

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 24 June 2011

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to arrive not later than two weeks after publication of this report.

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Allister, Jim (North Antrim)
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Campbell, Gregory (East Londonderry)
Clarke, Trevor (South Antrim)
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Craig, Jonathan (Lagan Valley)
Cree, Leslie (North Down)
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Dobson, Mrs Jo-Anne (Upper Bann)
Doherty, Pat (West Tyrone)
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Durkan, Mark H (Foyle)
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Elliott, Tom (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Farry, Dr Stephen (North Down)
Flanagan, Phil (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Ford, David (South Antrim)
Foster, Mrs Arlene (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
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Gardiner, Samuel (Upper Bann)
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Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)
Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 24 June 2011

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Pledge of Office

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the pledge of office affirmed in order to hold office, to confirm whether the inherent reference to actively encouraging full co-operation with the PSNI in tackling crime includes police investigations of actions by the IRA which occurred before April 1998.

(AQW 4/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Pledge of Office is set out in Schedule 4 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 as amended. OFMDFM has no role in interpreting the Pledge of Office however the normal canons of statutory interpretation apply.

Funding for Victims' Groups

Mr I McCrea asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the amount of funding allocated by their Department to victims' groups in each of the last five years.

(AQW 44/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The amount of funding allocated by OFMDFM to victims and survivors groups in each of the last five years is set out in the Table below.

Year	OFMDFM Funding (£)	OFMDFM Interim Capacity Fund * (£)
2006/07	2,986,638	N/A
2007/08	2,791,080	N/A
2008/09	3,857,189	1,252,944
2009/10	4,557,800	240,138
2010/11	6,283,847	154,625

* In April 2008, OFMDFM introduced additional support for victims and survivors groups in the form of an Interim Capacity Fund. The purpose of this fund was to allow groups to continue important projects that had begun under PEACE II while the application process to PEACE III was taken forward.

Coastguard Service

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail any correspondence they have exchanged in the last two years regarding the future of the Coastguard Service.

(AQW 255/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have taken a close interest in the Department of Transport's consultation on proposals for modernising the coastguard and, particularly, the implications for the Belfast Rescue Centre based in Bangor. Our visit to the Rescue Co-Ordination Centre at Bregenz House and the opportunity to talk to Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey, Chief Executive of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, and the staff at the Centre was very informative.

We subsequently wrote to Mike Penning MP, the Under Secretary of State for Transport, enclosing our comprehensive response to the consultation. A further, more specific, submission was sent from the Civil Contingencies Group, a unit within OFMDFM responsible for co-ordinating strategic multi-agency civil contingencies in Northern Ireland. We also provided written evidence to the House of Commons Transport Committee reinforcing our stance.

In addition, over the past few months we have corresponded on this issue with the Merchant Navy Welfare Board and with a number of local elected representatives.

Funding for Lesbian, Gay and Bi-Sexual Groups

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the funding that has been allocated by their Department to each lesbian, gay and bi-sexual group in each year since May 2007. **(AQW 291/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No money was allocated by OFMDFM since May 2007. The Department continued to administer a pre-devolution funding package which is now finished.

Smithwick Tribunal

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have made representations to the government of the Republic of Ireland regarding its intention to limit the Smithwick Tribunal; and if not, will they do so urgently.

(AQW 345/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have raised this issue with the Taoiseach, and the First Minister has raised the matter with the Irish Justice Minister.

Coastguard Service

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the discussions they have had with the British Government regarding the future of the Coastguard Service.

(AQW 460/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In response to the Department of Transport's consultation on proposals for modernising the coastguard, we wrote to Mike Penning MP, the Under Secretary of State for Transport, enclosing our comprehensive response on 3 March. Our submission outlined a comprehensive and detailed case for retaining the Belfast Rescue Centre at Bregenz House in Bangor.

A further submission was sent from the Civil Contingencies Group, which is a multi-agency group chaired by OFMDFM responsible for co-ordinating strategic civil contingencies arrangements in Northern Ireland. We also provided written evidence to the House of Commons Transport Committee reinforcing our stance.

Single Tender Actions

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) whether their Department has engaged in any procurement single tender actions in the last 12 months, and why; and (ii) the scale of expenditure involved.

