

TARGETING NEED: A METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW OF A SOCIO-ECONOMIC URBAN REGENERATION INITIATIVE IN BELFAST.

TONY MCKIBBEN
Belfast Regeneration Office

(read before the Society, 6 April 2000)

1. INTRODUCTION

The problems of social exclusion currently occupy centre stage in the thinking of government in both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. Considerable efforts are being made to assess the extent of the problem and to formulate strategies to deal with it. While the present degree of activity might suggest to many that this is a newly discovered phenomenon, that is far from being the case. The problem of social exclusion, poverty, relative or multiple disadvantage - there are many and no agreed definition as to social exclusion (Hills, 1999) - is one which government in Northern Ireland have tried to alleviate for a considerable period of time. A particular challenge is ensuring that resources are targeted at those who are most in need.

Drawing on the experiences of the *Making Belfast Work* (MBW) initiative this paper reviews the methodologies employed to identify and tackle deprivation within Belfast and illustrate how the lessons learnt will guide future intervention in this field. It will describe the methodologies used in both the targeting of the problem as well as the assessment of impact and the implication for future data requirements in the context of the *New Targeting Social Need* (New TSN) policy.

2. BACKGROUND

Many of the problems that exist in Belfast are common to other cities in the United Kingdom such as Liverpool, Leeds, Nottingham and Cardiff. These are primarily related to the decline in traditional manufacturing industries and the subsequent decay of inner cities.

These problems have been compounded by outward migration, as those that can leave and those that stay behind find themselves caught in the trap of urban decay exemplified by high rates of unemployment, poor housing, and the rest of the problems associated with areas of urban decline. In addition to these shared problems, Belfast has also suffered from over 30 years of civil conflict and disturbances, making additional demands on both policy makers and practitioners.

The composite effect of urban decline and political violence has thus created a unique challenge.

Belfast is home to nearly 300,000 people and provides employment for around 160,000. In the 19th century, the city emerged as Ireland's most important industrial city and seaport. Since then the city has undergone various stages of social and economic transformation. During the late 1800s, Belfast's strong industrial base was built on the manufacture of linen. Engineering and shipbuilding industries grew in response to linen manufactures' need for machinery and transport facilities, especially for export. Following the Second World War, heavy industry went into decline, followed by the decline of engineering.

In the 1960s and 1970s, and very much in common with developments in other UK cities, the service sector became the main employer in the local economy. During the 1970s unemployment also increased dramatically in Belfast. Among the unemployed, in Belfast the share of long-term unemployed was and remained twice that of comparable cities in Great Britain².

Employment opportunities for local residents declined as indigenous and externally owned manufacturing industries contracted. In 1981, there were more jobs in the city per economically active resident than ten years earlier. Yet more of these jobs were held by non-residents as population dispersed to urban growth centres in a 30 mile radius around Belfast and fewer residents obtained employment. Those made redundant in the traditional blue-collar industries were not absorbed into the expanding service sector and unemployment nearly doubled. Between 1981 and 1991 the numbers employed in the manufacturing sector declined from 37,925 to 22,242, or a fall of 43 percent, (Cebulla, 1995). The continuing violence, of course, compounded the problem.

In summary, the 1970s marked a period of employment decline and population loss with the highest levels of deprivation being found in Belfast's inner city. Between 1971-91, Belfast District Council (the city) lost a third of its population (Census, 1991) – from 416,700 to 279,230. During this period, its share of the Belfast Urban Area (BUA) population fell from 70 percent to 59 percent. Most of the decline happened in the 1970s. Between 1971-81, there was a 25 percent drop in population, followed by an 11 percent drop in the following decade (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 1999, p.45).

This shrinkage was not due to a simple flight to the suburbs. The Belfast Urban Area itself saw a population decline, so that whereas in 1971 it accounted for 39 percent of the region's population, by 1991 its share was 30 percent. Even within Greater Belfast area which includes the District Council areas of Ards, Castlereagh, Lisburn, North. Down, Newtownabbey, Larne, and Carrickfergus, the population fell from 809,000 to 757,000 during the two decades from 1971.

The major population changes occurred in the inner city. In the 1970s, this resulted in a population loss of 42 percent and in the 1980s a loss of 23 percent. Between 1971-91 the inner city population decreased by over half (55 percent). Even in terms of households, the decline was considerable (39 percent). Much of this pattern is familiar in industrial cities like Liverpool and Glasgow. What is distinctive about Belfast is the way this change has been also tracked by deepening segregation during a period of massive public housing redevelopment and prolonged violent conflict. Catholics and Protestants have both left the city. But, while the period 1971-91 experienced a 16 percent decline in the Catholic city population, there was a much more significant decline of 41 percent in the Protestant population.

Thus, whereas Catholics accounted for 34 percent of city population in the early 1970s, two decades on they accounted for 42 percent (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 1999). The Shankill represents a stark example of this change. It is not just that total population has dropped. The composition has also changed. Nearly a quarter of its residents are aged 60+, compared to the Belfast average of one fifth. The dispersal of the Protestant population has been around a wide area East of the Bann. Catholic movement has been more 'clustered' - for instance, in areas like the Poleglass and Twinbrook estates in the West of the city. Increasing residential segregation has been based on both religion and class. Whereas the core city to the west of the Lagan is 55 percent Catholic, to the east it is only 12 percent.

In many of the wards in which MBW operates almost 100 percent of the population is either Catholic or Protestant. For example the proportion of Protestants in Ardoyne is 0.2 percent, Falls 2.4 percent and Clonard 0.7 percent, while in contrast The Mount is 1.2 percent, Woodvale 0.5 percent and Island 0.6 percent Catholic.

Patterns of unemployment are compounded by spatially segmented labour markets. Over twenty-five years of violent political and inter-communal conflict have imposed severe limitations on where people in Belfast are prepared to work. Inner West Belfast stands out as having extraordinarily low percentages of those prepared to work in East Belfast. By contrast higher proportions are prepared to work in Britain or elsewhere in the European Union. (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 1999, p.46).

