

## **Response to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2004: Consultation Document**

Carrickfergus Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has been established to devise local strategies to tackle local community safety problems. As part of this work, Carrickfergus CSP have recently completed the first stage of their community safety audit for the Borough of Carrickfergus. This audit draws on information from the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2001.

Carrickfergus CSP welcomes the review of Deprivation for Northern Ireland. The CSP appreciates the importance of the model in ascertaining deprivation as experienced by individuals and communities and the difficulties of quantifying deprivation and disadvantage in different types of areas.

In completing the audit the following issues have been identified in relation to the NI Measure of Deprivation 2004:

- Carrickfergus CSP welcomes the proposed crime domain for the new NI Measures of Deprivation. The Carrickfergus Community Safety Audit uses information from the PSNI 2002/03 recorded crime statistics for District Council area and it is clear that deprivation resulting from crime is different to deprivation stemming from living environment. In addition, Police recorded crime data locate criminal events at their point of occurrence and therefore act as an indicator of risk of victimisation at the neighbourhood level.

However, it is important to remember the following when using recorded crime data as a means of measuring deprivation. Many offences never come to the attention of the police. Of those crimes that do come to their attention, the police may exercise discretion in deciding whether or not to follow up the offence with an investigation. It is important therefore that the under reporting of crime is understood when interpreting these official figures.

- Carrickfergus CSP proposes an additional domain covering domestic violence. The Carrickfergus Community Safety Audit highlights domestic violence as a significant issue for this area and Northern Ireland as a whole. According to Women's Aid 1 in 4 families have experienced domestic violence. The Audit shows that Carrickfergus has a large number of domestic incidents attended by police and a substantial proportion of these involved domestic violence. Incidents of domestic violence are often under reported and under recorded. Although domestic violence may be currently included under the crime domain it may be important to create a new domain, and/or indicators, which cover this area.
- There are several areas which impact deprivation which are difficult to measure. In this area the Community Safety Audit identifies that the fear of crime is a significant issue. Northern Ireland has been one of the safest parts of the UK, in

terms of the numbers of crimes committed per head of population. The risk of being a victim of crime in Northern Ireland is substantially lower than in England and Wales. However, some communities in Northern Ireland do not feel safe and many people have fear about crime and anti social behaviour. In addition, the First Annual Report of the Carrickfergus District Policing Partnership March 2003 to April 2004 shows local people perceive paramilitary activity is one of the biggest problems (65%) in this area. In reality the Police only recorded 13 sectarian incidents in the year 2002/03. This was a 30% decrease on the previous year.

Similarly anti social behaviour is identified as affecting quality of life. In this area it appears teenagers hanging around, vandalism/graffiti and rubbish/litter are key issues.

Both of these issues can be particularly difficult to measure as they can mean different things to different people. Would there be an opportunity in the future to develop a domain to include details of fear of crime and anti social behaviour?

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A copy of the Carrickfergus Community Safety Audit Stage One can be viewed at [www.carrickfergus.org](http://www.carrickfergus.org) under the Community Safety Partnership page.