The validation checklist outlines the procedures for requesting additional information required to validate a planning application. This policy specifies the information that may need to be provided upfront when submitting an application. The aim is to enhance the quality of planning applications, streamline processing times, and reduce the resource burden on both internal teams and key stakeholders involved in the planning process.

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

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Planning Department Validation Checklist

1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above.

Developing a Policy X Strategy Plan

Adopting a Policy Strategy Plan

Implementing a Policy Strategy Plan

Revising a Policy Strategy Plan Designing a Public Service

Delivering a Public Service

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

Publication of Validation Checklist

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.

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1A. Name of Public Authority.

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

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N/A

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

N/A

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

N/A

*Details of alternative definition of ‘rural’ used.*

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition). Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below).

A definition of ‘rural’ is not applicable.

X

1F. What definition of ‘rural’ is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

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It is not considered that the proposed policy will impact on people in rural areas differently from people in urban areas as it applies equally to all involved in the planning application process.

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.

People living in rural areas who wish to submit a planning application will be affected by the new policy. Under this change, they will need to provide supporting information at the outset for validation, rather than submitting it later in the process. Importantly, the required information is not new or additional compared to current planning policies; the policy simply shifts the timing to an earlier stage in the application process.

2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **2E**.

X

2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?

**SECTION 2 - Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

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 N/A

2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.

If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.

Rural Businesses Rural Tourism Rural Housing

Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas Education or Training in Rural Areas

Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas

Poverty in Rural Areas Deprivation in Rural Areas

Rural Crime or Community Safety Rural Development

Agri-Environment

Other (Please state)

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.

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N/A

3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders Published Statistics Consultation with Other Organisations Research Papers Surveys or Questionnaires Other Publications

Other Methods or Information Sources (include details in Question 3C below).

3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

Yes No If the response is **NO** GO TO Section **3E**.

X

3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?

**SECTION 3 - Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

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The policy focuses on the processing of planning applications and specifies when supporting information should be submitted during the process. The current process has undergone rural screening, and no further rural-specific issues have been raised by citizens to date. The implementation of a validation checklist does not directly affect the social or economic needs of people in rural areas, as it does not require additional information beyond what is already mandated. Instead, it simply reorganises the process by front-loading the submission of this information.

To accommodate the needs of rural individuals, the submission process includes measures to enhance social and economic accessibility, such as:

* Allowing individuals to submit information electronically or by post, addressing challenges faced by those with limited travel options.
* Providing alternatives for individuals in areas with poor internet connectivity, such as submitting information by post or having someone participate on their behalf.

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

If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.

N/A

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

The processing of planning applications in relation to social and economic needs of people in rural areas will be considered taking into account the existing planning legislation, policies and Northern Area Plan 2016. The following social and economic considerations specific to rural areas were taken into account to ensure that the policy change is equitable and does not disproportionately impact rural residents:

**Social Considerations**

1. Accessibility of Services

 - Ensure that rural individuals with limited access to technology or internet connectivity can still access and submit required information.

 - Provide alternatives for those who face challenges travelling to planning offices due to poor public transport or remote locations.

2. Awareness and Communication

 - Use targeted outreach to inform rural residents about the checklist and its requirements, ensuring clarity and understanding.

 - Offer accessible formats for communication, such as paper-based materials or phone consultations, for individuals who may have difficulty accessing digital resources.

3. Support for Vulnerable Groups

 - Recognise the unique needs of vulnerable populations in rural areas, such as older residents, individuals with disabilities, or those with limited literacy and incorporate mitigation measures.

 - Provide dedicated support, such as case officer consultations or online meetings, to guide applicants through the process.

4. Representation of Rural Voices

 - Include rural stakeholders in the consultation process to ensure their perspectives and challenges are addressed in the policy implementation.

**Economic Considerations**

1. Cost Implications for Applicants

 - The new checklist does not increase costs for rural applicants, it changes the timing for the information to be provided.

2. Impact on Small Businesses and Farmers

 - The checklists impact on rural enterprises, such as small businesses or farmers seeking planning permissions for operational improvements by reducing the process time.

 - Streamline requirements for simple applications to avoid unnecessary complexity or delays

that could hinder economic development.

The consultation will target rural people to gain their views on the impact and identify current unknowns.

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4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

**SECTION 4 - Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

3. Timely Processing of Applications

- The checklist helps improve application processing times, preventing delays that could

disrupt rural projects or economic activities dependent on planning approvals.

4. Equal Opportunities for Development

- The Validation Checklist does not prevent any unintended barriers to rural development by

ensuring the checklist does not disproportionately favor urban applicants who may have greater

 access to resources and professional assistance.

Mitigation Measures

- Flexible Submission Options:

The Validation Checklist allows for information to be submitted electronically, by post, or through

an authorized representative to accommodate rural challenges.

-Advisory Support:

The process allows for contact with Planning Officers to provide pre-application advice sessions

to guide rural applicants and address potential difficulties.

Monitoring and Review:

* The Validation Checklist will be reviewed every 2 years to assess the checklist's impact on rural communities and adjust policies if adverse effects are identified.

By addressing these issues, the implementation of a validation checklist can be equitable, supportive, and sensitive to the unique needs of rural populations.

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If the response to Section 5A was YES GO TO Section 6A.

5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.

Yes No If the response is NO GO TO Section 5C.

X

5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?

**SECTION 5 - Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

The following mitigation has been included in the process:

1. Accessibility of Services

 - Individuals with limited access to technology or internet connectivity can still access and submit required information by post or by telephone. Information can be issued in the most suitable format.

 - For individuals who face challenges travelling to planning offices due to poor public transport or remote locations, postal information and on-line submissions will be accepted or a nominated person can act on their behalf. Traditional forms of payment such as cheques continue to be accepted.

2. Awareness and Communication

 - The consultation process will include newspaper advertisements, social media and information will be left at the 4 civic centres across the borough. Rural organisations will be contacted as part of the consultation process.

 - Accessible formats for communication will be offered, such as paper-based materials or phone consultations, for individuals who may have difficulty accessing digital resources.

3. Support for Vulnerable Groups

 - Information will be provided in an Easy Read format to support older residents, individuals with disabilities, or those with limited literacy. Sign Video will be provided at civic centres to support Sign Language users. Responses by telephone will also be accepted.

 - Officer consultations or online meetings can be arranged, to guide applicants through the process.

4. Representation of Rural Voices

 - Rural stakeholders will be included in the consultation process.

5. Cost Implications for Applicants

 - The new validation checklist does not increase costs for rural applicants, it changes the timing for the information to be provided.

6. Impact on Small Businesses and Farmers

 - The validation checklist will support rural enterprises, such as small businesses or farmers seeking planning permissions for operational improvements by reducing the process time.

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Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:

Position/Grade:

Division/Branch

Signature:

Date:

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:

Position/Grade:

Division/Branch:

Signature:

Date:

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained and relevant information compiled.

**√**

6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.

**SECTION 6 - Documenting and Recording**

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.