

# **Proposals for a Successor to DARD's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework 2011-15**

**Report on Public Consultation**

**February 2016**

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# 1. Executive Summary

## Introduction

- 1.1 A public consultation on DARD's proposals for a successor to the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation (TRPSI) Framework 2011-15 commenced on 18 November 2015 and concluded on 20 January 2016. During this nine-week period, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) held a public consultation stakeholder event. Its purpose was to inform stakeholders of the proposals and to provide them with an opportunity to discuss and provide their views.

## Public Consultation Stakeholder Event

- 1.2 A stakeholder event took place at Loughry Campus on Thursday 10th December 2015 as part of the public consultation process. Approximately 50 stakeholders attended from a range of organisations including local councils, the Housing Executive, the Rural Development Council, the Rural Community Network, Rural Support, the Rural Support Networks and representatives from other community organisations.
- 1.3 The event commenced with DARD providing an overview of the proposals contained in the consultation document following which presentations were given by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust on the Farm Families Health Checks Project, The Advantage Foundation on the BOOST Programme and Libraries NI on the Health in Mind project. The presentations were well received and provided a flavour of the wide range of initiatives supported under the TRPSI Framework.
- 1.4 Participants were then given an opportunity to work in groups to discuss issues around the three priority areas for intervention i.e. financial poverty, access poverty and social isolation and how these issues might be addressed through the successor framework.

## Written Responses

- 1.5 A total of 83 written responses to the consultation were received. The consultation attracted responses from a wide range of organisations, the vast majority being from the voluntary/community sector (71.9%). A list of consultees responding to the consultation is provided at Annex A and a list of the consultation questions is provided at Annex B.

## Summary of Written Responses

- 1.6 The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with the proposed aim, objectives and intended outcomes for the successor framework. Many highlighted the importance of partnership working, the flexibility of the

framework and focus on promoting new and innovative approaches to tackling rural poverty and social isolation.

- 1.7 A number of consultees expressed concern regarding the emphasis on supporting pilot projects and felt that this may restrict the scope of the framework to deliver longer term benefits. Many respondents felt that it was important to improve the mainstreaming of successful interventions and it was suggested that mainstreaming should be an objective of the framework
- 1.8 The overwhelming majority of respondents felt that the 3 key priorities should continue as the Framework provides the opportunity for programmes to be delivered under these themes which best meet the needs of local rural communities. The major themes identified by respondents included access to transport, availability of flexible and affordable childcare, lack of affordable and social housing and access to health services. Access to broadband was a theme identified by a significant number of consultees which cut across the 3 key priorities.
- 1.9 All but one respondent indicated that they agreed with the key principles proposed for the successor Framework. One respondent suggested including transnational partnership working as an additional key principle as there is merit in looking beyond what is happening in Northern Ireland and to other rural areas in the EU.
- 1.10 The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with the list of target groups and felt that it represented the range and diversity of local communities. A significant number of respondents endorsed the proposal not to be prescriptive in specifying a list of target groups in the successor framework but to retain the flexibility to target other groups where evidence supports the need.
- 1.11 The majority of respondents welcomed the measures outlined in the draft Action Plan in relation to addressing access poverty, financial poverty and social isolation. Access to suitable transport and access to quality broadband were identified as being key drivers in addressing all three key priorities. Respondents also suggested a range of new and innovative measures were suggested across the three key priorities. Some respondents referred to the lack of detail in the action plan and the lack of information on budgets.
- 1.12 A majority of respondents indicated that the community development support delivered under the previous Framework has been vital. Some respondents pointed out that the partnership approach adopted by the previous Framework had ensured a more collaborative approach between government and the wider voluntary/community sector and hoped this collaborative approach would underpin delivery of the successor Framework. Respondents also expressed the hope that investment would continue to be made in rural community support structures.
- 1.13 A range of views were provided by respondents as to how the successor TRPSI Framework can support the delivery of local councils' community

plans with the need for integration between TRPSI and community planning mentioned a number of times. The importance of effective engagement between DARD, local councils, the voluntary and community sector and rural dwellers, including representatives of farmers, was highlighted in order to identify local needs and to ensure the development of appropriate local solutions.

1.14 The overwhelming majority of respondents did not raise any concerns regarding the conclusions reached by DARD in relation to the Equality Impact Screening document and the Rural Impact statement. Two organisations put forward the view that a full EQIA should be carried out on the TRPSI Framework.

1.15 In relation to the other aspects of the proposals a range of views were expressed by respondents many of which were general in nature or which related to other questions in the consultation. These included a need for a vision for the framework to focus on creative solutions, the importance of sharing information and learning between organisations, opportunities for joint funding with other EU funds; the need for an advisory group; the need to promote awareness among the rural community of the existence of services funded under TRPSI in order to raise participation levels and reduce social isolation and poverty levels.

## **Conclusion**

1.16 DARD is grateful to all those who participated in the public consultation stakeholder event and to those who responded to the consultation. DARD will be reviewing the proposals for the framework in light of the responses received. DARD intends to finalise its proposals for a successor TRPSI Framework to be implemented in the period post April 2016. DARD will also be working with partnership organisations on the development of measures to be supported under the successor Framework.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The TRPSI Framework is a DARD-led initiative aimed at tackling rural poverty and social isolation through a package of measures, in partnership with other statutory bodies, designed to target the effects of poverty and social isolation among vulnerable rural dwellers.
- 2.2 The TRPSI Framework is one of a number of complementary rural initiatives led by DARD which are designed to help ensure that the needs of rural communities are addressed by government. It is the mechanism through which DARD has delivered the commitment in the Programme for Government 2011-15 to bring forward a £13 million package to tackle rural poverty and social and economic isolation. The current TRPSI Framework 2011-15 has built on DARD's previous anti-poverty programme delivered through its Rural Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Framework 2008-11. It was originally scheduled to operate during the period 2011-15 but was subsequently extended by one year to March 2016.
- 2.3 The TRPSI Framework uniquely focuses on the needs of the most vulnerable groups in rural areas. It allows DARD to combine the tools it has available to help tackle poverty and social isolation in rural areas (e.g. financial resources, staff resources, legislation, experience etc) with the financial resources and expertise of other public sector bodies and the local knowledge and skills provided by the rural community sector. It provides the flexibility necessary to address a range of poverty and social isolation issues and to target a broad range of vulnerable groups. The TRPSI Framework also promotes the development of new and innovative approaches to address rural issues and encourages the mainstreaming of successful projects by government organisations. The TRPSI Framework provides a mechanism for DARD to work in partnership with other government Departments and other public sector organisations in seeking to tackle poverty and social isolation in rural areas more effectively.

