

**Investment Strategy for
Northern Ireland
2005-2015**

CONSULTATION REPORT

December 2005

CONTENTS

1	Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015 Consultation	2
1.1	Introduction.....	2
1.2	Consultation Process.....	2
1.2.1	Soliciting Consultation Responses	3
1.2.2	Public Events.....	3
1.2.3	Sectoral Consultation	4
1.3	Consultation Responses.....	4
2	Key Themes and Issues Arising from the Consultation Process.....	6
2.1	Introduction.....	6
2.2	Issue 1: Strategic nature of the ISNI	7
2.3	Issue 2: Affordability of the ISNI	9
2.4	Issue 3: Capacity to deliver the ISNI.....	11
2.5	Issue 4: Equality considerations	14
2.6	Issue 5: Addressing regional disparities	16
2.7	Issue 6: Other issues	16
	Annex A: Written Consultation Submissions Received	19
	Annex B: Participants at Public Consultation Events	21
	Annex C: Main Outcomes from ISNI Public Consultation Events	29

1 Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2015 Consultation

1.1 Introduction

The draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) was launched for consultation by the Minister Ian Pearson, on 20 December 2004. The consultation process ran for just over 14 weeks from 20 December 2004 to 31 March 2005. The public was invited to participate in the consultation process, through attendance at a series of seven consultation events, and/or in writing by post, fax or email.

Comments from the consultation process have been incorporated, wherever possible, into the final version of the ISNI. Work has commenced to ensure that other issues are reflected in future iterations of the ISNI. The Investment Strategy was published by the Secretary of State on 14 December 2005.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a summary of the key issues raised in the consultation process.

1.2 Consultation Process

In recognition of the significance of the ISNI for future development in Northern Ireland, the consultation process encompassed public consultation events, sectoral consultations and opportunities to send written submissions. The remainder of this section outlines the consultation process and responses received. Section 2 summarises the main issues arising from the public events, written consultation responses and sectoral consultation process.

1.2.1 Soliciting Consultation Responses

Over 250 organisations and individuals received printed copies of the draft ISNI document for consideration and response. In addition, public consultation events were publicised in the printed media. The Strategic Investment Board Limited (SIB) also responded to requests from groups and organisations for further consultation.

1.2.2 Public Events

Five planned consultation events took place across Northern Ireland during January and February 2005. In response to public demand, an additional two events were held. Details of the seven events are as follows:

Date	Venue	Time
24 January 2005	Civic Centre, Lisburn	9.30am – 1.30pm
25 January 2005	Canal Court Hotel, Newry	9.30am – 1.30pm
26 January 2005	Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen	12.30pm – 4.30pm
31 January 2005	City Hotel, Londonderry	12.30pm – 4.30pm
4 February 2005	Belfast Castle, Belfast	9.30am – 1.30pm
21 February 2005	An Creggan, Omagh	9.30am-1.30pm
25 February 2005	Adair Arms, Ballymena	12.30pm-15.45pm

Each event was facilitated by a panel of officials from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) and the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), chaired by OFMDFM. Opening comments from the chair preceded a short presentation on the draft ISNI given by the Chief Executive of the SIB, David Gavaghan. This was followed by a question-and-answer session from the floor, feedback on the questions posed in the draft ISNI, and finishing with the chair's closing remarks.

1.2.3 Sectoral Consultation

The ISNI is designed to be an iterative process and, over time, to become an integral part of the public expenditure framework in Northern Ireland. The document consulted on was also a draft of the first iteration of the ISNI, and it was recognised that the opportunity exists to improve and build on the development of the ISNI so far. For these reasons SIB was keen to initiate dialogue with as wide and diverse a range of interest groups and organisations as possible in Northern Ireland. Sectoral consultation events and meetings were held with representatives from:

- Advisory Council on Infrastructure Investment;
- The four main political parties in Northern Ireland;
- Equality interest groups;
- The Voluntary and Community Sectors;
- Rural, Farming and Environmental Interests;
- Business Interests; and
- Contractors and Investors.

1.3 Consultation Responses

A total of 51 written responses were received as part of the public consultation process. These are broken down in the table below:

Written Submissions on the Draft ISNI	
Political parties	1
Local government	12
Business sector	8
Non Departmental Public Bodies	9
Health sector	7
Voluntary and community sectors	6
Trade unions and employers' organisations	3
Environmental groups	3
Other	2
TOTAL	51

Annex A contains a list of all written submissions received. A list of participants at public consultation events can be found at **Annex B**, and a summary of the main outcomes of the seven consultations are detailed in **Annex C**.

This document can be sent to you in electronic format or hard copy, or you can access it at www.sibni.org.

2 Key Themes and Issues Arising from the Consultation Process

2.1 Introduction

A diverse range of responses was received as part of the consultation process, many of which addressed the issues covered in the draft ISNI in some detail. SIB wishes to express its appreciation for the time and effort expended by all those individuals and groups who participated in the draft ISNI consultation process, and looks forward to developing an ongoing engagement on the issues raised as the ISNI goes forward.

In general, the ISNI was broadly welcomed in both written submissions and at public consultation events. The main issues emerging from the written consultations mirrored those raised at the public consultation events. The main themes emerging from the consultation process are listed below:

- **Strategic nature of the ISNI:** Is the ISNI sufficiently 'joined up' and strategic?
- **Affordability of the ISNI:** Are the processes underpinning the ISNI sufficiently robust to ensure that it is affordable?
- **Capacity to deliver the ISNI:** Is there sufficient capacity (both public and private sector) and sufficient market appetite to deliver the projects proposed?
- **Equality considerations:** Are equality and social outcomes sufficiently well considered in ISNI to deliver beneficial outcomes to the ISNI?
- **Addressing sub-regional disparities:** Are sub-regional disparities and rurality considered sufficiently in the ISNI?

- **Other issues:** Any other issues raised that should be reflected in the ISNI?

