



THE FERMANAGH TRUST

COUNTY FERMANAGH'S COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

**Response to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2004:
Consultation Document (July 2004)**

1st Draft

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1.0 Introduction

The Fermanagh Trust welcomes the opportunity to feed into this most important consultation on the proposed revisions relating to the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure as developed by Noble et. al. 2001.

2.0 Overall Domain Structure Feedback

The Multiple Deprivation Measure domain structure as currently proposed is comprehensive and convincing. However, the Trust feel that a number of very important amendments need to be made to the various sub-domains and their respective measures.

The domains and their indicators are heavily focused on 'effect', and appear not to give importance and or priority to 'cause'. This particular aspect is discussed more fully under the Income, Employment and Accessibility Domains.

The domains and their indicators imply that like is being compared with like across Northern Ireland, whilst no regard is given to the uniqueness of rural areas and particularly those that occupy the border area with its specific and unique challenges for the individuals and communities that live there. This is covered particularly under the Accessibility Domain.

3.0 Income and Employment Domains

The Trust welcomes the revisions to the Domains, and particularly the inclusion of the new measure which relates specifically to the inclusion of Older People and the income deprivation experienced by them.

Income and Employment

Fermanagh Trust would wish to see within the Income and Employment Domains an additional sub-domain (e.g. Local Economic Opportunity Index) and related indicators relating to the value of the local economy/ economic opportunity/ growth/ investment.

From looking at the proposed Multiple Deprivation Measure Domain structure (2004) and the current structure (2001), it is apparent that when exploring income and employment domain scores between areas, one is not comparing like with like. We believe that in order to draw wise, fair and real meaning from the employment and income scores, some attempt must be given toward quantifying and weighting the economic context within which the persons identified find themselves. By way of example, to say that there is for the sake of illustration, 4.5% unemployment in Enniskillen and Belfast, appears to suggest that both areas operate within the same economic context of opportunity, growth and investment. However, we feel that real consideration must be given to ones chances to access economic inclusion in the labour market given their prevailing economic context.

Evidently, people who are unemployed in Fermanagh will not necessarily experience the same opportunities as those in Belfast. We know that there are

significant differences in the nature, dynamic and scales of the respective economies. Therefore, any presentation of income and employment must factor in the local economic context and its prevailing opportunities and challenges. One's chances of accessing work in the labour market should be taken into account.

Further, we recommend that income and employment should be weighted by income as measured by the Continuous Household Survey which is available to sub-regional NUTS III. As it stands, the measures look at benefits, without looking at real incomes. Research commissioned by OFMDFM indicates that risk and concentration of low income is greater in rural as opposed to urban areas.

Employment Domain

An additional factor which we feel needs to be taken into account is summed up by Donaghy, J. (1996)¹:

"The overall economic activity rate amongst males in Fermanagh is 70.2% and for females it is 39%. Their respective economically inactive percentages are 29.9% and 61%. Keeping both these points in mind, when unemployment figures for males and females are examined, a trend is discovered that would seem to run contrary to the above facts. This is that the female unemployment rate is 12.1% whilst the males is 22.8%. What this would appear to suggest is that there is a low-level of females actually signing on i.e., gaining employment benefit. They are therefore to be found within the informal household sector. This is reflected in their high economic inactivity rate and low unemployment rate relative to the male rates. This may be viewed as a reflection of the Fermanagh economy in which agriculture has dominated. This has tended to be viewed over the years as being a male sector activity with farmers spouses been considered not active."

Economic inactivity rate is not reflected in the Employment Domain measures. It would appear that by incorporating this measure, that a much more accurate and full picture of true labour market exclusion can be determined. An indicator should be incorporated that gives due regard to this aspect of labour market exclusion.

4.0 Education, Skills and Training Deprivation

The Trust welcomes the development of the sub-domains. This finer granularity gives greater information with regard to the development and promotion of Life-Long Learning, etc.

5.0 Geographical Access to Services

Of all the Domains and their related indicators, the Trust feels that this one is the weakest and that the proposed construct/ methodology for this domain is fundamentally flawed and most definitely urban biased. We argue vociferously that this particular domain and its related indicators require a greater degree of sophistication and focus. Further, the Trust opposes the

dropping of the indicators that were in the 2001 measure and recommends their retention, i.e.

