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Our Ref: BH/cj

14 October 2004

Neighbour Statistics Unit
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Dear Sir/Madam

Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2004

Please find enclosed Fermanagh District Council's response to the above Consultation Document. The issues addressed in our response have been extensively researched and we have conducted consultation on a local basis with interested groups who have contributed to the report.

I trust that you will find the report useful and that appropriate account will be taken of the issues raised therein.

Yours faithfully

Brendan Hegarty
Director of Finance and IT

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**Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation
Measure Consultation:**

**Response by
Fermanagh District Council**

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Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure Consultation

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FINAL	1	12-10-04	<i>C. Hinchey</i>	<i>P. Kelly</i>



1. Introduction

1.1 Fermanagh District Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation exercise for the Northern Ireland Measure of Multiple Deprivation. In a region where equity has become a key consideration in the delivery of public policy, it is imperative that an appropriate evidence base is developed to frame decisions about targeting and support for those most in need. The Council sees the project of developing an appropriate measure of multiple deprivation as an important complement to research associated with New Targeting Social Need and Section 75.

1.2 The Council agrees that the principles and techniques involved in the production of a multiple deprivation measure should be agreed before the data sets are prepared. It is important that consensus is built around the method before the rankings and score are known. This ensures that comments are not influenced by the self-interest of those concerned.

1.3 In that spirit, the comments and recommendations of Fermanagh District Council are not framed by considerations about maximising the deprivation scores of its own wards or the entire district. Rather, the principle of equity demands that a measure which influences the way in which public resources are allocated, be itself equitable – it does not systematically discriminate against, or favour, any particular group or community. **In that respect, the Council's principal concern is whether the proposed Measure takes adequate account of rurality, peripherality and the development consequences of its border location.**

1.4 To explain the Council's position, this submission will outline the salient characteristics of the Fermanagh District, set out its criticisms of the proposed measure and make recommendations for domains, weightings and the indicators that make them up.



2. The Fermanagh District

2.1 As an indication of population change within the Fermanagh District Council area, population statistics from 1981 to 2003 are detailed in the table below. 1981, 1991 and 2001 figures are based on published Census statistics. In addition, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency provide mid-year estimates of population size and age breakdown for 2003. While these are obviously less reliable than Census data, they can be used to provide an indication of population change within the area between 2001 and 2003.

Population and Population Change						
Year	Population Figures					
	Fermanagh			Northern Ireland		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
1981	51,008	25,969	25,039	1,481,959	725,217	756,742
1991	54,033	27,095	26,938	1,577,836	769,071	808,765
2001	57,527	28,818	28,709	1,685,267	821,449	863,818
2003	58,705	29,499	29,206	1,702,628	832,822	869,806
	Population Change					
	Fermanagh			Northern Ireland		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
1981 - 1991	5.9%	4.3%	7.6%	6.5%	6.0%	6.9%
1991 - 2001	6.5%	6.4%	6.6%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%
2001 - 2003	2.0%	2.4%	1.7%	1.0%	1.4%	0.7%
Total change 1981 - 2003	15.1%	13.6%	16.6%	14.9%	14.8%	14.9%

Fig. 1: Population and population change. Source: Northern Ireland Census 1981, 1991, 2001. NISRA 2003.

2.2 Fermanagh District Council area has exhibited an overall population growth of 15% over the period 1981 – 2001 which is on par with growth in Northern Ireland.

2.3 Population density, i.e. number of persons per hectare, provides a suitable method of determining the rurality of the Fermanagh District Council area. As shown in the table overleaf, at the time of the 2001 Census, Fermanagh was ranked the most rural council area in Northern Ireland on this basis.



	All persons	Area (hectares)(1)	Population density (number of persons per hectare)	Rank by Lowest Density
Northern Ireland	1,685,267	1,413,540	1.19	
Fermanagh	57,527	187,582	0.31	1
Moyle	15,933	47,976	0.33	2
Omagh	47,952	113,045	0.42	3
Strabane	38,248	86,165	0.44	4
Cookstown	32,581	62,244	0.52	5
Limavady	32,422	58,558	0.55	6
Dungannon	47,735	78,360	0.61	7
Ballymoney	26,894	41,820	0.64	8
Magherafelt	39,780	57,280	0.69	9
Armagh	54,263	67,060	0.81	10

Fig. 2: District council population density. Source: Census 2001

2.4 The table overleaf provides an indication of the extent of the rurality of the Fermanagh District Council. Almost 70% of the wards (sixteen wards) displayed a population density which was below the Northern Ireland average of 1.19. Within these sixteen wards there was a combined population of 39,216, which equated to approximately 68% of the total population of the area. In addition, thirteen wards displayed a population density below the Fermanagh District Council average of 0.31.