These themes emerged from, and were driven by, the issues identified in the written and oral submissions received. In addition to the questions above, a number of other issues were raised in the course of consultation which focused on area-specific issues or topics outside the scope of SIB or the ISNI.

2.2 Issue 1: Strategic nature of the ISNI

Issue 1: Is the ISNI strategic enough to develop the step change in infrastructure investment needed in NI?

Although the ISNI was broadly welcomed by consultees, both at events and in the written submissions received, the strategic nature of the ISNI was critically explored in many responses. Respondents to the consultation process stressed the need to improve a number of facets of the ISNI, including the prioritisation and joined-up nature of the Strategy, its relationship to other government strategies, and cross-border dimension to infrastructure investment.

- **Prioritisation and joined-up government**

Consultees were generally content with the prioritisation of infrastructure investment across the ISNI, and the ISNI was broadly welcomed as a move towards a more joined-up approach to infrastructure investment. Disappointment was expressed in some responses in relation to the priority afforded in the ISNI to addressing regional disparities, equality considerations, environmental issues and social outcomes.

On a more general level, many responses reflected the view that there was still some way to go in relation to fully integrated infrastructure planning and investment, and there was some support for a move towards a more evidence based approach to prioritisation and planning.

Consultees expressed the view that being joined up would require a culture shift in the public sector with increased cross-departmental working among departments. Prioritisation within departments would need to be augmented with an approach that reflected how government policy could work together across departments. The example was given of how investment in healthy school meals has immediate impacts on standards of behaviour and educational attainment. It recognised the potential to provide longer-term benefits for overall population health and wellbeing, as a healthier, better qualified workforce tends to be more productive, thus enhancing economic growth and prosperity.

- **The relationship to other strategies**

The relationship between the ISNI and other government strategies emerged as a key theme in many of the consultation events and written responses. Consultees called for greater clarity around this relationship and, in particular, the relationship between the ISNI and the Regional Development Strategy (Strategy 2010), New TSN, and Section 75.

- **Setting Priorities**

The need for government to invest for the future was highlighted by respondents. The need to embed the ISNI and its benefits into NI society was also a strong theme in discussions. For some, this was reflected in a call for government to ensure that job creation and economic development arose from the ISNI. There was a clear view that government should not be 'penny wise and pound foolish'. Calls

were made for direct infrastructure investment to underpin and stimulate development, and to facilitate individuals and organisations to create and avail of economic growth. Others expressed the view that the role of government in this respect was to ensure that the ISNI investment attracted greater sums of private sector activity and investment in NI.

- **The cross-border dimension**

The importance of a cross-border dimension and its absence from the draft ISNI was highlighted in a number of submissions and at the events in Omagh, Londonderry and Newry. Participants felt that greater co-operation between both jurisdiction's spatial strategies and coordination in areas such as planning, roads, transport links and healthcare would make a positive contribution to regional, and economic development in the North West and border regions. In addition, it was felt that a cross-border view could create opportunities in service provision, as some individuals from the Republic of Ireland already accessed services in Northern Ireland.

2.3 Issue 2: Affordability of the ISNI

Issue 2: Are the processes underpinning the ISNI sufficiently robust to ensure that it is affordable?

Consultation responses focused in some considerable degree on the affordability of the infrastructure investment proposed in the ISNI and the potential impact for NI households. Participants also highlighted the importance of planning and managing costs over the lifetime of the ISNI. Although the use of private investment in public services, alongside conventional public investment, was seen as beneficial in helping to improve services, there was sustained questioning from some respondents as to whether NI could afford the use of private finance proposed in the ISNI.

Questions posed and points raised centred on the various aspects of affordability:

- **Affordability in the public sector**

There was concern that other strategies had been published in the past that had ultimately proved to be unaffordable. In addressing this, there was some support for more information on the funding of proposed projects, the cost of any borrowing required, the cost of unitary charges for privately financed projects and programmes, and the overall running cost and revenue implications for departments and public bodies of the projects and programmes in the ISNI. The long-term impact on NI's budget was raised, and participants questioned the impact on the NI budget of cumulative charges as the scale of PPP/PFI investment increases.

There was also support for an approach to infrastructure investment decision making processes that integrate both revenue and capital considerations – such as whether we can afford, train, and supply more nurses and other staff for any proposed new healthcare infrastructure. It was also stressed that infrastructure investment should result in improvements in service levels in tandem with advances in physical infrastructure.

- **Affordability to the people of NI**

Calls were also made for greater clarity around the issue of affordability in those projects and programmes identified as financed through Public Private Partnership / Private Finance Initiative. The ability of domestic households/ratepayers in NI to fund additional borrowing through rates increases and water charges featured in many of the responses received, with the impact of such moves on the most economically vulnerable households in NI highlighted as a primary concern.

- **Managing costs through better planning**

The importance of managing the costs of infrastructure investment on such a large scale also featured in responses. The view was expressed that one of the key roles for SIB would be in managing the timing of both the release of projects to the market to promote competition, and any programme of asset disposal to ensure the best price and that value for money was achieved for NI.

There was a call for design issues to be looked at more closely in future ISNI's. The view was expressed that while good design and whole life costing may appear more expensive in the short-term, it would be more cost effective in the long term.

The early involvement of planners and the planning service was seen as essential in ensuring that projects were delivered on time and within cost. There was a perception that N.I.'s performance in relation to planning delays was poorer than in other countries and that, such problems would act as a disincentive to investment from large overseas companies. Overall, respondents felt that there was considerable room for improvement in this area.

On a more technical note, there was a call from some respondents for the inclusion of optimism bias and construction cost inflation in the ISNI, as it would provide a more realistic and accurate picture of the long-term affordability of the infrastructure projects and programmes proposed in the ISNI.

2.4 Issue 3: Capacity to deliver the ISNI

Issue 3: Is there sufficient capacity (both public & private sector) and sufficient market appetite to deliver the projects proposed?

