

## **Equality Issues for the DSD Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in Northern Ireland**

**Context** Public consultation in relation to equality issues for the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for Northern Ireland was carried out in two distinct phases. Firstly, as an integral part of consultation on the draft strategy proposals for Neighbourhood Renewal held in late Summer/Autumn 2001. Secondly, in early 2003, by way of formal consultation on the basis of an Equality Impact Assessment.

**Phase 1** The consultation process undertaken in late 2001 involved a number of elements. A consultation document was developed and disseminated widely, seven regional conferences were held involving 327 persons, and 48 written responses were received. Consultation with the Social Development Committee of the Northern Ireland Executive was also carried out and DSD consulted with a working group of academics and practitioners in urban regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal established to advise on the development of this Strategy. A report of the consultation process has been prepared setting down in detail the outcomes. The report is presented as a key working document underpinning the rationale for this Strategy and is available on DSD's website [www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk) The main messages that emerged from the initial consultation have been incorporated into the development of this Strategy.

**Phase 2** A formal Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was carried out and consulted upon in early 2003. The EQIA was made on the Section 75 groups contained within the top 10% deprived urban wards at 2 levels. The first looked at the differential impact on those wards identified for initial inclusion within the Strategy and others not included. The second looked at the impact of the policy on Section 75 groups within the wards.

The EQIA was issued to approximately 250 individuals and organisations on the DSD's Equality Scheme consultation list and those who subsequently expressed an interest. Publication of the EQIA document was advertised in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News and News Letter. The document was also published on the DSD's web site. A total of three written responses were received, two of which were concerned at the absence of detailed statistical data for the actual Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. However, DSD takes the view that a detailed assessment of the equality implications for the target Neighbourhood Renewal Areas cannot be defined until, firstly, the Area boundaries are agreed and, secondly, definitive programmes are determined within the context of the Neighbourhood Vision Framework or Neighbourhood Action Plans. In recognition of this difficulty and as part of the implementation process, equality screening exercises will be applied as part of the action planning process in all Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.

The formal EQIA document is reproduced below. A set of statistics relating to the EQIA has been published on the Department's web site.

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**DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**URBAN REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)**

**URBAN REGENERATION – NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL**

February 2003

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# URBAN REGENERATION - 'Neighbourhood Renewal' EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## Executive Summary

In 2000 the UK Government published a strategy for the renewal of England's most deprived neighbourhoods which reflects the importance of a holistic and integrated approach to tackling social and economic disadvantage. This prompted a review of area based urban regeneration programmes in Northern Ireland.

Despite worthwhile achievements and the efforts of service providers the review points to two basic needs in terms of urban regeneration policy. The first is for area based regeneration policies to improve the environment and the physical characteristic of socially excluded areas so that they become attractive places to live and invest in. The second is for initiatives to help mainstream public service providers to focus and target their resources on people and areas most in need, so that the vicious cycle of relative decline can be broken.

It is against this backcloth that the Department for Social Development has decided to introduce a new urban regeneration policy the core aim of which is the regeneration of local neighbourhoods, targeting those communities experiencing the most serious economic and social deprivation. This lies at the heart of Government's policy for Targeting Social Need and addresses the commitment made in the *draft* Programme for Government 2002, and related Priorities and Plans 2003 / 06 document, that renewal of the most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods will be a priority issue. The strategy will be a significant focus for the Department's urban regeneration activities and resources over the next 7 -10 years. The key components are:

- ◆ **Firstly, to put the tackling of the most acute deprivation and disadvantage at the heart of all regeneration activity;**
- ◆ **Secondly, by focusing regeneration at the neighbourhood level, to empower communities to shape, and then drive, urban regeneration initiatives in their own areas;**
- ◆ **Thirdly, to encourage Government Departments and public agencies to place regeneration at the centre of their programmes of work and to work together to complement one another's efforts;**
- ◆ **Fourthly, to increase focus on the outcomes which are delivered and to be able to clearly articulate the difference which the investment has made; and**
- ◆ **Finally to commit to a 7–10 year planning and implementation time-scale, so that sustainable renewal and stability can be achieved.**

The areas to be assisted under the policy will be chosen on the basis of the Noble Index of Multiple Deprivation which is an independent and objective measure of relative deprivation in Northern Ireland.