	All persons	Area (hectares)(1)	Population density (number of persons per hectare)	Rank
Fermanagh	57,527	187,582	0.31	
Belcoo and Garrison	2,506	20,278	0.12	1
Belleek and Boa	2,385	17,291	0.14	2
Derrygonnelly	2,418	16,078	0.15	3
Florence Court and Kinawley	2,485	16,375	0.15	4
Boho Cleenish and Letterbreen	2,570	13,998	0.18	5
Brookeborough	2,204	12,274	0.18	6
Donagh	2,260	11,009	0.21	7
Derrylin	2,365	10,563	0.22	8
Rosslea	2,251	9,544	0.24	9
Lisnarrick	1,847	7,198	0.26	10
Newtownbutler	2,420	9,067	0.27	11
Tempo	2,402	9,049	0.27	12
Maguires Bridge	2,545	8,871	0.29	13
Kesh Ederney and Lack	3,440	11,268	0.31	14
Lisbellaw	2,696	5,231	0.52	15
Ballinamallard	2,422	4,457	0.54	16
Irvinestown	2,094	1,718	1.22	17
Erne	2,718	653	4.16	18
Rossorry	2,536	577	4.40	19
Devenish	1,928	431	4.47	20
Lisnaskea	2,632	559	4.71	21
Castlecoole	3,715	682	5.45	22
Portora	2,688	411	6.54	23

Fig. 3: Fermanagh District council population density. Source: Census 2001

2.5 The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research agency provides an annual breakdown of persons per square kilometre from 1981 to 2003. This presents an indication of changes in population density over this period. From 1981, Fermanagh District Council population density has remained at approximately 27% of the population density level for Northern Ireland as a whole.

Population Density (Persons per Square Kilometre)		
	Northern Ireland	Fermanagh
1981	113.6	30.7
1991	118.4	32.2
2001	124.4	33.9
2003	125.4	34.5

Fig. 4: Population Density. Source: Census 1981, 1991, 2001. NISRA 2003.

2.6 The table below details the difference in age profiles in both Northern Ireland and Fermanagh over the past twenty-years. The data highlights the increasing proportion of older people in recent years. Since 1981, the percentage of the population aged 0-24 has fallen by 7.9% and 8.6% in Northern Ireland and Fermanagh respectively, which has been met with a corresponding increase in



the population aged 35 years and over. This may suggest a trend to smaller family sizes, in-migration of older persons to the area and/or a greater than average life expectancy in the Fermanagh area and Northern Ireland as a whole. The changing age profiles in recent years point to different types of social need.

1981				
Age	Northern Ireland		Fermanagh	
	0-14	384,306	25.9%	13,816
15-24	261,736	17.7%	8,609	16.9%
25-34	194,703	13.1%	6,686	13.1%
35-44	170,262	11.5%	5,276	10.3%
45-54	150,345	10.1%	4,764	9.3%
55-64	142,468	9.6%	5,076	10.0%
65+	178,139	12.0%	6,781	13.3%
Total Population	1,481,959	100.0%	51,008	100.0%
1991				
Age	Northern Ireland		Fermanagh	
	0-14	385,275	24.4%	14,114
15-24	253,701	16.1%	8,496	15.7%
25-34	235,700	14.9%	7,274	13.5%
35-44	197,221	12.5%	6,908	12.8%
45-54	166,491	10.6%	5,290	9.8%
55-64	140,396	8.9%	4,622	8.6%
65+	199,052	12.6%	7,329	13.6%
Total Population	1,577,836	100.0%	54,033	100.0%
2001				
Age	Northern Ireland		Fermanagh	
	0-14	370,952	22.0%	12,798
15-24	238,586	14.2%	8,021	13.9%
25-34	242,221	14.4%	7,743	13.5%
35-44	246,974	14.7%	8,182	14.2%
45-54	200,890	11.9%	7,427	12.9%
55-64	162,319	9.6%	5,398	9.4%
65+	223,325	13.3%	7,959	13.8%
Total Population	1,685,267	100.0	57,528	100.0
2003				
Age	Northern Ireland		Fermanagh	
	0-14	361,168	21.2%	12,454
15-24	246,140	14.5%	8,318	14.2%
25-34	232,703	13.7%	7,734	13.2%
35-44	253,601	14.9%	8,353	14.2%
45-54	206,448	12.1%	7,668	13.1%
55-64	172,421	10.1%	5,961	10.2%
65+	230,147	13.5%	8,217	14.0%
Total Population	1,702,628	100.0%	58,705	100.0%

Fig.5: Age Breakdown. Source: Northern Ireland Census 1981, 1991, 2001. NISRA 2003.