Residents' attitudes to the availability of employment are localised and correspond with indications of where people were prepared to work. In West Belfast, four out of five respondents felt that only low paid jobs were available in their own areas. Over two thirds felt that the only jobs available were in areas where it was dangerous to work. Nearly four out of five felt that those living in the area suffered employer discrimination (DoE, 1994)

Even if many more jobs were made available in the city as a whole, matching people from areas like West Belfast to those jobs faces many problems. These include factors like work experience; skill gaps; the reality and perception of discrimination and insecurity; transport cost and convenience; income loss associated with the gap between the loss of unemployment benefit and eligibility for benefits in work; and

good information about appropriate employment prospects. This matrix of factors can be said to represent the transition costs to employment. Most evidence increasingly points to the necessity for integrated, customised strategies which tackle all these factors to facilitate the return to work.

The movement of population in response to the Troubles has created a city substantially more divided on religious grounds than 25 years previously. Particularly in the north of the city, populations with different religions are separated by physical barriers. The ethnic spaces so created give the appearance of safety but contain populations in small areas which act as barriers to any systematic form of development. Recent events in Northern Ireland and Belfast have tended to accelerate rather than moderate such developments.

Belfast is a city divided physically by walls and socially by wealth and religion. One of the sad realities of the last 25 years is that those communities in Belfast that have borne the brunt of violence have also suffered the highest levels of disadvantage. As the *Unemployment in Belfast* report outlines:

“Thus, Belfast is the product of an exceptional combination of processes which have determined development in the city and affected the quality of life of its inhabitants. It has been subject to the consequences of rapid economic change which have, for example, transformed its labour market and generated an endemic problem of unemployment. Finally, it has been the primary location of a conflict between communities, within communities and against the state. All of these give Belfast its specific character, its particular set of acute problems and pose a major challenge to any development process.”

However, the decreasing frequency of attacks against property in the city centre and the slow recovery of the service sector presented a new opportunity for the physical and economic regeneration of Belfast. Years of economic decline, however, had contributed to the erosion of the indigenous capital resources, and there were few institutional investors operating in the city. The severity of the decline and physical depletion had increased the costs of redevelopment over and above the returns which could be expected from investment. Moreover the private sector was deterred by the high risk associated with investing in property in an inner city which had a poor image and was vulnerable to the disruption of continued bombing.

This provided the rationale for urban policy aimed at directly improving the environment (via Environmental Improvement Schemes) while simultaneously facilitating and encouraging the private sector to contribute to the physical regeneration process by sharing the cost burden of development (via Comprehensive Development Schemes and the Urban Development Grant).

3. SOCIAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS

The policy instruments mentioned above focused on the redevelopment of the city centre and were essentially of a physical nature. It was with the publication of the findings of the 1977 report 'Belfast Areas of Special Social Need' (Cebulla, 1995) that the focus moved to social problems encountered in the inner city areas. Using information from the 1971 Census of Population the report analysed the geographical distribution of social need within the Belfast Urban Area. It found:

“two major need syndromes. One is characterised by unemployment, low incomes and overcrowded housing resulting from large family size. This has a west Belfast distribution. The other is an inner city syndrome, distinguished by sub-standard housing, poor physical environment, low incomes and concentrations of persons with different forms of personal handicap whether associated with age or health.”

The report identified constraints imposed by inter-communal strife on development and planning, as well as on labour mobility and the ability of an already educationally disadvantaged population in some parts of the city to seek and take up employment in other parts of the city.

It triggered a number of policy responses, mainly concerned with the improvement of area provision with leisure and educational facilities. In 1987, the *Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency* (NISRA) predecessor the *Policy Planning Research Unit* (PPRU) produced an update of some of the findings of Belfast Areas of Need work. This exercise provided a statistical basis for the launch of the 'Making Belfast Work' initiative in 1988. It showed that those wards and sub-areas of special social need identified in 1977 remained the most disadvantaged in the city

While physical policy instruments had been employed to regenerate the City Centre, and despite progress in this area, severe problems continued to persist within the inner city communities. In essence the trickle down effect was having little or no effect. Job creation will be of limited value unless the employability of residents in deprived areas is also enhanced.

Policy initiatives have undergone a number of transformations over the last 15 years. The initial focus on physical development was complemented in the late 1980s and the 1990s by an increasing emphasis on social and economic development through the parallel mechanisms of the *Belfast Action Teams* (BAT) and the MBW initiative.

These initiatives had a remit to strengthen and better target the efforts being made by the community, the private sector and the Government in addressing the economic, educational, social, health and environmental problems facing residents in the most disadvantaged areas of Belfast.

The MBW initiative and the BATs were amalgamated in April 1994. A revised strategy was developed which involved a widespread public consultation exercise which sought to ensure that the community, public and private sectors had an input to devising the most appropriate method for regenerating the most deprived areas of the city.

The new strategic framework which emerged had the following key components:

- MBW embedded in the overall drive for regeneration in the city.
- Main task to open up opportunities for those citizens in special social need.
- MBW must influence the thinking behind all public policy in the City
- A committed partnership involving business, elected representatives and the community sector.
- Priority need not demand.
- Encourage community and voluntary effort.
- Education and employment
- Innovative methods of tackling deprivation with mainstreaming as the desired outcome.

4. DELIVERY MECHANISMS AND FUNDING

The Making Belfast Work has two delivery mechanisms for the allocation of resources;

- The Departmental Action Plan;
- Team Projects.

The Departmental Action Plan is a mechanism whereby Departments make bids to MBW for funding for projects. Financial Assistance is provided to Departments to conduct projects that enhance mainstream programmes. The projects must fulfil MBW objectives and be located within the MBW area. The Action Plan Allocation for 1999/2000 is some STG£13.7m.

The four Area Teams fund projects that originate from within their particular geographical areas and on the whole are put forward by the community sector. The budget for the teams is STG£4.5m in 1999/2000 of which STG£1m is drawn from the Action Plan. This is divided between the Teams on the basis of population.

Funding for the Belfast Action Teams and the MBW initiative since 1987/88 is summarised below in Table 1. From 1987/88 until 1999/00 the MBW initiative (including the BATs until 1993/94) have directed funding of some STG£275m into the most deprived areas of Belfast.

