

Rural White Paper Action Plan

WHAT IS IT?

- The *draft Rural White Paper Action Plan* is an initiative aimed at addressing the key issues and challenges facing rural areas. It recognises the contribution that our rural areas and rural communities make to the region and highlights the need for government to take account of rural circumstances as part of the policy making process. The document shows that departments and Ministers are taking rural issues and the rights of rural communities seriously and are committed to ensuring a fair deal for them.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

- The *draft Rural White Paper Action Plan* outlines the Executive's commitments to rural areas and details the actions that the Executive proposes to take to help support and develop rural areas. It also sets out a vision for the future of rural areas and identifies the key policy priorities required to deliver the vision.

HOW WAS IT DEVELOPED?

- The development of the *draft Rural White Paper Action Plan* was a fully inclusive process and involved extensive consultations with a wide range of rural stakeholders including representatives of rural communities, local government and the agricultural, environmental and equality sectors. The process was fully supported by the Executive and all government departments have contributed to its development.

WHAT DOES IT CONTAIN?

- The *draft Rural White Paper Action Plan* contains approximately 90 actions which deal with a wide range of rural issues and challenges. A summary of these are included over-leaf.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- Consultation on the *draft Rural White Paper Action Plan* commences on the **21st March 2011** and runs for a period of **12 weeks**. Copies of the consultation documentation and details of how to respond to the consultation are available on the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's website: www.dardni.gov.uk, or by contacting officials in the Department on **02890 378530**.



Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**

www.dardni.gov.uk

AN ROINN

**Talmhaíochta agus
Forbartha Tuaithe**

MANNYSYRIE O

**Fairms an
Kintra Fordèrin**

Housing & Planning

- Improving the condition of houses in rural areas;
- Funding pilot projects on rural housing;
- Developing further 'Shared Future' housing in rural areas;
- Reviewing the implementation of PPS21;
- Rural dwellers will have a say in planning and development of rural areas.

Transport

- Joining-up transport services for rural areas;
- Developing local transport plans;
- Improving access to rural areas via the new Regional Transportation Strategy;
- Providing a comprehensive information service for rural public transport services.

Health

- Running community based health checks specifically targeting farmers;
- Taking account of the needs of rural communities in implementing health strategies;
- Reducing accidents on rural roads.

Education

- Adopting an area based planning approach to provision of education;
- Utilising school facilities to deliver services to rural communities;
- Supporting breakfast / after schools clubs;
- Providing access to education in isolated rural areas.

Tourism

- Investing in tourism accommodation;
- Rural tourism development;
- Helping rural tourism businesses become established and sustainable;
- Increasing tourism opportunities through use of natural and built heritage.

Broadband

- Improving broadband quality in rural areas via the Broadband Fund;
- Rolling out Next Generation Broadband Project to extend access to high speed broadband services to rural businesses.

Business

- Supporting rural businesses in meeting waste management targets;
- Providing business support tools to support rural economies;
- Helping rural businesses find new market opportunities.

Poverty and Social Exclusion

- Aiming to tackle the causes of poverty and disadvantage in rural areas;
- Ensuring new fuel poverty strategy takes account of rural needs;
- Providing financial assistance for rural dwellers to access a safe water supply;
- Maximising access and uptake of grants, benefits and services in rural areas.

Countryside

- Promoting opportunities for renewable energy;
- Enhancing sustainable recreational use of the countryside;
- Maximising opportunities for rural areas in climate change mitigation and adaptation.