potential of the Regional Strategic Transport Network, improving the public transport service and managing the movement of freight. It includes providing transport solutions to growth areas and town and city centres and adopting a ‘safe systems’ approach to road safety.

RG3: A balanced approach to telecommunications infrastructure that will give a competitive advantage

The key challenges for the Region will be to improve international and internal connectivity and to ensure that the opportunities provided by access to high quality telecommunication services are fully exploited. The RDS recognises the need to invest in infrastructure for higher broadband speeds and minimise the urban/rural divide. Increasing the take-up and usage of broadband and capitalising on direct international connectivity are also key issues addressed by the strategic guidance.

RG4: Promote a sustainable approach to the provision of tourism infrastructure

Tourism can make a step change in its contribution to the economy if the public and private sectors work together. This means promoting a balanced approach that safeguards tourism infrastructure while benefiting society and the economy, improving facilities for tourists in support of the Tourist Signature destinations and encouraging environmentally sustainable tourism development.

RG5: Deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply

Northern Ireland needs a robust and sustainable energy infrastructure which delivers reliable and secure sources of energy to communities and businesses across the region.

This means increasing the contribution that renewable energy can make to the overall energy mix, strengthening the grid, providing gas storage, working with neighbours and developing ‘Smart Grid’ initiatives.

Assessment of Impacts

Marital Status

From the 2006-08 Travel Survey, it can be seen that those who were single and never married were significantly more likely to use public transport than any other group (9% of journeys) compared with 4% of journeys for the population as a whole. However, it is likely that this differential is linked to age as a large proportion of those who are single and never married are likely to be aged under 25.

Disability

There is evidence that those who are disabled are under-represented on public transport journeys. During 2006 – 2008, 14% of public transport journeys were taken by those with a disability which is not as high as would be expected given that over one-fifth of adult population is estimated to have a disability (21% NISALD 2007; 23% CHS 09/10). Regional Guidance Numbers 1 to 5 on the Economy recognises the need for accessibility for all Section 75 Groups to services.

Conclusion

RG2 identifies the need for an improved public transport system and promotes walking and cycling and a co-ordinated approach to road safety. This applies throughout the Region and it is anticipated that this strategic guidance would have a positive impact on all Section 75 Groups. It will be particularly positive for women and young people, who are greater users of public transport. The passenger profile of Translink’s Autumn 2008 customer survey which surveyed those aged 16 and over states that 55% of passengers were female (compared with 51% of the overall population) and 37% were under 25 (compared with 17% of the overall population).

Good Relations

The Economy Regional guidance will have a positive impact on good relations as a better integrated transport system can help to promote a stronger more cohesive community.

Society (RG6-RG8)

The guidance in this section supports the aims of ‘A Shared Future’ by encouraging development of a shared community where people wish to learn, live, work and play together.

RG6: Strengthen community cohesion

This Guidance relates to the need to develop integrated services and facilities, foster a stronger community spirit and sense of place and encourage mixed housing development.

RG7: Support urban and rural renaissance

This guidance is based on the need for a co-ordinated approach to the development of programmes that influence urban renewal and regeneration. It identifies the need to develop innovative ways to bring forward under-utilised land and buildings, particularly for mixed use development, promoting regeneration in areas of social need and ensuring that environmental quality in urban areas is improved and maintained. Rural renaissance likewise is about revitalising the centres of small towns and villages so that they meet the immediate needs of the communities they serve

RG8: Manage housing growth to achieve suitable patterns of residential development

The Strategy emphasises the need to promote more sustainable housing development within existing urban areas and ensuring an adequate and available supply of quality housing to meet the needs of everyone. This means concentrating major housing proposals in sustainable locations, encouraging mixed use development and avoiding areas of significant environmental quality (Appendix C – Estimated Growth Indicators).

Assessment of Impacts

The Society guidance numbers RG 6 to RG 8 seek to ensure that all parts of the Region make a valuable contribution to the quality of life, wealth and wellbeing of everyone with

people at the centre of decisions about where development should happen. The Region's housing needs of all areas are addressed by the housing figures and the guidance reflects communities in both urban and rural areas. The housing figures take account of housing needs across the Region, including both urban and rural areas. The figures are indicative only and it is not appropriate at this level to determine equality impacts. This was supported by the Public Examination Report on the Review of Housing Growth Indicators which commented that it is at Development Plan level that the equality aspects of housing allocations would be most appropriately dealt with. This will be an important element to consider in a planning context.