In accordance with its statutory duties and its related Equality Scheme the Department has carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of its Urban Regeneration, '*Neighbourhood Renewal*' policy to determine whether the new policy is likely to have any potentially adverse differential impact on the nine equality groups listed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The assessment shows that any potential differential impacts for the new policy should be positive. In cases where certain equality groups may be the main beneficiaries, this can be justified and is not detrimental to other groups. However, in implementing the strategy the equality agenda will be reinforced by:

- ◆ a transparent and objective selection processes in the final choice of neighbourhood renewal areas;
- ◆ equality of opportunity in accessing resources within the neighbourhood renewal areas; and
- ◆ monitoring of the effects of programmes on Section 75 groups over the lifetime of the policy.

The Department consulted widely during the development of the policy which included a specific focus on the Equality considerations. In accordance with its Equality Scheme commitments and subsequent undertakings, the Department now intends to consult further on the equality issues surrounding its Urban Regeneration, '*Neighbourhood Renewal*' policy by selecting the most relevant bodies from those listed in Appendix 5 of the Scheme.

## URBAN REGENERATION - 'Neighbourhood Renewal'

### EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

#### Aims of Proposed Policy

- 1 There have been many successful area based regeneration programmes that have contributed to the economic, environmental and social well being of Northern Ireland. However, these measures were developed to deal with evolving problems and as such tended to be demand led and fragmented in response to real needs. Despite worthwhile achievements and the efforts of the providers of core public services the evidence provides a clear message that concentrated deprivation and social exclusion are complex, multi-dimensional, and stubborn problems that cannot be resolved easily or quickly.
- 2 The need for comprehensive and integrated regeneration initiatives to tackle concentrations of multiple deprivation and social exclusion in our society has never been greater. The evidence points to the need for area based policies to improve the environment and the physical characteristic of socially excluded areas so that they become attractive places to live and invest in. Initiatives are also required to help mainstream providers to focus and target their resources on people and areas most in need, so that the vicious cycle of relative decline can be broken.
- 3 It is against this backdrop that the Department for Social Development (the Department) has decided to introduce a **new urban regeneration policy the core aim of which is the regeneration of local neighbourhoods, targeting those communities experiencing the most serious economic and social deprivation.** This lies at the heart of Government's policy for Targeting Social Need and addresses the commitment made in the *draft Programme for Government (PfG) 2002*, and related *Priorities and Plans 2003 / 06* document, that renewal of the most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods will be a priority issue. It will be a significant focus for the Department's urban regeneration activities and resources over the next 7 -10 years.

## Equality Considerations

- 4 This document is an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Department's Urban Regeneration, *'Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy'* and conforms to the requirement to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and the need to provide equality of opportunity in developing new policy. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:-
- ◆ between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
  - ◆ between men and women generally;
  - ◆ between persons with a disability and persons without; and
  - ◆ between persons with dependants and persons without.
- 5 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities should also, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.
- 6 Schedule 9 of the Act requires public authorities to prepare equality schemes which should state, amongst other things, arrangements for assessing the likely impact of policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. Schedule 9 also requires that a public authority, in publishing the results of an assessment, should give details of any consideration given to measures which might mitigate the adverse impact of that policy on the promotion of equality of opportunity and alternative policies which might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity.
- 7 The Department is whole-heartedly committed to complying with the statutory equality obligations. The Department has set out in its Equality Scheme how it proposes to fulfil its obligations. Its Mission Statement ***"together, tackling disadvantage, building communities"*** highlights the Department's commitment to work together with organisations, both within and outside the Department, in order to implement its statutory obligations.

- 8 A copy of the Department's Equality Scheme is available at [www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk) Hard copies are also available from Mary Graham of the Department's Equality and Corporate Planning Unit, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Churchill House, Victoria Square, Belfast, BT1 4SD (Telephone 9056 9188).
- 9 The Department published its '*Urban Regeneration in Northern Ireland, Neighbourhood Renewal – a Consultation Document*' in Summer 2001. The document is available on the Department's website at:  
<http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/publications/documents/URGStrategyConsult.pdf> It was circulated widely including those on the Department's Equality Scheme list. During the consultation workshops which followed publication of the strategy the equality implications were considered. While no major implications were raised by respondents the Department gave an undertaking to carry out and publish a formal EQIA with the final strategy document.
- 10 In its Equality Scheme, the Department also undertook to carry out EQIAs over the 5-year lifetime of the Scheme, on urban regeneration policies relating to Belfast, Londonderry and the regional towns. These commitments were given in April 2000 shortly before the Department decided to undertake a fundamental review of the delivery of urban regeneration in Northern Ireland. Since drafting the Scheme work has been completed on the development of the Urban Regeneration, '*Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*' which, as indicated earlier, will be the main focus of the Department's urban regeneration activities over the next 7 – 10 years. The strategy will be the framework for the delivery of urban regeneration activities at the sub-regional level (namely for Belfast, Londonderry and other regional towns) and that will consequently inform how the sub-regional strategies would be implemented. Given emerging developments in urban regeneration policy since the publication of the Equality Scheme the Department has decided that, rather than prepare 4 separate EQIAs that all deal with the same instrument of government policy, it is preferable to prepare one EQIA that assesses the equality implications for neighbourhood renewal across Northern Ireland.