**Table 1: Making Belfast Work and Belfast Action Team Funding (STG£m)
1987/88 – 1999/00.**

Year	MBW	BAT	Total	COMMENT
1987/88		1	1	2 BAT teams launched
1988/89	10	2	12	MBW launched July 1988 6 additional BAT teams
1989/90	15	3	18	
1990/91	22.5	3.5	26	Ninth BAT team launched
1991/92	27.5	3.5	31	
1992/93	26	3.5	29.5	
1993/94	23.6	3.5	27.1	
1994/95	21.7	3.5	25.3	BAT and MBW amalgamated
1995/96	22.7	3.5	26.2	
1996/97	20.4	3.5	23.9	
1997/98	17.2	3.5	20.7	
1998/99	14.4	3.5	17.9	
1999/00	13.8	3.5	17.3	
Total	234.4	41	275.4	May be some discrepancy due to rounding

Table 2: The Aims and Objectives of Making Belfast Work

Aims	
To increase opportunities for residents of MBW areas to secure employment	To improve the quality of life for residents of MBW areas
Related Objectives	
To improve educational and training outcomes leading to skills enhancement and better employability.	To tackle dereliction and conserve the local environment with priority given to those areas most damaged by 25 years of civil disturbance.
To expand the existing job and enterprise-base in a way that best improves the employment and earning power of MBW residents.	To strengthen the social fabric, enhancing capacities for community development and programmes to address the needs of marginalised youth.
To improve the potential for inward investment, where benefits are targeted to residents of MBW areas	To provide a range of health and social service programmes responsive to local need that help reduce the incidence of accidents and improve care provision for the most vulnerable community members.
To nurture personal confidence in ways which help people look for work.	
To open up wider labour market opportunities for residents of MBW areas, tackling barriers to recruitment and mobility.	To respond flexibly to housing need and where appropriate, increase housing stock to encourage people, particularly young families to live in Action areas.
To ensure sufficient supply of land for economic activities, which best support job opportunities for residents of MBW areas.	To improve people's safety and sense of security by helping to reduce the incidence and fear of crime.

The MBW initiative has two main aims with a number of related objectives. In order for a project to receive funding it must be located within an MBW area and display the potential to impact upon the objectives illustrated in Table 2 below.

5. TARGETING NEED

The launch of the MBW strategy established the initiative at the forefront of the Government's *Targeting Social Need* (TSN) policy with a remit to address disadvantage through the targeting of clearly identified need (Hills, 1999). A number of tools have been employed to this end and these are described below.

Following the availability of results from the 1991 Census of Population, a team led by Professor Brian Robson from the Centre for Urban Policy Studies at the University of Manchester was commissioned to produce a general index of deprivation for Northern Ireland.

The Census of Population is the most comprehensive source of data covering all geographical areas at a point in time and with a wide coverage of domains such as the labour market and housing. Geographical deprivation analysis in Northern Ireland has largely been based on this source of data. The outcome of the Robson research was the publication of a report ranking wards in terms of relative deprivation based on three measures (degree, intensity and extent).

The 1994 deprivation index (Robson, 1994) combines a eighteen indicators, chosen to cover a range of fields such as health, education and income, into a single deprivation score for a geographical areas. The index was produced at three spatial scales of electoral district (ED), ward and district council level. At electoral district there were 9 indicators, 5 further indicators were added at ward level and a further 4 at district council level.

The main innovation of the Robson (1994) work is that it acknowledges that deprivation will not be distributed evenly across geographical boundaries and is unlikely to fit neatly into administrative units hence the three measures of multiple deprivation, which are:

- The degree score which essentially measures the average level of deprivation in the area
- The intensity score assesses the level of the worst deprivation within an area, for example the worst EDs within a ward;
- The extent score which measures the percentage of the area's population living in sub-areas which are predefined as 'deprived'. For example, at ward level, the worst 10 percent of EDs were predefined as 'deprived' and the extent score for a ward is the percentage of the ward's population living in the worst 10 percent of Northern Ireland's EDs.

The indicators that were used are summarised in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Domains of Deprivation and Indicators

	ENUMERATION DISTRICT	WARD	DISTRICT
ENVIRONMENT			
Health	•	• Standardised long-term illness	• Standardised mortality
Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pensioners lacking central heating • Overcrowding • Lacking amenities • Children in unsuitable accommodation 	• Low rateable values	•
Physical environment	• Lack of public sewerage		
SKILLS/ SOCIALISATION			
Education	• Low qualifications	• 17 year-olds not in education	
Family			• Births not jointly registered
RESOURCE BASE			
Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No car • Children in Low-earner households 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income support • Free schools meals
Jobs	• Unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term unemployment • Part-time male unemployment 	

The strategy proposals identified 32 wards in Belfast which form the operational area of MBW. The basis for the selection of these particular wards was that they are classified as deprived on the basis of the 'Robson Index'. Those wards included in the MBW area demonstrated levels of disadvantage sufficient to rank highly on three separate measures (Annex 1).

An examination of the Robson ranking shows that nine of the worst 10 wards ranked by the degree of deprivation lie within the Belfast District Council Area and five and seven of the worst 10 in terms of the intensity and extent of deprivation respectively.

The Robson indicators were used primarily within MBW to identify priority areas of concentrated need in order to target resources and distribute funds according to the need within each identified area.

There are some drawbacks to the use of a single measurement in targeting and the use of Robson attracted a variety of criticisms. The report had been published in September 1994, based upon census data from 1991 and by the mid-1990s it was being argued that it was becoming dated, especially in terms of demographic change and ward boundary change. The surge in owner-occupation and new build in areas that were once solely public housing were cited as elements contributing to the deterioration of the data.

Robson used a number of unweighted variables, covering a wide range of areas such as health, education and income, which are combined to provide a single deprivation index for a geographic area. The equal weighting given to each of these variables was questioned, e.g. is overcrowding as important as not having a connection to mains sewage.

The unweighted nature of the variables often means that the application of Robson was viewed as a 'blunt instrument', in that it ignored the differences between rural and urban, young and old, e.g. it was criticised for its inability to allow targeting of specific groups such as young unemployed.

On the positive side however Robson was useful in that indices designed to embrace the different dimensions of deprivation identify different populations and areas than single variable measures. The latter highlight only particular aspects of deprivation and are not good indicators of the multiple deprivation.

The use of the Robson Index works best when the target population, i.e. those suffering from deprivation are living in a given geographical area as the index identifies both the area and the individuals. In other circumstances, however there will be deprived people living in areas that are not deprived and vice versa.

