

Social Justice & Regeneration Committee

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Date: 8 December 2005
Venue: National Assembly for Wales
Title: Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

Purpose

1. To brief the Committee on the publication of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005 on 22 November 2005.

Summary / Recommendations

2. This paper introduces the new Index, outlines the differences from the previous Index, makes comparison with the Communities First areas and sets out a course for engaging with stakeholders about the future of the Communities First programme.

Background

3. The original Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005, (published 30 September 2005), was correct as published. However, it was found that one of the employment domain indicators, recommended by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005 Advisory Group and used in the Indexes for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, was not included: namely unemployment claimant counts. It was agreed that a revision should be made to incorporate this indicator. The revised Index was published on 22 November

4. The revision affects the Employment domain and the overall Index, but all other domains remain unchanged.

Consideration

5. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2005 as published on 22 November succeeds the first Index

which was released in 2000. The methodology for the new Index largely follows that from 2000 as well as that currently used for the other 3 UK countries. The domains contributing to the 2005 Index are Income, Employment, Education, Health, Access to services, Housing and Physical Environment. The addition of the last is the only change from 2000.

6. The main difference from the 2000 Index is the geographic unit on which the new Index is calculated. In 2000, the unitary authority electoral divisions were used. These are neither stable nor a consistent geography, being subject to review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales and having populations which range from 1,000 to 20,000. The new geographic units are Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA), which are aggregations of census output areas. LSOAs have very similar population sizes, averaging 1,500 (the smallest is 890, the largest 4,000). Aggregations of LSOAs are largely coterminous with electoral divisions.

7. The number of areas for the new Index is 1,896 LSOAs, which compares with 865 electoral divisions used in 2000. In areas which are primarily single-member electoral divisions, the new LSOA is often the electoral division itself – eg almost all of Anglesey, Powys and Pembrokeshire. The larger urban electoral divisions, however, typically contain several LSOAs. Sketty in Swansea has 9 LSOAs, Grangetown in Cardiff has 10 and Liswerry in Newport has 7.

8. The finer spatial detail in the larger electoral divisions brings out variations between LSOAs within electoral divisions which hitherto we were unable to identify, but which are now highlighted by their rankings on the new Index. Thus in Cardiff, the Ely electoral division contains 8 LSOAs in the top 10% of most deprived LSOAs (ie from 1-190) in Wales, but the other 2 LSOAs rank at 1498 and 1532 and so among the very least deprived. Conversely, Sketty has 8 of its 9 LSOAs ranked between 1381 and 1835, but has one LSOA at 187 and so among the top 10% most deprived.

9. The opportunity afforded by the 2005 Index to identify with greater certainty pockets of deprivation within the larger territorial units addresses one of the main criticisms made of the 2000 Index. Neither the original nor the new Index shows absolute levels of deprivation. They merely rank areas relative to each other.

10. Maps showing the LSOAs by local authority were published on 22 November. The Local Government Data Unit web site contains an interactive map allowing people to identify areas and see the Index results for those areas

Communities First Areas

11. There are 142 Communities First (CF) areas, comprising the 100 most deprived electoral divisions as identified in the 2000 Index, 32 "pockets of deprivation" (areas at sub-electoral division level nominated by local authorities) and 10 Communities of Interest (based on thematic or sectoral communities – eg BME in Cardiff, young people in Pembrokeshire).

12. Among the 100 electoral division based CF areas, most of the LSOAs which make up those divisions continue to be ranked among the most deprived in Wales. However, in some of the larger electoral divisions there are sometimes LSOAs which do not demonstrate the same level of deprivation – for example, the 2 in Ely (out of 10) mentioned above, 5 LSOAs (of 8) in the Castle division in Swansea and 2 LSOAs (of 4) in Treherbert in Rhondda Cynon Taff.