The ability to deliver the ISNI also featured in many written responses and consultation events. Most contributions centred on the ready availability of

the requisite quantity and mix of skills-sets, both in the public sector and the construction industry, to deliver the ISNI. Some additional points were raised in relation to market appetite for involvement in Northern Ireland, and the importance of monitoring progress towards delivering the ISNI.

- **Capacity in the public sector**

There was some discussion of the need to match the infrastructure investment procurement structures and skill sets available in the public sector, to the demands of delivering the projects and programmes contained in the ISNI. Respondents expressed the view that this would require a change of culture and approach in the public sector, breaking down the individualised departmental approach and the adoption of new approaches such as strategic partnering and more open, flatter, organisational structures. This would also require the development of a critical mass of knowledge, and greater sharing of information across the public sector. It was felt, that there was a danger that opportunities for increased value for money would be lost as the public sector focused on easier to deliver projects rather than more complex programmes, through a lack of capacity.

On a related point, it was stated that growth and innovation requires improved productivity, especially in the service sector and public sector. Some respondents felt this would be challenging for the public sector, and suggested that SIB could play a key role in improving productivity.

- **Capacity in the construction sector**

Concern was expressed as to the availability of the required mix, quantity and quality of skills in Northern Ireland to deliver the ISNI, while maintaining construction cost inflation at a reasonable level. It was stressed that managing cost inflation would require forward planning for future skills requirements. The proximity of a buoyant and attractive construction market in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) also featured in consultation responses, and questions were posed as to the

ability of the ISNI to compete for the substantial capacity in construction currently employed in the RoI.

The impact of the ISNI on the local market for skilled workers and small sub-contractors was also highlighted. Respondents expressed the view that, given the scale of the small and medium enterprises (SME) employer sector in NI, it would be important for government to consider mechanisms for participation by SMEs in infrastructure investment in NI. Some respondents expressed fears that many small indigenous firms would be unable to compete for large scale infrastructure contracts, and called for research to identify baseline preparedness and capacity in SME sector in NI.

Calls were also made for government to facilitate the development of partnership working between NI firms, and between NI firms and international companies to ensure that NI SMEs are assisted in availing of the opportunities presented.

- **Market appetite for work in Northern Ireland**

Although stressing the progress made in NI in recent years, some contributions expressed the fear that the negative image of NI abroad would impede international contractors and financial institutions from doing business in NI.

- **Monitoring progress**

The availability of clear, consistent and reliable information was seen as a key element in creating and maintaining market confidence in the ISNI and in NI as an attractive prospect for both Northern Ireland and overseas companies wishing to bid for work. To address this, there were calls for more openness and information on the planned release of projects and programmes to the market, together with regular monitoring and evaluation of progress towards delivering the infrastructure identified in the ISNI.

2.5 Issue 4: Equality considerations

Issue 4: Are equality and social outcomes sufficiently well considered in the ISNI to deliver beneficial outcomes to Northern Ireland?

Many of the inputs to the consultation process highlighted consideration of equality issues and social outcomes. In the main, these focused on Section 75 considerations, the need to ensure that New TSN and social outcomes were reflected in the ISNI.

- **Section 75 and equality issues**

Mainstreaming equality in the ISNI attracted considerable attention at consultation. Annex 5 of the draft ISNI sets out the high-level consideration of the equality impacts of the infrastructure projects proposed. In consultation, respondents reiterated their support for Section 75, while accepting the difficulties associated with conducting a standard equality impact assessment on the ISNI. However, the view was put forward that consideration of equality was more important precisely because the ISNI was a high-level, and potentially far-reaching, document. The ISNI should be informed by the equality considerations - equality, it was said, was not an add-on.

Respondents felt that it would be possible to continue to accelerate infrastructure investment, and develop a model to address this, taking account of the difficulties posed by the strategic nature of the ISNI.

The question was raised as to the role of SIB in relation to a wide range of equality issues, including Disability Discrimination Act. The needs of rural areas were highlighted, and concern was expressed that population density and isolation be reflected in considerations of the access to services and transport links in the ISNI.

- **TSN and social outcomes**

Concern and disappointment was expressed that the ISNI fails to address the issues of social outputs and environmental sustainability in a more comprehensive manner. Clarification was also sought on how new TSN fits with the ISNI.

The need to examine the potential of public procurement to address social outcomes and equality issues was raised in a number of submissions and events. Discussions focused on the possibilities for the creative use of contract compliance as a mode of securing social outputs, on addressing long-term unemployment (LTU), in particular, in public procurement. A number of concerns were expressed in relation to the need to ensure that both employers and LTU employees received support throughout any such initiative. In addition, respondents felt that the sharing of lessons and experiences should be encouraged, in conjunction with monitoring of compliance to ensure meaningful outcomes for all.

Social and community cohesion was also raised as an issue in consultation, in the context of its important role in creating and maintaining the social conditions needed to underpin the long-term development of NI.

On a more general note, many consultees expressed the hope that, as the ISNI developed, it would be accompanied by an open consultation process, feedback and ongoing dialogue and open debate on infrastructure investment decisions.

2.6 Issue 5: Addressing regional disparities

Issue 5: Are sub-regional disparities and rurality considered sufficiently in the ISNI?

The importance of ISNI in addressing regional disparities and ensuring balanced regional development was a feature of all consultation events, and many submissions. Respondents put forward the view that infrastructure investment had, in the past, favoured the east of NI, and as a result those living and working in the west of NI were in a disadvantaged position with respect to social and economic development. Views on this issue ranged from calls to see evidence of all areas receiving their “fair share” of any proposed infrastructure investment, to demands that investment be prioritised towards historically disadvantaged areas.

2.7 Issue 6: Other issues

Issue 6: Any other issues raised that should be reflected in the ISNI?

Other issues were raised during the course of the consultation process. These centred on calls for higher priority to be accorded to a number of specific areas, calls for additional information or clarification, and a number of local, area-specific concerns.