- Access to a dentist
- Access time to an optician
- Access time to a pharmacist
- Access tie to a library
- Access time to a museum
- Access time to a Social Security Office or a Training and Employment Agency

The Trust further endorses the inclusion of access to a shop. However, the Fermanagh Trust believes that a specific shop size threshold needs to be set within which one might assume that an individual/ family could get the shopping basket essentials. We propose access to a grocery shop size of a minimum of 2,500 square feet.

Road Distances as proxy measures

Road distance is not an effective, robust and safe determinant of accessibility. Therefore, the use of road distances, especially with regard to accident and emergency units is ill-founded. We know that road distance is not the key determinant in the vital minutes following an accident, but in fact 'ambulance response times'. These figures are readily available from the NI Ambulance Service. In the event of an accident and a patient requiring admission, it is expected that one is most probably going to be transported by ambulance. The Trust feels that time is a much more appropriate and robust measure.

Pre-school, FE/ HE provision and opportunity

The omission of access, especially to Further and Higher Education provision and indeed pre-school education are ominous by their absence. Government tells us that these are key determinants with regard to an individuals chances of inclusion both socially and economically and therefore their propensity to end up on state benefits and unemployed. Consideration should be given to these key measures. Availability locally will have a huge influence on ones ability to go onto FE/ HE and or return to FE/ HE and Life Longing Learning opportunities later in life and or career. Again, there is a huge rural urban difference and dimension with regard to this which must be considered when contextualising the context within which Further and Higher Education learning achievement rates are being considered. Attainment rates cannot be considered in isolation outside of the context for the opportunity to participant in and therefore FE/ HE qualifications.

Car ownership and Public Transport Measures

It is this aspect in particular which causes the Trust the greatest deal of concern. This element of the accessibility domain gives a very crude reference and approach to the measurement of rural accessibility/ inaccessibility.

When looking at accessibility in rural areas, it is widely understood within the theory and practice amongst transport geographers that rural areas tend to experience higher levels of car ownership over their more urban counterparts. This is as a result of necessity and the general unavailability of adequate rural public transport given the inherent unprofitability of the demand/ supply context. It is further recognised, that in order for a great many rural dwellers to have access to more than one car, several of life's other essentials such as central heating and food stuffs, etc. may suffer.

Those left without access to a car within car owning households and those within households without access to car are then very dependent on public transport availability, particularly when family and friends are unavailable to transport them, especially when the latter are at work, etc. This phenomenon has become greatly exacerbated in recent times by the break-down of social networks within traditional rural communities as these economies and communities have undergone massive economic restructuring and haemorrhaging of jobs, which has driven the migration of the young and those with transferable skills to centres of larger population and economic activity.

The Fermanagh Trust fully endorses the need for access to transport to be included. However, any assessment should not be focused on access to transport per se, "but access to key services and activities facilitated through the availability of appropriate timed public transport". The document on page 12 states: "Both public transport measures calculate the percentage of people (households) in an area who live within walking distance of a bus-stop or within walking distance of a train station, and then use a crude measure of bus/train frequency information (the number of services per day) to weight these percentages...". This approach completely neglects the need to determine whether or not transport services which are available facilitate people to travel to work within the required time-frame in order that they can take-up employment, take their child to the doctor during surgery opening times, go to the library in the nearest town to get a book, go to the Cinema on a Saturday evening. This is what accessibility is about. A bus can go up and down a road, but if it does not meet the time parameters related to the individuals within the communities social and economic travel and access related needs, then it is for all intense purposes irrelevant to the accessibility needs with respect to key activities and services. Nutley, S. (1992, p.137)¹ describes accessibility as:

"the ability to make a journey for a specific purpose".

As presently conceived, the measures within the accessibility domain do not measure true accessibility.

An approach which has been widely deployed in measuring accessibility as defined by Nutley is the model and framework developed by R.J. Johnston. R.J. Johnston (1966)² has set out a model and framework for looking at

¹ Nutley, S. (1992) *'Rural Areas: The Accessibility Problem'*, in Hoyle, B.S. & Knowles, R.D., (ed), *Modern Transport Geography*, pp.125-154, Belhaven Press, London.

² Johnston, R.J. (1966)² in his article *'An Index of Accessibility and its uses in the Study of Bus Services and Settlement Patterns'* in *Tijdschrift Voor Econ. En. Soc. Geografie*, Jan/ Feb, Vol. 57, pp.33-38

accessibility within a time/space prism. This model has been deployed by the Transport Research Group at the University of Ulster Jordanstown.