While adopting this model to establish the core MBW area, it was acknowledged that there might be other legitimate approaches to defining need. For example, the nature of deprivation is such that it may vary both geographically and in terms of its main features. Accordingly, areas or indeed groups with a very specific need may fail to be identified in a general model of deprivation. Consideration also needed to be given small pockets of disadvantage located within otherwise relatively affluent wards. Therefore, recognising that there are different approaches to identifying need, an element of flexibility for inclusion was introduced and consideration given to areas outside of the core wards on the following grounds.

- Area Partnerships could include Addition 1 areas on the condition that they give those areas the attention that their relative needs merits;
- Some areas, while not disadvantaged in overall terms, may nevertheless have specific problems which require attention. MBW would consider these cases taking into account evidence of the severity of the problem and the scale of the response required; and
- Pockets of disadvantage identified in the Census or other data could be included.

The final definition of the Making Belfast Work wards as informed by the above is an amalgam of those core wards in the Belfast DCA designated as deprived using Robson, wards drawn in by the Partnerships and additional wards with pockets of deprivation or specific problems of disadvantage (Annex 2).

In addition to the spatial designation, information pertaining to ‘macro indicators’ of need in the MBW area were used to identify key themes upon which projects should concentrate, these were;

- Education
- Health
- Unemployment
- Employment
- Crime

The MBW area compares badly to the Northern Ireland and Belfast Urban area scores across all of the above indicators. In order to target resources appropriately it was necessary to identify problems at local level which required the Robson Indicators to be supplemented by data on specific or sectoral aspects of disadvantage.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

The requirement for baseline information at ward level, in addition to enabling targeting, is linked to the requirement to monitor and evaluate the initiative. Evaluation is considered an essential part of the regeneration programme. It is used to assess results, compare achievements with costs, show how the programme can be improved and draws good practice for the benefit of future activities. While it is important that all public policies should be evaluated, the need is greatest in policy areas dominated by change and innovation; urban regeneration is one such area. The main categories of information needed in order to inform the evaluation are:

- Baseline information on the local conditions which the initiative is trying to change. Typical baseline indicators are employment, educational attainment, long-term illness, depending on the initiatives objectives;

- Objectives which describe the change in local conditions that the intervention is trying to achieve, and targets describing the degree of change sought;
- Changes in the local conditions over time;
- Outputs, such as jobs created, training provided and number of young children involved in pre-school provision.

The starting point for evaluation begins with the establishment of baseline information on the local conditions which the initiative is trying to improve. There should be at least one, but usually more, baseline indicators relevant to each of the key objectives, and collectively they form the starting point from which the impact of the scheme will be assessed. To track changes in the local conditions it is essential that these baseline indicators can be updated at regular intervals. There should also be a clear linkage between the baseline indicators and output measures to ensure that the scheme is not later evaluated against inappropriate or irrelevant indicators (Tym *et al.*, 1999).

In order to be effective baseline indicators have to pass two tests:

- Are they appropriate?
- Are they measurable?

On the first test an indicator such as the 'the number of jobs created' may be initially seen as an appropriate indicator for an objective 'to reduce unemployment among residents of the schemes area'. However, it is possible that jobs created in an area do not go to the target groups. This has been the experience of MBW where work undertaken by the Spatial Analysis and Research Unit indicates that one in every four jobs in an MBW area is taken by a non-resident (Power and Shuttleworth, 1997).

An assessment of the second test breaks down into three questions:

- Can the information be produced to fit the geographical boundary of the scheme area(s)?
- Can the baseline indicators be easily obtained?
- Can they be easily updated, at time intervals that are useful for the purposes of the scheme?

The first criterion is often difficult to meet. Many statistical sources provide information at national and regional level and perhaps at Education or Health Board area or Travel-to-Work areas. Despite some recent improvements through more

extensive use of post-coding, it remains difficult to obtain comprehensive data at ward or sub-ward level.

If information cannot be updated it is of limited value. The best baseline indicators are based on information that is published, freely available, relatively easily broken down to cover an appropriate area and regularly updated. Some data are available in such a manner, other information is easily available from the Census but suffers from infrequent collection, while information on Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME) or examination performance is collected or published at school level whilst the catchment area may be very dispersed.

One obvious method of obtaining baseline information is to carry out or commission original research. Surveys are expensive, but often essential when establishing and updating baseline data where hard information, for example on quality of life issues, does not exist.

In practical terms the problems in achieving a useful set of baseline indicators can be illustrated by the experiences of MBW. The effectiveness of the MBW initiative must be understood in the context of a complex, multi-dimensional initiative operating in a dynamic and difficult socio-economic environment. The problems of establishing baseline data is exemplified in the following statement from a review conducted in 1997 (Deloitte and Touche, 1997):

'Assembling the required baseline for the purposes of the review has been a frustrating experience. There has just not been enough information of the required calibre, which is focussed on the MBW areas and in a form able to meet the requirements of good baseline information'.³

MBW sought to assemble indicators relating to a number of socio-economic and physical variables in order to establish a baseline position for the areas covered by the MBW initiative. This presented a number of problems, both conceptual and in relation to data availability.

The multifaceted nature of the problems facing the areas concerned are such that information is required for a range of socio-economic and physical variables. Ideally it would be preferable to have information on these indicators for a period before the initiative started in order to establish the pre and post policy conditions. However, this is rarely the case in such initiatives.

It is also true that there may well be changes to the key socio-economic indicators for the area concerned that are not the result of the policy initiative but other factors, such as changes in the wider economic environment. In order to disentangle the relative impact of these factors on the variables concerned it is helpful to have information on the respective indicators for control group areas that are not subject to the urban regeneration initiative. For example a study of the claimant count between 1987 and 1995 'appears to indicate that unemployment for both men and

women fell faster in Making Belfast Work core wards than in the rest of the city' (Urban Institute, 1997).

It is also important to have information at a wider geographical level as the nature of the problem has both an absolute and relative value. Thus, whilst policy may be targeted because it is believed that the absolute level of a problem is unacceptable, it is more often the case that the targeting reflects the view that the level is too high compared to other areas. Without the comparative information such relative differences cannot be assessed.