The guidance refers to carrying out housing needs assessments to establish the need for social, affordable and specialised needs in both urban and rural. Therefore, **it is considered that the guidance will have a positive impact across all 9 Section 75 Groups.**

Good Relations

This guidance is considered to have a positive impact on good relations and RG6 in particular encourages communities to work together in a co-ordinated approach towards urban renewal and regeneration and to achieve balanced communities.

The Environment (RG9-RG12)

The key environmental factors addressed by the RDS are:

RG9: Reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate mitigation and adaptation to climate change whilst improving air quality

The RDS guidance aims to encourage compact development with essential services within easy reach. This includes the actions of mitigation and adaptation needed on order to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change. The guidance encourages reducing the need to use the car, improving the energy efficiency of buildings, and increasing the use of renewable energies and renewable heat. The recycle and reuse of land, buildings and materials will help to minimise development in areas at risk from flooding, coastal erosion, land instability and protection of soils.

RG10: Manage our waste sustainably

This guidance relates to the need to investigate innovative ways of re-using and recycling

our waste and to view the waste we do produce as a potentially valuable resource and minimise the environmental impacts of waste transport.

RG11: Conserve and protect and, where possible, enhance our built heritage and our natural environment

The guidance reflects the need to protect and conserve the built heritage and the actions needed to protect, sustain and enhance the natural environment.

RG12: Promote a more sustainable approach to the provision of water and sewerage services and flood risk management.

The planning for the provision of water and sewerage infrastructure and treatment facilities is both a practical and environmental necessity for regional development. The guidance reflects a need to integrate water and land-use planning, manage future water demand, restrict development in areas at risk from flooding and encourage sustainable surface water management.

Assessment of Impacts

Regional Guidance Numbers 9 to 12 on the Environment reflects the actions needed to reduce our carbon footprint and to protect and enhance our natural and built environment. These actions will contribute to an increased quality of life for everyone. This guidance is considered to have a **positive impact on all 9 of the Section 75 Groups**. The Draft EQIA on the Programme for Government assessed the priority ‘Protecting and Enhancing our Environment and Natural Resources’. It reached the same conclusion that this would contribute to an increased quality of life for everyone.

Good Relations

The environmental strategic guidance will have no impact on good relations.

SPATIAL FRAMEWORK GUIDANCE

The Belfast Metropolitan Area centred on Belfast (SFG1-SFG5)

The Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA) is defined as the continuous built up area centred on Belfast with an arc from Jordanstown to Knocknagoney and includes the city of Lisburn, and towns of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Holywood.

The guidance for the BMUA centred on Belfast is as follows:

SFG1: Promote urban economic development at key locations throughout the BMUA and ensure sufficient land is available for jobs

This means identifying key sites for employment growth well connected to public transport and linked to existing communities and the regeneration of sites for mixed use development with residential, commercial and leisure potential. It also means enhancing Lisburn as a major employment and commercial centre serving a significant catchment, and promoting the regeneration of the town centres of Bangor and Carrickfergus.

SFG2: Grow the population of the City of Belfast

This means supporting a drive to provide additional dwellings on land already zoned for housing and on windfall sites which become available for development. It will require imaginative and innovative design, including mixed use schemes, to ensure that they link into the existing urban fabric. This includes developing transport linkages, regenerating inner and middle city areas and reinforcing the quality of the city centre shopping and business area.

SFG3: Enhance the role of Belfast City Centre as the regional capital and focus of administration, commerce, specialised services and cultural amenities

This can be achieved by ensuring that its role as the regional shopping and office centre is maintained and by developing the City of Belfast as the regions culture and arts centre and enhancing public areas. Measures are also needed which target social need, community disadvantage across the city and closing the gap in quality of life for those living in deprived areas.

SFG4: Manage the movement of people and goods within the BMUA

The guidance recognises that transport has a key role to play not only for the economy

but is also vital for social inclusion. This means managing travel demand within the BMUA, improving the public transport service, efficient movement of freight, integrating land use and transportation, and the provision of a rapid transit network. It also refers to improving facilities for walking and cycling.

SFG5: Protect and enhance the quality of the setting of the BMUA and its environmental assets

The guidance sets out the need to protect areas of high scenic value and the hills around the Metropolitan Area from urban development and protecting and enhancing the network of open spaces in the BMUA.