- **Higher priorities**

There was a call for maintaining the flexibility and responsiveness of the ISNI, to facilitate changing priorities and pressures in the future.

There were calls for leisure and recreation to be afforded higher priority, in addition to existing priorities. Higher priority was also called for in relation to environmental issues, in particular, that the principles of sustainable development be reflected in any future infrastructure investment. In relation to transport, there was a desire to see issues of access for rural areas and those with disabilities receive greater priority in investment proposals. The importance of affordable and good quality childcare solutions was stressed, in the context of facilitating women's access to and participation in training and the labour market. Respondents also called for greater consideration of the needs of rural areas, in relation to rural development, and the spatial aspects of dispersed rural populations in planning service provision and infrastructure investment decision-making.

Looking to the future, it was felt that an aging population would require a different pattern of healthcare provision than would appear to be the case in the ISNI, and calls were made for flexibility in the future to reflect these changing population health needs.

- **Area specific proposals**

All events and many of the consultation responses featured some discussion of the needs of specific localities across NI.

All public events reached consensus that the ISNI should include and reflect the needs of their localities, and make provision for infrastructure investment to bring their area into line with infrastructure standards in other areas of NI. In addition to this general concern, respondents made the following area-specific points:

- More investment needed for Newry and the south-east in roads, health, social housing, tourism, education and urban development.
- Derry and Eniskillen wished to underline the need to attach more importance to integrated spatial planning for cross-order areas,

together with a reiteration of the need to continue implementation of transport routes identified in the RDS.

- Ballymena wished to stress the importance of investment in roads and rail infrastructure links from Ballymena to the major development hubs in NI, together with investment in local schools to enhance academic and vocational qualifications
- Omagh and Tyrone consultees stressed that, in the absence of rail network, high priority should be given to investing in those roads identified as trans-European network roads, and those key cross-border road links, together with local healthcare facilities. The need for a bypass for Cookstown was also stressed.

Other issues were raised during the course of the consultation process. These centred on calls for higher priority to be accorded to a number of specific areas, calls for additional information or clarification, and a number of local, area-specific concerns.

Annex A: Written Consultation Submissions Received

Written submissions were received from the following organisations:

Political parties	Sinn Féin	1
Local government	Antrim Borough Council Ards Borough Council Ballymena Borough Council Banbridge District Council Belfast City Council Craigavon Borough Council Fermanagh District Council Limavady Borough Council Newry and Mourne City and District Council Omagh District Council Arc21 North West Region Cross- Border Group	12
Business sector	CBI (NI) Irish Academy of Engineering Construction Industry Group Institution of Civil Engineers Londonderry Chamber of Commerce Northwest Chambers of Commerce Initiative Omagh Business Forum Ltd Omagh Chamber of Commerce and Industry	8
Non Departmental Public Bodies	Advisory Council on Infrastructure Investment General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Northern Ireland Housing Executive InterTradeIreland Rural Development Council South Eastern Education and Library Board (Property Services Division) Translink Waste Mangement Board	9

Health sector	Eastern Health and Social Services Board Northern Health and Social Services Board Southern Health and Social Services Board South and East Belfast Health and Social Services Trust Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Care Trust Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust United Hospitals Trust	7
Voluntary and community sectors	Belfast Jewish Community Centre Committee on the Administration of Justice NICVA Social Economy Agency West Belfast Economic Forum Women's Support Network	6
Trade unions and employers' organisations	Construction Employers Federation NIPSA UNISON	3
Environmental groups	Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland Environment Link	3
Other	Disability Action Omagh 2010 Taskforce	2

Annex B: Participants at Public Consultation Events

The following individuals and organisations participated in the ISNI public consultation events.

ATTENDEES AT LISBURN EVENT 24/1/05

NAME	ORGANISATION
Cllr Gardiner-Watson	Lisburn City Council
Patricia Lewsley	Lisburn City Council
Betty Campbell	Lisburn City Council
Pat Corker	EHS- DoE
Ricky Burnett	Arc 21
Dermott Curran	Down District Council
Richard Bullock	DUP- Advisor
John R Quinn	Arc 21
Tom Walsh	SEELB
Officials	
David Gavaghan	SIB
Paul Dolan	SIB
James McAleer	OFMDFM
Roisin Kelly	SIB
Richard Pengelly	DFP

ATTENDEES AT NEWRY EVENT 25/1/05

NAME	ORGANISATION
Liam Hannaway	Banbridge District Council
Martin Dillan	Newry and Mourne Health & Social Services Trust
Eric Bowyer	Newry and Mourne Health & Social Services Trust
Sean McKeever	Southern Health & Social Services Board
Gerard McGivern	Newry & Mourne District Council
Eddie Curtis	Newry & Mourne District Council
John McArdle	Newry & Mourne District Council
Paul McKibben	Newry & Mourne District Council
Frank Feely	Newry & Mourne District Council
Thomas McCall	Newry & Mourne District Council
Pat McElroy	Newry & Mourne District Council
Tony Williamson	Newry & Mourne District Council
Michael Carr	Newry & Mourne District Council
Officials	
David Gavaghan	SIB
Linda Wilson	OFMDFM
James McAleer	OFMDFM
Roisin Kelly	SIB
Paul Duffy	DFP

ATTENDEES AT ENNISKILLEN EVENT 26/1/05

NAME	ORGANISATION
Gabriel Carey	Sperrin Lakeland Trust
Paddy Gilgunn	Fermanagh District Council
Harold Andrews	Fermanagh District Council
Joe Dodds	Fermanagh District Council
Bertie Kerr	Fermanagh District Council
Ruth Lynch	Fermanagh District Council
Fergus McQuillan	Fermanagh District Council
Gerry Gallagher	Fermanagh District Council
Stephen Huggett	Fermanagh District Council
Bert Johnston	Fermanagh District Council
Gerry McHugh	Fermanagh District Council
Thomas O'Reilly MLA	Fermanagh District Council
Mark Fawcett	Farmer
Officials	
David Gavaghan	SIB
Linda Wilson	OFMDFM
James McAleer	OFMDFM
Roisin Kelly	SIB
Paul Duffy	DFP