The construction of good baseline indicators thus imposes quite demanding data requirements and in the case of MBW a pragmatic approach had to be adopted. Indicators were chosen on the basis that:

- they help to capture in whole or in part the nature of the problem facing residents in the area concerned;
- they are capable of being tracked through time;
- information about them can be obtained for areas other than those that have been subject to the policy.

These three criteria are rarely satisfied and a major review by Deloitte and Touche (1997) recommended the adoption of a relatively small number of indicators that are central to the problems experienced by the areas concerned. Table 4 below summarises the indicators chosen.

Many of the indicators described above emanated from a Belfast Residents Survey. This survey, conducted in 1992, was a random sample of 4,500 households within the Belfast District Council Area. The survey provided data on both the characteristics of the population and their attitudes towards the impact of urban regeneration measures both within their communities and the City Centre.⁴ It also provided the basis for monitoring future social and economic change among Belfast Residents.

The residents survey along with data from other administrative sources helped to identify specific problems within the MBW area on a number of the key indicators described above. There were, however, inherent problems in the data sources used to construct the baseline, particularly in terms of measuring change over time.

The key demographic indicators were constructed using 1991 census data, as were figures relating to economic activity and employment. This created a particular problem at ward level. For example, amongst other changes, the inner city ward of St Anne's ceased to exist as a result of boundary changes in 1992. Data on many of the indicators were reliant on the repetition of large and expensive surveys such as the Environmental Audit or the Belfast Residents Survey.

Table 4: Baseline Indicators (Deloitte and Touche Review 1997)

INDICATOR	SOURCE
Economic	
GDP – net output	Index of Production
Aggregate and sectoral employment	Labour Force Survey Belfast Residents Survey Training and Employment Agency DED Statistics
Number of firms in area	Census of Employment/VAT register
Unemployment and long-term unemployment	DED Press Notice (monthly) Labour Market Skills Trends Bulletin
Average earnings/incomes	Belfast Residents Survey
Environment	
Air quality	UK Smoke and Sulphur Dioxide Monitoring Network
Built Environment	
Environmental Audit	Building Design Partnership
Educational Achievement	
Qualifications and numbers staying on to 'A' Level	IDB DENI Belfast Residents Survey MBW NIEC/CSO
Health	
Incidences of long-term illness	Registrar General Census
Number of GP Consultations	NISRA
Crime	
Reported crime –total, burglary, street crime, car crime	RUC
Housing	
Housing tenure, unsatisfactory housing	MBW
Numbers in receipt of housing benefit	Belfast Residents Survey
Poverty	
Numbers in receipt of Income Support, Family Credit and other benefits	Belfast Residents Survey
Deprivation	
Overall deprivation	Robson's Deprivation Indices

The opportunity, however, to measure changes in the attitude and characteristics of residents has not as yet been fulfilled. For example the survey revealed that unemployed residents in the West of the city would not be prepared to work in areas outside that section of the city (other than the City Centre). In fact a greater proportion of unemployed residents from inner west Belfast (20 percent) would be

prepared to take employment on the continent than to work in the east of the city (10 percent) a few miles away.

A repeat of the Belfast Residents Survey over the next few years will allow us to measure any changes in residents attitudes and behaviour, such as that described above, which could not be obtained from administrative sources. The survey was also a useful source of information on household income and the attitudes of residents to their accommodation. As no alternative sources yield data of this type it has not as yet been possible to measure the impact that the initiative has had on the attitudes of residents towards their areas as places to live, perceptions of crime and safety, problems with the local environment (rubbish, graffiti etc), attitudes about employment opportunities and mobility.

While this highlights the problems with dependence on the use of large sample surveys, with better statistics available from administrative sources many of the demographic elements of the Belfast Residents Survey will be available.

7. MEASURING THE IMPACT

The problems which MBW has experienced in the construction of an adequate baseline exacerbates the difficulty in measuring the impact of the initiative in terms of outcomes. As MBW is only one of a number of players operating within Belfast, distilling its contribution poses considerable methodological challenges. For example within the MBW operational area there are a number of policy measures addressing various urban problems, these include, the National Lottery, The International Fund for Ireland, Laganside Corporation, the EU Urban Initiative, The Belfast European Partnership and Belfast City Council. The contribution that the initiative makes is therefore best illustrated by an examination of its outputs against objectives.

**Table 5: Distribution of MBW Expenditure by Strategic Objective
1992/93 and 1995/96**

Category of Strategic Objective	1992/93	1995/96
Enterprise and Employment	24.1	14.9
Employability	17.6	17.1
Education	23.9	21.2
Environment	6.8	4.5
Community benefits	27.6	42.3
Total	100	100

Source: (Deloitte and Touche Review 1997)

The last major review of MBW (1992 – 1996) undertaken by a team from Deloitte and Touche in which Peter Tyler was a key member examined the consistency of

expenditure with aims and objectives. During the review the expenditure associated with 3,000 projects was examined by category of strategic objective into which the project had been allocated. The distribution of costs across strategic objectives in 1992/93 and 1995/96 is presented in Table 5:

The most notable aspect is the fall in the share of expenditure devoted to projects with an enterprise/employment strategic objective and a broadly corresponding increase in the share of projects with a community development objective. This is due to MBW's significant contribution to investment in infrastructure in the early 1990s.

With regard to overall impact the Deloitte and Touche (1997) review concluded that *"The evidence indicated that MBW had been able to deliver a very significant volume of benefits which were relevant to meeting the socio-economic and environmental needs of the residents of inner Belfast"*.

In terms of additional benefits the programme generated about
1,900 jobs in inner Belfast between 1992/93 and 1995/96;
provided assistance to over 4,000 small businesses;
assisted over 16,000 disadvantaged people to gain access to the labour market,;
brought additional benefits to over 100,000 children and young people;
community benefits to about 130,000 adult residents in highly deprived communities.

In this respect the programme has made a significant contribution to the well being and quality of life of the residents of Belfast. Table 6 below summarises the position over this period.

In terms of the consistency with objectives there has been a notable project emphasis on education and training and quality of life. This reflects the acceptance in practice that MBW is much wider than a job creation initiative per se.