Assessment of Impacts

Strategic Framework Guidance Numbers 1 to 5 on the BMUA recognises its importance as the centre of the regional transport network and the major gateway for national and international trade and that a strengthened BMUA will be at the core of the Region's economy.

The Census Key Settlements Report shows that a greater proportion of BMUA residents come from a Protestant background (61%) than in the Region as a whole (53%) and therefore there is a positive differential for Protestants in respect of both religious belief and the associated read across to political opinion.

There has been an historical tendency for voting preferences in Northern Ireland to closely reflect the religious affiliations of the population. This implies that those issues and differentials identified in relation to persons of different religion may also impact on persons of different political opinion. This being the case the comments above for religious belief are considered to also apply to political opinion.

However, many people from outside the BMUA come into Belfast for work or leisure purposes and a vibrant successful Belfast drives much of the Region's economic growth. The wealth created from this growth is shared across the Region with a positive impact on all the other Section 75 Groups.

The RDS covers the whole of the Region with a focus also on the Londonderry area, the other towns and cities and the rural communities. Considering the RDS overall, there is no differential impact on people of different religious belief or political opinion because of where they live.

A vibrant BMUA will have a positive impact on all Section 75 Groups.

Good Relations

This guidance is considered to have a positive impact on good relations as it will enhance communities throughout the BMUA.

The North West centred on Londonderry

The regeneration of Londonderry is central to the development of the wider North West Region and is defined as the council areas of Derry and Strabane and also extends into County Donegal. The key strategic issues for the North West and Londonderry are:

SFG6: Develop a strong North West

This means enhancing its role as the key centre in the North West for trade and services with high levels of co-operation between Letterkenny and Londonderry and Strabane. Enhancing the role of Strabane and improving the energy infrastructure are the key features of this guidance.

SFG7: Strengthen the role of Londonderry as the capital city of the North West

This means regenerating the City, meeting the housing needs of the area and maximising the tourism potential of the city. It also includes continuing to regenerate the city and closing the gap in quality of life for those living in deprived areas.

SFG8: Manage the movement of people and goods within the North West

The Strategy recognises that transport has a key role to play in developing competitive cities and regions. An efficient transport infrastructure is not only important for a successful economy but it can also help promote social inclusion.

SFG9: Protect and enhance the quality of the setting of Londonderry and the North West and its environmental assets

This guidance recognises the significance of the existing environmental assets in and around the North West and the City. The North West also has many protected areas of high scenic value and designations. These areas should be safeguarded, although opportunities should be taken to increase access to these natural assets for residents and tourists, where this is appropriate to the area and consistent with protecting their integrity and value.

Assessment of Impacts

Londonderry has suffered from isolation, but this is changing. The City's position as the transport hub of the North West will be strengthened. This investment, coupled with the City's airport, port and telecommunications infrastructure, will reduce isolation and mean that it is well placed to contribute strongly to the Region's economic growth.

The 2001 Census Key Settlement Report shows that a greater proportion of residents in the Derry Urban area come from a Roman Catholic background (78%) than in the Region as a whole (44%) and therefore there is a positive differential for Roman Catholics in respect of both religious belief and the associated read across to political opinion.

However, the RDS covers the whole of the Region with a focus also on the BMUA, the other towns and cities and the rural communities. Considering the RDS overall, there is no differential impact on people of different religious belief or political opinion because of where they live.

Good Relations

A strong North West Region and the promotion of regeneration initiatives will have a positive impact on good relations.

Hubs and Clusters of Hubs (SFG10 - SFG10)

Chapter 3 of the RDS identifies the main settlements that have the greatest potential for economic growth. These provide a range of accessible centres for the concentrated development of industrial, commercial, health, education and community services. This guidance identifies the need for an assessment of the roles and functions of settlements to inform development and community plans. Use of the Hierarchy of Settlements and Related Infrastructure (Appendix B) will assist in co-ordinating the delivery of services and facilities. Londonderry and BMUA are dealt with in Spatial Framework Guidance 1 to 9.

SFG10: Identify and consolidate the roles and functions of settlements within the clusters

This means assessing the roles and functions of settlements, building and strengthening existing cluster settlements and using the Hierarchy of Settlements and related Infrastructure Diagram to help identify the level of appropriate services and facilities

SFG11: Promote economic development opportunities at Hubs

This guidance is intended to promote and exploit the potential for economic development and to consider Hubs and cluster towns/cities first when new development is being considered.