### **Existing Policy / Policy Context**

- 11 In its draft Programme for Government 2002 the NI Executive stated that renewal of the most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods would be a priority issue. One of the key challenges in the PfG is to develop a society – a wider community – in which all citizens can fully and freely participate. In such a community, equality, human rights, mutual trust and respect must be core values and citizens must be able to realise their full potential and live free from

poverty. These aspects of the Executive's mission are set out in a number of areas within PfG, particularly under the theme of 'Growing as a Community'.

- 12 In terms of urban regeneration and renewal of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods PfG states that:

*"We want to regenerate and sustain our cities, towns and rural areas, building strong communities in line with New TSN. We know that the differences in the standard and quality of life experienced in the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of Northern Ireland are wide. We will objectively identify the areas in greatest need, developing and delivering co-ordinated programmes to bring about real improvements, not only in physical infrastructure, but also in the lives and economic opportunities of communities and individuals.*

*The most significant concentrations of deprivation are found in our cities and larger towns and we will take action to improve economic and social conditions as signalled in our New TSN Action Plan. We will also implement our new strategies for the regeneration of the most disadvantaged urban areas and for town and city centres and we will use EU funding programmes, including Peace II and URBAN II, to strengthen our approach."*

- 13 Working within the context of PfG, the Government's Priorities and Plans document and our Mission Statement '**together, tackling disadvantage, building communities**' the Department seeks to deliver programmes for the regeneration of the main cities and larger towns across Northern Ireland. The Department does not run programmes in settlements with a population of less than 5 000 people (settlements with a population of below 5 000 are generally defined as rural and, as such, come under the scope of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's rural regeneration programmes). The *area based* focus of the Department's urban regeneration activities fits closely with the Government's Targeting Social Need (TSN) priorities since all the evidence shows that social deprivation is to be found in significant concentrations within our cities and larger towns.

- 14 The financial resources applied to urban programmes and measures include a mix of public and private sector investment, European Union Structural Funds and contributions from the International Fund for Ireland. The mechanisms and schemes used to achieve regeneration objectives include the Urban Development Grant (UDG) Programme which aims to stimulate

property development by the private sector in some of the most run down areas of the two main cities. The better planning, development and regeneration of larger urban areas, such as the Belfast City Centre Victoria Square area, is being achieved through Comprehensive Development (CD) programmes involving land acquisition, site assembly and disposal. Environmental Improvement Schemes seek to improve the appearance of open spaces and the public realm in towns and city centres across the Province. The Laganside Urban Development Corporation model is successfully addressing problems of failure in land markets on derelict sites along Belfast's waterfront, where the high cost of removing dereliction, river pollution and contamination had for a long time prevented landowners and developers from developing sites. The more community focused initiatives such as Making Belfast Work (MBW), the Londonderry Regeneration Initiative (LRI) and the Community Regeneration and Investment Special Programme (CRISP) contribute much to regeneration and the promotion of social inclusion.

### **Reasons for Changing Existing Policy**

- 15 The challenge of regenerating urban areas has received considerable attention throughout the UK and in Europe. There is now greater emphasis on helping people obtain jobs and to focus on specific initiatives in areas such as health and education. It is now accepted that disadvantage and social exclusion are complex and multi-dimensional issues that require an integrated and comprehensive approach if they are to be successfully tackled.
- 16 In 2000 the UK Government published a strategy for the renewal of England's most deprived neighbourhoods which reflects the importance of a holistic and integrated approach to tackling social and economic disadvantage. It sets out overarching aims as follows:
  - ◆ To bridge the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of England; and
  - ◆ In all the poorest neighbourhoods, to have lower long-term worklessness and crime, and better health, skills, housing and physical environment.
- 17 It is recognised that many successful area based regeneration programmes have contributed to the economic, environmental and social well being of Northern Ireland. Also that considerable efforts have been made to improve the ability of main spending Government Departments and Public Agencies to respond to the needs of marginalised people living in the

most deprived urban areas. However, these measures were developed to deal with evolving problems and as such tended to be demand led and fragmented in response to real needs. Despite worthwhile achievements and the efforts of the providers of core public services the evidence provides a clear message that concentrated deprivation and social exclusion are complex, multi-dimensional, and stubborn problems that cannot be resolved easily or quickly. The manifestation of urban areas with widespread multiple deprivation is well documented and well known. These are characterised by:

- ◆ A dominance of social housing
- ◆ High rates of unemployment
- ◆ A high dependence on state benefits
- ◆ Low average income and high levels of poverty
- ◆ Low levels of skills and qualifications in the population
- ◆ Low levels of attainment in secondary school pupils
- ◆ Above-average disability, incapacity and long-term sickness
- ◆ Below-average standards of health and
- ◆ Above-average rates of vandalism and crime.

- 18** Levels of deprivation closely mirror population density. Belfast and Londonderry contain many of the most deprived urban areas. This is important, not only for the levels of disadvantage experienced but also for the total number of people affected. Significant levels of disadvantage exist in the neighbourhoods and housing estates of regional towns.
- 19** Reviews commissioned in recent years by the Department, together with similar research and data produced locally and nationally over the last 30 years, suggest that problems of this nature and scale do not go away on their own accord; rather they tend to become cumulatively worse and inter-generational. The need for comprehensive and integrated regeneration initiatives to tackle concentrations of multiple deprivation and social exclusion in our society has never been greater. The evidence points to two basic needs in terms of urban regeneration policy. The first is for area based regeneration policies to improve the

environment and the physical characteristic of socially excluded areas so that they become attractive places to live and invest in. The second is for initiatives to help mainstream public service providers to focus and target their resources on people and areas most in need, so that the vicious cycle of relative decline can be broken.

## **Main Elements of New Policy on Neighbourhood Renewal**

- 20** It is against this backcloth that the Department in its Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy Consultation document published in 2001 outlined a new strategy the core aim of which is the regeneration of local neighbourhoods, targeting those communities experiencing the most serious economic and social deprivation. This lies at the heart of the NI Executive's policy for Targeting Social Need. It also addresses the commitment made in the Programme for Government that renewal of the most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods will be a priority for the Executive. The Department's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy provides a distinctive framework to tackle the geography of deprivation in the region. We want to see a proactive and integrated approach to specific areas of concentrated need and want to avoid the problems of the past when reactive programmes sometimes made little imprint on the poorest communities. This will take time, involve new ways of working and will require all of us to think about how our skills and resources will link together to make a lasting change in the areas of greatest need.
- 21** The strategy is aimed at all those with an interest in promoting the quality of life of our most disadvantaged people and places in Northern Ireland. For it to work we must have a clear idea about the nature of the problems and opportunities we are dealing with. Where you live clearly matters and the cycle of low skill level, joblessness, crime, poor health and educational attainment, poor services and environmental decay have deepened the isolation of many communities. This new policy will be an investment in the areas of disadvantage and, like all good investments, must produce a positive return that fundamentally improves the target communities. The outcome from this investment must be tangible and transparent and will be measured against targets to ensure that the policy is making a clear difference. The difference must include the long-term inclusion of communities, which for far too long, have not had the benefits that many of us take for granted.
- 22** The key components of the new Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal are:

- ◆ **Firstly, to put the tackling of the most acute deprivation and disadvantage at the heart of all regeneration activity;**
- ◆ **Secondly, by focusing regeneration at the neighbourhood level, to empower communities to shape, and then drive, urban regeneration initiatives in their own areas;**
- ◆ **Thirdly, to encourage Government Departments and public agencies to place regeneration at the centre of their programmes of work and to work together to complement one another's efforts;**
- ◆ **Fourthly, to increase focus on the outcomes which are delivered and to be able to clearly articulate the difference which the investment has made; and**
- ◆ **Finally to commit to a 7–10 year planning and implementation time-scale, so that sustainable renewal and stability can be achieved.**

**Framework** The new Strategy is seen as providing the necessary spatial framework to co-ordinate and connect the policies of a range of agencies that share a common concern for local development and tackling social exclusion. In line with national policy Neighbourhood Renewal should be placed at the core of the work programmes of Government Departments. An Inter-Departmental Working Group of senior officials representative of Government Departments and their Agencies will provide the strategic direction for the implementation of the strategy across Northern Ireland. The strategy will be taken forward under the Group's direction by sub-regional strategies and operational plans which will facilitate the identification of the target neighbourhoods, establish structures in each area and set out the arrangements for implementing the programme over a proposed nine year time frame. In response to comments made during consultation the strategy contains a flexible framework that can respond to local needs and circumstances.