The review recognised that the MBW approach to regeneration produced a wide range of social, economic, environmental and community benefits that could not easily be added together to enable conventional cost per job value for money performance measures to be derived. The cost benefit analysis produced during the review attempted to bring together the programme benefits with the associated costs in terms of public expenditure. This is summarised in the Table 7 below:

It was acknowledged that adding together benefits and thus beneficiaries creates problems in relation to their comparative worth relative to each other. Additionally it was also possible to compare between different types of benefits as some individuals may benefit briefly from a particular project whilst others may enjoy the benefits of a project for a number of years or the benefits of more than one project.

Table 6: Net Benefits of the MBW Initiative 1992/93 – 1995/96

	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	Total
Job years	1,448	1,375	2,042	1,871	6,736
Jobs from construction And purchasing	441	141	140	166	888
Business Assisted					
- Private	872	834	1,115	903	3,724
- Community	64	76	147	119	406
Number of young People benefiting	21,840	24,717	27,166	29,550	103,273
Number of Trainees	4,365	4,317	4,365	3,586	16,633
Community Beneficiaries	27,387	28,295	34,042	39,695	129,419

Source: Deloitte and Touche (1997).

Table 7: The Cost Benefit Account for MBW 1992/93 to 1995/96

Net Costs (STG£m)	Net Benefits	
MBW Programme Expenditure £93.1	Direct job years created	6,740
Other Public Sector (net)	Job years from construction and purchasing.	890
	Business assisted	4,130
Other private/voluntary sector	Trainees assisted	16,300
	Young people benefiting	103,300
	Community beneficiaries	129,400
	Diversion of employment opportunities to disadvantaged	4,160
Total Public Sector £93.1	Commercial/industrial floor space Constructed/upgraded (000 sq ft)	220

Source: Deloitte and Touche (1997).

Table 8: MBW Achievements per STG£20,000 of Net Public Sector Cost.

(Average 1992/93 to 1995/96 – Current Prices)	
Job years created	1.6
SMEs assisted/devised	1
Young people benefiting	22
Number of Trainees	3.6
Jobs diverted to disadvantaged residents	0.9
Number of community beneficiaries	28
Sq ft of floorspace	47

Source: Deloitte and Touche (1997).

In order to quantify the achievements of MBW over this period the concept of a “basket of benefits” per unit of public expenditure was employed. The analysis suggests that for every STG£20,000 of MBW expenditure a number of outcomes were secured. These are detailed below in Table 8:

8. MBW OUTPUTS 1995/96 – 1999/2000

The distribution of project objectives over recent years (Table 9) show a concentration on giving people the skills and qualifications to allow them to compete for jobs.

Table 9: MBW Project Objectives 1995/96 to Present

Aims	Related Objectives	Number and Percentage of Projects
To increase opportunities for residents of MBW areas to secure employment	1. To improve educational and training outcomes.	1,149 (14%)
	2. To expand the existing job and enterprise base	464 (6%)
	3. To improve potential for inward investment	317 (4%)
	4. To nurture personal confidence which will help people look for work.	602 (7%)
	5. To promote opportunities for women to enter the labour market	349 (4%)
	6. To open up wider labour market opportunities for residents of MBW areas	268 (3%)
	7. To ensure sufficient supply of land for economic activities	112 (1%)
To improve the quality of life for residents of MBW areas	1. To tackle dereliction and conserve the local environment.	581 (7%)
	2. To enhance the capacities for community development and programmes to address the needs of marginalised youth.	2,995 (38%)
	3. To provide a range of health and social services programmes responsive to local need.	661 (8%)
	4. To respond flexibly to housing need	89 (1%)
	5. To help reduce the incidence and fear of crime	383 (5%)

In tandem with this the community's capacity to participate in its own development has been a dominant element of the MBW initiative. In order that development in these areas is sustainable it must be accompanied by community participation. Unless projects are rooted in and nurtured by their host communities they simply will not deliver the long-term dividends.

During this period reviewed by Deloitte and Touche (1997) the MBW initiative was clearly able to go some way to meeting the shortfall in jobs, training places and enhanced social provision and was contributing to a better quality of life for the residents of its area. The initiative was, however, designed to achieve a range of wider achievements. These encompassed the ability of the MBW initiative to build physical and institutional capacity in and for the areas concerned.

Such outputs were more difficult to quantify but were identified by the Deloitte and Touche (1997) review team as:

1. Co-ordination between Statutory Departments

A key feature of the MBW approach to urban regeneration has been to improve co-ordination between mainstream departments by bringing resources together to tackle urban regeneration. This occurred at a number of levels. Government Departments co-operate at a senior level to ensure that the special priorities and needs of disadvantaged groups within Belfast are addressed. At the operational levels the co-ordination of the work of MBW with individual departments and other public bodies ensures that there is an element of 'joined up' government in the formulation and delivery of projects on the ground.

2. Sensitising Government Departments and Bending mainstream

MBW has been able to increase awareness amongst government departments of the full range of employment, enterprise, social and community development issues of relevance to the needs of those in the most disadvantaged areas and has thus helped mainstream programmes to become more accessible to people living there and relevant to their needs.

3. Encouraging Innovative Approaches to Urban Regeneration

One important aspect of the MBW approach to urban regeneration is its ability to encourage high levels of innovation in the formulation and delivery of projects. At least three out of every five projects examined in the Deloitte and Touche review were regarded as innovative, not only to the area concerned, but some were also felt to be breaking new ground in the field of regeneration across the United Kingdom as a whole.

4. Encouraging Good Project Design

Projects are designed and managed to ensure that proposed project outputs were time bounded and capable of being achieved in the planned timescale.

5. Sustainability and the Building of Capacity

Durable outcomes were obtained in a number of ways. If projects are to have a lasting impact then they must contribute to removing the underlying causes of disadvantage so that the benefits can be passed on. In this respect MBW has

invested in human capital through the provision of education and employability measures that will increase the ability of residents to gain employment in the future. This is complemented by investment in the physical and community infrastructure in terms of improvements to the physical environment, the refurbishment and enhancement of building and improvements to educational and health facilities so that a higher quality of public service provision is possible in the future.

6. *Development of Local Partnerships*

A major contribution to the building of local capacity is the encouragement of local partnerships. The local partnership model emerged as a desired outcome of the 1994 consultation exercise. The emphasis was on creating partnerships to develop projects which would help to achieve local area regeneration by bringing together departments, councils, public bodies and the community and private sector.