SFG12: Grow the population in the Hubs

Key to population growth and the associated regeneration of urban centres is the provision of additional housing. The purpose of this guidance is to provide additional housing in the Hubs and clusters of Hubs across the Region.

Assessment of Impacts

Religious Belief and Political Opinion

Chapter 3 of the revised RDS identifies specific locations for economic development. The locations identified are spread throughout the Region and the community background profile (based on the 2001 Census Key Settlements Report) of the towns and cities specified closely matches the Northern Ireland profile. The percentage of the population from a Catholic background in the specified towns and cities is 47% compared with 44% in Northern Ireland as a whole; and the percentage of the population from a Protestant background in the specified towns and cities is 50% compared with 53% of the population in Northern Ireland as a whole. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest an adverse impact on persons of a different religious belief and therefore political opinion, due to the read across from religious belief, because of where they live. Rather, this guidance will have a positive impact on people of all religious beliefs and political opinions.

Gender

Promoting economic development opportunities in general is positive for both men and women. However, there are significant differences in the type of employment that men and women have. The April – June 2010 Labour Force Survey indicated that a higher proportion of women work in part-time employment, 37% compared to 9% for men. This may be due in large part to family/home commitments as almost three quarters of those women working in part time employment (74%) stated that they did not want to work full time. The nature of future jobs, the provision of affordable childcare and the flexibility to care for older dependents will determine whether the positive differential impact is on men or women.

Age

There is evidence from the April – June 2010 Labour Force Survey to suggest that younger people aged between 16 – 24 are almost twice as likely to be unemployed (9%) than the working age population as a whole (5%) and may face distinctive barriers to employment due for example to limited previous employment experience. Additional employment opportunities will help to address the differential impact.

Race

The 2001 Census data would suggest that Irish Travellers are more likely to be economically inactive and unemployed than other racial groups. The employment rate for Irish Travellers aged 16-74 (35%) is significantly below that of all economically active people aged 16-74 (62%). There is no evidence of an adverse impact on other persons of different racial group.

Dependants

There will be some positive impact on women in part-time work because of additional employment opportunities but the extent of this will be determined by affordable childcare and flexibility to care for older dependents.

Disability

The DETI Northern Ireland Quarterly Labour Force Survey (April 2010 - June 2010) indicates that the employment rate for those without disabilities (75%) is almost two and a half times that of people with disabilities (31%). Additional employment opportunities will help to address the differential impact.

Marital Status

It is considered that this guidance has no impact on marital status

Summary

The Hubs and Clusters of Hubs Guidance in SFG's 10 to 12 recognises that different areas have different strengths which can be improved to provide economic growth across the Region as a whole. This will ensure that impacts on Section 75 Groups are all positive and help to address existing differential impacts on gender, age and disability.

Good Relations

The economic strategic guidance will have a positive impact on good relations as it encourages towns and cities to work together in a cohesive and inclusive way for the provision of services and facilities.

The Rural Area (SFG13-SFG14)

The guidance on Rural Communities is as follows:

SFG13: Sustain rural communities living in smaller settlements and the open countryside

This guidance recognises the need to establish the role of multi-functional town centres, connect rural and urban areas, revitalise small towns and villages and promote neighbourhood renewal. It also means facilitating the development of rural industries, businesses and enterprises in appropriate locations and encouraging sustainable and sensitive development.

SFG14: Improve accessibility for Rural Communities

This means improving the overall connectivity of rural communities to services and other parts of the Region by exploring innovative ways of bringing these services to the communities. It also means integrating local transport and promoting innovative rural transport initiatives.

Disability

The 2007 NISALD survey has identified accessibility of public transport as an issue, although not a major one, to those with a disability. Just over 16% said they had experienced difficulties when using the public transport services in the previous 12 months.

Assessment of Impacts

The Stakeholder Workshops held during pre-consultation produced evidence to suggest that the elderly and disabled in rural areas did not have adequate access to services and for this reason Strategic Framework Guidance Number 14 was added to the section on rural communities to improve accessibility.

There is therefore **potential for a positive impact on everyone but particularly on older people and people with disabilities** following inclusion of Strategic Framework Guidance Number 14.