**Identification of Neighbourhoods** Given the large number of people living in relatively deprived areas, and the resources available for urban regeneration, the initial focus will be on the worst areas. Annex A lists those wards in urban areas which fall into the 10% most deprived wards in Northern Ireland (as measured in the Noble Index of Multiple Deprivation) and we would clearly want to prioritise regeneration plans in these communities along with smaller clusters of deprivation revealed by an analysis of Enumeration Districts. Local knowledge and expertise will be used to delineate boundaries, taking account of factors such as precarious population structure, weak community capacity and the effects of segregation. We want to emphasise that in all cases we see *neighbourhoods* as naturally functioning places

that reflect peoples' experiences and feelings about the places they live in. As a guide, our approach views neighbourhoods as a collection of area-based activities, services and facilities clustered around residential and other land uses. Consultation has emphasised the need to tackle small pockets of deprivation in smaller towns as well as larger more recognisable communities in need in larger towns and cities. Therefore neighbourhood scale and population will vary significantly. The Department will produce guidance to help take forward the task of identifying neighbourhoods at the local level.

**Strategy Implementation** Sub regional strategies and operational plans for Belfast, Londonderry and regional towns will apply the broad approach to each area. Existing or adapted local partnership structures will be used wherever possible to implement the strategy at the local level. Once sub regional strategies and operational plans are in place Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) will be developed and delivered within local areas. Each will set out a nine-year vision, a three-year rolling NAP, linked to action and resource allocation, and set targets for the achievement of strategy aims.

**Resourcing the Strategy** The Department recognises that it will not be possible to achieve delivery of the strategy in its entirety all at once. However, a start has been made with over £20m worth of European Union and Executive Programme Fund programmes currently being rolled out to tackle multiple deprivation and inter related problems caused by the conflict. In addition, the Department aims to allocate, over time, similar sums towards the renewal of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. But for the strategy to be successful Departments must be able to focus their mainstream spending programmes on failing neighbourhoods. We will therefore work with Departments and other service providers to construct genuinely integrated plans that pull together all mainstream spending agencies at local level. Therefore the resources applied to the identified neighbourhoods by the dominant providers of services will be critical to the success of this policy initiative.

**Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs)** It should be noted that the strategy is not a blueprint for neighbourhood renewal to be followed slavishly in every area. There is a need for some flexibility as each neighbourhood will have different needs and priorities. We want to ensure that the core strategy aims and objectives are achieved and each NAP should contribute to the attainment of the following overarching policy objectives:

- ◆ *Community Renewal* – which recognises the importance of community capacity building in the formulation and delivery of neighbourhood plans
- ◆ *Economic Renewal* – which aims to build the internal capacity of deprived communities and at the same time connect them to better training and employment opportunities elsewhere in the urban economy.
- ◆ *Social Renewal* - which emphasises the need to support education, community health, sports and the arts, in order to implement an approach that puts the welfare of people at the heart of the development process.
- ◆ *Physical Renewal* - which will support initiatives that develop the property economy generally in neighbourhoods, contribute to the regeneration of derelict land or run down buildings, encourage and sustain private investment and diversify housing tenure.

## **CONSULTATION ON THE POLICY**

- 23** The consultation which followed publication of the draft strategy signalled strong support for the proposal to move to a more planned, long-term and integrated approach to the needs of local neighbourhoods. In total the Department received 48 written responses to the Report and a total of 327 people attended 7 regional conferences.
- 24** There was a remarkable degree of convergence from the evidence gathered from the series of workshops and written submissions. Respondents generally acknowledged that the most deprived urban areas should be targeted and that local people should be at the centre of decisions about the regeneration of their neighbourhood. A long term and integrated approach was endorsed, through partnerships of Government and other statutory agencies, and the private and community and voluntary sectors, to avoid the piecemeal and single project focus of the past. However, respondents generally considered that the strategy should not be overly prescriptive but should contain a sufficiently flexible urban regeneration framework which would allow final decisions, for example on neighbourhood boundaries and priorities, to be made at the local level.