### **3. The Proposals**

#### **Aim of the Framework**

- 3.1 To provide a flexible mechanism for DARD to work effectively with other statutory bodies and partnership organisations to bring together a cocktail of funding to develop and implement new and innovative pilot measures which help tackle poverty and social isolation among vulnerable people living in rural areas.

#### **Objectives of the Framework**

- 3.2 To promote the development of new and innovative pilot approaches to tackling poverty and social isolation in rural areas;
- 3.3 To encourage effective partnership working between DARD, other statutory bodies and public sector organisations and the rural community sector in seeking to tackle poverty and social isolation among vulnerable people in rural areas;
- 3.4 To encourage the design and delivery of pilot measures which effectively target financial poverty, access poverty and social isolation among vulnerable people in rural areas in line with the key principles of the Framework;
- 3.5 To support pilot interventions which better target the funding and/or other resources available to target poverty and social isolation among vulnerable people in rural areas.

#### **Intended Outcomes of the Framework**

- 3.6 A measurable improvement in the quality of life of vulnerable rural dwellers;
- 3.7 Through pilot interventions, the availability of new models/approaches designed to address the rural aspects of poverty and social isolation which can be mainstreamed by government organisations;
- 3.8 Better targeted resources available through a mix of funding to target poverty and social isolation among vulnerable people in rural areas;
- 3.9 An increase in levels of knowledge, information and understanding in relation to the rural aspects of poverty and social isolation across government;
- 3.10 Positive and effective engagement by rural communities in seeking to address poverty and social isolation issues within their areas.

## Priority Areas for Intervention

3.11 *Access Poverty* - this priority aims to improve access to key services for vulnerable rural dwellers by supporting pilot interventions which;

- Improve urban-rural linkages eg through the provision of better transport and broadband services;
- Improve access to key services (e.g. healthcare, education and training, leisure facilities, library services, childcare etc).

3.12 *Financial Poverty* – this priority aims to address financial poverty among vulnerable rural dwellers by supporting pilot interventions which:

- reduce household expenditure or other living costs (e.g. transport costs etc);
- Increase household incomes; (e.g. through improved employability, employment
- address issues relating to the additional costs faced by people living in rural areas (e.g. fuel costs);
- address the barriers to escaping financial poverty (e.g. low qualifications, low skills, lack of access to affordable childcare, lack of access to quality jobs, disengagement, poor health etc);
- help alleviate the effects of financial poverty (e.g. food poverty, health problems, obesity among children, debt etc).

3.13 *Social Isolation* – this priority aims to address social isolation among vulnerable rural dwellers by supporting pilot interventions which:

- promote positive mental health and wellbeing;
- increase opportunities for social engagement (e.g. social activities, sport and leisure activities, cultural activities etc);
- provide support to groups at risk of social isolation (e.g. farmers, older people, people with disabilities, disengaged youth, etc).

## Key Principles for the Framework

3.14 The Framework will focus on addressing the needs of rural communities through the delivery of outcomes based pilot programmes;

3.15 The Framework will promote the piloting of new and innovative approaches to tackling rural poverty and social isolation;

3.16 The Framework will encourage partnership working between Departments, other public sector organisations and the rural community sector;

3.17 The Framework will recognise the important role played by the rural community sector and the need to encourage rural community empowerment;

- 3.18 The Framework will encourage the mainstreaming of successfully piloted projects and the development of suitable exit strategies;
- 3.19 The Framework will complement the Rural Proofing, Rural White Paper Action Plan and DARD's Rural Development Programme initiatives;
- 3.20 The Framework will promote sustainability through support for pilot projects which deliver long term benefits for rural communities;
- 3.21 The Framework will seek to promote equality and good relations in line with the Department's duties under Section 75;
- 3.22 The Framework will seek to complement the aims and objectives of other key government strategies relating to poverty and social isolation;
- 3.23 The Framework will promote the sharing of information, learning and best practice between organisations;
- 3.24 The Framework will seek to complement the community planning process.

## **Target Groups**

- 3.25 The current TRPSI Framework aims to target certain vulnerable groups, however the evaluation of the Framework indicates that it has been less successful in targeting some of these groups than others. Furthermore the evaluation identifies that some groups such as 'farmers' have been successfully targeted despite not having been specified as a specific target group while some stakeholders have questioned why 'women' were not specifically listed as a separate target group. Discussions with key stakeholders indicated that the list of target groups included in the 2011-15 TRPSI Framework risks being too prescriptive and may restrict the successor Framework's ability to target new groups.
- 3.26 It is proposed therefore that the successor Framework would have the flexibility to develop and test pilot measures aimed at addressing a wider range of target groups based on need rather than be restricted to targeting a specific 'Target Group' list as was the case under the previous Framework.
- 3.27 It is proposed that the vulnerable groups which can be supported by the successor Framework would include the following groups but that this list would not be prescriptive: The target groups listed below have been identified as being at risk of poverty and/or social isolation in rural areas however it is proposed that the successor Framework will retain the flexibility to target other groups which are identified on evidence of need as being at risk but which are not listed.
  - Women
  - Farmers

- People in work on low incomes (the working poor)
- Children and Young People
- Older People
- Ethnic Minorities and Immigrants
- People with low skills and/or low levels of education
- Lone parents
- People with mental ill health
- People with disabilities
- The LGBT community
- People with caring responsibilities
- People who are unemployed or on benefits

## **Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 3.28 A detailed Action Plan will be drawn up setting out the Department's proposals for implementing the successor Framework including details of the measures to be funded and the budget to be allocated in respect of each initiative during the budgetary period. The Action Plan will be updated to reflect any changes to the measures to be funded under the successor Framework and/or changes to budget allocations made during the period of the successor Framework.
- 3.29 Monitoring arrangements will be put in place in respect of individual pilot programmes funded under the successor Framework and will include regular updates on progress and expenditure. An annual update on the implementation of the successor Framework will be published in the Department's Annual Progress Report on the Rural White Paper Action Plan.
- 3.30 The Terms of Reference for the Interdepartmental Committee on Rural Policy (IDCRP) will be revised to include oversight of the implementation of the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework in line with the ARD Committee's recommendation in its Position Paper to develop an inter-departmental working group. It is proposed that a TRPSI Advisory Forum will also be established to advise on poverty and social isolation issues in rural areas.
- 3.31 Each individual programme funded under the successor Framework will be subject to an evaluation on completion of the programme. An evaluation of the successor Framework will be undertaken prior to the development of any future Framework.

## DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2016-17

Priority Area for Intervention	Examples of Initiative(s) that could be supported, subject to evidence of need and commitments from the appropriate partner organisations
<p><b>Access Poverty</b> – Promote fair and equitable access to key services for all rural dwellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve urban-rural linkages through</li> <li>• the provision of better transport and broadband services;</li> <li>• improve access to key services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative Health Solutions</li> <li>• Essential Skills support</li> <li>• Broadband solutions</li> <li>• Rural hub facilities</li> <li>• Social economy models for delivery of services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Poverty</b> – Maximise household incomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce household expenditure or other living costs</li> <li>• increase household incomes</li> <li>• address issues relating to the additional costs faced by people living in rural areas</li> <li>• address the barriers to escaping financial poverty</li> <li>• help alleviate the effects of financial poverty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and promote employability, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.</li> <li>• Support access to and awareness of benefits and entitlements</li> <li>• Support household energy efficiency improvement</li> <li>• Support transport access and solutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Isolation</b> – Promote tolerance, health, well-being and inclusion for rural dwellers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote positive mental health and wellbeing;</li> <li>• increase opportunities for social engagement</li> <li>• provide support to groups at risk of social isolation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the promotion of mental health awareness and actions</li> <li>• Support health and well-being activities</li> <li>• Support community capacity, rural hubs and social inclusion activities</li> </ul>

## 4. Analysis of Written Responses to Consultation and DARD's Response

4.1.1 This section provides information on the written responses received during the public consultation and DARD's response to these. Issues discussed during the public consultation stakeholder event generally focussed on issues around financial poverty, access poverty and social isolation and a summary of these issues is provided in section 6 of this report.

### Aim, Objectives and Intended Outcomes of the Framework

#### Consultation Question 1

*Do you agree that the proposed Aim, Objectives and Intended Outcomes for the TRPSI Framework are appropriate?*

4.1.2 There was overwhelming support from consultees for the proposed Aim, Objectives and Outcomes for the successor TRPSI Framework. Of the 66 consultees who responded to the question, 63 responded 'Yes' to the question with only 3 responding 'No'. Of those responding 'No', 2 questioned why the successor TRPSI framework should focus only on pilot measures whereas the current framework had the potential to support rural communities on a longer term basis, while 1 suggested that the aim to 'tackle rural poverty and social isolation' should be expanded to include 'identifying rural poverty and social isolation'.

4.1.3 Many consultees highlighted the importance of partnership working, the flexibility of the framework and focus on promoting new and innovative approaches to tackling rural poverty and social isolation. In particular the importance of working in partnership with councils and the voluntary and community sector was highlighted and the need for a solid and responsive rural community infrastructure. It was also pointed out that there needs to be a more of a focus on sustaining and mainstreaming projects under this framework.

4.1.4 A number of consultees raised the issue of the pilot interventions and the need to ensure that the successor Framework maintained the flexibility to continue to support interventions which although may not technically be termed as pilots had proved to be successful in the past and which had a positive impact on the lives of vulnerable people in rural areas. One consultee pointed out that the reference to 'cocktail of funding' was inappropriate as the framework was not just about bringing together financial resources but other resources also. One consultee suggested that the aim of the framework should be revised to "*To provide a flexible and sustainable mechanism for DARD to work effectively with other statutory bodies, partnership organisations and stakeholders to bring together a sustainable and targeted funding model to continue and*

*develop existing and new innovations which help prevent and tackle poverty and social isolation-particularly among vulnerable groups- living and working in rural areas”*

- 4.1.5 Other objectives that were suggested included “*identifying and encouraging best practice*”, “*working closely with industry and the private sector*”, “*developing a better understanding of the causes and dynamics of poverty and deprivation*” and the “*mainstreaming of successful projects*”.
- 4.1.6 Other intended outcomes that were suggested included “*improving the range of health and wellbeing initiatives available to rural communities*”; “*reducing the prevalence of social isolation and its effects among vulnerable and isolated older people in rural areas*” and “*making better use of rural community buildings in servicing the needs of rural dwellers*”

### **DARD’s response**

- 4.1.7 DARD accepts the need to maintain the flexibility of the TPRSI Framework to support measures which have proven to be successful in addressing a particular need among vulnerable rural dwellers and therefore will consider the wording of the aim of the framework.
- 4.1.8 DARD accepts the point raised regarding use of the term ‘cocktail of funding’ which could also include other non-financial resources as well and will consider amending the aim of the framework accordingly.
- 4.1.9 DARD will review the objectives and intended outcomes in view of the points raised.

## **Priority Areas for Intervention**

### **Consultation Question 2**

***Do you agree that the 3 Priority Areas – Access Poverty, Financial Poverty and Social Isolation – should continue to be the main priorities for the TRPSI Framework?***

- 4.2.1 The overwhelming majority of respondents felt that 3 main priorities should continue as the Framework provides the opportunity for programmes to be delivered under these themes which best meet local community needs.
- 4.2.2 Of the 64 consultees who responded to the question, 63 responded ‘**Yes**’ to the question with only 1 responding ‘**No**’. The one respondent who said ‘**No**’ acknowledged that Access Poverty, Financial Poverty and Social Isolation remain key priorities however they queried how DARD would define terms such as ‘Social Isolation’ and whether programmes will be

delivered targeting 'vulnerable people' as opposed to an 'area based' approach.

- 4.2.3 Many consultees highlighted that these priorities allow for a bottom-up approach which consultees believe is critical to ensure effective delivery of service. The need to develop local solutions was reiterated by a significant number of respondents.
- 4.2.4 While there was a high level of support for all 3 priorities, there were a number of consultees who felt that social isolation could be the top priority. One respondent made the point that *“social isolation is compounded by a lack of access to services and the impact of rural poverty”*.
- 4.2.5 One consultee felt that these priorities enabled the Framework to retain a degree of flexibility, allowing it to respond to emerging needs which may arise over the lifetime of the framework. The need for a wider Digital Inclusion Initiative was highlighted by a consultee which they believe could maximise the benefits made in broadband infrastructure and could *“create a vehicle to allow funding to be drawn from a host of departments, and reducing the emphasis on DARD leading these programme”*.
- 4.2.6 The overwhelming majority of respondents did suggest themes which could be delivered under the 3 priorities. The major themes identified include access to transport, availability of flexible and affordable childcare, lack of affordable and social housing, and access to health services. Access to broadband was a theme identified by a significant number of consultees and which cut across the 3 main priorities.
- 4.2.7 A number of consultees expressed concern regarding the emphasis on supporting pilots and felt that it was important going forward to improve the mainstreaming of successful interventions.

### **DARD'S response**

- 4.2.8 DARD accepts that Access Poverty, Financial Poverty and Social Isolation should remain the main priorities for TRPSI. We believe these priorities provide a strategic focus going forward but also retain sufficient flexibility to develop intervention to emerging local issues which may arise over the lifetime of the framework.