GATEWAYS AND CORRIDORS (SFG15)

Gateways should be able to deal with goods and passenger traffic efficiently and be considered as an asset by potential investors and local firms alike.

SFG15: Strengthen the Gateways for Regional competitiveness

The guidance recognises the need to have high quality connections to and from the air and sea ports and to enhance Gateways and their environmental image.

Assessment of Impacts

Strategic Framework Guidance Number 15 on strengthening the Gateways for regional competitiveness reflects the actions needed to deal with goods and passenger traffic efficiently. These actions will contribute to an improvement in the economy for the Region and therefore will benefit everyone. This guidance is considered to have a ***positive impact on all 9 of the Section 75 Groups.***

Good Relations

Connectivity of rural and urban areas will be positive for good relations as it will help to promote greater desegregation.

5.0 Mitigation/Alternatives

5.1 When we looked at the guidance as set out in the draft RDS during its early development we identified a gap in addressing the isolation of the elderly and disabled in rural areas. The evidence of a lack of accessibility to services was identified through the Pre Consultation Stakeholder Workshops where this issue was raised at 7 of the 11 workshops held across the Region.

5.2 As a result Strategic Framework Guidance No 14 was added to the section on The Rural Area in order to improve accessibility to services in rural areas and to mitigate against this impact.

5.3 The assessment of the remaining Strategic Guidance has not identified any potentially adverse impacts. Rather the analysis concludes that the delivery of the RDS has the potential to have a positive impact on all Section 75 Groups. As a result further mitigating action is unnecessary at this stage.

5.4 The realisation of the potentially positive impacts will be dependant upon the delivery of actions at departmental and local government level.

5.5 To facilitate that outcome, the specific policies, programmes and investment projects which public bodies will deliver in support of the RDS will continue to be subject to equality screening and, where appropriate full EQIA.

6.0 Monitoring for Adverse Impact in the Future and Publication of Results of Monitoring

6.1 Many of the impacts considered within this assessment will be monitored by the organisations responsible for the relevant policies to identify any unforeseen impacts of implementation and to ensure that as far as possible all objectives and anticipated positive impacts are being achieved over the period of implementation.

7.0 Consultation

7.1 In line with the Department's equality obligations and guidance issued by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, a draft EQIA, carried out at a strategic level, was issued for formal consultation over a 12 week period from 6 January 2011 to 31 March 2011.

7.2 Information on the revised RDS and consultation process was issued to all consultees listed in the Department's Section 75 database. A full list of consultees is detailed at Appendix D.

7.3 No written responses were received in relation to the Draft EQIA.

8.0 Key Findings

8.1 No responses were received in respect of the draft Equality Impact Assessment and therefore there are no key findings to address.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 The assessment of the potential impacts contained within the draft EQIA has not changed following the public consultation as no responses were received.

9.2 The assessment of the potential impacts of the proposals included in the review of the RDS has concluded that the implementation of the Strategic Guidance would provide benefits across all equality categories identified by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, with no negative effects on any category.

9.3 The narrative which follows highlights the impact of the implementation of the revised RDS on each of the Section 75 Groups.

Assessment by Section 75 Group

Religious Belief

9.4 Several of the Strategic Framework Guidance are location specific and therefore could impact on a greater proportion of one community background because of where they live. However, the RDS has focused guidance covering the whole of Northern Ireland and the overall impact is positive for people of all religious beliefs.

Political Opinion

9.5 There has been an historical tendency for voting preferences in Northern Ireland to closely reflect the religious affiliations of the population. This implies that those issues and differentials identified in relation to persons of different religion may also impact on persons of different political opinion. This being the case the comments above for religious belief are considered to also apply to political opinion.

Gender

9.6 The implementation of the revised RDS will have a positive impact on both males and females. Improvements in the transport system will impact particularly positively on women, as they are currently greater users of public transport than men. Promoting economic development opportunities will be positive for both men and women. There will be some positive impact on women in part-time work because of additional employment opportunities but the extent of this will be determined by affordable childcare and flexibility to care for older dependents.

Age

9.7 Implementation of the revised RDS has the potential to impact positively on people of all ages, for various reasons. Improving the local transport in rural areas will particularly impact on older people. Improving public transport will particularly impact on people under 25 who are key users of public transport.