## **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC AUTHORITIES**

- 25 All proposed policies have to be screened and where appropriate an EQIA should be carried out. During consultation in 2001 on its document *'Urban Regeneration in Northern Ireland - Neighbourhood Renewal'*, the Department sought the views of those with an interest in urban regeneration, community development and equality issues to comment on the equality issues for the strategy. The Department gave a commitment that a formal EQIA would be carried out and published with the final strategy document.

## **CONSIDERATION OF AVAILABLE DATA AND RESEARCH**

- 26 The strategy is based on extensive process of consultation, evaluation of previous policies and experience and best practice in the UK and beyond. It is also based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of data. In developing the strategy we have critically examined the particular contribution urban regeneration has made to society in Northern Ireland and have developed a large body of evidence to support our move to a more focussed approach to tackling endemic spatial deprivation. This information will be presented as a series of Working Documents to be published along with the final strategy document. These documents will address in detail the policy rationale, report on consultation and provide indicative programme activities for the strategy. Crucially, they will also set out arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the strategy, including equality issues, and measuring its success over time.
- 27 The Noble Indices will be used as a guide for making the difficult choices as to the neighbourhoods in which the strategy should operate. We have said that the focus should be the worst 10% as measured in the Multiple Deprivation Index. Noble is now being used extensively across Government since adoption of the basic methodology and indicators by the NI Executive in 2001. There was very considerable consultation and briefing on the Indices prior to their adoption. The development of the indices was overseen by a broadly representative Steering Group. All NI Departments, the Northern Ireland Office, Equality Commission, Local Authorities (SOLACE) and the NI Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA) were represented. A wide-ranging series of consultation meetings was held across the Province at the start of the project. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) also briefed political parties. Use of the new measures has been indicated in the

Programme for Government. Noble is therefore considered a sound, independent and objective basis for identifying the most socially excluded in our society and guiding decisions on the allocation of resources for neighbourhood renewal. Further information on Noble is available on the website of NISRA [www.nisra.gov.uk](http://www.nisra.gov.uk) The research is also incorporated in a publication 'Measures of Deprivation in Northern Ireland' (ISBN 1-899203-43-5).

## **ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT**

- 28** The Department has examined the equality implications of this policy on Section 75 groups both during its policy development and during consultation on the strategy proposals. Those with an interest in urban regeneration, community development and equality issues were invited to submit their views at the time of consultation. No major issues were raised by respondents. Working within its urban regeneration remit the Department has indicated that the policy will focus on people living in the worst 10% of deprived areas, objectively identified and measured, rather than apply across all urban areas in Northern Ireland. Therefore the equality implications for the policy may be considered at two levels. Firstly, the impact between people in the Section 75 groups who reside in the target urban areas and those living in other urban areas of Northern Ireland. For example if there is a disproportionate number of people of one religion residing in the target areas, than the population as a whole, one could argue there may be an adverse impact. Secondly, the impact of the policy on people in the Section 75 groups who live in the target areas.
- 29** The policy aim is to redress disadvantage and promote the inclusion of the most economically and socially deprived in our society, along the lines of the Government's TSN policy. The policy will also contribute to the equality outcomes envisaged under equality legislation and to a fairer and more inclusive society. Any negative impact there might be in, or between, any of the nine groups living outside the target areas is therefore justified and is simply a natural outcome of using Noble. In general terms however the assessment suggests that any potential differential impacts for the new policy should be positive. In cases where certain equality groups may be the main beneficiaries, this can be justified and is not detrimental to other groups. In terms of the impact of the policy on people in the Section 75 groups who live in the target areas the assessment has been made having regard to the following:
- ◆ firstly, while the policy aims to target the most deprived neighbourhoods, using noble as a guide, no clear or all encompassing definition of neighbourhood exists. Under its sub-

regional strategies the Department will consult with local people before final decisions on the choice of neighbourhood renewal areas is taken.

- ◆ Secondly, each neighbourhood will have different needs and priorities and we will not have a clear picture of the range of necessary programmes required, or target groups, until a community led assessment of the needs of each area is completed and related action plans are produced.
- ◆ Thirdly, the Department will not be able to do everything at once. Around 200,000 people live in the 50 most deprived urban wards alone and a phased approach to the implementation of the strategy will be required with resources being prioritised as they become available.

In the following section the Department sets out in some detail the potential impact of the policy on each of the nine categories.