## **Key Principles**

### **Consultation Question 3**

***Do you agree that the 12 Key Principles are appropriate for the TRPSI Framework?***

- 4.3.1 The overwhelming number of consultees agreed with the key principles for the successor Framework.
- 4.3.2 Of the 63 consultees who responded directly to the Yes/No question, 62 responded 'Yes' and only 1 responded 'No'. The view of the consultee responding 'No' was that the first principle should focus more on the needs of people who are affected by financial/access poverty or social isolation in rural communities.
- 4.3.3 One consultee highlighted the point raised in the Report on the evaluation of the current TRPSI Framework, namely that there is no formal process for monitoring the impact of TRPSI on Section 75 Groups. One other consultee raised the issue of the multiple references to pilot programmes within the list of key principles and put forward the view that this new emphasis on pilot measures constituted a downgrading of the ambition of the successor Framework in terms of its ability to provide longer term support.
- 4.3.4 The importance of research and evidence in identifying the needs of rural communities was highlighted and the need to engage with rural communities for example through experimental evidence and first-hand accounts of our rural poor and the impact that poor broadband provision has on financial poverty, access poverty and social isolation. The need for local solutions for local people which are tailored to suit the area of need was also raised. One consultee suggested widening the key principles to include transnational partnership working, project development and information exchange as a means of enhancing the value of the programme. It was pointed out that there is merit in looking beyond what is happening in Northern Ireland and to other rural areas in the EU.

### ***DARD's Response***

- 4.3.5 DARD welcomes the broad support for the key principles. DARD's view is that the key principles are broad principles and therefore general in nature and consequently it would not be appropriate to make specific references to issues such as broadband, early intervention etc.
- 4.3.6 DARD has accepted the point raised in the Report on the Evaluation of the current TRPSI Framework and has included in the proposals for the TRPSI Framework a commitment to undertake equality monitoring of individual measures supported under the Framework at the earliest opportunity
- 4.3.7 DARD accepts that the identification of rural needs should be based on sound evidence and will continue to support a rural research programme as outlined in DARD's Evidence and Innovation Strategy. It is DARD's view that the proposed Rural Needs Bill will provide a greater focus both on identifying and addressing rural needs.

- 4.3.8 DARD fully accepts the benefits of looking at potential solutions beyond Northern Ireland and therefore will consider the inclusion of a further key principle to reflect this.

## Target Groups

### Consultation Question 4

*Do you agree that the list of Target Groups is appropriate in relation to providing support to vulnerable groups under the successor TRPSI Framework?*

- 4.4.1 The overwhelming majority of respondents agreed with the list of target groups and felt that it represented the range and diversity of local communities. A significant number of respondents endorsed the decision to retain the flexibility to target other groups through need's analysis.
- 4.4.2 Of the 75 consultees who responded to the question, 66 responded 'Yes' to the question and 2 responding 'No'. Of those responding 'No', 1 felt it was unclear if Irish Traveller was included under "Ethnic Minorities" and the other felt that as the current framework has been less successful in targeting some groups than others, and they would "suggest that a targeted action is required to address specific issues to relevant Section 75 groups".
- 4.4.3 A small number of responses felt that "men" should also be included in the list of target group while 3 consultees felt that the "PUL community" should be a specific target group. The inclusion of "farmers" and the working poor was welcomed by some respondents while one consultee felt that "Older people living alone" should also be included.
- 4.4.4 A small number of consultees expressed the need to be careful that the list of target groups does not become too large and its impact reduced.

### **DARD's response**

- 4.4.5 DARD recognises that in providing a list of targets groups, there will always be omissions however; the Framework will retain the flexibility to target other groups which are identified on evidence of need.

## Access Poverty

### Consultation Question 5(a)

*Please comment on how effective you think the measures contained in the draft Action Plan will be in addressing Access Poverty among vulnerable people in rural areas.*

- 4.5.1 The majority of consultees welcomed the measures outlined in the draft Action Plan. Comments from consultees included references to the measures being extremely effective in addressing access poverty and being comprehensive and providing a robust platform for achieving the aims of the Framework.
- 4.5.2 Some consultees commented on the lack of detail in the draft Action Plan and the need for more detail to be provided in order to enable them to provide informed comments.

#### *Innovative Health Solutions*

- 4.5.3 It was pointed out that these could encompass MARA and other initiatives aimed at improving emotional wellbeing.

#### *Essential Skills Support*

- 4.5.4 One consultee suggested that accredited courses for adults should be considered particularly in relation to the farming community who are experiencing severe cuts in incomes. The provision of courses in the English Language for ethnic minorities including seasonal workers was also suggested as a means of helping to tackle social isolation.

#### *Broadband Solutions*

- 4.5.5 The importance of effective broadband solutions was highlighted with the need for major infrastructure investment in rural areas identified as vital. Access to broadband services was identified as an important enabler in addressing wider needs including carrying out transactions online, availing of learning opportunities, access to online information and for social engagement. In particular the importance of broadband in reducing energy costs was highlighted in that it allows customers to avail of the best discounted options, switching information and advice. The issue of 'not spots' in rural areas was also raised and the impact that inadequate broadband provision has on the ability of rural businesses to expand into new markets.

#### *Rural Hubs*

- 4.5.6 The inclusion of rural hubs was commended and the important role that village halls can play in helping to address social isolation was highlighted.

#### *Access to Transport*

- 4.5.7 The lack of accessible rural transport was identified as a key cause of social isolation in rural areas. One consultee suggested that innovative transport initiatives should be included in the list of measures provided under Access Poverty. The importance of support for rural transport solutions was raised by a number of consultees including the need for

transport to be an integral part of the development of wider solutions aimed at addressing not only access poverty in rural areas but financial poverty and social isolation also. Affordability of transport was raised as an issue as was the need for services running after 6pm.

#### *Access to Gas*

- 4.5.8 The issue of fuel poverty was raised with the reliance on home heating oil and the lack of access to natural gas being identified as a key issue. The importance of oil clubs, switching suppliers, maintaining boilers, improving insulation and upgrading heating systems all suggested as a specific initiative.

#### *Access to Mobile Phone Coverage*

- 4.5.9 The need for better mobile phone coverage was also raised.

#### *Access to Childcare*

- 4.5.10 Access to childcare particularly for children with disabilities was also raised. One consultee highlighted the potential of working in partnership with LAGs to explore the potential for community enterprises to provide basic services such as childcare and eldercare.