People with Disabilities

9.8 Investing in transport infrastructure will benefit all persons with or without a disability. However, enhanced provision of public transport, including improved access and the enhancement of services, particularly at community level is likely to have a more positive impact on persons with a disability.

Marital Status

9.9 Investing in public transport will impact positively on those who are single as they are significantly more likely to use public transport than any other group. However, it is likely that this differential is linked to age as a large proportion of those who are single and never married are likely to be aged under 25.

People with Dependents

9.10 No differential impacts on people with and without dependents have been identified. For this reason it is anticipated that the revised RDS will have a positive impact on people, regardless of whether or not they have dependents.

Race

9.11 Reflecting the differentials outlined previously, Irish Travellers are at greater risk of poverty, multiple deprivation and exclusion. The RDS guidance seeks to address the barriers to employment, within communities. It is anticipated, therefore, that the guidance will have a positive impact on Irish Travellers. There is no evidence of an adverse impact on other persons of different racial group.

Sexual Orientation

9.12 No differential impacts on people of different sexual orientation have been identified. For this reason it is anticipated that the revised RDS will have a positive impact on people, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Good Relations

9.13 There are key positive impacts for good relations within the guidance on Society, Economy, Londonderry and Belfast. This is due to the promotion of working together to share services and facilities and community integration. RG6 in particular encourages communities to work together in a co-ordinated approach towards urban renewal and regeneration and to achieve balanced communities. In addition, a better integrated transport system can help to promote a stronger more cohesive community.

10.0 Policy Decision

10.1 This EQIA has been finalised following the public consultation on the draft EQIA. No amendments have been made to the assessment of impacts or to the key findings as no responses were received.

10.2 The EQIA has been amended to reflect the presentational changes made to the document following the public consultation process and taking account of the final decision made by the Minister on the policy proposals. It is considered that these changes do not have any impact on the section 75 groups or the conclusions.

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Appendix A

EQIA CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

EQIA CONSULTATION QUESTION 1

Is there any other relevant qualitative or quantitative information you consider should have been taken into account in the analysis of equality impacts?

EQIA CONSULTATION QUESTION 2

Do you have any general comments on the aspects of equality covered in this draft assessment?

EQIA CONSULTATION QUESTION 3

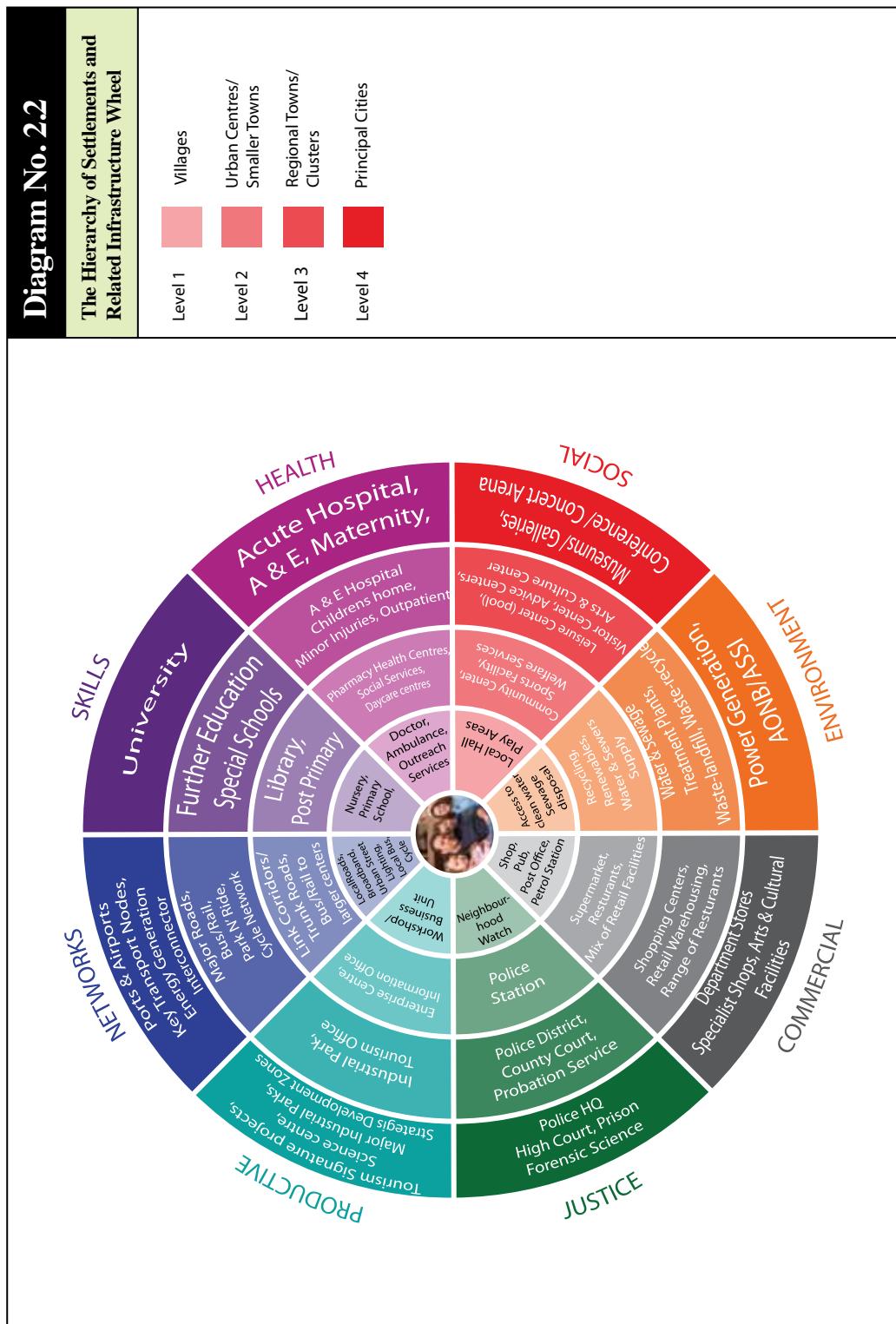
Are there any other issues that have not been addressed? If so, what are they?

