
NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2004

Response to Consultation Document July 2004

Introduction

Derry City Council recognises the important role which the measurement of spatial multiple deprivation has, not only in shaping government policies and resources, but also in helping to assess over time the impact of these interventions on peoples lives. Derry City Council therefore welcomes the opportunity to comment on NISRA's proposals to update the NI Multiple Deprivation Measure.

Super Output Areas

Derry City Council recognises the need for change for statistical purposes to these new spatial units but requires reassurance that the ability to measure deprivation at the electoral ward and district council level will not be compromised. The ability to compare data at the ward and district council level is important for the purposes of accountability.

It is also important that a move to new spatial units of measurement will still allow assessment of changes in deprivation over time and allow comparative analysis with other regions in GB and the ROI. Since Derry has a quite unique position as the only Regional City in the UK which sits on an international border, the ability to assimilate NI datasets with those from the ROI is particularly important for the City Council.

The Super Output Areas must be flexible enough to be capable of presenting data for any new local authority administrative boundaries emerging from the Reform of Public Administration.

Domains

Derry City Council supports the domains proposed. While it can be accepted, as the Consultation document states, that Crime inflicts particular forms of deprivation on individuals and communities, irrespective of the incidence of other forms of deprivation, the consultation document does not clearly explain why an entire domain with a weighting needs to be dedicated to it. The consultation document does not recognise that there may be differences between communities in the reporting of crime.

Without a definition of "Weak Community Infrastructure" and the potential indicators which might be used to measure it, it is impossible to comment on its merits at this stage.

Weighting

Derry City Council welcomes the fact that Income and Employment remain prominent. The consultation document provides no evidence to support a change to the relevant weightings other than simply to state that some have argued for it. Derry City Council

would prefer more evidence to be presented on the shortcomings of the present weighting system before any change is considered.

Overall Comment

Derry City Council is imbedded in the lives of the people it serves. As such it is well placed to believe that the level of multiple deprivation faced by its citizens has changed little relative to the NI average since 2001. It is important that all of the programmes and policies of the NI Government Departments are tailored to address spatial concentrations of deprivation rather than Measures of Multiple Deprivation simply being used as a quality control exercise.

Derry City Council welcomes the opportunity to continue to engage further with NISRA on these and other statistical research issues.