

## Appendix I – Draft Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

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

#### 1A. Name of Public Authority.

Department of Finance.

#### 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.

REDUCTION OF EARLY PAYMENT DISCOUNT FROM 4% TO 2% WITHIN THE RATING SYSTEM

#### 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 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 checked="" 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.

REDUCTION IN EARLY PAYMENT DISCOUNT FROM 4% TO 2% WITHIN THE RATING SYSTEM

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

*The current policy is a longstanding feature of the domestic rating system which was originally implemented to encourage ratepayers to pay in a single amount early in the rating year as, at that time, this was accepted as administratively less complex and less expensive than managing payments by instalments. As the current policy no longer aligns with modern accounting methods within government, and for some years the Department's publicly stated preferred payment method has been Direct Debit, by reducing the discount from 4% to 2%, this policy revision aims to contribute to the increase in rate revenue for central government due to the current Budgetary Context.*

**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.

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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.

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

Rural Businesses	<input 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" value="N/A"/>

**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.**

This policy revision reduces an early payment discount open to domestic ratepayers who have the available funds and choose to pay their rates in one lump sum prior to a fixed date each year and does not affect the underlying tax liability. The policy change will apply in rural areas but has application regardless of a property's location (urban or rural) and applies against a large swathe of the taxbase (163,449 ratepayers) in addition the option is not open to persons in tenanted property (private or social rented) where the landlord is liable for rates

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

Large empty box for providing details of methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.

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

**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?**

This policy revision reduces an early payment discount option open to domestic ratepayers who have the available funds and choose to pay their rates in one lump sum prior to a fixed date each year and does not affect the underlying tax liability. This option and other payment options remain available within the rating system.

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## **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.**

As per 3E

DRAFT

## 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.

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.**


This policy revision reduces an early payment discount option open to domestic ratepayers who have the available funds and choose to pay their rates in one lump sum prior to a fixed date each year and does not affect the underlying tax liability. This option and other payment options remain available within the rating system.

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## 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.

<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:</b>	Rating Policy Division
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Various
<b>Division/Branch</b>	Full Team level
<b>Signature:</b>	-
<b>Date:</b>	October 2024
<b>Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:</b>	Andrew McAvoy
<b>Position/Grade:</b>	Grade 5
<b>Division/Branch:</b>	Rating Policy Division
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	23/10/24