## **IMPACT ON SECTION 75 GROUPS**

**30 Religious Belief / Political Opinion** The policy will be targeted at the most marginalised people living in the most deprived urban areas. It is consistent with the Government's TSN policy and will also positively contribute to the equality outcomes envisaged under equality legislation. The areas to be assisted under the policy will be chosen on the basis of the Noble Index of Multiple Deprivation which is an independent and objective measure of relative deprivation in Northern Ireland. In implementing the strategy the equality agenda will be reinforced by:

- ◆ a transparent and objective selection processes in the final choice of neighbourhood renewal areas;
- ◆ equality of opportunity in accessing resources within the neighbourhood renewal areas; and
- ◆ monitoring of the effects of programmes on Section 75 groups over the lifetime of the policy.

The Department therefore believes generally that this policy will promote equality between persons of different religious belief / political opinion.

- 31 **Racial Groups** The Department believes that the impact will be the same as that for religious belief / political opinion.
- 32 **Age** Generally speaking, the Department believes that the impact will be the same as that for religious belief / political opinion. However, programmes under the policy are likely to have a positive impact on young people as pupils in secondary schools in the most deprived areas have low levels of educational attainment. Older people may also benefit from initiatives to improve life expectancy which is lower in deprived areas than the national average.
- 33 **Marital Status / Sexual Orientation / Men and Women** Generally speaking, the Department believes that the impact will be the same as that for religious belief / political opinion. However, single parenting and womens' programmes are a significant feature of regeneration activities, but encouraging those in most acute need to take-up related programmes tends to be a problem.
- 34 **Persons with Disability and Persons without** People with disabilities are likely to benefit from programmes under this policy as the most deprived neighbourhoods are characterised, amongst other things, by above-average disability, incapacity and long-term sickness. Using the uptake of Invalidity Benefits and Severe Disability Allowance as a proxy for long-term illness, the rate of relevant uptake in Northern Ireland is around 10.5%, but in the socially deprived wards it can go up to almost 25%.
- 35 **Persons with Dependents and those without** Young women are likely to benefit from programmes under the policy as the birth rate to teenage mothers in Northern Ireland for the period 1991 –99 was 6.9% of all births; this figure rises to 21% in the most deprived urban wards.

## FORMAL CONSULTATION

- 36 As indicated in para 23 the Department has already undertaken extensive consultation during the development of the policy and this included a specific focus on Equality considerations. The earlier consultation document was distributed for comment to bodies listed in Appendix 5 of the Department's Equality Scheme and other urban regeneration interests. However, in

accordance with its Equality Scheme commitments the Department now intends to consult further on the equality issues surrounding its Urban Regeneration Strategy, *'Neighbourhood Renewal'* with interested parties on the basis of this formal assessment.

## **MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 37** Monitoring arrangements will be put in place to assess the impact of the strategy when it is being implemented. The Department is currently developing appropriate evaluation and monitoring models for the delivery of urban regeneration policy in Northern Ireland. The effects of the policy on Section 75 groups will be also be monitored over the life of the policy programmes.

## **COMMENTS ON EQIA**

- 38** This EQIA has tried to address, in a pragmatic way, the potential impact of the Department's policy on Urban Regeneration, 'Neighbourhood Renewal' on all nine Section 75 groups.
- 39** The Department would particularly welcome comments on any perceived adverse impact that this policy may have on any particular group. Comments should be forwarded, preferably using the **Questionnaire at Annex C**, to:

Paul Hughes  
Urban Regeneration and Community Development Group  
Central Business Unit  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Churchill house  
Victoria Square  
Belfast  
BT1 4SD  
Telephone 028 90569286  
Textphone 028 90569727  
Fax 028 90569291