2.7 As measured by population density, Fermanagh is the most rural district in Northern Ireland with a population age structure typical of many of the UK's rural areas – particularly in terms of marginally higher concentrations of the older age groups in the population.

2.8 The Farm Census 2001 provides a clear picture of the importance of agriculture within the Fermanagh District Council area. At 2001, approximately 12% of Northern Ireland's farms were located in the Fermanagh area. Similarly, 11% of the total Northern Ireland agricultural labour force was employed within Fermanagh. It is also worth noting that in 2001, 130,148 hectares of the total land within the Fermanagh District Council (187,582 hectares) area, was used for farming. This equates to a significant 69% of the total land which clearly demonstrates the reliance on agriculture within Fermanagh.

DC Name	Number of Farms 2001	Total area farmed in hectares 2001	Total number of Agricultural labour 2001
Fermanagh	3,584	130,148	6,176
Newry & Mourne	3,013	64,840	5,083
Omagh	2,434	89,427	4,180
Armagh	2,199	55,872	4,186
Dungannon	2,101	60,727	3,713
Cookstown	1,512	44,497	2,651
Magherafelt	1,487	53,597	2,741
Strabane	1,434	71,523	2,688
Ballymena	1,382	52,042	2,713
Down	1,343	47,896	2,643
Banbridge	1,257	37,896	2,420
Lisburn	977	34,062	1,992
Antrim	806	34,355	1,754
Coleraine	805	38,806	1,641
Ballymoney	798	33,018	1,658
Ards	776	30,296	1,913
Craigavon	723	21,527	1,630
Limavady	716	40,431	1,516
Moyle	651	38,839	1,266
Derry	591	29,216	1,203
Larne	571	31,602	1,150
Newtownabbey	298	11,208	598
Castlereagh	129	7,021	316
Carrickfergus	115	3,743	247
North Down	90	3,938	217
Belfast	26	1,712	67
Total	29,818	1,068,234	56,362

Fig. 6: Number of Farms. Source: Northern Ireland Farm Census 2001.



2.9 The table below provides an indication of the declining role in agriculture in Northern Ireland as a whole. Since 1999, the number of farms in Northern Ireland has decreased by 1,314, which is a decline of 4.2%. Fermanagh and Newry and Mourne, the top two agricultural district council areas in Northern Ireland, also witnessed a similar decline of 4.0%.

2.10 The sharp decline in farms during the period 1999 – 2000, may be partially attributed to the resultant impact on beef sales following the Government announcement in 1996 that BSE could be transmitted to humans in a variant form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD).

	Number of Farms			No. of Farms in Fermanagh as a % of NI	No. of Farms in Newry and Mourne as a % of NI
	Northern Ireland	Fermanagh	Newry & Mourne		
1999	31,132	3,734	3,141	11.99	10.09
2000	29,891	3,593	3,043	12.02	10.18
2001	29,818	3,584	3,013	12.02	10.10
Change 1999-2001	-1,314	-150	-128		
% change	-4.22%	-4.02%	-4.08%		

Fig. 7: Number of Farms. Source: Northern Ireland Farm Census 1999, 2000, 2001.

2.11 As would be expected, the decline in the number of farms over recent years has been met with a corresponding decrease in the number of agricultural employees. As shown in the table below, the Northern Ireland Agricultural labour force declined by 4.88% between 1999 and 2001, a total of 2,889 agricultural jobs. Within Fermanagh, there was a decline of 3.71%, which equates to 238 jobs. Newry and Mourne exhibited the greatest percentage decrease in the agricultural labour force.

	Number of Agricultural Labour			No. of Agricultural Labour in Fermanagh as % of NI	No. of Agricultural Labour in Newry and Mourne as % of NI
	Northern Ireland	Fermanagh	Newry and Mourne		
1999	59,251	6,414	5,379	10.83	9.08
2000	57,823	6,161	5,326	10.65	9.21
2001	56,362	6,176	5,083	10.96	9.02
Change 1999-2001	-2,889	-238	-296		
% change	-4.88%	-3.71%	-5.50%		

Fig. 8: Agricultural Labour. Source: Northern Ireland Farm Census 1999, 2000, 2001.