(AQW 476/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department has engaged in procurement via single tender actions in the twelve month period 1 June 2010 to 31 May 2011. The total value of contracts awarded through single tender action in this period is £131,679.

Single tender action was considered the most appropriate procurement method due to the specialised nature of the assignments being commissioned.

Bangor Coastguard Station

Mr Easton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the position in relation to Bangor Coastguard Station.

(AQW 479/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We await the outcome of the consultation on the Modernisation of Coastguard Services which the Department of Transport launched on 16 December 2010. The closing date of the consultation was 5 May 2011.

We responded to Mike Penning, Whitehall Minister for Transport, on 3 March, in which we supported the retention of a full-time coastguard presence here. The previous Minister for Regional Development and the Civil Contingencies Group (NI) also submitted responses to the consultation. In addition, we provided written evidence to the House of Commons Transport Committee reinforcing our stance on 21 March 2011.

Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the discussions they have had with the British Government regarding the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme.

(AQW 491/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The suspension of the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme (ALCS) has been a major concern for some time now, given the very damaging effect it is having on our local industry.

The Finance Minister has raised this issue with Treasury Ministers on several occasions since the EU Court decision last September, and stressed the need for an early replacement scheme most recently when he met the Economic Secretary, Justine Greening, on 16 March 2011. It was also raised during our meeting with the Chancellor on 17 June.

The Economic Secretary indicated at that meeting that the Treasury are committed to a new/replacement scheme and will work towards that goal as quickly as possible.

The European Commission are carrying out a full review of the scheme following the EU General Court decision. Officials from DFP and DOE are working with the Treasury to provide the Commission with the information it requires to complete this review as quickly as possible.

Commission for Victims and Survivors

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the review of the Commission for Victims and Survivors has been completed.

(AQW 549/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department commissioned KPMG to carry out the review. The review is ongoing.

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what legislation their Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) the following years of this mandate.

(AQW 643/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It is not possible to be definitive at this time about whether the completion of current strands of policy development within OFMDFM will require the introduction of Bills in the Assembly and, if so, in which year of the mandate this will take place. This will be kept under review as work progresses.

We do, however, plan to introduce regulations in 2011/12 to amend the Race Relations Order 1997 in respect of differential rates of pay for seafarers recruited in different jurisdictions, and to introduce a statutory rule to update the list of bodies specified as public authorities for the purposes of the Fair Employment and Treatment legislation.

Any legislation brought forward will of course be subject to consultation with the OFMDFM Committee, and where appropriate, with Executive agreement.

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 155/11-15, to detail (i) the subject matters on which the consultants were engaged; (ii) the consultants engaged; and (iii) the costs incurred on each project.

(AQW 697/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In response to AQW 155/11-15, we have provided details of total expenditure by OFMDFM and its Arms Length Bodies on the use of external consultants during the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2011. Full details of the subject matters on which external consultants were engaged, the consultants engaged, and the costs incurred on each project during this period have been placed in the Assembly Library.

St Patrick's Army Base in Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether their Department has any plans to preserve the front gates of the St Patrick's army base, Ballymena in any future development.

(AQW 712/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Under the 2010 Hillsborough Castle Agreement, this site has been transferred to the Executive to be sold. Plans for the disposal of the site are therefore being drawn up.

The Ministry of Defence advise that they are not aware of any special significance to the front gates. Regimental shield badges were removed from the gates by the MoD when the base was being decommissioned.

St Patrick's Army Base in Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what military memorials are still in the St Patrick's army base in Ballymena; and what their Department plans to do with these artefacts.

(AQW 713/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We understand that the military memorials previously on the site of the former St Patrick's base in Ballymena were removed and relocated by the Ministry of Defence when the base was being decommissioned.

St Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they can ensure that any future plans their Department has for (i) military memorials that may currently exist in St Patrick's Barracks; and (ii) the front gates of these barracks, will reflect the wishes of Ballymena residents, people who were based at the barracks and organisations who represent past and present servicemen and women.

(AQW 745/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Under the 2010 Hillsborough Castle Agreement, this site has been transferred to us for sale in order to provide funds for budget pressure within the Executive. Plans for the disposal of the site are therefore being drawn up.

We understand that the military memorials previously on the site of the former St Patrick's base in Ballymena were removed and relocated by the Ministry of Defence when the base was being decommissioned.