Many of the features described above are now being advocated as good practice in neighbourhood regeneration policy in Great Britain (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999).

9. CONCLUSION

The quantification of the impact of MBW is complicated by a number of factors. These include the use of the Robson Index as the prime targeting mechanism albeit supplemented by data from other sources. The use of an index of relative deprivation based primarily on census data means that the task of assessing impact cannot be considered during the inter-census period.

The difficulties of constructing a baseline and the measurement of change thereafter have also been highlighted. In addition, the nature of the interventions, for example the provision of additional pre-schools places, are likely to yield changes in educational attainment levels or employability only in the medium to longer term.

Effective targeting and meaningful evaluation of the MBW initiative will require continuing development of appropriate data sources. This need is further emphasised by the data requirements arising from the government's New Targeting Social Need initiative which is intended to ensure that available resources are targeted on areas, groups and individuals who are objectively assessed as being in greatest need.

The key problems have been:

1. An over reliance on census based data or outputs i.e. the Robson Index means that there is a least a ten year gap between data points. Local areas can undergo sudden change and the targeting of resources needs to reflect such changes. In addition, the impact of policies needs to be measured over shorter periods of time particularly, to allow changes to be made which may become apparent through the monitoring process.

2. The census also only provides a partial description of an area. It does not provide information on attitudes, perceptions, problems etc.
3. Administrative data has remained to some extent an untapped resource. There are two primary reasons for this:
 - **Spatial definitions:** Historically much information has only been available at a national, Health Board, District level etc. It often cannot be broken down to an appropriate level to inform the interventions required.
 - **Dispersion:** Information at local area level is not currently centrally located and therefore to compose a comprehensive picture of an area requires significant effort. In addition, quite often there exists a lack of awareness of what data is available and from whom.

Future developments in this area are however promising. The *Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency* (NISRA) has been actively involved in working with Government Departments to identify gaps. Arising from this consultation NISRA has undertaken to examine the feasibility of constructing a new index of deprivation. While the detail has yet to be decided it is intended to explore the scope for making greater use of administrative data which has the potential for more regular updating.

NISRA are also considering a proposal to set up a *Geographical Information Systems* (GIS) unit to meet the data needs of departments. The development of the New TSN policy and the requirement to work across departments has created a significant demand for geographically referenced data. It has been recognised that the task of collating data across departments has until recently been a difficult one because of disparate collection methods and procedures. Recent advances in computer technology have made such collations more practicable.

The NISRA unit has three identifiable functions, these are:

- The proposal and subsequent adoption of standards in the development of GIS across departments;
- The production of a geographical Information System which would provide a central repository for geographically referenced information across government; and
- The provision of expertise to NISRA branches across departments on GIS.

Issues of data availability are not just a problem for the Belfast Regeneration Office but one that is shared by all agencies involved in regeneration initiatives at a local or neighbourhood level. At present Policy Action Team 18 of the Social Exclusion Unit in England are examining these problems. The Teams' remit was set (Patel, 1999):

“in the recognition that government knows very little about the true levels of deprivation and poverty across the country because of the lack of good quality localised (or small area) data. Analysis of the combined and complex nature of deprivation in our neighbourhoods needs good quality information as their foundation. Monitoring the delivery of desired outcomes relies on good quality information. In short better strategies need to start with better information – but we haven’t got it.”

These two developments in Northern Ireland, noted above, would make a significant contribution to the targeting, baseline construction and monitoring and evaluation of the urban regeneration process. These are also timely developments with regard to the demands that will be made to target resources and to assess their impact within the context of the New TSN (1999) policy directives.

References

Cebulla, A., 1995. *Urban Policy in Belfast: An Evaluation of Department of Environment's Physical Regeneration Initiatives.* Belfast.

Deloitte and Touche, 1997. *Review of Making Belfast Work,* Belfast.

DoE, 1994. *Belfast Residents Survey,* Belfast: Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland.

Gaffikin, F. and M. Morrissey, 1999. *A Tale of One City,* Pluto Press.

Hills, J., 1999. "Social Exclusion in the UK: The State of Current Research", ESRC Research Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE, paper presented to Statistics Users Council/CEIES Joint Conference, November.

Census, 1991. *Northern Ireland Census of Population 1991.* Belfast.

New TSN, 1999. *An Agenda for Targeting Social Need and Promoting Social Inclusion in Northern Ireland,* CCRU.

Patel, A., 1999. "The Work of the Social Exclusion Unit on Better Information", paper presented to the Statistics Users Council/CEIES Joint Conference, November.

Power, J. and I. Shuttleworth, 1997. *Urban Labour Markets in the Belfast Urban Area,* Working Paper No.2., Socio-Spatial Research Unit, SARU.

Robson, B. et al., 1994. *Relative Deprivation in Northern Ireland,* Policy Planning Research Unit, Occasional Paper No 28.

Social Exclusion Unit, 1999. *Bring Britain Together, A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.*

Tym, R. et al., 1999. *Local Evaluation for regeneration Partnerships Good Practice Guide,* DETR.

Urban Institute, 1997. *Unemployment in Belfast and the Making Belfast Work Programme.* Belfast.