2.12 The table below provides an indication of the impact on the agricultural sector within the Fermanagh District Council area if a similar decline occurs over the next six years. Any future decline in the number of farms and agricultural jobs would have a significant impact on the Fermanagh District Council area given its dependence on the sector.

	Number of Farms		
	Northern Ireland	Fermanagh	Newry & Mourne
1999	31,132	3,734	3,141
2000	29,891	3,593	3,043
2001	29,818	3,584	3,013
Projected Number of Farms			
2004	28,559	3,440	2,890
2007	27,354	3,302	2,772

Fig. 9: Projected number of Farms. Source: Northern Ireland Farm Census 1999, 2000, 2001.

2.13 Not only is Fermanagh the most rural district in Northern Ireland, but agriculture plays a more significant role in its economy both in terms of production and employment. In recent years, the agricultural economy in Northern Ireland has suffered successive crises. An indication of the problems experienced by agriculture can be seen in the next table indicating the low levels of farm incomes.

Net farm income (£'s)	<i>per cent</i>			
	Dairy	Cattle and sheep (LFA)	Mixed	All types
Less than 0	37	34	42	37
1 - 2,499	5	12	-	10
2,500 - 4,999	2	8	11	5
5,000 - 7,499	9	7	11	7
7,500 - 9,999	8	8	22	9
10,000 - 14,999	8	10	-	8
15,000 - 19,999	10	11	-	10
20,000 - 29,999	11	7	8	8
> 30,000	10	3	6	6
Total	100	100	100	100
Number of farms in sample	139	111	15	296 ¹

1. Total includes 31 farms in farm types other than Dairy, Cattle and sheep (LFA) and Mixed

Fig. 10: Farming Cash Incomes 2002-2003, Source: DARD Agricultural Statistics 2003

2.14 Over a third of all farm types had cash incomes of less than zero. A further 15% had incomes of less than £5,000 per year. Such figures graphically depict



the plight of the agricultural community and the situation in Fermanagh may be worse because of the concentration of agriculture in the district. DARD statistics also point to declining farm incomes over time – the situation is deteriorating.

2.15 Considerations of equity demand that a measure of multiple deprivation captures such changes in the rural economy. Indeed, there is independent evidence of their impact.

2.16 The Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland¹ states that the socio-economic breakdown of rural communities indicates that, especially in the West and South of the region, there is a higher proportion of people in social need. In addition, the strategy outlines that the problem of poverty in rural areas is compounded by longer than average travel distances and a lack of public transport services resulting in an increase in the need for a car.

2.17 Research commissioned by OFMDFM (Diagram 2003) examined the characteristics of that section of the population located in the bottom 30% of the income distribution (equivalent to the EU poverty threshold of 60% of median household income) described as being in 'low income risk'. One aspect of the analysis looked at the regional distribution of the group. Because the data were derived from the Continuous Household Survey, it is not possible to disaggregate the findings below NUTS III level. Fermanagh is thus included in the West and South of Northern Ireland.

¹ Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002 – 2012. Department for Regional Development 2002.



	1990/91- 1993/94	1997/98- 1998/99	1999/00- 2001/02	Change ²
	%	%	%	pps
Population shares				
Belfast	18	19	18	-1
Outer Belfast	22	21	22	-0
East of N.I.	23	24	25	2
North of N.I.	17	16	16	-1
West & South of N.I.	20	20	20	0
All	100	100	100	
Low-income risk				
Belfast	27	29	31	4
Outer Belfast	16	16	16	-1
East of N.I.	20	20	20	1
North of N.I.	32	36	34	2
West & South of N.I.	37	34	36	-0
All	30	30	30	
Concentration of low incomes				
Belfast	19	21	20	1
Outer Belfast	14	13	13	-1
East of N.I.	18	19	19	2
North of N.I.	20	22	20	-1
West & South of N.I.	28	26	28	-1
All	100	100	100	

Notes:

¹ From 1990/91-1993/94 to 1999/00-2001/02.

Source: Derived from CHS data

Fig. 11: Population Shares, Source: OFMDFM 2003

2.18 In two of the three periods, the West and the South had the highest low income risk of any NUTS III area. Moreover, on the measure of low income concentration (an aggregate of risk and population share), the West and the South had the highest score in all three periods. Importantly, this research is based on real incomes as measured by the Continuous Household Survey rather than surrogate indicators of income such as benefits' data. Equally, while the area concerned is substantially greater than Fermanagh District, it is the most rural segment of Northern Ireland. There is no reason to suppose that the situation in Fermanagh is any different from that of the NUTS III area in which it is located.

2.19 These are real problems faced by the population of Fermanagh (and rural areas generally). It is imperative therefore that they are captured by the proposed measure of multiple deprivation.