The MoD have told us that they are not aware of any special significance to the front gates. Regimental shield badges were also removed from the gates by the Ministry of Defence when the base was being decommissioned.

Northern Ireland Memorial Fund

Mr A Maginness asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to explain the delay in the allocation of funding to the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund for the year 2011/12; and when the Trustees will be able to distribute the funding to successful applicants.

(AQW 757/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The application process for funding from NIMF closed on 18th April. The first phase of funding, totalling over £4 million, has already been delivered. The Department is working to ensure that all of the necessary financial approvals are in place to enable the second phase of funding to be delivered early next month.

Victims and Survivors Groups

Mr Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the names of the victims and survivors groups which were subject to the recent risk based audits.

(AQW 782/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Whilst the audit is being carried out it would be inappropriate to identify any of the groups being investigated.

Sir Jon Shortridge's Report on NI Water

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when Sir Jon Shortridge's report on NI Water will be published.

(AQW 805/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Sir Jon Shortridge was not reporting on NI Water.

Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they have had with HM Treasury regarding the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme.

(AQW 838/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The suspension of the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme (ALCS) has been a major concern for some time now, given the very damaging effect it is having on our local industry.

The Finance Minister has raised this issue with Treasury Ministers on several occasions since the EU Court decision last September, and stressed the need for an early replacement scheme most recently when he met the Economic Secretary, Justine Greening, on 16 March 2011. It was also raised during our meeting with the Chancellor on 17 June.

The Economic Secretary indicated at that meeting that the Treasury are committed to a new/ replacement scheme and will work towards that goal as quickly as possible.

The European Commission are carrying out a full review of the scheme following the EU General Court decision. Officials from DFP and DOE are working with the Treasury to provide the Commission with the information it requires to complete this review as quickly as possible.

24-hour Coastguard Service

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they have had with the Prime Minister regarding the retention of a 24-hour coastguard service in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 839/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have had no direct discussion with the Prime Minister regarding the retention of the 24-hour coastguard service in Bangor. During the “Modernisation of Coastguard Services” consultation period, we submitted a comprehensive response to Mike Penning MP, the Transport Minister, in which we made the case for retaining the service. We also provided written evidence to the House of Commons Transport Committee reinforcing our stance.

We await the outcome of the consultation, which closed on 5 May 2011. The final decision is expected before the Westminster recess on 19 July.

Devolution of Further Functions to the Assembly and Executive

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made in relation to the development of a Programme for Government for 2011-2015.

(AQW 840/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM officials, in consultation with departments, have been developing over the last number of months, a draft Programme for Government for the period 2011-2015.

Following a meeting of the Budget Review Group on 15 June 2011, it was agreed that we should issue a draft of the Programme for Government (2011-15) for consideration by Executive colleagues.

Devolution of Further Functions to the Assembly and Executive

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline any discussions they have had with the Prime Minister, in the last twelve months, regarding the devolution of further functions to the Assembly and Executive.

(AQW 886/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have met the Prime Minister twice in the last twelve months and on both occasions we discussed the potential for the devolution of powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly for the setting of the rate of corporation tax in Northern Ireland.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Food Standards Agency

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is seeking to recoup the full cost of its meat inspection controls, what plans her Department has in place to assist the farming industry; and for her assessment of the impact of the FSA's decision.

(AQW 502/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): I am aware that the Food Standards Agency is proposing to introduce a full cost recovery system for meat hygiene inspections and understand industry concerns about the effect this will have on their costs. The costs of food safety controls imposed by the Food Standards Agency are for a service provided to the meat industry whose decision it is whether or not to pass any increase on to the farmer.

I intend to meet with the Food Standards Agency next week to discuss this issue and I will be making my position known to them.

Forest Land in the Mourne Mountains

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department intends to take in relation to the forest land in the Mourne Mountains that was recently damaged by fire; and whether there are any plans for the restoration of this area.

(AQW 527/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The forest fires have had an impact on many of our key stakeholders, including visitors to forests and forest parks seeking recreation and Local Councils with leisure and recreation interests. It is therefore imperative that action is taken to assess the damage caused by the fires which will inform further decisions on restoration of the affected areas. My Department is currently finalising work on surveying the extent of Forest Service woodland recently damaged by fire.

