

RESPONSE TO NORTHERN IRELAND DEPRIVATION MEASURE 2004: CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Craigavon Borough Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the above document and would offer the following comments.

- Craigavon Borough Council acknowledges the difficulty in designing a range of indicators which will measure deprivation in its entirety and are statistically robust.
- However, Council is concerned that the small pockets of deprivation contained within particular wards which are deemed affluent should be easily identified.
- In relation to income deprivation, consideration should also be given to the issue of debt and perhaps this could be measured by number of queries to agencies who advise on these issues.
- Under the employment deprivation indicator, Council welcomes the proposed inclusion of lone parents. However, in relation to carers, Council would argue that this grouping are not necessarily involuntarily out of work, rather most have no other option than to stay at home and care for a relative etc. Therefore, this issue should be re-examined.
- Council welcomes the inclusion of a measure of adult skills in order that the patterns may be identified on different levels.
- In relation to rural areas, consideration should be given to the increase of growth of commuter towns and the impact this has upon the rural populations.
- Consideration should also be given to the inclusion of available green space/play areas within the living environment domain as this has an impact on the outdoors physical environment.
- Under the crime domain, Council is concerned that drug-related crime is not included. Differences in the number of reported drug crimes are not necessarily all related to police activity. In addition, the indicator is not necessarily drug use but rather drug dealing activity which has a massive impact upon local communities as certain areas within Craigavon can demonstrate.

- The use of recorded crime data depends upon the reporting of such crimes. Therefore, in areas where crime is less likely to be reported, the figures will not provide an accurate reflection of local circumstances. Perhaps there should be an acknowledgement of the outcome of local community safety audits which focus on quantitative and qualitative data.
- While recognising that an untidy environment is not a crime, it should also be noted that there is some correlation between levels of crime and the state of the environment.
- In relation to the inclusion of weak community infrastructure, the concept can be defined and interpreted in different ways. Therefore, while this would be a useful indicator to include, what is actively meant by the term should be clarified.