13. There are also a small number of electoral divisions where none of the constituent LSOAs ranks in the top 20% of most deprived areas (ie 1-380) on the new Index. These include Amlwch Port in Anglesey at 547, Llangeinor in Bridgend at 488, Gilfach in Caerphilly at 444 and Pwllheli South in Gwynedd at 816 (all single LSOAs).

14. Plotting the 32 existing pockets of deprivation onto the new Index is much less clear-cut. These areas did not necessarily follow any standard geographically defined areas. They are often discrete housing estates or even streets and have populations smaller than that of the LSOA in which they are located eg Oldford estate in Welshpool, Gibbonsdown in Barry and Chester Avenue estate in Kinmel Bay, Conwy. Even in the new Index, the "pockets" remain as pockets. All the 32 were submitted, appraised and approved on the basis of evidence of very localised deprivation.

15. The 10 Communities of Interest were included in the programme because of disadvantage factors related to a particular thematic or sectoral characteristic of the community (eg BME communities, victims of domestic abuse). The finer spatial detail within the new Index does not impact upon that characteristic.

16. At first analysis there are some 42 LSOAs ranked in the top 10% most deprived (ie 1-190) on the new Index which are located in areas which are currently not inside the CF programme. These are spread across 31 electoral divisions; many of these electoral divisions contain a range of rankings across their constituent LSOAs. For example, Brackla in Bridgend has an LSOA ranked at 145 and so in the top 10%. The other 6 LSOAs in that electoral division range from 733 to 1802 (out of 1,896).

17. The 42 LSOAs are distributed as follows: 17 in Cardiff (across 8 electoral divisions), 4 in Neath Port Talbot (across 2 electoral divisions), 4 in Rhondda Cynon Taff, 4 in Bridgend, 2 in Merthyr Tydfil, 2 in Conwy, 2 in Swansea, 2 in Caerphilly and 1 each in Carmarthenshire, Newport, Torfaen, the Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham. Except for the instances in Cardiff and Neath Port Talbot, each LSOA is located in a separate electoral division.

Next steps

18. The new Index contains much detailed information. I propose that the Assembly Government should take time to reflect on the information contained in the new Index and on the issues it raises. I will invite the communities themselves and the programme's other key stakeholders, including Assembly Members, to join us in that reflection and to submit their views on how we might take the whole programme forward.

19. The Assembly Government will undertake its own analyses and, informed by the views submitted by stakeholders, we will draw up clear proposals on which we will consult formally. We will discuss the outcomes of the consultation with the communities and their key local stakeholders and work through the implications with them.

20. The issues we need to address are:

- Whether the Communities First programme should continue to cover those areas currently in the programme but which no longer have any of their constituent parts in the top 10% of deprived areas in the new Index (ie ranked 1-190);
- Whether the Communities First programme should continue to cover existing programme areas in their entirety even where constituent parts of those areas are now identified as not being in the top 10% of deprived areas in the new Index;
- Whether the Communities First programme should be extended to cover areas newly identified in the top 10% of deprived areas;
- If the programme is to be extended to include new areas, how might the extension be achieved so that the new areas are recognisable communities and still focused on areas which are clearly among the most deprived;
- In the event of the programme being extended, the scope for existing partnerships to mentor new areas and for joint working arrangements across neighbouring existing and new areas.

21. My timetable is as follows:

- By 15 December 2005 I will write to communities and stakeholders to invite their views by 14 February 2006 on the implications of the new Index for Communities First;
- By late spring 2006, I will issue a formal proposal about any changes to the areas to be included in the Communities First programme. I will consult on that proposal;
- By early summer 2006, I will have agreed a way forward.

Financial Implications

22. None arising from this paper. There are no issues of propriety.

Cross Cutting Themes

23. Communities First is a cross cutting programme. Work is ongoing to ensure that other policies and programmes are mainstreamed to support the work of Communities First Partnerships. Communities First partnerships are required to represent and work on behalf of all sectors of the communities in which they are located.

Action for Subject Committee

24. Committee Members are invited to note the publication and content of the new Multiple Deprivation Index and consider the implications for the Communities First Programme.

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