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ANTI-POVERTY

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Dear Dr Mulligan,

Re: New TSN – The Way Forward – Towards an Anti-Poverty Strategy :
WHSSB Response

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the Phase 2 public consultation document. The Western Board is pleased to see that many of the comments from Phase 1 have been accommodated.

The following comments are now offered on Phase 2;

The Board welcomes the shift of focus from TSN to the development of a broader anti-poverty strategy for NI.

In terms of strategic objectives contained in the document, it is suggested that the objectives from a new anti-poverty strategy should include health in the title, and would read "To improve income, health and living conditions of the most disadvantaged".

The strategic framework must have a clear preventative element to ensure future generations do not fall into poverty and this should be linked to education and the development of life long learning skills.

It is suggested that the reference to migrant workers should also include ethnic minorities and other very vulnerable groups such as travellers. These groups are all prone to poverty issues.

There needs to be a focus on "bending the spend", similar to that highlighted by DSD in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

Measuring poverty - it is suggested that poor health has to be a key indicator in terms of measuring poverty. In addition access to services, mobility, mortality and links to social exclusions need to be given equal weight.

It will be important to ensure that the anti-poverty strategy can be implemented much easier by local communities and local government agencies. The strategy should look at the opportunities which exist within Investing for Health and Neighbourhood Renewal.

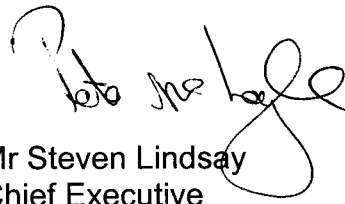
It would be helpful, in the development of the anti-poverty strategy for the government to develop locality profiles which can identify specific communities which have serious poverty or exclusion issues. This would be a significant tool in assisting local authorities and agencies identify priorities within their strategic developments.

There is a need for ongoing evaluation of the anti-poverty strategy with some baseline in terms of demonstrating what money is currently being targeted within departments and agencies to tackle anit-poverty.

Finally the anti-poverty strategy must take account of communities that exist along the border line measurements, that may not be classified as poverty areas but may suffer inequity as a result of policies.

I trust you find these comments helpful and wish you well in taking forward the strategy to implementation.

Yours sincerely



Mr Steven Lindsay
Chief Executive