

## **NORTHERN IRELAND MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION MEASURE 2009: CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

Armagh City and District Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to the above consultation document. It welcomes the review of the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation measures, as it considers that such important indicators should be regularly reviewed, especially in rapidly changing economic circumstances.

Concerns have been expressed in the measurement of income deprivation especially concerning pensioners where there has traditionally been an undertake up of benefits and pensioners in a deprived state may not be identified. Pensioners relying on income from investments and savings have seen income levels fall which may take them into poverty, they can be asset rich but income poor and their assets impact against their benefits or their own desire to claim benefits. Some consideration should be given to this category especially in the current recession.

The Council in principle accepts the changes to the income domain.

The Council in principle accepts the changes to the employment domain, however concern was expressed about the measurement of people who are not in employment as a result of being full time carers and would ask that consideration be given to the impact this group has on the indicators.

The Council in principle accepts any change to the health deprivation and disability domain which improve the accuracy of the measure

The Council in principle accepts any change to the education, skills and training deprivation domain which improve the accuracy of the measure

The Council in principle accepts any change to the proximity to service domain which improves the accuracy of the measure; however some issues were raised in respect to your questions which are as follows:

***Question 1: Whether cross border service centre and accident and emergency hospitals should be included?***

These should only be included if our emergency services use these resources;

***Question 2: Whether a general service indicator should be included?***

Only if it does not dilute the accuracy of indicator.

***Question 3: Whether the food shop indicator should be broadened to include convenience stores?***

Consideration still needs to be given to where people will do the main shop for the bulk of their food items and receive the best value.

***Question 4: Whether dentists, opticians and pharmacists should be combined into a single indicator?***

Reflecting the rural nature of parts of our area the Council would prefer to retain separate indicators.

***Question 5: Whether Council leisure centres should be included?***

As leisure centres contribute significantly to the overall wellbeing of an area they should be included however as centres can be provided by both the public and private sector, the presence of private sector facility is likely to indicate affluence and a Council facility need. Some consideration needs to be given to how this information is used.

***Question 6: Whether service centres should be based on service provision rather than having a population of at least 10,000?***

Service centres should be based on service provision rather than population.

***Question 7: Whether the calculation of proximity be based on time rather than distance?***

As road infrastructure is an important contributor to economic growth, Armagh City and District Council considers that proximity should be based on time rather than distance and consideration needs to be given to the availability of public transport.

The Council in principle accepts any change to the living environment domain which improve the accuracy of the measure

The Council in principle accepts any change to the crime and disorder domain which improve the accuracy of the measure