### **Consultation Question 5(b)**

***Please provide details on any further measures which you think should be considered to help address Access Poverty among vulnerable people in rural areas.***

- 4.5.11 The following further measures were suggested by consultees:

- I. A further rural community micro grants scheme;
- II. A single digital inclusion programme;
- III. Measures to improve rural transport services including more affordable transport, support for longer journeys, better services for people with disabilities, better integration of transport services and better services at weekend and in the evenings. There was support for retaining the ARTS and support for Rural Community Transport Partnerships;
- IV. Measures to improve access to training, particularly IT training and numeracy and literacy skills;
- V. Measures to support community development and capacity building;
- VI. Measures to support childcare services including additional wrap around services, the promotion of breakfast clubs and afternoon clubs

up to 5.30pm, support for working families through reduced child care fees and the extension of free preschool places for 3 year olds;

- VII. Measures to support outreach facilities to deliver basic services;
- VIII. Measures to promote of luncheon clubs in rural areas;
- IX. Measures to improve energy efficiency including the provision of information and advice on energy efficiency issues;
- X. Measures to improve broadband and mobile phone services;
- XI. Measures to improve advice services in remote rural areas;
- XII. Measures to help credit unions and post offices play a greater role in serving low income and financially excluded groups and in improving access to services through their networks;
- XIII. Measures that will help to sustain rural libraries;
- XIV. Support for research.

### ***DARD's response***

4.5.12 DARD acknowledges the uncertainty around budgets and the implication this had on providing more detail in the draft Action Plan at the time the consultation commenced. It is proposed that a more detailed Action Plan will be developed setting out more details of the measures to be funded under the successor Framework.

**4.5.13** DARD welcomes the wide range of new measures put forward to help address access poverty.

## **Financial Poverty**

### **Consultation Question 6(a)**

***Please comment on how effective you think the measures contained in the draft Action Plan will be in addressing Financial Poverty among vulnerable people in rural areas.***

4.6.1 The majority of consultees welcomed the measures outlined in the draft Action Plan. Comments from consultees included references to the measures being extremely effective in addressing financial poverty and being comprehensive and providing a robust platform for achieving the aims of the Framework.

- 4.6.2 Some consultees commented on the lack of detail in the draft Action Plan and the need for more detail to be provided in order to enable them to provide informed comments. Some consultees felt there needs to be a cleared distinction between measures to drive down costs and those to boost income.
- 4.6.3 There was recognition among a number of respondents that higher living costs are a reality of living in rural areas, in particular food, fuel and transport costs. Some consultees also felt that people within rural communities are less likely to identify that they are in poverty.

#### *Energy Efficiency/Fuel Poverty*

- 4.6.4 A number of respondents referred to improving energy efficiency as the key component in addressing financial poverty. Many of the consultees welcomed the measures that would support improving household energy efficiency through reducing unfitness, improving insulation and exploring innovative community energy schemes.

#### *Improving Employability & Entrepreneurship.*

- 4.6.5 Many consultees highlighted the importance of creating opportunities to boost employability and entrepreneurships and see these as vital to reducing poverty in rural areas. One consultee referred to the need to adopt a streamline approach to delivering the range of employability and entrepreneurship programmes being delivered in rural areas.

#### *Broadband Solutions*

- 4.6.6 The need to invest in broadband to ensure rural businesses are not disadvantaged was raised by a significant number of consultees.

#### *Support for farmers.*

- 4.6.7 One consultee referred to the need to take account of farmers who may be asset rich but are becoming increasingly cash poor but are unable to access financial help due to asset wealth.

#### *Child Poverty*

- 4.6.8 One consultee suggested the need to focus on children and the need to reduce child poverty.

### **Consultation Question 6(b)**

*Please provide details on any further measures which you think should be considered to help address Financial Poverty among vulnerable people in rural areas.*

4.6.9 The following measures were suggested by consultees.

- I. Measures to improve rural transport services including more accessible and affordable transport, continuation of free or half fare travel through ARTS, maintain the government funding for community transport, abolish the cancellation fee introduced by some community transport services, extend the eligibility criteria for free travel to those who are partially sighted and for their companions/carers
- II. Continuation of MARA programme.
- III. Creation of jobs through investment in infrastructure such as investment in rural hubs, renovating abandoned housing and broadband infrastructure development.
- IV. Investment in high quality and affordable childcare
- V. Investment in children and young people and early intervention to break the cycle of deprivation and educational under achievement.
- VI. Measures to provide access to broadband and the skills and confidence to use it and support the provision of Digital Skills such as targeted farmers ICT introduction, or social enterprise apps.
- VII. Measures to provide advice and information on debt management, further education opportunities, welfare reform.
- VIII. Measures to improve the energy efficiency of rural homes/facilities, and advice on energy bills and switching.
- IX. Measures to improve and recognise the skills of farmers and to make their income's more secure and assist with farm succession.
- X. Measures to support rural hubs.
- XI. Encourage community based solutions with the growth and development of Credit Unions.
- XII. Support for rural business to enable them to be more competitive in government tendering process.
- XIII. Supported employment programmes such as the former ACE scheme and measures to support thriving rural economies and communities and encourage entrepreneurs to set up in rural areas.

- XIV. Closer working with Post Offices to scope opportunities to support consumers in rural areas and improve the sustainability of the post office network in rural communities.
- XV. Online self help resources to ensure those working on an intermittent basis or who are self employed and whose income fluctuates maximise any benefit entitlements.

### ***DARD's response***

- 4.6.10 DARD acknowledges the uncertainty around budgets and the implication this had on providing more detail in the draft Action Plan at the time the consultation commenced. It is proposed that a more detailed Action Plan will be developed setting out more details of the measures to be funded under the successor Framework.
- 4.6.11 DARD welcomes the wide range of new measures put forward to help tackle financial poverty in rural areas and will consider these in the delivery phase of the framework noting that opportunities also exist under the Rural Development Programme that will help alleviate poverty and isolation.

## **Social Isolation**

### **Consultation Question 7(a)**

***Please comment on how effective you think the measures contained in the draft Action Plan will be in addressing Social Isolation among vulnerable people in rural areas.***

- 4.7.1 The majority of consultees welcomed the measures outlined in the draft Action Plan. Comments from consultees included references to the measures being extremely effective in addressing social isolation and being comprehensive and providing a robust platform for achieving the aims of the Framework.
- 4.7.2 Some consultees commented on the lack of detail in the draft Action Plan and the need for more detail to be provided and more certainty around the allocation of resources in order to determine whether the measures will be effective.

*Support the promotion of mental health awareness and actions*

- 4.7.3 Many consultees expressed the view that there were significant issues around mental health in homes particularly depression and loneliness. The key role of Volunteers in maintaining positive mental health was highlighted together with the importance of services such as befriending and community transport in helping to address social isolation.
- 4.7.4 It was suggested that this priority should be widened to cover promoting positive health and wellbeing generally particularly as there is stigma around mental health in rural areas and people would be more likely to engage in activities that are seen to be about general health. The impact of fuel poverty on mental health, educational attainment and social inclusion was also highlighted.