3. General Comments

3.1 The NI Measure of Multiple Deprivation attempts to measure spatial differences in the incidence of deprivation – one area is more likely to have a higher concentration of deprivation than another. It is a relative measure, with wards ranked from most to least deprived. The difficulty this poses is determining what set of areas are the 'most deprived', i.e. which are the 10% of wards with the highest deprivation scores (as was used recently for designating Urban Regeneration Areas)? The question of course remains, what about areas that are just above that threshold?

3.2 No matter how well they are constructed, all spatially-based measures of deprivation are subject to two fundamental limitations - not all of those who live in disadvantaged areas are themselves disadvantaged and not all disadvantaged people live in disadvantaged areas.

3.3 The proposed measure does not measure deprivation directly. Instead, it relies on surrogate indicators for each of the domains. Its validity thus depends on the close relationship between the surrogates and the forms of deprivation they seek to measure. If some domains have better surrogates than others, this is likely to bias the measure of multiple deprivation. All domains depend on administrative data (necessary to be able to update the measure). This represents an improvement on using Census data that can only be updated every decade. However, this advantage also has its down side, i.e. there may be variation in how carefully data is collected across different agencies.

3.4 The income domain measures from the number of people living in families in receipt of a means-tested benefit. One problem with this is that it does not take account of low-income individuals who are not in receipt of a means-tested benefit, including those that may be entitled to a benefit but who do not take it for whatever reason. If such individuals are distributed unevenly across Northern Ireland, the different take-up rates of the various benefits may bias the indicator scores – a problem particularly for rural areas where culture or indeed, the ineligibility of certain farmers for certain kinds of benefit can affect the overall benefit take-up rate.

3.5 The employment domain measures exclusion from the world of work. This was measured by counting numbers of people not in work for involuntary reasons. There are questions about whether the proposed indicators will capture all such incidences of worklessness. Moreover social exclusion frequently focuses on duration of unemployment, but there is no particular focus on duration of worklessness within this domain.



3.6 The geographical access to services domain is primarily based on measured road distance, i.e. the deterrent effect of a mile is the same in, for example, both urban and rural areas. However, the physical infrastructure of rural areas is very different from urban as is the level of congestion in the latter. A more accurate indicator might be average travel times, something which the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation explicitly seeks to incorporate.

3.7 Additionally, the measure proposes to combine seven different domains to form a measure of multiple deprivation. While this is common practice in spatial measures of multiple deprivation, it has to be recognised that, with asymmetric scores across domains, there is the assumption that the lack of deprivation in one domain can compensate for high deprivation in another – for example, that employment can compensate for health.

3.8 Finally, Fermanagh District Council accepts the recommendation to create Super Output Areas. The range in ward populations in Northern Ireland is very large posing many problems for comparing like-with-like in any spatial measure of deprivation. This was acknowledged in the Robson measure through the Signed Chi Square technique and the Shrinkage technique in the 2001 measure. Moving to a spatial unit with less variability in size is a welcome recommendation.

3.9 None of the above comments are intended to dismiss the idea of a measure of multiple deprivation. Instead, they are intended to point out that the measure is a construct that is always less than perfect. It should be used carefully and supplemented, where possible, with other kinds of information that can give more texture to understanding the quality of life in particular localities. The danger is that, once scores have been assigned and a multiple deprivation measure constructed, it will be treated as though written on tablets of stone. The uses of the measure will be as important as the method of its construction. Policy must recognise the limitations as well as the uses of such mechanisms.



4. Fermanagh's Recommendations on the Domains and their Weighting

4.1 In July 2004, a consultation document for a new Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure was produced. In general, it proposed to use a similar methodology as that adopted in 2001:

The general notion of multiple deprivation and the concept of different domains of deprivation which can be combined to form a composite measure of deprivation, were widely supported during consultation for the NI MD 2001 and this methodology will be retained in the current review. Thus the emphasis of the consultation will be on the number and nature of domains and the indicators that are used to measure various forms of disadvantage; the creation of domain scores; and the weights for the creation of a multiple deprivation measure. (p.3)

4.2 In short, the proposed measure would be largely the same with changes in domains, indicators and weighting.

4.3 The consultation document suggests the following domains and two possible weighting systems.

	Weights A	Weights B
Income deprivation	25%	25%
Employment deprivation	25%	25%
Health deprivation and disability	15%	10%
Education, skills and training deprivation	15%	10%
Geographical access to services	10%	10%
Crime	5%	10%
Living environment	5%	10%

4.4 At headline level, Social Environment and Housing Stress from the 2001 Measure have been replaced by Crime and Living Environment. The document asks whether a new domain of Weak Community Infrastructure should be included since there has been substantial debate about this issue and government has directly commissioned research on attempting to measure weak community infrastructure. However, in the absence of a robust and consistent data set on community infrastructure, it is unlikely that such a domain could be added to the existing set.