EQIA CONSULTATION QUESTION 4

What are your views on the conclusions made in this summary of the impacts?

Appendix B

THE HIERARCHY OF SETTLEMENTS AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE



Appendix C

ESTIMATE GROWTH INDICATORS 2008-2025

Table B2 Housing Growth Indicators 2008-2025

	HGI 2008-2025
BMUA	50100
BMUA Rural Hinterland	10700
BMUA Districts Total	60800
Antrim	7300
Ards	9600
Down	9600
Larne	3900
Armagh	5500
Ballymena	6400
Ballymoney	3500
Banbridge	5500
Coleraine	6900
Cookstown	3700
Craigavon	10300
Derry	13700
Dungannon	5000
Fermanagh	6800
Limavady	3900
Magherafelt	4600
Moyle	1800
Newry and Mourne	11200
Omagh	6100
Strabane	3900
Regional Total	190000

1 For the purpose of these figures BMA is the built up area along the shores of Belfast Lough and the lagan Valley taking in the city of Belfast and adjacent areas of Carrickfergus, Castlereagh, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and north Down. The rural hinterland is the rural parts of the above districts.

Appendix D

List of Consultees

Action Mental Health
Age NI
Age Sector Platform (ASP)
All MLAs (109)
All NI Members of Parliament
All NI Members of the European Parliament
Alliance Party of NI
Alzheimer's Society
Amalgamated Engineering & Electrical Union (AEEU)
An Munia Tober
Antrim Borough Council
Ards Borough Council
Armagh City & District Council
Asperger's Network
Assembly Library
Autism NI
Ballymena Borough Council
Ballymoney Borough Council
Banbridge District Council
Barnardos NI
Barnardos, Tuar Ceatha Project
Belfast Butterfly Club
Belfast City Council
Belfast Harbour
Belfast Healthy Cities Project
Belfast Hebrew Congregation
Belfast International Airport
Belfast Islamic Centre
British Association for Shooting and Conservation
British Deaf Association (Northern Ireland)
Bryson Charitable Group
Business Services Organisation - HSC, Equality Unit
Campaign for Better Transport
CaraFriend/ Lesbianline Belfast
CARDI (Centre for Aging Research & Development in Ireland)
CARE In Northern Ireland
Carers Northern Ireland
Carlingford Lough Commission
Carrickfergus Borough Council
Castlereagh Borough Council
Child Poverty Action Group
Children In Northern Ireland (CiNi)