#### *Support health and well-being activities*

- 4.7.5 It was suggested that the learning and evidence from the positive work undertaken with rural communities through the Local RSNs, Healthy Living Centres, the community and voluntary sector and statutory bodies on earlier health and wellbeing activities should be utilised when drawing up new programmes.

#### *Support community capacity, rural hubs and social inclusion activities*

- 4.7.6 Groups including older people, older farmers, lone workers and people with disabilities were identified as being at particular risk of social isolation.
- 4.7.7 There was strong support for community capacity building with the need for partnerships between local networks, faith based and community organisations identified as being essential in addressing social isolation.
- 4.7.8 Links between social and digital exclusion with indications that those who are socially excluded being three times more likely to be digitally excluded.
- 4.7.9 The important role that libraries can play in helping address social isolation was highlighted as neutral trusted spaces, social spaces and community hubs and providers of better broadband access.

#### **Consultation Question 7(b)**

*Please provide details on any further measures which you think should be considered to help address Social Isolation among vulnerable people in rural areas.*

- 4.7.10 The following further measures were suggested by consultees:

- I. Measures to improve health and wellbeing, including mental health;
- II. Measures which focus on good relations and which celebrate cultural heritage and diversity;
- III. Measures which promote a sense of purpose for people at risk of social isolation;
- IV. Measures which improve rural transport availability (see responses to Question 5b);
- V. Measures which make adaptive technologies more available;
- VI. Measures which improve the levels of digital skills including skills and learning for farmers and older people etc to improve social isolation and integration opportunities;
- VII. Measures to improve farm safety;
- VIII. There was support for the continuation of Rural Support as a vital lifeline for rural and farming communities;
- IX. Measures to help rural dwellers feel safe and secure;
- X. Measures to improve access to emergency healthcare;
- XI. Measures aimed at vulnerably older men;
- XII. Measures to improve consumer skills;
- XIII. Measures which support the development of outreach and home based solutions e.g. the 'Good Morning' scheme, befriending schemes, rural radio transmission services;
- XIV. Measures to support the sustainability and upgrading of existing community halls;
- XV. Measures to improve capacity building.

### ***DARD's response***

- 4.7.11 DARD acknowledges the uncertainty around budgets and the implication this had on providing more detail in the draft Action Plan at the time the consultation commenced. It is proposed that a more detailed Action Plan will be developed setting out more details of the measures to be funded under the successor Framework.

- 4.7.12 DARD welcomes the wide range of new measures put forward to help tackle social isolation in rural areas and will consider these in the delivery phase of the framework.

## Rural Community Support Structures

### **Consultation Question 8**

#### ***How might the successor TRPSI Framework contribute towards the development of more effective rural community support structures?***

- 4.8.1 The overwhelming majority of consultees felt that the community development support delivered under the Framework has been vital in ensuring that rural gets its fair share in terms of community development and were keen that. A significant number of consultees also felt that the support improved cross departmental working ensuring rural issues are kept to the fore for future planning and development.
- 4.8.2 Some of the benefits which the majority of consultees highlighted included “*access to information, advice, support, signposting, training, development, providing a rural voice and levering in vital resources*” to their community. A significant number of consultees also praised the Rural Micro Grants Capital Scheme which ensured capital investment reached the smallest and lowest capacity rural groups across the region.
- 4.8.3 A small number of consultees felt that the Framework could create opportunities for more research to be carried out on an ongoing basis in order to identify new needs as they arise, create a rural evidence base and understand more fully the social dynamics of rural communities.
- 4.8.4 A number of consultees felt that the partnership approach adopted by the Framework ensured a more collaborative approach across central and local government and the wider voluntary/community sector to help avoid duplication and identify gaps in provision. The overwhelming majority of consultees hoped this collaborative approach would underpin delivery of the successor Framework and expressed support for continuing to invest in rural community support structures.

### ***DARD’s response***

- 4.8.5 DARD welcomes the support for a cross departmental and more collaborative approach to developing more effective rural community development support structures. DARD will consider how this approach could be used in the development of a more detailed Action Plan setting

out more details of the measures to be funded under the successor Framework.

- 4.8.6 DARD accepts that the identification of rural needs should be based on sound evidence and will continue to support a rural research programme as outlined in DARD's Evidence and Innovation Strategy. It is DARD's view that the proposed Rural Needs Bill will provide a greater focus both on identifying and addressing rural needs.

## Supporting Community Development

### **Consultation Question 9**

#### *How might a successor TRPSI Framework support the delivery of local councils Community Plans?*

- 4.9.1 A range of views were provided by consultees as to how the successor TRPSI Framework can support the delivery of local councils' community plans. It was recommended that partnership working with councils is essential and that DARD should engage with the Partnership Panel and local councils. It was also recommended that engagement with councils should commence soon with a view to integrating relevant measures with emerging community planning themes in relation to economic development, regeneration, building safer communities, rural transport, community development and community relations. The need for integration between TRPSI and community planning was mentioned a number of times.
- 4.9.2 It was also suggested that the successor Framework could play a key role in the delivery of community plans through the Rural Community Development Support Service and that the structures for the delivery of community plans already exist within councils though the local RSNs and the network of community based organisations. It was also suggested that local RSN's could be a useful means for ensuring alignment with community plans during the development stage.
- 4.9.3 It was suggested that the Framework can act as a mechanism for delivering an effective community plan by acting as a vehicle to co-ordinate the activities of different organisations.
- 4.9.4 It was also suggested that local council community plans may be used to provide more broadband access in specific 'not spot' areas and now that local councils also have the remit to stimulate economic development, a coordinated multi-organisational approach would maximise the benefits of any intervention in relation to economic development and SME (including farmer) support.

- 4.9.5 The importance of effective engagement between DARD, local councils, the voluntary and community sector and rural dwellers, including representatives of farmers, was highlighted in order to identify local needs and to ensure the development of appropriate local solutions. Sharing of learning between TRPSI and Councils was also deemed to be important and the need to consider the impact of the Rural Development Programme.

### ***DARD's response***

- 4.9.6 DARD welcomes the suggestions put forward by stakeholders. A key principle of the framework will be to seek to ensure that the framework complements the community planning process and DARD will be engaging with local councils and other partnership organisations to help ensure this during the delivery phase of the framework.

## **Impact Assessments**

### **Consultation Question 10**

*Do you have any views on the conclusions reached by DARD in relation to the proposals for a successor TRPSI Framework in respect of:*

*(i) The Equality and Human Rights Template*

- 4.10.1 59 Consultees responded to this question in respect of the Equality and Human Rights Template. The overwhelming majority of consultees did not raise any concerns regarding DARD's conclusions, noting the requirement of "programmes to be screened and issued for consultation and possible EQIA".
- 4.10.2 A significant number of consultees felt that local Rural Support Networks are advantageously neutral to central and local government, ensuring that all rural communities can access resources, services and programmes in a timely manner, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.
- 4.10.3 2 organisations felt that the Framework should be subject to a full EQIA.