4.5 In both weighting systems, priority is given to income and employment deprivation. The second weighting system prioritises Crime and Living Environment over Health and Education.

4.6 Fundamentally, Fermanagh District Council remains unconvinced that the data sets on crime are sufficiently robust to merit an entire domain within the multiple deprivation measure. The consultation document suggests



that because Northern Ireland has a single policing authority (PSNI) crime recording and geo-coding will be consistent across the region. However, if recording systems are not uniform (there are reasons to suggest that this is the case) or if the propensity to report and prosecute criminal type activities are systematically different in different areas of Northern Ireland, distortions would appear within these indicators. It has been suggested that reporting rates vary between urban and rural areas and between religions. If so, the entire domain becomes suspect.

4.7 Accordingly, Fermanagh recommends that the Crime domain be abandoned and that the indicators be incorporated as a sub domain within Living Environment. This would reduce the domains to six. In terms of precedent, this is not unusual, both the Scottish and Welsh Indices of Multiple Deprivation utilise six domains. They do indicate the desirability of incorporating a crime domain, but admit that the data sets are insufficiently robust. In our view, there are issues with differential reporting that are systematic across the region. Accordingly, the measure should put much less reliance on these data sets.

4.8 Fermanagh District Council recommends the following domains and weights:

Domain	Weight
Income deprivation	22.5%
Employment deprivation	22.5%
Health deprivation and disability	15.0%
Education, skills and training deprivation	15.0%
Geographical access to services	15.0%
Living environment	10.0%

Fig. 12: Fermanagh District Council recommended domains and weights.

4.9 Income and Employment deprivation would continue to have the highest weights, although marginally less than proposed in the consultation document. The reason is straightforward – both depend on benefits data that may be subject to uneven take-up rates. While there are clearly the major axes of deprivation, they tend to favour areas with high take-up rates. In our view they should not make up half of the total measure. The 22.5% weighting for each is in line with the weighting scores used in the English Multiple Deprivation Measure.

4.10 Doing so would enable the measure to maintain significant weights for Health and Education, both of which are crucial determinants of deprivation while retaining a 25% weighting for the two specifically spatial measures, Geographic Access and Living Environment.

4.11 In our view, this set of domains and weights represents the best balance between different forms of deprivation and is most equitable in a region characterised by severe spatial underdevelopment.



5. Fermanagh's Recommendations on the Proposed Indicators

5.1 Income Deprivation

The proposed indicators for the Income Deprivation domain are:

- Adults and children in Income Support (IS) households (2003, Source: DSD)
- Adults and children in Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA(IB)) households (2003, Source: DSD)
- Adults and children in Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) households whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefits) is below 60% of median before housing costs (2003, Source: Inland Revenue and DSD)
- Adults and children in Disabled Person's Tax Credit (DPTC) households whose equivalised income (excluding housing benefits) is below 60% of median before housing costs (2003, Source: Inland Revenue and DSD)
- Adults and children living in rented accommodation
- Households in receipt of housing benefit who are not captured through IS, JSA(IB), WFTC or DPTC (2003, Source: NIHE)
- Adults and children living in owner occupied households in receipt of rate rebate who are not captured through IS, JSA(IB), WFTC or DPTC (2003, Source: Northern Ireland Rate Collection Agency).

The major changes are the inclusion of Working Families Tax Credit and Disabled Person's Tax Credit. While these were superseded in April 2003 by new tax credits, the document argues that the quality of the new data could not be assured in time to produce a new deprivation measure and so WFTC and DPTC data are to be used. Moreover since tax credits are available further up the income scale than the old Family Credit, an income threshold of 60% of median equalised household income would be used as a cut-off point.

Fermanagh District Council recommends that an indicator should also be included to measure those over 60 receiving the Minimum Income Guarantee (in place up until 5th October 2003, then replaced by Pension Credit) - data available from DSD.