Inclusion of Transport Poor Measure and Weighting

Any assessment of accessibility as defined above must determine the number of transport poor within a given geographical area and weight the overall accessibility measure score accordingly. Transport Poor can be defined as those who do not have access to a car all day every day, and are those who are suffering most from the decline of public transport as mainly induced through car-ownership and usage and from the centralisation of services and activities. This group commonly referred to as the Transport Poor is comprised of the elderly who for reasons of physical deterioration and low incomes cannot avail of car ownership and use; the young who because of their age and financial circumstances cannot drive; women, especially those with young children whose husband might take the car to work; the disabled and those families on low incomes and state benefits(Cawley,M.E., 1986, p.48³; Ramblers Association, 1970, *2*, p.15⁴; Robinson,H. & Bamford, C.G.,1978,p.323⁵; Cresswell,R.,1978,p.51⁶; Gilg,A., 1985, p.177; Hall,C.,1975, p.119⁸; Nutley, S., 1992, p.129⁹; Moseley,M, et.al., 1977, p.65.73 & 1979, p.51^{10/11}; RDC., 1996a, p.6 & 1996, p.4-5^{12/13/14}; Grant,R. & Smith.J., 1991, p108-124)¹⁵.

The above definition of the Transport Poor sets out the significance of the Transport Poor grouping, and the need to ensure that any measure of accessibility incorporates the determination of the scale of the Transport Poor population within a given area, and the degree to which public transport facilitates them in their necessary journeys for social and economic inclusion

³ Cawley,M.E. (1986) *'Disadvantaged Groups and Areas: Problems of Rural Service Provision'*, in Breathnach, P. & Cawley, M.E., (ed), Change and development in Rural Ireland, Geographical Society of Ireland Special Publications, No.1, The Cardinal Press Ltd, Moynooth, pp.48-49.

⁴ The Ramblers Association (1970's?) *'Rural Transport in Crisis'*, The Ramblers Association: Brief for the Countryside, No.4, Leicester Printers Ltd, Leicester.

⁵ Robinson, H. et. al. (1978) *'The Rural Transport Problem'*, in Robinson, H. & Bamford, C.G., Geography of Transport, pp.322-336, Macdonald & Evans Ltd, Plymouth

⁶ Cresswell, R., 1978, p.51

⁷ Gilg, A., (1985), *'Rural Transport, Service Provision and Deprivation'*, in An Introduction to Rural Geography, Edward Arnold (Pub) Ltd., London, pp.97-107.

⁸ Hall, C. (1975) *'Rural Transport – A Poor Relation'*, in Built Environment Quarterly, September, 1975, 120, pp.119-120.

⁹ Nutley, S., (1992), *'Rural Areas: The Accessibility Problem'*, in Hoyle, B.S. & Knowles, R.D., (Ed), Modern Transport Geography, pp.125-154, Belhaven Press, London.

¹⁰ Moseley,M,J., et.al.,(1977), *'Rural Transport and Accessibility – Volume One'*, Main report, University of East Anglia, U.K., p.65.73 & 1979, p.51.

¹¹ Moseley,M,J., (1979), *'Accessibility: The Rural Challenge'*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London

¹² Rural Development Council (NI), (1996a), *'Rural Transport – The Vital Link'*.

¹³ Rural Development Council (NI), (1996b), *'Rural Transport Problems and Needs'*.

¹⁴ Rural Development Council (NI), (1996c), *'Country Lifelines – Good Practice in Rural Transport'*

¹⁵ Grant, R., et.al. (1991) *'The Elderly and Disabled in Rural Areas: Travel Patterns in the North Cotswolds'*, in Champion, T. & Watkins, C. (ed), People in the Countryside: Studies of Social Change in Rural Britain, Chapman Publishing, London, pp.108-123

purposes. It is for this grouping that public transport is crucially important. If it fails to meet their essential travel requirements, they are then excluded from the main with respect to all dimensions of life.

The Accessibility measure is focused on the 'Transport Rich' as opposed to the 'Transport Poor'.

Accessibility and the Border Counties

Another important issue which is not reflected in the sub-domains or the measures is the impact of the Border. A great many people who live along the Border live within the context of their 'natural hinterland'. A great many of the services and activities that they require access to will not be accessed in Northern Ireland, but in the Republic of Ireland. In the instance of Fermanagh, Rosslea and the south-east area of the County look not to Enniskillen but to Monaghan Town in County Monaghan, especially the Nationalist community. The topography of the area dictates that the Roslea/ Monaghan access is more relevant than the Roslea/ Enniskillen access (Fermanagh's primary town market town.) To facilitate access may require the individuals utilising both Northern Ireland Transport Group and CIE bus services, etc.

