

<b>Title of Report:</b>	NIHE Rural Needs Tests – Selection of Settlements
<b>Committee:</b>	Corporate Policy and Resources
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	27 May 2025
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	For Information
<b>To be discussed In Committee YES/NO</b>	No

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	
Outcome	
Lead Officer	

<b>Estimated Timescale for Completion</b>	
Date to be Completed	

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>YES/NO</b>
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

<b>Legal Considerations</b>	
Input of Legal Services Required	<b>NO</b>
Legal Opinion Obtained	<b>NO</b>

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

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## 1.0 **NIHE Rural Strategy and Rural Needs Test**

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Community Planning Partnership in February 2025, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) delivered a presentation on their Rural Strategy Action Plan and the Rural Needs Test Programme.
- 1.2 The presentation covered three key areas of business, namely:
- How the NIHE consider the needs of rural communities.
  - The NIHE Rural Housing Needs Test.
  - Opportunities for collaboration.
- 1.3 An overview of the current NIHE Rural Strategy (2021-2025) was provided which included 3 Themes, 3 Outcomes, 12 Priorities and 29 Actions.
- 1.4 The NIHE also outlined the Rural Needs Test process which was designed to work together to ensure the waiting list was reflective of housing need in rural areas by identifying priority locations for a rural needs test.
- 1.5 The NIHE highlighted the importance of individuals registering their housing needs with the NIHE, especially those located within rural settlements throughout the Causeway Coast and Glens area.
- 1.6 Discussion also took place at the Community Planning Partnership meeting on housing issues in relation to difficulties in identifying potential sites for social housing and difficulties that can emerge in having sufficient water and sewage infrastructure to support potential housing developments.

## 2.0 **Identifying Settlements for Future Rural Needs Tests**

- 2.1 The NIHE have now conducted an analysis of rural areas within the Borough and the table below shows rural settlements they have identified from their analysis using criteria such as:
- Housing need projection of five units or less
  - No sites coming forward/no Social Housing Development Programme activity
  - Developable sites
  - No Rural Needs Tests carried out in the last three years.
- 2.2 Rural Settlements by DEA for Potential Rural Needs Tests:

DEA	Settlement	Housing Need Projection 2024-29
Bann	Boveedy	0

	Castleroe	1
	Craigmore (Ringsend NAP 2016)	0
	Maybouy (Boleran NAP 2016)	2
Benbradagh	Dernaflaw	1
	Foreglen	0
	Largy	2
Causeway	Dunluce (Ballytober NAP 2016)	3
	Liscolman	0
	Mosside*	0
The Glens	Ballintoy	5
	Corkey	3
	Stranocum*	3
	Waterfoot	5
Limavady	Artikelly	5

\* Indicates settlements that NI Water have identified as having no available capacity in their wastewater treatment works as at January 2025.

- 2.3 The table does not include Coleraine DEA as this comprises a wholly urban area. It also does not include Ballymoney DEA as there are areas within this DEA which do not have development limits as defined by the Northern Area Plan (NAP) 2016. This means that it would be highly unlikely to gain planning permission for residential development in those areas.

### 3.0 Request from NIHE

- 3.1 The NIHE have asked that one elected representative from each of the DEAs listed in the table above select/confirm **one settlement in their DEA** as a priority location for a Rural Needs Test.
- 3.2 The outcome of this exercise will inform the NIHE's Rural Needs Test programme for the upcoming years and the NIHE would appreciate a response by 1st August 2025.

### 4.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Council nominate one elected representative from the following DEAs: Bann, Benbradagh, Causeway, The Glens and Limavady and select/confirm **one settlement in their DEA** as a priority location for a Rural Needs Test as listed in the table.