It should be recognised that benefit take-up is a surrogate rather than a measure of income. **Fermanagh District Council recommends that the Social Disadvantage research Centre investigate the possibility of weighting these data by sub-regional (NUTS III) average income levels taken from the Continuous Household Survey.**

5.2 Employment Deprivation

The proposed indicators for the Employment Domain are:



- Unemployment claimant count (JUVOS) of women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64 averaged over 4 quarters (2003, Source: DETI)
- Incapacity Benefit claimants women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64 (2003, Source: DSD)
- Severe Disablement Allowance claimants women aged 18-59 and men aged 18-64 (2003, Source: DSD)
- Participants in New Deal for the 18-24s who are not included in the claimant count (2003, Source: DEL)
- Participants in New Deal for 25+ who are not included in the claimant count (2003, Source: DEL)
- Participants in New Deal for Lone Parents aged 18 and over (2003, Source: DEL).

The purpose of this domain is to capture all those who are involuntarily out of employment, including those who are on the post-Gateway components of New Deal.

Fermanagh District Council recommends that an indicator should be constructed for the New Deal (50+).

Fermanagh District Council recommends the changing of the age thresholds for the Unemployment Count to start at 16 since there is evidence of younger people having access to this benefit.

Fermanagh District Council recommends the changing of the age thresholds of Severe Disablement Allowance to start at 16 since there is evidence of younger people having access to this benefit.

5.3 Health and Disability

The Health and Disability Domain will be made up of:

- Years of Potential Life Lost (1999 to 2003, Source: Mortality statistics, NISRA)
- Comparative Illness and Disability Ratio (2003, Source: IS, AA, DLA, SDA, IB from DSD) (*Consideration should be given to the collection of data from DSD regarding those registered with Incapacity Benefits Branch who are receiving "credits only" due to incapacity.*)
- Measures of emergency admissions to hospital, derived from Hospital Inpatient System records (2001/2002 to 2003/2004, Source: DHSSPS)
- Measure of individuals suffering from mood or anxiety disorders, based on prescribing (2003, Source: CSA),
- Hospital Inpatient System records (2000/2001 to 2003/2004, Source: DHSSPS) and suicides (1999 to 2003, Source: NISRA).



These are very different indicators from those employed in the 2001 Measure. The proposed change is designed to capture unexpected death or morbidity rates, e.g. the Years of Potential Life Lost indicator will be higher in an area which has a high rate of deaths among young people compared to one where deaths are predominantly amongst elderly.

Fermanagh District Council recommends that an indicator be constructed from data in regard to the number of emergency admissions to Mental Health Hospitals, including voluntary and those under the Mental Health Order.

Fermanagh District Council recommends that the indicator used in NI MD 2001 - *people registered as having cancer*, be retained.

Fermanagh District Council recommends that the indicator used in NI MD 2001 - *proportion of all 12-17 years olds with extractions and registration or non-registration with a dentist*, be retained. A recent study found that young people living west of the Bann have the worst dental health in the United Kingdom.

Fermanagh District Council recommends that data is obtained from DSD regarding those receiving Industrial Disablement Benefit and those receiving Constant Attendance Allowance (a benefit for those who are severely disabled) should be employed to generate a new indicator for this domain.

5.4 Education and Skills

The Education, Training and Skills Deprivation domain is to be constructed from two sub-domains, one for young people and one for adults. This is an attempt to capture the 'flow' and 'stock' dimensions of this aspect of deprivation. Educational performance of young people reflects flow in terms of the groups that are acquiring training and skills, the education/training characteristics of adults is a statement of the education training levels within the adult population.

The proposed indicators for this domain are:

Sub Domain: Children/young people

- GCSE/GNVQ points score (1999/2000 to 2001/2002, Source: School Leavers Survey, DE)
- Key Stage 3 data (2003, Source: DE) Note: Key Stage 3 assessment is based on formal tests taken by pupils at the end of KS3 (c. age 14) in English (or Irish – in Irish speaking schools), Mathematics and Science.
- Proportions of those leaving school aged 16 and not entering Further Education (1999/2000 to 2001/2002, Source: School Leavers Survey, DE)



- Absenteeism at secondary level (all absences) (2002/2003 Source: School Performance Survey, DE)
- Proportions of 17-20 year olds who have not successfully applied for Higher Education (1999/2000 to 2002/2003, Source: UCAS and DEL)
- Proportions of Years 11 and 12 pupils not in a grammar school (2003, Source: School Census, DE)

Fermanagh District Council questions how children in *integrated or Irish Language medium schools will be treated under the grammar school indicator.*

Sub Domain: Working age adults

- Proportions of working age adults (aged 25-59) in the area with no or low levels of qualification (2001, Source: Census, NISRA)

The range of flow data (young people) is considerably greater than that for stock data (adults). Both sub-domains are proposed as having equal weighting, although it should be noted that if the adult sub-domain is Census derived, then updating the data will be difficult before 2011.