ATTENDEES AT LONDONDERRY EVENT 31/1/05

NAME	ORGANISATION
Tony Monaghan	Derry City Council
Cllr Anthony McGurk	Derry City Council
Mayor Gearold ÓhEára	Derry City Council
Cllr Annie Courtney	Derry City Council
Margaret Miskelly	Northwest Development Office, DSD
Martin White	Northwest Development Office, DSD
Oonagh Warke	DoE
Cllr G L McLaughlin	Coleraine Borough Council
William Alexander King	Coleraine Borough Council
J Cowan	Chamber of Commerce
Rick Reinhard	Ilex URC
Richard Sterling	Ilex URC
Philip Faithful	Strabane District Council
Cllr Mitchell McLaughlin	Sinn Fein
Cllr Maeve McLaughlin	Sinn Fein
Colm Cavannagh	McCormick Properties Plc
Noel Brown	McCormick Properties Plc
Colm Moore	Moore Comst
Nick Rogers	North Down Borough Council
Michael Gallagher	MFG Consultancy
Noelle Robinson	FOSEC
Charles Nicell	FOSEC
Brian Baker	WHSSB
Tom Frawley	Ombudsman NI
Lisa McElherron	NICVA
Officials	
David Gavaghan	SIB
Paul Sweeney	OFMDFM
James McAleer	OFMDFM
Roisin Kelly	SIB
Andrew McCormick	DFP
Kellie Service	OFMDFM

ATTENDEES AT BELFAST EVENT 4/2/05

NAME	ORGANISATION
Dan Gault	Hewlett-Packard
Chris Parkes	Hewlett-Packard
Cllr Darin Ferguson	Carrickfergus Borough Council
Kieran Drayne	Ulster Community & Hospitals Trust
Siobhan Grant	Ulster Community & Hospitals Trust
Jim McCall	Ulster Community & Hospitals Trust
Lisa O'Kane	Ballymoney Borough Council
Colm McCauley	Sperrin Lakeland Trust
Katrina Carlin	Construction Industry Training Board
Paul Crowe	Todd Architects
Sandra Donnelly	BCC
Liz Benson	DoE
Tim Cunningham	CAJ
Colm Bradley	Community Technical Aid
Cllr Jackie Beattie	Castlereagh Borough Council
Nuala O'Neill	SDLP
Colin McCarthy	CIG NI Professional College
John Tate	CIG NI Professional College
Karine McGuckin	Ards Borough Council
Cllr Robert Gibson	Ards Borough Council
Cllr Robert Smith	Craigavon Borough Council
Cllr Norah Beare MLA	NI Assembly- Banbridge DC
George Coey	ARC 21
Heather Loudon	Belfast City Council
George Coulter	ACE
Elizabeth Law	Equality Commission
Cllr Jonathan Bell	Craigavon Borough Council

Officials	
David Gavaghan	SIB
Paul Sweeney	OFMDFM
James McAleer	OFMDFM
Roisin Kelly	SIB
Paul Duffy	DFP

ATTENDEES AT OMAGH EVENT 21/2/05

NAME	ORGANISATION
Daniel McSorley	Omagh District Council
Seamus Shields	Omagh District Council
Elizabeth Beattie	Omagh District Council
Barry McElduff	Omagh District Council
Barry Rooney	North West Marketing
Dara O'Hagan	Sinn Fein
Adrian McCreesh	Cookstown District Council
Pat Doherty	West Tyrone MP MLA
Joe Byrne	SDLP MLA
Officials	
David Gavaghan	SIB
Linda Wilson	OFMDFM
James McAleer	OFMDFM
Roisin Kelly	SIB
Richard Pengelly	DFP

ATTENDEES AT BALLYMENA EVENT 25/2/05

NAME	ORGANISATION
P J McAvoy	Ballymena Borough Council
Mervyn Rankin	Ballymena Borough Council
Roy Beggs Jnr	Carrickfergus District Council
Clare Broom	General Public
Robert Coulter	MLA
Diane Forsythe	Rural Development Council
Keith Millar	Port of Larne
Officials	
David Gavaghan	SIB
Linda Wilson	OFMDFM
John Murphy	OFMDFM
Roisin Kelly	SIB

Annex C: Main Outcomes from ISNI Public Consultation Events

Following, in date order, find a note of the main outcomes from the ISNI public consultation events:

- Lisburn, 24 January 2005;
- Newry, 25 January 2005;
- Enniskillen, 26 January 2005;
- Londonderry, 31 January 2005;
- Belfast, 4 February 2005;
- Omagh, 21 February 2005;
- Ballymena, 25 February 2005.

Lisburn: Issues arising from ISNI public consultation event

Following are the key issues and themes arising from the public consultation event in Lisburn Civic Centre on 24 January 2005.

A - Deliverability

Three main themes arose in relation to the deliverability of ISNI.

Capacity

There was some considerable discussion around the issue of capacity, both in the public and private sector.

- There was some discussion of the **availability of appropriate skill sets** in requisite **numbers** and at sustainable **price** in NI.
- Need to **plan now**, where possible, **for future skills requirements**.
- **Capacity issues may lead to a concentration on projects** rather than programmes because projects can be delivered.
- Another aspect of this discussion focused on the likely impact of increased construction demand on **availability and affordability of skilled trades-people** to householders, small sub-contracting builders and **others**.
- There was also some discussion of **the capacity of domestic households / ratepayers** in Northern Ireland **to fund additional borrowing** through rates increases and water charges. In this context, the assumption that closing the gap between NI and GB local / household taxation was questioned. It was highlighted that this would ultimately be a political decision

Embedding ISNI into NI society

Embedding ISNI and its benefits into NI society recurred at several points in the discussion.

