

LSP Working Group Response to 'Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2004: Consultation Document July 2004'

The Local Strategy Partnership Working Group was established in August 2002. All 26 Local Strategy Partnerships (LSPs) have formally joined the LSP Working Group, each of which has nominated two Board Members and one staff member to represent their LSP.

The LSP Working Group welcomes the opportunity provided by NISRA to participate in the consultation on the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure. While individual LSPs may choose to submit a response that reflects their local situation it was decided at the last meeting of the LSP Working Group that a joint response should also be submitted covering issues that are common to all 26 LSPs.

In general the LSP Working Group would welcome any changes that are made to the Deprivation Measures that make them more user friendly. In particular it is felt that the terms used need to be easily understood and clearly convey what they cover. It was also raised that guidance on how to use and implement the Multiple Deprivation Measure would be welcomed.

In several instances it is noted that data can not be included in the deprivation measures because statistics are not currently available or are not in a format that can be used. It is recommended therefore that work is carried out on data collection in these areas so that these statistics are available and can be used when the deprivation measures are next updated.

In relation to the inclusion of weak community infrastructure information the LSP Working Group would welcome this but there are issues around how it is defined and measured.

In relation to the Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Measure the absence of data on primary schools has been raised as an issue and there is no indicator relating to the provision of pre-school or nursery provision. It was also raised that the indicator relating to absenteeism is reported at a school level and therefore may not be relevant as it can not be attributed to a pupil's home address which is likely to be in a different area to the school.

In relation to the Geographical Access to Services Measure it has been queried why some of the previous indicators such as access to dentist, optician and library have been removed. It was raised for example that for people living in deprived areas their access to the internet was often in their local library. Also in relation to this measures it was queried how road distance was to be measured and the fact that the quality of the road structure was not included which has an impact on travel time particularly in rural areas.

In relation to the Crime Measure it was raised that the statistics may not accurately reflect deprivation in an area as in a significant number of cases crimes are committed in affluent areas by people who do not live in the area. We would query the omission of domestic violence from this measure,

although it is recognised that domestic violence is prevalent in all sections of society and is not confined to deprived areas we feel that this is an important indicator. It has also been raised that statistics relating to Anti Social Behaviour should also be examined and where possible included in this measure.

Finally in relation to the use of SOAs it has been raised that the addition of another geographical area is likely to cause confusion and that further work needs to be carried out into the practical application of these, how they will integrate with the geographical areas currently being used and how the changes will be communicated to the general public.