Children with Disabilities Strategic Alliance
Children's Law Centre
Chinese Welfare Association
Chrysalis Womens Centre
Church of Ireland House
Citizen's Advice Bureau
Citizens Advice Regional Office
City of Derry Airport
Coalition on Sexual Orientation (CoSo)
Coleraine Borough Council
Coleraine Harbour
Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ)
Community Development & Health Network NI
Community Places
Community Relations Council
Community Transport Association
Concordia Partnership for Progress
Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Conservation Volunteers NI
Cookstown District Council
Craigavon Borough Council
Democratic Unionist Party
Department for Social Development
Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Department of Culture Arts & Leisure
Department of Education for NI
Department of Employment & Learning
Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
Department of Environment
Department of Finance & Personnel
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Derry City Council
Derry Well Woman
Disability Action
Disability Action (Derry)
Down District Council
Down's Syndrome Association
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council
Eastern Health and Social Services Board
Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland
Employers Forum on Disability
Enniskillen Airport (St Angelo)
Equality Coalition
Equality Commission for NI
Equality Forum NI
Falls Community Council

Falls Women's Centre
Federation of Small Businesses
Fermanagh District Council
Foyle Women's Aid
Foyle Women's Information Network
Freight Transport Association
Friends of the Earth
Gay & Lesbian Youth Northern Ireland (GLYNI)
General Consumer Council for N.I.
George Best City Airport
Gingerbread NI
Health and Safety Executive for NI
IMTAC
Indian Community Centre
Institute of Directors (IOD)
Institution of Highways and Transportation - Northern Ireland
Invest Northern Ireland
Irish Congress Of Trade Unions - NI Committee (ICTUNI)
Irish Transport Trust
Labour Party
Larne Borough Council
Larne Harbour
Limavady Borough Council
Lisburn City Council
Living Streets (The Pedestrians Association)
Local Government Staff Commission
Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners
Lower North Belfast Community Council
Magherafelt District Council
Magherafelt Women's Group
MENCAP
Men's Health Forum In Ireland
Methodist Church in Ireland
Mid-Ulster Women's Network
Mobilise (Formerly Disabled Drivers Association)
Moyle District Council
Multi-Cultural Resource Centre
Newry & Mourne District Council
Newry & Mourne Senior Citizen's Consortium
Newry & Mourne Women Ltd
Newtownabbey Borough Council
NI Anti-Poverty Network
NI Association for Care & Rehabilitation of Offenders (NIACRO)
NI Association for Mental Health
NI Bird Watchers' Association
NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry

NI Chest, Heart & Stroke Association
NI Commissioner for Children & Young People (NICCY)
NI Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)
NI Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
NI Cycling Initiative
NI Environment Link
NI Gay Rights Association (NIGRA)
NI Human Rights Commission
NI Rural Development Council
NI Rural Womens Network
NI Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
NI Tourist Board
NI Women's Aid Federation
NIPSA
NITHC
North Down Borough Council
North Eastern Education & Library Board
North West Community Network
North West Forum of People with Disabilities (Derry)
Northern Ireland Office (NIO)
NSPCC
NUS-USI Northern Ireland Student Centre
Office of the Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of all Ireland
Omagh District Council
Omagh Women's Area Network
Parents Advice Centre
Phoenix Natural Gas
POBAL
Polish Association N.I.
Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Press for Change
Progressive Unionist Party
Quarry Products Association
Queer Space
RNIB (NI)
Road Safety Council for NI
Royal National Institute for the Deaf (NI) (RNID)
Rural Community Network
Rural Support
S.T.E.P. (South Tyrone Empowerment Programme)
Save the Children
SDLP
SEELB
Sense NI - for Deafblind People
Sikh Cultural Centre
Sinn Fein

Sperrin Lakeland Senior Citizens' Consortium
Strabane District Council
SUSTRANS
The Cedar Foundation
The Community Foundation
The Green Party in Northern Ireland
The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
The Law Society of Northern Ireland
The Men's Project
The Omnibus Partnership
The Participation Network
The Rainbow Project
The Women's Centre
The Workers' Party
Translink
Travellers Movement NI
Ulster Archaeological Society
Ulster Scots Agency
Ulster Scots Heritage Council
Ulster Society for the Protection of the Countryside - Belfast
Ulster Unionist Party
ULTACH
UNISON NI
Warrenpoint Harbour Authority
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
Women's Forum
Women's Information Group
Women's Support Network
Womens Resource and Development Agency
Youth Council for NI
Youthnet NI

RDS 2035

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