- The scale of the SME employer sector in NI was highlighted, along with the importance of considering **mechanisms for participation by SMEs** in infrastructure investment in NI. Fear loss of small indigenous firms. This **may require research** to identify baseline preparedness and capacity in SME sector in NI.
- The need to **facilitate the development of partnership working** between NI firms, and between NI and international companies in this area.
- There was some concern that experience in waste management in other jurisdictions was **not unilaterally supportive of the proposition that bigger contracts were 'better value' than smaller contracts of that PFI solutions were always the best approach**. Participants urged further consideration of this issue in NI context.

Process issues

- There was general agreement on **the importance of planning** in the process of developing infrastructure, the early involvement of planners, and the need to improve performance in this area. Suggested that **planning problems would be a disincentive** for big companies to invest in NI, with a perception that NI's performance was poorer than elsewhere. The general feeling among participants was that there remained **considerable scope for improvement** in this area.
- Need to look at timing, urgency and delivery together. **Impact of non delivery**, in waste with the possibility of infraction proceedings on the horizon, **should be factored into VFM considerations**.
- Participants underlined their **support for S75**, and highlighted the **importance of New TSN and other equality considerations** in Northern Ireland. With this in mind, there was some discussion of the **need to clarify and agree an appropriate methodology** to operationalise these important considerations while continuing to accelerate investment in infrastructure. For example: at what point in process do an EQIA? How to integrate social considerations in infrastructure investment in innovative ways?

B - Integration

- **General support** expressed for the ISNI as a step towards improving joined-up government.
- Desire to **see more integration** in re the ISNI and other areas of strategic planning.
- Would like to see decision making **integrating revenue and capital considerations**. (Example: can we afford, train, supply more nurses to the new hospital buildings).
- Would like to see **improvements in service elements in tandem with infrastructure improvements** (Example: great hospital, poor service).

C - Visibility

There were 2 main issues arising from discussions of visibility.

- The first of these relates to the **branding of projects** delivered through ISNI to identify these as SIB/RRI/ISNI projects, and increase awareness among general public of this work. Reference made to NDP branding in Rol.
- The second point highlighted in this area relates to **fostering and supporting open debate** on the conditions required to support the development and delivery of the ISNI in the longer term. These are, inter alia, capacity in the public and private sector, value for money. There is also a need for an **open consultation process**, updates on issues arising from public consultation, and feedback on the impact / outcome of consultation on revised document and beyond.

D - Substantive issues for clarification

- What does £16bn represent – what NI needs, can be delivered, or raised?
- Better explanation of departmental assumptions used in formulating DIPs for submission. What policy / strategies / reports underpinned DIPs. Example: Costello in DE.
- Affordability assumptions more clearly explained (what is borrowing power, what is rates, what is conventional funding, what is PPP/PFI? What would happen if one element of this were missing?)
- Waste issues – more clarity – LA of CG responsible?
- Can we be clearer about when first project will be delivered?

E - Discussion questions

Balance of priorities

- Need for **greater flexibility in the longer term**, to facilitate changing priorities.
Example: EU directives
- In assessing priorities, need to consider the **balance of effort** / resources between **improving quality of public services and directive compliance**.

Equality issues

- EQIAs, need to look at how to support S75 **and** speed up delivery
- Need innovative solutions to address challenge of pursue social goals within procurement guidelines and regulations.
- Need to include issues of access for rural areas and those with disabilities.

Newry: Issues arising from ISNI public consultation event

Following are the key issues and themes arising from the public consultation event in Canal Court Hotel, Newry on 25 January 2005.

Impact of ISNI on the Newry Area

Issues were raised about the needs of the Newry area for infrastructure investment and the impact that ISNI will have.

Historical Position

Views were expressed strongly that historically investment by government in the past in Newry had not been equitable compared with other places, or has it addressed the needs of the area. In contrast private investment in Newry has been significant and is viewed as being the main factor behind the recent successes in Newry. Government should match the commitment shown by the private sector by providing additional investment in Newry.

There were particularly strong views about investment in roads. The route and configuration of the Newry by-pass went against the weight of local opinion with the result that traffic problems were not addressed and economic opportunities had been lost. Similar concerns were expressed about the development of the A1 route and the contrast with the RoI.

Investment Needed

Specific examples of need were cited as being schools in the maintained sector and roads. There was also a perception that Daisy Hill Hospital is not being given the scope it merits to provide the range of facilities of which it is capable, with some services having been moved elsewhere.

Concern was expressed at the impact of rising house prices in the area and the difficulties this is causing to local people and the local economy. There was a call for more social housing in the Newry and Mourne area.

Tourism was also cited as an area where further stimulation was needed to help recover the potential of locations such as Rostrevor which participants felt had fallen back considerably during the troubles.

Newry and Mourne Council is seeking ways to develop the Albert Basin site in Newry and concern was expressed that Urban Development Grant was only available in Belfast and

Derry. The extension of UDG to the hubs identified in the Regional Development Strategy was called for.

The advantages of Newry for major facilities (such as the Multi-Sports stadium) due its location close giving it the ability to attract people from both sides of the border was cited.

Cross-Border

There was discussion about the cross-border dimension to infrastructure investment with a view that not enough is being done by way of communication or co-ordination between authorities. There was a call for the public sector to follow the lead of the private sector in developing cross-border opportunities.

Other themes

Planning

There was some discussion of the planning process, with particular concern about delays in the production of area plans. It was cited that nearly all the new housing envisaged for the area had already been constructed before the area plan was published. Such delays are an inhibiting factor on development. Planning legislation needs to be amended.

Resourcing

Capital and revenue need to be aligned to ensure that there is adequate provision with sufficient staff to operate facilities properly.

Relationship of ISNI with other Strategies & Reviews

There was concern that other strategies had been published in the past that had ultimately proved to be unaffordable. The Review of Public Administration should not be used as an excuse for delaying decisions. The Office Accommodation Review has a role in helping to ensure balanced regional development.

