

**Update of Measures of Spatial Deprivation  
 Minutes of the Third Steering Group Meeting  
 10am Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009  
 CSU Conference Room, Millennium House**

**Present:**

Name	Department / Organisation
Robert Beatty (Chair)	NISRA
David Marshall	NISRA (DMB)
Fiona Johnston (Secretary)	NISRA (DMB)
Cathryn McBurney	NISRA (DMB)
Malcolm Megaw	DARD
Ian Davidson	DCAL
Karen McCullough	DE
Stephanie Harcourt	DETI
Carmel Colohan	DHSSPS
Martin Mayock	DRD
Tony McKibben	DSD
Darren McKinstry	Equality Commission
Frances McCandless	NICVA
Alan McClelland	OFMDFM
Ruth McAreavey	RDC
David McLennan	SDRC Oxford
Daniel McSorley	SOLACE

Apologies were received from Dave Rogers (DEL), Alex Boyle (DOE), Joe Frey (NIHE) and Margaret Langhammer (DRD).

**(i) Welcome and introduction**

Robert Beatty welcomed all present and initiated round-the-table introductions.

**(ii) Minutes and actions from previous meeting (22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009)**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the second Steering Group Meeting. Robert Beatty noted that all the actions from the June

meeting had been addressed through the blueprint document and would be covered in later agenda items.

### **(iii) Consultation Update**

Cathryn McBurney gave a presentation on the NIMDM Consultation Period and provided an overview of the events, responses and general comments that have emerged in response to the consultation. These include; support for a fuller review post-Census 2011, disappointment at the lack of progress against some of the recommendations from the NIMDM 2005, calls for effective uses of the NIMDM and support for a MDM for children.

### **(iv) Peer Review Results – Social Disadvantage Research Centre (SDRC), University of Oxford**

David McLennan provided a presentation on the SDRC's recommendations from their independent Peer Review of the NIMDM 2010 proposed update. The review team had been provided with the Update terms of reference, the NIMDM 2005 recommendations, the consultation document, a summary of consultation responses (written and from events) and a draft blueprint document. The remit of the peer review was to assess proposed changes to indicators which had received conflicting responses during the consultation period and at proposed changes where there had not been the opportunity to consult, due to changes in data availability. These are discussed under each domain heading below.

#### **Income:**

David McLennan described the main issues as the inclusion of Housing Benefit recipients, the unavailability, and therefore omission, of Tax credit data and proposed replacement of benefit data with a modelled estimate of income deprivation. The Peer Review recommended that Tax Credit data should be included if possible, Housing Benefit recipients could be included if NISRA were able to avoid double-counting and could treat owner-occupiers and renters equally and that the income domain should be based on benefits rather than modelled estimates.

Steering Group members were in agreement that Tax Credit data indicators should if possible be used for the Income domain. David Marshall informed the group that, after negotiations with HMRC, this data was likely to be available in February 2010. This may however cause a delay in the publication of the NIMDM 2010 results by at least a month. There was widespread consensus that a short delay would be acceptable in relation to the benefits of accessing this data.

Further discussion on Housing Benefits data led to agreement that these recipients should be included after assurance from Cathryn McBurney that there was no risk of double-counting and that there was enough information to include those residing in both owner-occupied and social housing.

The Steering Group also agreed with the Peer Review conclusion that the use of modelled estimates on income were not necessary for the Income domain at this time.

**Key Point (Income Domain Indicators that will be included in the NIMDM 2010):**

Income Support, State Pension Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit and Housing Benefit

**Employment:**

There was general agreement with the recommendation of the Peer Review that proposed changes to this domain (based on the inclusion of Employment and Support Allowance data and unavailability of Steps to Work as replacement for New Deal benefit data) are driven by changes to the benefit system and so are acceptable.

**Key Point (Employment Domains Indicators that will be included in the NIMDM 2010):**

Jobseekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance

**Health and Disability:**

David McLennan discussed the two changes proposed to this domain that had resulted in conflicting responses – the inclusion of an Emergency Hospital Admission Rate (EHAR) and Mental Health Hospital Admission Rate (MHHAR) indicator. The Peer Review team noted that using an EHAR indicator concerning emergency admissions resulting in an inpatient stay of at least 4 nights was sufficient to remove the perceived rural/urban bias and so recommended its inclusion in the domain in this form. Similarly as the MHHAR data will be combined with two other measures of mental health to form a mental health indicator any effects of access to a mental health unit would be diminished and so this data should be included.

The Steering Group were content to accept the Peer Review's recommendations that these proposed changes are included in the NIMDM 2010. The Steering Group also agreed with the inclusion of Children's Dental Health and Low Birth Weight indicators which had been supported during the consultation period.

