

#### 4 SUPPORTING RURAL COMMUNITIES TO REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL AND AMBITIONS

- To promote and encourage equitable service delivery and investment in rural areas, informed by the needs of the rural community.
- To actively work with other agencies to ensure that rural organisations and rural people have access to local service provision to improve their quality of life.
- To support communities to maximise the usage of local assets.
- To develop areas of work, in partnership with other agencies, to ensure the best possible services are developed and delivered to rural communities.

### RCN Internal Development

#### 5 DEVELOPING STAFF SYSTEMS AND RESOURCES, ENSURING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF RCN SERVICES

- To create an organisational plan to achieve all of the strategic aims.
- To invest in Board and staff to ensure adequate support processes and structures are in place.
- To ensure strong corporate governance and accountability.
- To work in collaboration with others to ensure we meet our strategic aims.



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**Rural Community Network**  
SUPPORTING RURAL COMMUNITIES



Rural Community Network (NI)

**Strategic Plan  
2014 - 2020**



## Background

Rural Community Network is a voluntary membership based organisation supporting rural communities across the region. RCN works with rural communities to address issues relating to poverty, inequality, community and good relations.

RCN adopts a community development approach to its work. Areas of work include community development training, action research, policy analysis, peace-building, strategic planning, consultation, mediation and facilitation.

**Our Vision** is of vibrant, articulate, inclusive and sustainable rural communities whose contribution is valued across Northern Ireland.

**Our Mission** is to provide an effective voice for and support to rural communities, particularly those who are most disadvantaged and excluded.

**Our Values** are set within the context of community development which is a long-term value based process which aims to address imbalances in power and bring about change founded on social justice, equality and inclusion.

The values we bring to our work are

- **Community Empowerment**
- **Social Justice**
- **Collective Action**
- **Working/Learning Together**
- **Equality and Anti-discrimination**

Through this community development process RCN works with and supports rural communities to

- **Identify their own needs and aspirations**
- **Take action to exert influence on the decisions which affect their lives**
- **Improve the quality of their own lives, the communities in which they live, and societies of which they are a part**

RCN supports and promotes its work within the context of the Strategic Framework for Community Development for NI.



## Strategic Aims

### 1 EMPOWERING THE VOICE OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

- To advocate on behalf of and with rural communities.
- Provide leadership on rural policy issues and provide a challenge function, where required to both regional and local government on rural policy issues.
- To build community capacity to enable communities to identify issues and advocate on behalf of themselves.
- To promote rural proofing and monitor how statutory agencies deliver policies and programmes to meet the needs of rural communities.
- To build partnerships with relevant organisations on rural needs and issues.
- To network rural stakeholders across Northern Ireland and build effective collaborations on policy issues.
- To communicate with stakeholders on policy issues that impact on rural communities.
- To develop credible research and a robust evidence base to mitigate poverty and deprivation in rural communities.

### 2 PROMOTING, SUPPORTING AND CELEBRATING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

- To support and develop the role of the volunteer, paid worker, organisations and agencies in the promotion, sharing and development of community development practice, skills and knowledge.
- To acknowledge and celebrate the role of volunteers, paid workers, organisations and agencies in their community development practice.
- To contribute to learning and professional development initiatives relating to community development practice.

### 3 ACTIVELY WORKING TOWARDS AN EQUITABLE AND PEACEFUL SOCIETY

- To support and encourage peace and reconciliation work throughout rural communities.
- To support and encourage those who are most disadvantaged to address social and economic needs and to reduce inequalities.
- To support the capacity and confidence building of rural Section 75 groupings in attaining equality of opportunity.
- To collaborate with, and offer support to, other agencies / organisations in their work to meet this aim in a rural context.

**“RCN:  
building vibrant and  
sustainable rural  
communities”**