Overall views on ISNI

There was a general welcome for ISNI and the concept of longer term planning for capital investment. Private investment in public services was seen as beneficial alongside conventional public investment in helping to improve services.

Need for pre-planning to avoid delays when funding eventually becomes available.

Build for the future – don't be "penny wise and pound foolish".

Discussion questions

Clarity of ISNI

No mention of Newry area or clarity about potential impact of ISNI on investment there.

How could local priorities in future feed into ISNI?

Concern that the NUTS classification system is too aggregated and groups together places that are dissimilar to be useful.

How investment will be funded is unclear – impact on rates and water charges?

Extent of private finance in the ISNI is unclear

Waste management position unclear

More clarity needed about role of SIB and ISNI decision making process

Balance of priorities

More investment needed in Newry in roads, housing education and development.

Tax yields/Return on investment could be used to help set priorities.

Leisure and recreation to be provided for in addition to other areas.

Equality issues

Newry should receive its fair share of investment, taking account of past inequalities.

Enniskillen: Issues arising from ISNI public consultation event

Following are the key issues and themes arising from the public consultation event in Killyhelvin Hotel on 26 January 2005.

A - Affordability

There was some considerable discussion around the issue of the affordability of the ISNI in the longer term.

- More information was requested on exactly **how much the ISNI will cost** and **where this money would come from**.
- Concern was expressed over the proposed **use of PPP/PFI**, particularly in relation to the **increasing levels of debt faced by households** in NI. This would be increased by water charging.
- The affordability of PPP/PFI projects was raised, and participants questioned the **impact on the NI budget of cumulative charges** as the scale of PPP/PFI investment increases.
- It was felt that account should be taken of the increasing cost of projects over time. **How realistic / affordable are the costings in the ISNI, given that they are all in current prices over the 10 year period?**
- The view was expressed that the **Barnett Formula was not working** for NI.

B - Integration

- **General support** expressed for the ISNI as a step towards improving joined-up government.
- Being **joined up means looking at how priority areas can work together**. For example, spending on healthy school meals has an impact on current educational attainment and longer term health benefits.
- It was reported as important that **consideration be given** not just to the overall balance of priorities (health v education v transport etc) but **to how investment was allocated within each priority area**.
- Participants stressed the link between revenue needs and new capital investment, and would like to **see more joined-upness** in bringing these two elements together in the ISNI.
- Participants also stressed the need for infrastructure investment to **reflect the link between different elements of policy** – for example the planning of acute hospital provision and community care infrastructure.
- A need was also expressed for **greater integration of planning**, and the development of supporting infrastructure and services for headline investments. For example, provision of sufficient affordable housing for hospital workers and

investment in roads and quality transport links to other towns to facilitate access to a new hospital.

- Participants stressed **the importance to Fermanagh of consideration of the cross-border issues**. For example, Enniskillen is on a main route from NW of the Republic of Ireland to the rest of the Republic of Ireland, and this creates traffic **problems**. It may also create **opportunities, in that joint service provision**, in for example health care, may be possible as people from ROI already use some NI health services.

C – Other Issues

- There was some discussion of the **need for the government to ensure that job creation and economic development arose** from the investment represented by the ISNI.
- Respondents expressed concern that the ISNI would represent the type of development **investment needed to bring Fermanagh up to a level with other council areas / parts** of NI.
- Concern was expressed that the ISNI appeared to be based on government priorities, which were felt were ideological. Would like to see evidence of other more **objective criteria for decision making**.
- Would like to see **some consideration of rural development** as it was felt that farm incomes were inadequate to sustain farming in the future.
- There are **opportunities for the development of cross-border business** with the Republic of Ireland, however these are **hampered by traffic and access problems**, a by-pass would address this problem.
- Consideration of roads infrastructure needs to take account of **town traffic problems**.
- There was support for a new hospital in the area; concern was expressed at the time taken to produce an outline business case.

D - Substantive issues for clarification

- Why is the ISNI different?
- How will local Enniskillen / Fermanagh people benefit from the ISNI?
- Is it clear that departments are / will work and communicate more closely?
- How have departments prioritised investments? The view was expressed that in the past, Fermanagh had not benefited as it should have.
- Where does responsibility lie for delivery on the investment outlined in the ISNI?
- Will the ISNI be laden with costly monitoring processes?

E - Discussion questions

Balance of priorities

- Looking to **the future**, we will have an older population with more ill-health / disability, therefore we may need **may require a reassessment of priorities** to address changing need.
- **Include some element of rurality or dispersal of population** in decision making processes.

Equality issues

- Need to ensure fair access to services.
- Need to ensure access for the elderly and disabled.

Belfast: Issues arising from ISNI public consultation event

Following are the key issues and themes arising from the public consultation event in Belfast Castle on 4 February 2005.

Resourcing Issues

Funding of ISNI

Clarification sought on the sources of funding for £16b in ISNI. Information on the proportions from Barnett, borrowing & PPP was sought.

Concern at impact of water charges and increases in rates on both businesses and households. Fear that more manufacturing jobs will be lost as a result of increases in commercial rates. Lower Corporation Tax regime needed for region.

Questions were raised about the ability and willingness of people to pay more in rates and water charges. Rating reforms being rushed through.

A view was expressed that the combined effect of increasing local revenues and expenditure priorities would be re-distributive into TSN areas, leaving people in "donor" areas significantly worse off.

Funds in the past diverted to pay for fighting terrorism. A large injection of funds now required from GB to raise standards of NI infrastructure. Need to reduce bureaucracy.

Revenue consequences

Clarification sought on revenue consequences of ISNI, in particular the match of revenue to capital allocations if there had been consideration beyond years 1-3. Recurrent cost seen as a significant long-term problem.

Disinvestment

There needs to be a "dis-investment programme" for assets not needed in the future.

Social Dimension

TSN

Clarification was sought on how ISNI fits in with TSN. Targets and outcomes need to be in place. Need to address the East/West divide. Disadvantaged areas are not getting the

support they deserve. “Joined-upness” needed between areas such as training with infrastructure. View expressed that SE regions do not get support they deserve.