**by 26 March 2003.**

## Annex A

### List of urban wards falling in the worst 10% of Northern Ireland's wards

Number	Ward Name	Local Government District	Rank order on the Noble Index
1	Crumlin	Belfast	1
2	Falls	Belfast	2
3	Whiterock	Belfast	3
4	St Annes	Belfast	4
5	Ballymacarrett	Belfast	5
6	Brandywell	Derry	6
7	Woodvale	Belfast	7
8	New Lodge	Belfast	8
9	The Mount	Belfast	9
10	Shankill	Belfast	10
11	Upper Springfield	Belfast	11
12	Ardoyne	Belfast	12
13	Creggan South	Derry	13
14	Shaftsbury	Belfast	14
15	The Diamond	Derry	15
16	Water Works	Belfast	16
17	St Peters	Derry	17
18	Victoria	Derry	18
19	Duncairn	Belfast	19
20	Clonard	Belfast	20
21	East	Strabane	21
22	Creggan Central	Derry	22
23	Shantallow East	Derry	23
24	Binvevenagh	Limavady	24
25	Flying Horse	Downpatrick	25
26	Woodstock	Belfast	26
27	Shantallow West	Derry	27
28	Twinbrook	Lisburn	28
29	Beechmount	Belfast	29
30	Westland	Derry	31
31	Blackstaff	Belfast	32
32	Daisy Hill	Newry and Mourne	33
33	Glencairn	Belfast	35
34	Island	Belfast	37
35	Colin Glen	Lisburn	38
36	Ballybot	Newry and Mourne	40
37	Court	Craigavon	41
38	Glen	Derry	42
39	Rosemount	Derry	43
40	Drumhask	Craigavon	45
41	Ballysally	Coleraine	46
42	Glencolin	Belfast	48
43	Carn Hill	Derry	49
44	Drumgor	Craigavon	50
45	Callan Bridge	Armagh	51
46	Beechwood	Derry	52
47	Tullycarnet	Castlereagh	53
48	Churchland	Coleraine	54
49	Ballykeel	Ballymena	55
50	Braden	Newtownabbey	56

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Draft Programme for Government (PfG) 2002 / Priorities and Plans 2003/06</b>	<b>PfG is a Programme incorporating the NI Executive's agreed budget linked to policies and programmes. It is subject to approval by the NI Assembly. Priorities and Plans 2003/06 sets out Government's policy framework and spending plans for 2003/04 and beyond. It builds on the priorities set by the NI Executive, prior to suspension, in its draft PfG 2002.</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>	<b>A process which involves an examination of the impact of policies on various groups as defined by section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It involves consideration of available data and research, consideration of measures which might mitigate any adverse impact, formal consultation and monitoring for adverse impact in the future.</b>
<b>Interdepartmental Working Group:</b>	<b>A group of officials from various Government Departments who will help oversee the implementation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.</b>
<b>International Fund for Ireland:</b>	<b>Body established as an independent, international organisation by the British and Irish Governments in 1986. The objectives of the Fund are to promote economic and social advance; and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between Unionists and Nationalists throughout Ireland.</b>
<b>Noble</b>	<b>Measures Relative Deprivation in Northern Ireland (updates the 1994 Robson Measures). It comprises 7 Ward level domain Deprivation Measures; a ward level Multiple Deprivation Measure; a supplementary ward level Child Poverty Measure; Income and Employment Deprivation Measures at Enumeration District(ED) level; an Economic Deprivation Measure at ED level; 6 Local Government District level summaries of the ward level Multiple Deprivation Measure and 2 ward level summaries of the ED level economic Deprivation Measure. Further information on Noble is available on the website of NISRA <a href="http://www.nisra.gov.uk">www.nisra.gov.uk</a> The research is also incorporated in a publication 'Measures of Deprivation in Northern Ireland' (ISBN 1-899203-43-5).</b>

**Peace II**

**An EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland. The Programme will address economic and social issues in the specific context of Northern Ireland's current transition to a more peaceful and stable society.**

**New TSN:**

**The New Targeting Social Need Policy recognises and seeks to reduce inequalities in the life experiences of citizens in terms of poverty, health, housing, educational and economic opportunity and disability.**

**Urban II:**

**A European Union Programme which will run from 2000 – 2006 and will focus on disadvantaged urban areas within Inner North Belfast.**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE URBAN REGNERATION, NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL, EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**1. Do you consider that any of the policy impacts adversely on any of the Section 75\* groups?**

**YES/NO (please delete as appropriate)**

**2. If the answer to question 1 is “Yes”, please tell us:**

- Which groups do you think the policy affects? and**
- How do you think these groups would be adversely affected?**

**3. What alternative action might mitigate or lessen any adverse impact on these groups?**

**4. What changes to the policy might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations?**

**5. Do you agree or disagree with the overall conclusions in the Equality Impact Assessment?**

**Agree/Disagree (If you disagree, please say why)**

**SIGNED:**

**ORGANISATION:**

**DATE:**

**Please return to the address on page 20 no later than 26 March 2003.**

**\*Section 75 groups: persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, men and women generally, persons with a disability and persons without, and persons with dependants and persons without.**