**Key Point (Health Deprivation and Disability Domain Indicators that will be included in the NIMDM 2010):**

Years of Potential Life Lost, Comparative Illness and Disability Ratio, Combined Mental Health Measure, Cancer Registrations, Emergency Admission Rate, Low Birth Weight  
Children's Dental Extractions

**Education, Skills and Training:**

The focus of the change to the Education, Skills and Training domain was on the inclusion of an indicator on the destination of school leavers at 16 who are not entering full-time education, employment or training. David McLennan stated that the Peer Review was happy to support this change and the Steering Group also advocated this recommendation as being a more inclusive measure of Education, Skills and Training deprivation. All other changes to the Education, Skills and Training domain (Key Stage 2 performance data, primary level absenteeism rates, Special Educational Needs data and the introduction of three sub-domains) had gained wide acceptance throughout the consultation period and the Steering Group endorsed this.

Karen McCullough noted that the issue of primary pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) had come under some debate. Cathryn McBurney clarified that the NIMDM 2010 update would only be including pupils who had been categorised at the higher range of SEN assessment (Stages 3 to 5), these assessments were based on medical, rather than teaching, professional appraisals. Karen McCullough requested that this indicator was recommended for review for the post Census MDM and this would be in line with a review of SEN provision currently ongoing within DE.

**Key Point (Education Skills and Training Domain Indicators that will be included in the NIMDM 2010):**

Key Stage 2, Special Education Needs for Primary School Pupils, Absenteeism at Primary Schools, Key Stage 3 Teacher Assessments for English and Maths, GCSE or equiv. qualifications, Proportions of those leaving school not entering Further Education, Employment or Training, Proportions of 18-21 year olds who have enrolled in Higher Education or Further Education, Absenteeism at Secondary Schools, Special Education Needs for Post-Primary School Pupils, Proportion of working age adults (25-59) with no or low levels of qualification

**Living Environment:**

The Peer Review of the Living Environment Domain consultation questions concentrated on the inclusion of two new indicators; namely the Decent Home Standard (DHS) and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). David McLennan confirmed that the Peer Review group agreed with both proposals.

David McLennan discussed the proposal to remove the Census 2001 overcrowding indicator and the consultation responses that proposed including a measure of Households in Multiple Occupation (HMO). The use of HMO data was rejected on the grounds that it measures a somewhat different phenomenon to overcrowding. The Peer Review recommended adjusting the Census 2001 overcrowding indicator in line with overcrowding information from the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) over a number of years.

Following publication of the Consultation Document Daniel McSorley had helped secure noise complaints data from District Councils and it was proposed by the MDM team to include this indicator in the Living Environment Domain if data were robust. David McLennan clarified that, in keeping with the 2005 recommendations, the Peer Review group felt that this indicator fitted better within the Crime and Disorder domain as it can be viewed as a measure of anti-social behaviour.

A general discussion followed that resulted in further clarification of what the DHS and HHSRS measured and as a result all Steering Group members were able to concur with the Peer Review recommendations. This was also the case in relation to adjusting the Census 2001 overcrowding data, based on the caveat that more quality assurance work would need to be carried out to assess the robustness of this indicator, and in moving the noise complaints data to the Crime and Disorder domain. The Steering Group were content that the Domain Group makes a decision on the robustness of an adjusted Census 2001 overcrowding indicator.

**Key Point (Living Environment Domain Indicators that will be included in the NIMDM 2010):**

Decent Homes Standard, Housing Health and Safety Rating System,  
Overcrowding Indicator  
Homelessness Acceptances, Local Area Problem Score

**Action Point 1:** NISRA to investigate the quality of adjusting overcrowding data.

**Crime and Disorder:**

The proposed change to the Crime and Disorder domain that was looked at by the Peer Review was in reference to including both primary and secondary fires in the NIMDM 2010. The issue of including secondary fires had been raised at a consultation event. David McLennan confirmed that the Peer Review agreed with this recommendation and the Steering Group were also in accordance with this decision. Again, the inclusion of this indicator will only take place after further investigations into the robustness of the data.