DDA Compliance (Disability)

Only 3 departments have identified DDA compliance in ISNI. Question about how SIB ensuring consistency in applying/interpreting priorities.

Community Cohesion

No reference to tackling community cohesion in ISNI e.g. city centres.

Long-term unemployed

Disappointment that Invest NI HQ project did not recruit long-term unemployed.

Other Issues

Waste Planning

Clarification needed on funding arrangements and impact on ratepayers.

Planning

Concerns about impact of planning process on delivering strategy.

Design Issues & Whole Life Costs

Design issues need to be looked at more closely in ISNI 2. Good design saves cost in long-term but appears more expensive in short-term. Cost in use expenditure (whole life costs) needs to be taken account of in design.

Impact on Local Economy including Small Contractors

Need to look at how local economy can benefit from the investment in NI. Opportunity to create centre of excellence in health through investment programme. Projects need to be packaged to allow small NI firms to benefit from ISNI.

Deliverability

Question raised about responsibility for monitoring of deliverability; need for standard format across departments. More detail needed on how plans will be implemented.

Skills

Need a skills strategy. Strong in finance and engineering, but concern at low take up of some apprenticeships. Concern at ending of Worktrack programme by DEL.

Discussion questions

Balance of priorities

Childcare provision needed to assist women to work more flexibly or return to labour market.
This needs to be included.

Need for relative prioritisation_not just departments but types of activities.

Equality issues

- View put forward that it is all the more important that ISNI is equality screened because it is high level and strategic. Ways exist to do this; doesn't have to be normal model in use for S75.
- Evidence needed for investment decisions. More input needed from ordinary people.
- New policy objectives should be informed by equality on a consistent basis. Equality is not an add-on.
- New guidance has been issued by Equality Commission.

Clarity of ISNI

Suggestions to include the following were made:-

- Executive summary
- Expenditure Forecast – include something on optimism bias
- Related revenue forecasts and how this will be funded
- Relative % across departments.
- Information on implementation

Omagh: Issues arising from ISNI public consultation event

Following are the key issues and themes arising from the public consultation event in Omagh on 21 February 2005.

General Background/Context

- There is the sense that Tyrone has been overlooked even though there are 160,000 people in the county.
- Is it the intention of decision-makers to leave Tyrone lagging in deficit?
- Underdevelopment West of Bann and the subsequent impact on society of this is high, for example:
 - poor social services, roads and public transport;
 - young people leave area for work/education and do not return;
 - local economy and society damaged.

Roads/Transport

- Those in attendance believe that the quality of rural roads is very bad.
- A5/N2 and A4/N16 need to be developed. A5/N2 and A4/N16 are transeurope networks - would be of interest to Republic of Ireland Government as well as Northern Ireland.
- Road Service studies illustrate roads unsatisfactory for traffic volumes.
- Local view is that there should be bypass at Cookstown — small towns that are successful are gridlocked — using volume as measure of need for bypass is wrong. Therefore volume is less but gridlock is real.
- There is no rail infrastructure in Tyrone.
- There is an absence of strong roads infrastructure in Co Tyrone.

Health

- Need considerable development in health

Affordability

- How will ISNI be paid for? Have we resources to back this up?
- Concerned that Northern Irish people will have to pay highly for their rates and water.

Addressing Regional Disparities

- Balanced regional development is needed. There is a need to recognise environmental, social and economic benefits of balanced regional development and Government needs to demonstrate their commitment to this.

- There is a need to consider the wider socio-economic benefits/aspects eg. travel to work; congestion; quality of life
- Government and ISNI have to address: paying rates disproportionate to ability to pay wages west of Bann less than NI average
- Are any actions being taken to address needs of rural areas?
- Decentralisation — Government commitment to this and driving employment out to address this.

Impact of the ISNI

- Difficult to work out what the ISNI might mean for people locally? (What does this mean for me in my area?)
- What schools/hospitals/roads, etc will be developed? More detail needed on the projects in the ISNI.
- Vision for economic and social circumstances in 10 years' time. Could we see and discuss this?
- Need to clearly identify what defects are in Tyrone and how ISNI is addressing these.
- No disagreement that ISNI needed.
- Overall strategy does not seem to be offering any additional money over and above existing budgets.

Cross border issues

- Value for money means need to look at cross-border issues.
- Cross-border issues – there should be a common chapter with commitments under the Good Friday Agreement by both governments.

Equality issues

- Multiple Area Deprivation - West of Bann consistently worse off than east of Bann (OFMDFM/Noble indicators).
- See resources/investment moving away from these areas instead of moving to them. Why if TSN and deprivation is targeted?
- Need to be innovative in this to succeed in addressing long-term unemployment.
- Upskilling long-term unemployed: need to look at West Belfast Taskforce on Long-Term Unemployment.
- Section 75 and equality impact assessments do not deal with income disparity/social need.
- Need to include socio-economic status as section 75 category (Canada and South Africa).

Education/skilling

- Importance of skilling should be recognised.
- Difference between what business needs and what education provides and there seems to be a lack of understanding on both sides.
- There has been a brain drain from west of Bann and this issue must be addressed through the strategy.
- Better use of further education colleges keeps cost of HE down because they are more local.
- Spread of colleges offering HNDs needs to be improved — check who offers these and where they are.

Health

- Value for money assessments should be conducted. Serious reservations expressed re Des Browne's decision on future profile of hospital provision in this area.
- Need better use of existing Government land/estate. Rather than rushing to new build.
- MoD 150,000 acres of land available in Omagh currently not strategic site.

Waste

- £300 million on waste seems very small.
- Need to support councils in providing small as well as large infrastructure projects.

Tourism

- DCAL issues — what importance is placed on tourism
- EG. Ulster-American Folk Park becoming natural museum for emigration for all-Ireland
- Need to think about decentralisation and support for change when it is admitted/decided