6.0 Living Environment Domain

Fermanagh Trust would propose that under the Sub-Domain: Outdoor physical environment that additional measures should be incorporated looking at Industrial related Hazardous Episodes and hazardous incident probability linked to economic and occupational make-up with the local community. As an example, someone earning £150 a week working in a shop does not encounter the same degree of potential danger and risk as someone working on a farm for the same money. The measures under this sub-domain appear to imply an implicit and explicit urban focus via the pedestrian and cyclist casualties resulting from road traffic accidents. People experience the physical environment through work as well as in their free time. This sub-domain needs to reflect this. Reported industrial accidents per area should be incorporated into this measure. This information is available from the Health and Safety Executive.

7.0 Crime Domain

It would seem that if the Crime Domain is to truly reflect Northern Ireland and the most appropriate types of offences, it would be anomalous to omit measurement of the incident of sectarian and racist offences.

Further, given the extent of unreported crime for various reasons, some attempt should be made to weight unreported crime into the statistics. If the information through the Northern Ireland Crime Survey is available at Belfast, East Northern Ireland, West Northern Ireland, then those areas that find themselves located within these areas should have their actual reported/ recorded figures weighted by the research on unreported crime at the Northern Ireland Sub-regional level. Given the fact that in rural areas

some 60% of crime goes unreported, it would be wholly wrong to ignore the reality on the ground and therefore essential to try to reflect more honestly and fully the true picture of crime. It must also be remembered that a great many people would wish to inform the police service of offences committed against them or their property. However, given current circumstances they feel unable due to the actual and perceived threat and fear of violence and recrimination against them.

8.0 Geography

We welcome the introduction of the new Super Output Areas which we believe should be nested within existing ward boundaries and the degree of standardisation they introduce to the presentation and analysis of the data. We would strongly urge that Census Output Areas should be kept and nested within the Super Output Areas. It is important that robust and valuable data is brought to the lowest possible level whilst still retaining the confidentiality and anonymity of especially small and easily identifiable groupings/ individuals.

9.0 Weighting

The Fermanagh Trust wishes to see Geographical Access to Services given a much higher weighting. Access is key as we have set-out under 5.0 above. Without it, it's impossible to earn an income and or access employment easily, especially in rural communities. Geographical Access should be given 20 points, and Education, skills and training deprivation and Health deprivation and disability each given 10 points.

10.0 Weak Community Infrastructure

If Weak Community Infrastructure is to be considered for inclusion within the Measure of Multiple Deprivation, it is important that any definition used does not exclude a great many organisations and movements that appear to fall outside the narrowly focused and conceived definitions by some organisations, academics and practitioners.

The Trust would argue that it would be much better and fairer to look at "Social Capital", especially from the perspective and definitions offered by the World Bank and Robert Putnam.

An anomaly and constant concern for the Trust is the fact that a great many areas who are allegedly weak in community infrastructure are infact extremely strong when Putnams and the World Banks definitions are applied. They are found to be rich and strong in community infrastructure, i.e. churches and related groups, sports organisations, voluntary organisations, etc. Too much definition of weak community infrastructure is being driven by what people understand by it through the eyes of the European Union Special Support Programme (PEACE II).

A great amount of work with "areas of weak community infrastructure" is predicated on the assumption that every community in Northern Ireland must have a constituted community development organisation/ group. A great many of the communities (with their rich array of community infrastructure) and their

existent organisations feel compelled to establish another group in order to access funding and fulfil some externally and remotely conceived definition of community infrastructure. This work does not start where the groups are at. It must encompass community infrastructure in the widest sense. As an example, faith based organisations in Northern Ireland are the largest and most significant community infrastructure we have, however, even the briefest of glimpses of existing programmes, support measures and materials does not reflect these organisations and their role in civic society.

Quite often, as a result of the establishment of a new group, the new group itself often ends up in conflict with the existing groups because it in a great many instances tries to recreate what the existing groups have and continue to do. As a result community infrastructure in the most appropriate sense is damaged and left at a much lower starting point, than that at which it was at prior to “externally moderated and driven” development pressure.

