

**SUBMISSION TO THE
NI STATISTICS & RESEARCH AGENCY**

**ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND
MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION MEASURES 2004:
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

**BY BANBRIDGE DISTRICT COMMUNITY NETWORK
AND
BANBRIDGE REGENERATION AGENCIES NETWORK**

October 2004

Banbridge District Community Network (1) and Banbridge Regeneration Agencies Network (2) welcome this opportunity to comment on the proposed review of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures.

We would argue that the proposed changes included in the consultation document once again fail to address the issue of effective measurement of poverty and disadvantage in rural areas.

People living in poverty in rural areas are less likely to be identified because of the mix of income levels that is prevalent. This is very apparent in the Banbridge district which has experienced the highest population increase of any district in NI. (3) This influx seems to be the result of people with higher disposable incomes moving from the Belfast area - which is experiencing a decline in population (4) - to rural areas for a better quality of life.

This mix of income levels is evident when looking at wards at ED level in the Banbridge district (and around the rest of rural NI) as shown by the following example:

FORT WARD (6.3% of the total population in the Banbridge district)

INCOME INDICATOR

Highest Ranking ED 3298 (88.4%)
Lowest Ranking ED 1011 (27.1%)
Percentage Difference (61.3%)

Overall Ward Score 382 (67.5%)
Difference with
Lowest ED Score (40.4%)

EMPLOYMENT INDICATOR

Highest Ranking ED 3361 (90.1%)
Lowest Ranking ED 775 (20.8%)
Percentage Difference (69.3%)

Overall Ward Score 343 (60.6%)
Difference with
Lowest ED Ranking (39.8%)

With the variation between EDs within one rural ward as much as nearly 70% it is clear that the current/proposed method of deriving 50% of the MDM from the Income and Employment Indicators is not effective in measuring poverty in rural areas. The proposed use of SOA determined by population size and tenancy type would minimise large variations within one geographical area of measurement within urban areas. However, as a result of the dispersion of the population and the vast mix in tenancy type, this benefit of the use of SOAs is unlikely to extent to rural areas.

Current theories have moved on from defining disadvantage as solely the result of low income and/or unemployment. Therefore we would argue that the disproportionate emphasis on income and employment as a measurement of disadvantage when compiling the MDM also undervalues the impact that poor health, disability, low educational attainment and lack of access to services can have on people's lives.

Applying a weighting of only 10% to the Access to Services Indicator again would not properly recognise the disadvantage that people experience as a result of living in rural areas. For example, nine out of the 16 wards in the Banbridge District are currently ranked within the 1/3 most disadvantaged wards in NI in terms of the Access to Services Indicator. Despite this clear disadvantage none of these wards are classed within even the 50% most disadvantage wards in terms of Multiple Deprivation as set out below:

WARD	GEOGRAPHICAL ACCES TO SERVICES INDICATOR		MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION INDICATOR	
	Ranking	Score	Ranking	Score
Garran	40	7.1%	325	57.4%
Bannside	47	8.3%	375	66.3%
Katesbridge	56	9.9%	356	62.9%
Croob	70	12.4%	405	71.6%
Quilly	150	26.5%	466	82.3%
Loughbrickland	158	28.0%	376	66.4%
Ballydown	159	28.1%	434	76.7%
Laurecetown	186	32.9%	331	58.5%
Dromore South	190	33.6%	456	80.6%

It seems clear that neither of the proposed weightings of the MDM - both suggesting applying a 10% weighting to the Geographical Access to Services Indicator - accurately reflect disadvantage in rural areas.

Finally, we welcome the suggestion to include low/weak community infra-structure, which is a particular concern in the Banbridge District, as a measure of disadvantage in the new deprivation indicators. The impact that a low/weak community infra-structure can have on geographical (as well as issue-based) communities in terms of the effectiveness of government social inclusion strategies and the abilities of these communities to address disadvantage has been well documented. (5) It is for exactly this reason that DSD commissioned the research to identify areas of low/weak community infra-structure mentioned in the consultation document.

The impact that a lack of access to a community centre/facility can have on both the development of community infra-structure and access to support- and self-help services by individuals has been raised by both the Rural Community Network (6) and the Community Foundation NI. (7)

SUMMARY

- We support the call by Rural Community Network that “If a single MDM overall score/rank is to be retained there must be a separation of rural NI from the four cities and larger regional towns”.
- The MDM weighting for the Income- and Employment Indicators should be reduced and the weighting for the Health & Disability-, Education, Skills & Training- and Geographical Access to Services Indicators should be increased.
- A Low/Weak Community Infra-structure Indicator should be added to proposed seven Indicators.
- The MDM should be weighted as follows:

INDICATOR	WEIGHTING
Income Deprivation	20%
Employment Deprivation	20%
Health Deprivation and Disability	15%
Education, Skills and Training Deprivation	15%
Geographical Access to Services	15%
Living Environment	5%
Crime	5%
Low/Weak Community Infra-structure	<u>5%</u>
	100%

- Road distance to a community centre/facility should be added to the Geographical Access to Services Indicator.

REFERENCES

(1) Banbridge District Community Network is an infra-structure organisation that aims to support and development the community/voluntary sector in the Banbridge district.

(2) Banbridge Regeneration Agencies Network is working in partnership with TADA Rural Network, ROMAL Rural Network and Banbridge District Community Network to develop community infra-structure in the Banbridge District.

(3) 2001 Census

(4) As above

(5) For example see:

- (NIVT, 1999), Building Community Infra-structure – Lessons from the Community Development Demonstration Programmes, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (now Community Foundation NI)
- (RCN, 2001), Low Infra-structure Programme 1998 – 2001 Report – Book One Policy, Rural Community Network

(6) (RCN, 2001), Low Infra-structure Programme 1998 – 2001 Report – Book One Policy, Rural Community Network (Page 10)

(7) (NIVT, 1999), Building Community Infra-structure – Lessons from the Community Development Demonstration Programmes, Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (now Community Foundation NI) as quoted in (DSD, 2004), Research to Develop a Methodology for Identifying Areas of Weak Community Infra-structure – Consultation Paper, Deloitte MCS Limited