Annex 1: Deprivation Matrix for MBW Wards

Degree		Intensity		Extent	
Falls	1	Glencolin	1	Whiterock	4
New Lodge	2	Falls	3	New Lodge	5
St Anne's	3	New Lodge	4	Falls	6
Clonard	4	St Anne's	5	Shafesbury	7
Shaftesbury	5	Clonard	10	Clonard	8
Woodvale	7	Upp Spring'fd	12	Upp Spring'fd	9
The Mount	8	Island	13	Ardoyne	10
Island	9	Shankill	15	Beechmount	12
Shankill	10	Twinbrook	16	Kilwee	17
Duncairn	13	Glen Road	18	Twinbrook	22
Ballymacarrett	14	Botanic	19	Glencolin	23
Crumlin	15	Beechmount	21	Island	26
Blackstaff	16	The Mount	26	Woodvale	27
Whiterock	18	Crumlin	27	The Mount	30
Glencolin	20	Whiterock	28	Shankill	34
Beechmount	24	Glencairn	29	Colin Glen	37
Ardoyne	33	Ardoyne	30	Crumlin	40
Upp Spring'fd	34	Woodvale	32	Blackstaff	50
Coole	45	Kilwee	33	Botanic	56
Twinbrook	46	Falls Park	34	Glen Road	59
Glencairn	49	Ballymacarrett	35	Ballymacarrett	67
Valley	57	Duncairn	39	Duncairn	73
Glen Road	82	Blackstaff	43	Cliftonville	74
Dunanney	90	Colin Glen	45	Falls Park	78
Waterworks	95	Shaftesbury	48	St Anne's	94
Botanic	101	Valley	68	Valley	99
Kilwee	114	Coole	72	Dunanney	101
Cliftonville	127	Water Works	94	Glencairn	135
Colin Glen	142	Ligoneil	113	Coole	138
Ligoneil	160	Dunanney	146	Water Works	154
Falls Park	179	Cliftonville	170	Ligoneil	156
		Highfield	203		
No.of Areas	217		430		170

Annex 2: Making Belfast Work Areas

MBW Core Wards	Ardoyne Ballymacarrett Beechmount Blackstaff Botanic Cliftonville Clonard Colin Glen Coole Crumlin Dunanney Duncairn Falls Falls Park Glen Road Glencairn	Glencolin Island Kilwee Legoniel New Lodge Shaftesbury Shankill St Anne's The Mount Twinbrook Upper Springfield Valley Waterworks Whiterock Woodstock Woodvale
Wards Drawn into Partnership	Ballysillan- Highfield	Greater Shankill Partnership
Additional Wards with Pockets of Deprivation or Specific Problems of Disadvantage	Abbey Anderstown Ballyhackamore Belmont Bloomfield Bradan Carrowreagh Cherryvally Chichester Park	Enler Graham's Bridge Ladybrook Loughview Malone Rosetta Sydenham Tullycarnet Whitehouse

DISCUSSION

Dr Peter Tyler: The author begins the paper by providing a clear and concise insight into the nature of the social exclusion problem as it has evolved and developed in Belfast in recent years. The decline of traditional staple industries and the resulting continued shortfall in the number of job opportunities available to those who have sought to live and work in Belfast, particularly in the inner city areas, is identified as a factor which has contributed to social exclusion in Belfast in line with the experience of other large cities across the United Kingdom. Inner city residents have not been able to secure enough jobs in the emerging new and growing sectors of the labour market and the consequence of this is that they have faced relatively high levels of unemployment.

The Troubles have added a further dimension to urban labour market problems and the paper points to the significant changes in the geographical concentration of Catholics and Protestants which has occurred over the last thirty years. Residential segregation has been based increasingly on both religion and class. The author comments that “*over twenty five years of political and inter-communal conflict have imposed severe limitations on where people in Belfast are prepared to work*”.

The physical decline of the built environment in the inner city has exacerbated the problems faced by inner city residents. The pace of re-development has often been very slow and new private sector investment has been deterred by the relatively high risks of investing in urban sites.

The author moves to describe how the economic, physical and social problems experienced by the residents of the deprived areas have proved difficult to remove. Both mainstream policy measures and the response of the market has been inadequate to adequately remove them. Such failure has provided the rationale for urban policy. Initially, this response took the form of measures designed to improve the physical environment and to promote land and property led economic regeneration but eventually, as the paper describes, it was recognised that a broader, multi-faceted approach was required which would focus on both physical and economic regeneration. Alongside measures to encourage social integration this has formed the basis for a radical and innovative approach on the part of government and this was reflected in the creation of Belfast Action Teams and the Making Belfast Work Initiative in the late 1980s.

These two initiatives were amalgamated in April 1994. Throughout the focus has been on bringing about regeneration through a ‘bottom-up’ approach with an emphasis on getting the mainstream departments responsible for the provision of health, education and the like to focus their activities on to the specific needs of those most disadvantaged in inner city wards.

This targeting has required considerable attention to measuring need at a small area level and the author refers to the use of the Robson Index of Deprivation based originally on the 1991 Census of Population. Whilst of considerable value in the early 1990s, the paper correctly points to the inadequacies of the Robson Index as the 1991 Census results have become out-dated. Other concerns have centred around the weighting of the variables used to measure the degree and extent of deprivation. It has also been recognised that not all the socially excluded are concentrated in tightly defined geographical areas where the Robson Index identifies high levels of need.

In the face of this, the author emphasises that an element of flexibility has been required so that the wards which have been targeted by Making Belfast Work have been a combination of the core wards identified by Robson and other wards with pockets of deprivation or specific problems of disadvantage.

The author argues that it has been essential that Government assess the achievements of MBW in terms of its ability to alleviate social exclusion in Belfast. This has proved to be a challenging requirement given the quality of existing monitoring data. As the paper argues monitoring and evaluation requires good baseline information – but the data limitations are considerable. It is difficult to find data to fit the geographical boundary of the areas concerned and which is capable of being updated regularly. It is often necessary to undertake social surveys of households which can be expensive. Also, in order to disentangle the impact of policy on targeted areas it is of great value to obtain data for other areas that can be used to establish controls.

In fact, as is now widely recognised by policy makers across the United Kingdom, in order to assess the impact of urban regeneration measures like MBW it is necessary to ascertain the effects it has had on key outcome indicators which relate to employment, health, education etc and to disentangle what the impact of the specific policy measures have been. Methodological problems abound and the author illustrates these by drawing on an evaluation of MBW. The evaluation of MBW is also used to good effect by the author to demonstrate that good evaluation should consider more than the outputs or outcomes of policy per unit of public expenditure but it should also identify what policy has been able to achieve by improving the co-ordination of government actions to alleviate the problems of those who are socially excluded and to ensure that they get a better deal from both the workings of the market as well as the quality of public services delivered to them.

As the paper concludes, if local area based initiatives are to be effective it is essential that they are targeted on those individuals and communities who are most in need. At the present time data problems abound, although there are some grounds to believe that the position will improve in the future as NISRA and others seek to build on the recommendations of Policy Action Team 18 in England. If there is to be adequate targeting, monitoring and evaluation of policy achievement then it will be necessary to undertake more local area based surveys of those households who are in the areas of deprivation.