**Key Point (Crime and Disorder Domain Indicators that will be included in the NIMDM 2010):**

Violence, Robbery and Public Order, Burglary, Vehicle Theft, Criminal Damage  
Deliberate Primary and Secondary Fires  
Anti Social Behaviour Incidents  
Noise Complaints

**Action Point 2:** NISRA to investigate the quality of noise complaints data.

**Action Point 3:** NISRA to investigate the quality of secondary fires data.

**(v) Proximity to Services Blueprint**

Cathryn McBurney gave a presentation on the proposed changes to the Proximity to Services domain, based on responses from the consultation period. The consultation responses had been considered by Chris Morris from ULAI DH consultancy. The presentation covered issues such as the differences between proximity and access as conceptual measurements and the general consensus that emerged from consultation on the inclusion of new indicators such as Large Service Centres (based on services not population), Council Leisure Centres, Financial and General Services indicators and a travel-time dimension.

A discussion followed on the indicators that had been more contentious such as including cross-border A&E and cross-border large services centres, and a primary health care indicator which combined access to GPs, Dentists and Pharmacists.

The Steering Group agreed with the proposal that the Primary Health Care indicator will be separated into its three components, and that all remaining proposed changes were accepted. In particular that cross border service centres and A&E hospitals, a general services indicator, council leisure centres and a financial services indicator should be included. Additionally that the food shop indicator should include convenience stores, that service centres should be based on services rather than population and that the calculation of proximity should be based on time rather than distance.

Tony McKibben stated that it would be important to record that this method of measuring deprivation, based on proximity rather than access, was based on a much broader definition of need.

**Key Point (Proximity to Services Domain Indicators that will be included in the NIMDM 2010):**

GP Premises, Accident and Emergency Hospital (incl. Cross Border), Dentist, Optician, Pharmacist, Job Centre or Jobs and Benefits Office, Post Office, Supermarket / Food Store, Large Service Centre (incl. Cross Border), Council Leisure Centre, Financial Services  
Other General Services

**(vi) Other Issues: Equality Considerations / Geography (RPA/Output Areas)**

David Marshall led a discussion on the equality considerations and issues that were part of the NIMDM 2010 update process. David Marshall assured members that the NIMDM 2010 would be subject to a statistical audit through the official statistics framework (the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice) and equality issues had been an inherent part of the deprivation policy process (in relation to open consultation, dissemination of findings and full guidance in the use of statistics).

Tony McKibben noted that the UKSA statistical audit may identify any potential bias within the indicators and Martin Mayock added to this by highlighting that the fact a combination of indicators are used as measures of deprivation will deflect any intrinsic bias or inequality. Karen McCullough noted that an audit process will look at the quality and integrity of data used.

Darren McKinstry stated that it will be important to clearly report on the decision-making process which led to certain indicators being included, or conversely omitted, and any potential equality implications that could emerge from these decisions.

The Steering Group was in agreement that formal documentation of the decisions made would ensure the NIMDM 2010 update was quality-assured and statistically robust.

The next part of this discussion focused on the impact of the impending changes to existing administrative geographical boundaries as a result of the Review of Public Administration (RPA). David Marshall noted that after the Boundary Commissioner's proposals for new LGDs and wards are accepted by the Assembly, NISRA will produce a sub-ward geography that will replace the current OAs and SOAs. However David Marshall clarified that re-constructing the lower level geographies would be a much greater task in terms of resources and timescale. David Marshall added that there may be demand for statistics at a new geography intermediate to wards and LGDs but that neither this nor the sub-ward geography work would be completed within the time-scales of the current deprivation project.

David Marshall also provided an overview of the methodology currently being used to create the Small Area Population Estimates (SAPes) and confirmed that they would be published alongside the NIMDM 2010 update results.

**Action Point 4:** NISRA to send UK Statistics Authority website link to Steering Group.

**(vii) Timeline**

Cathryn McBurney discussed the planned timeline for the publishing of the NIMDM 2010 update results which met with general consensus with the Steering Group. The next immediate action for Steering Group members is to review the list of indicators that will be included in the NIMDM 2010 Blueprint document, based on the consultation responses, Peer Review results and general discussion that was undertaken at this meeting, and indicate if they are happy with the content by 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010.

**Action Point 5:** NISRA to send out a list of blueprint indicators for Steering Group to sign-off

**Action Point 6:** Steering Group to reply to blueprint list by 23rd December

**(viii) Date of Next Meeting** - next SG Meeting to be held in March 2010.

**Action Point 7:** NISRA to arrange date of next meeting.

**Summary of Actions**

Action	Detail	Lead
1	To investigate the quality of adjusted overcrowding data	DMB
2	To investigate the quality of noise complaints data	DMB
3	To investigate the quality of secondary fires data	DMB
4	To send UK Statistics Authority website link to Steering Group.	DMB
5	To send out a list of blueprint indicators for Steering Group to 'sign-off'	DMB
6	To reply to blueprint list by 23rd December	Steering Group
7	To arrange date of next meeting	DMB