### ***DARD's response***

- 4.10.4 DARD confirms that equality screening will be undertaken in respect of each individual programme delivered under the Framework and, where appropriate, full EQIA's will be carried out by the lead public authority.

(ii) **The Rural Issues Statement**

- 4.10.5 60 consultees responded to this question in respect of the Rural Issues Statement. The vast majority of respondents were supportive of DARD's commitment under the Rural Issues Statement to "ensure potential impacts of a policy on people living in rural areas are fully considered".
- 4.10.6 A significant number of consultees felt that the central and neutral role which local Rural Support Networks deliver ensure grass roots representation in rolling out the Framework. 1 consultee felt that in accounting for rural need, it was important to consider the needs of the rural economy and rural businesses.
- 4.10.7 1 organisation referred to the provision of a Digital Inclusion programme as part of the successor Framework to help reduce rural access issues while another felt that the Rural Issues Statement should assess the potential impacts of a policy on people living or working in rural areas.

**DARD's response**

- 4.10.8 DARD has noted the comments made in relation to the Rural Issues Statement.

**Other Aspects of the Proposals**

**Consultation Question 11**

**Is there any other aspect of the proposals that you wish to comment on?**

- 4.11.1 A range of views were expressed by consultees many of which were general in nature or which related to other questions in the consultation.
- 4.11.2 It was recommended that poverty should be an all encompassing term that relates not only to income but to an individual's complete standard of life including their social, cultural, material and emotional deprivation. It was also suggested that the main aim of the successor framework should be 'making life better for rural dwellers particularly those living in isolated deprived areas'.
- 4.11.3 It was recommended that engagement with stakeholders is essential to ensure the identification of suitable capital projects which can be delivered within the framework.
- 4.11.4 More use of joint funding possibilities through EU and other funds was encouraged as well as the engagement by Departments with appropriate delivery agents who have a proven record of securing such funding. The

opportunity to expand the impact of TRPSI by drawing on international experience and expertise was also highlighted.

- 4.11.5 One consultee expressed the view that the framework lacks a vision for what vibrant rural life should look like and that work needs to be done to create and agree a vision of rural life among all rural stakeholders. It was also suggested that a North/South and East/West focus should be incorporated in any future framework
- 4.11.6 Concern was expressed that no agreed budget had been available.
- 4.11.7 The need for a clear communication plan to promote awareness among the rural community was highlighted to promote the existence of services funded under TRPSI, to raise participation levels and reduce social isolation and poverty levels.
- 4.11.8 The definition of rural was raised and it was suggested that a single definition of rural did not sufficiently capture those in most need and that anyone with a farm business ID should be automatically classed as rural.
- 4.11.9 It was recommended that public funding must not be unduly preoccupied with routine or standard programmes but that government should have the courage to fund creative pilot programmes which may deliver more effective solutions for rural dwellers.
- 4.11.10 Support was given to the recommendation in the Report on the Evaluation that some common measurement framework should be established for any future TRPSI Framework with the need for specific outputs/outcomes to be established at the outset in relation to programmes funded under the Framework being raised. It was also recommended that an advisory group of community and voluntary sector representatives be established to monitor the TRPSI Framework similar to the NIRDP monitoring committee.
- 4.11.11 The importance of the sharing of information and learning, the need for further research into aspects of rural poverty and social isolation and the importance of focussing on need were also highlighted.

### ***DARD's response***

- 4.11.12 DARD recognises that improving the quality of life for vulnerable rural dwellers is specified as a key outcome for the framework. DARD also recognises the importance of creativity in developing solutions to rural problems and the promotion of the development of new and innovative approaches to tackling poverty and social isolation in rural areas is a key objective of the framework.

- 4.11.13 DARD will give consideration to including a vision in the framework and the inclusion of a further key principle to reflect a wider focus of the framework e.g. North/South and East/West.
- 4.11.14 DARD also recognises the importance of the sharing of information and learning and this is included as a key principle of the framework. DARD also recognises the need for further research into the rural aspects of poverty and social isolation and for the identification of needs to be evidence based.
- 4.11.15 As part of the proposals DARD intends to establish a tackling rural poverty and social isolation advisory forum to provide advice on the delivery phase of the framework. However DARD does not consider that the establishment of a TRPSI monitoring committee is required to oversee the implementation of the Framework.

## **5. Summary of Issues Discussed at Public Consultation Stakeholder Event**

### **Access Poverty**

- 5.1 Transport – Stakeholders highlighted some of the challenges around transport in rural areas including the costs of providing community transport services. Stakeholders also highlighted the impact that a lack of access to transport has on young people and how it restricts their ability to access social, leisure, employment and volunteering opportunities. The need to extend bus services into the evenings and the need for better utilisation of school bus services was also raised. Stakeholders called for the ARTS scheme to continue and for similar support for young people in rural areas as that offered to older people under the smart pass scheme.
- 5.2 Broadband – stakeholders stressed the need for access to high quality broadband in rural areas and the contribution this can make in helping to address financial poverty and social isolation. It was pointed out that high quality broadband was essential to meet a range of rural needs for various groups including farmers, rural businesses and rural communities in accessing services and social networking.
- 5.3 Banking services – the need for better access to banking service was raised together with the need for support for credit unions to operate in rural areas.
- 5.4 Service Provision – stakeholders highlighted the benefits for rural hubs and the opportunities they can offer for providing shared services. They also expressed the need for better use to be made of existing facilities including community halls, schools etc. Examples of innovation in rural service provision were outlined including the use of mobile coffee mornings and the use of GP surgeries to facilitate the Citizen’s Advice Bureau. The need for effective outreach programmes to help ensure that people are aware of the services available in rural areas was also raised.
- 5.5 Other services - the need for better access to other services such as shops, post offices and affordable childcare in rural areas was also raised.

### **Financial Poverty**

- 5.6 Intermittent Employment – stakeholders highlighted the challenges faced by those in intermittent employment particularly those in self employment and those working in the construction industry. Issues highlighted included difficulties in accessing benefits, delays in obtaining housing benefit, the loss of entitlement to free school meals and the challenge for families in trying to budget for the future.