5.5 Geographical Access to Services

The domain that has excited most debate within rural areas has been that of Geographical Access to Services Deprivation. The document explicitly states:

*This is relevant to people wherever they live in Northern Ireland as poor access to services can be experienced in urban as well as rural areas. **Such deprivation may however be felt more acutely in rural areas, especially if access to public transport is poor.** (our emphasis) The proposed indicators aim to capture these issues. (p.12)*

In short, a key purpose of this domain is to capture aspects of deprivation that may arise from rurality and peripherality.

Here the proposed indicators are:

- Road distance to a Post Office (2003, Source: Post Office Ltd)
- Road distance to a GP premises (2003, Source: CSA)
- Road distance to an Accident and Emergency hospital (2003, Source: DHSSPS)
- Road distance to a general food store (2003, Source: Census of Employment, DETI)
- Access to transport (2003, Source: DVLNI Vehicle Registrations; 2004, Translink bus stop audit).



With respect to this indicator Fermanagh District Council recommends the following:

Fermanagh District Council recommends that there should be consideration of the concept of access time rather than just road distance to allow for differences in physical infrastructure and/or congestion.

Fermanagh District Council questions that the size (and therefore the range and prices of stock carried) of 'general food stores' might differ significantly between rural and urban areas. Individuals in rural areas may therefore have to shop at other than the nearest food store for particular items. The council therefore recommends that a minimum size of 2,500 sq. ft. be included in this indicator. This would guarantee that the 'general food store' be sufficiently large to carry a full range of items

The Access to Transport indicator is a combination of car ownership (Vehicle Registrations) and bus stops. In rural areas access to a car may be more necessary than in urban (acknowledged on page 13 of the consultation document). Individuals may be forced to spend a higher proportion of their income in ensuring access to a car or van without necessarily being any better off than those without cars. Moreover, the 'transport poor' (the young, elderly and disabled) may be more disadvantaged in rural compared to urban areas. **Fermanagh District Council therefore recommends that this dimension of the indicator be weighted by the proportion of the local population who are 'transport poor'.**

Similarly, the issue is not just the number of bus stops but the frequency of buses. An average frequency indicator derived from Translink timetables may offer a better picture of access problems. The indicator will be weighted by the number of services per day but the actual number of buses stopping per day is not available.

Fermanagh District Council opposes the dropping of several indicators that were in the 2001 measure and recommends their retention, i.e.

- **Access time to a dentist (1999, CSA)**
- **Access time to an optician (1999, CSA)**
- **Access time to a pharmacist (1999, CSA)**
- **Access time to a library (2000, Education and Library Boards)**
- **Access time to a museum (2001, Northern Ireland Museums Council)**
- **Access time to a Social Security Office or a Training and Employment Agency (2001, DHFETE)**



Both indicator lists should be combined to capture more of the 'texture' of rural life and of its associated access problems.

5.6 Living Environment

Fermanagh District Council recommends that the three proposed sub domains be retained but another added:

Sub Domain: Housing quality

- Ward level housing stress (2001, Source: SDRC and NIHE, modelled NI House Conditions Survey)
- Houses without central heating (2001, Source: Census, NISRA)

Sub Domain: Housing access

- Household overcrowding (2001, Source: Census, NISRA)
- District level rate of those presenting as homeless under the homelessness provisions of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 and the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, assigned to the constituent areas (2001 to 2003, Source: NIHE) – Those presenting as homeless is a better indicator than acceptances since the latter are a reflection of the level of supply of emergency accommodation rather the level of demand for it.

Sub Domain: Outdoor physical environment

- Pedestrian and cyclist casualties resulting from road traffic accidents (2001 to 2003, Source: PSNI)
- Local area problem score (2001, Source: SDRC and NIHE, modelled NIHCS)

Sub Domain: Environmental Risk

Fermanagh District Council recommends the inclusion of this sub domain to include the crime data and a further indicator on occupational accidents. Both are indicative of certain kinds of risks that individuals encounter through life.

All four sub domains would have equal weight within the domain.



6. Final Comments

In making these recommendations, Fermanagh District Council emphasises its commitment to evidence driven social policy. It has sought not to rewrite the multiple deprivation measure to its own advantage, but in recognition of the important equity issues between urban and rural environments, particular with the collapse of farming incomes in the latter.

In putting these comments and recommendations forward, it hopes to stimulate a debate amongst other rural districts about how to achieve the appropriate balance within and between the domains that make up the multiple deprivation measure.