- 5.7 Low incomes/unemployment - stakeholders highlighted the problems associated with low incomes and unemployment in rural areas and the need for more support for job creation and entrepreneurship. The need for support for people returning to employment was also raised together with the need to target young people to help ensure young people remained in rural communities. The former ACE scheme was put forward as an example of a successful initiative. The impact of low incomes/unemployment were also highlighted including an increase in the use of food banks, poor mental health, issues around stigma and increased social isolation.
- 5.8 Fuel Poverty – Stakeholders stressed that fuel poverty continues to be an issue in rural areas and discussions took place around lack of access to gas, oil buying clubs and housing unfit. Stakeholders pointed out that the Warm Homes project had specific rural targets and had formal links MARA and called for targets for rural areas to be incorporated under its successor Affordable Warmth and for the links to MARA to be retained.
- 5.9 Government Tendering Process - stakeholders raised the issue of the government tendering process and the difficulties small rural businesses have in competing due to lack of skills and/or experience in participating in the government procurement process. Stakeholders called for rural local contracts for local people and for price not to be the only determining factor in the award of government contracts.
- 5.10 Debt Advice – Stakeholders stressed the need for better access to debt advice services in rural areas and the opportunity for more innovative approaches to providing debt advice such as mobile debt advice units and the use of community centres as hubs for providing a range of services such as debt advice, food banks etc. Stakeholders highlighted the changes to the welfare system and the impact that this would have on rural communities and argued that this supported the case for the MARA project to be continued

## **Social Isolation**

- 5.11 Mental Health - the impact of social isolation on mental health among rural dwellers was raised by stakeholders. It was stressed that better access to social activities, recreation facilities and mental health support services was required in rural areas.
- 5.12 Current TRPSI Programmes - the importance of current TRPSI Programmes such as MARA and the Farm Family Health Checks project and the positive impact which these had in helping to address social isolation was also stressed.
- 5.13 Co-operation - the need for a small to medium grants scheme (up to £20k) for capital and programme funding was highlighted to support co-operation

between organisations in helping to tackle the effects of social isolation. It was pointed out that community planning offers an opportunity for better joined up working.

- 5.14 Linkages - the link between access and financial poverty and social isolation was raised and how addressing financial poverty and access poverty in rural areas can help reduce the effects of social isolation. In particular the barriers to reducing social isolation were discussed including issues around broadband quality and accessibility in rural areas.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 DARD is grateful to all those who participated in the public consultation stakeholder event and to those who responded to the consultation. DARD will be reviewing the proposals for the framework in light of the responses received. DARD intends to finalise its proposals for a successor TRPSI Framework to be implemented in the period post April 2016. DARD will also be working with partnership organisations on the development of measures to be supported under the successor Framework.

## Annex A

### List of Written Responses to Consultation

1	Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
2	NI Farm Groups
3	Committee for Social Development
4	Disability Action
5	CLOUGH AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
6	South West Age Partnership
7	Community Transport Network NI
8	Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland
9	North Antrim Community Network
10	Kilcoo GAC
11	Annsborough Community Forum
12	Killean & Edentubber Regeneration Group
13	TADA Rural support Network
14	CDM Community Transport
15	Hilltown Community Association
16	Annalong Community Association
17	Fivemiletown Community Development Association (COSTA)
18	Parkanaur College (COSTA)
19	Galbally Community Centre (COSTA)
20	Dungannon Area Churches Forum (COSTA)
21	Tamnamore Community Development Association (COSTA)
22	Aughnacloy Development Association (COSTA)
23	Killeeshill & Clonaneese Historical Society (COSTA)
24	Soroptomist International (COSTA)
25	Richmond Parents Support Group (COSTA)
26	Bawn Development Association (COSTA)
27	COSTA
28	ARMAGH RURAL TRANSPORT
29	Libraries NI
30	Drumquin Development Association
31	Robert Hamilton
32	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

33	County Armagh Community Development
34	Ballywalter Community Action Group
35	Portaferry Regeneration Limited
36	Advantage
37	NILGA
38	Drummond Centre Project Ltd
39	Dennett Interchange
40	Omagh Forum for Rural Associations
41	Aughlisnafin Community Association
42	County Down Rural Community Network
43	Castlerock Community Association
44	Creggan Community Association
45	Butterlope Social Farm CIC
46	Claudy Parish Community Group
47	Gortilea Social Farm CIC
48	Learmount Community Development Group
49	Rural Area Partnership in Derry Ltd
50	The Confederation of Community Groups
51	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
52	Fintona Senior Citizens Club
53	Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
54	Gilford Community Club
55	NEA NI
56	Mourne Mountain Rescue Team
57	Trillick Arts & Cultural Society
58	BT
59	Drumquin Young at Heart Club
60	Drumlough Community Association
61	RNIB NI
62	Ards and North Down Rural Partnership
63	University of Ulster
64	UFU
65	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
66	Mid Ulster District Council
67	Easilink Community Transport

68	Volunteer Now
69	Rural Support
70	Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
71	Rural Community Network
72	Aughlish Ulster Scots Group
73	Magheralin Community Association
74	Fermanagh Rural Community Network
75	Consumer Council NI
76	Disability Action -second response
77	SOUTH ANTRIM COMMUNITY NETWORK
78	Ulster Council GAA
79	Ulster Unionst Party
80	Birches Action Rural Network
81	Northern Ireland Rural Development Council
82	Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network (CWSAN)
83	DETI

### Consultation Questions

- 1 Do you agree that the proposed Aim, Objectives and Intended Outcomes for the TRPSI Framework are appropriate?
- 2 Do you agree that the 3 Priority Areas – Access Poverty, Financial Poverty and Social Isolation – should continue to be the main priorities for the TRPSI Framework?
- 3 Do you agree that the 12 Key Principles are appropriate for the TRPSI Framework?
- 4 Do you agree that the list of Target Groups is appropriate in relation to providing support to vulnerable groups under the successor TRPSI Framework?
- 5a Please comment on how effective you think the measures contained in the draft Action Plan will be in addressing Access Poverty among vulnerable people in rural areas.
- 5b Please provide details on any further measures which you think should be considered to help address Access Poverty among vulnerable people in rural areas.
- 6a Please comment on how effective you think the measures contained in the draft Action Plan will be in addressing Financial Poverty among vulnerable people in rural areas.
- 6b Please provide details on any further measures which you think should be considered to help address Financial Poverty among vulnerable people in rural areas.
- 7a Please comment on how effective you think the measures contained in the draft Action Plan will be in addressing Social Isolation among vulnerable people in rural areas.
- 7b Please provide details on any further measures which you think should be considered to help address Social Isolation among vulnerable people in rural areas.
- 8 How might the successor TRPSI Framework contribute towards the development of more effective rural community support structures?
- 9 How might a successor TRPSI Framework support the delivery of local councils Community Plans?
- 10 Do you have any views on the conclusions reached by DARD in relation to the proposals for a successor TRPSI Framework in respect of:
  - (I) The Equality and Human Rights Template
  - (II) The Rural Issues Statement
- 11 Is there any other aspect of the proposals that you wish to comment on?