Our aim will be to achieve restoration of areas damaged by fire and this will be in line with Forest Management Plans which are in place for all woodlands managed by Forest Service. These plans set out the management objectives for individual forests ensuring an appropriate balance between social, environmental and economic benefits consistent with sustainable forest management principles.

Broadband for Rural Areas

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what financial assistance is available to enable farmers and rural dwellers to access broadband at a cost and speed which does not disadvantage them in comparison to other users; and to outline her plans to ensure that broadband is available to all rural dwellers within the next 12 months.

(AQW 580/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not offer any direct financial assistance to enable either farmers or rural dwellers to access broadband. However DARD has invested £2.5 million in the 'Next Generation Broadband' programme delivered on the ground by Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. This funding was specifically targeted at rural areas that did not have broadband or were running at lower speeds and I am confident this will have a positive impact on rural dwellers. My department is also represented on the DETI broadband project board, and I have asked my Officials to investigate all opportunities for increasing access to broadband in rural areas. I have said publically that access to broadband for rural dwellers is one of my priorities.

Brucellosis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers have had their cattle herds destroyed as a direct result of the deliberate brucellosis infection in County Armagh; and where these affected farms are located.

(AQW 587/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In the Lislea area, where the infected foetus was deliberately placed, 11 herds have been subject to depopulations. In the Keady area, where the brucellosis breakdowns are suspected to have initially begun as a result of illegal activity in cattle movements, there have been 17 herds depopulated. Not all of the above had infection in their herds but some were associated to infected herds.

It should be emphasised that there is no suspicion of non-compliance with disease control legislation in the majority of these herds.

Brucellosis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is the farthest estimated distance of detected brucellosis infection from the original source of the deliberate infection in County Armagh; and what evidence was established showing that the cases were linked.

(AQW 590/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: From early 2010 there have been two distinct clusters of breakdowns: one group in Lislea, in the Newry DVO area, the site of the infected foetus, and a second group in Keady, in the Armagh DVO area.

Although there is no firm evidence of direct physical connection between the two areas, both groups of outbreaks had the same *Brucella abortus* strain type. The farthest distance between the infections sharing the same strain type, where there is a potential link, is approximately 20 miles.

Brucellosis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much has been paid in compensation to farmers whose cattle have been culled due to the deliberate brucellosis infection in County Armagh; and how many farms this involves.

(AQW 592/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: To date the compensation paid to farmers in South Armagh following on from the discovery of the dumped infected foetus in late 2009 has been £857, 573.

In addition a number of herd owners have had their herds valued and removed but have had compensation withheld pending investigations into non-compliance issues. Their combined value is £808, 375.

The total number of herds involved is 30. Not all of these herds had reactors themselves. Some were closely associated to reactor herds and had cattle culled because of the high risk of exposure to brucellosis.

DARD: Direct Offices

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number and location of the DARD Direct offices that have opened since 2006; and (ii) the number and location of DARD Direct offices that are planned for the future.

(AQW 600/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My predecessor Michelle Gildernew MP MLA announced there would be a network of 12 DARD Direct Offices across the north of Ireland. Since 2006 we have fully refurbished DARD Direct offices in Enniskillen, Coleraine, Dungannon, Newry and Mallusk. Offices at Downpatrick and Magherafelt are in the final stages of development and should be completed and fully operational by mid-July.

The remaining locations identified for DARD Direct offices are Armagh, Ballymena, Claudy, Newtownards and Omagh. Funding to continue the roll-out was secured in the current CSR period. I am hopeful that a fully operational DARD Direct office in Armagh and one other location will be delivered in this financial year. This is subject to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) securing and developing suitable premises. Beyond this, we will continue to work with DFP to secure and refurbish properties at the remaining locations, giving due care to the need to deliver value for money.

Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much funding has been distributed under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme; and how much has been spent on administering the Programme to date.

(AQW 651/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: To date £28m has been committed to Projects by way of Letter of Offer and 171 of these projects have been completed. The figure for administration of the programme is £5m, which is made up of staff costs for 7 Local Action Groups (LAGs), office equipment and the work done throughout the north to produce important local strategies for the Programme, stakeholder consultation and information.

A further £8m of Letters of Offer are being prepared to issue to applicants shortly. I am happy to report also that another £48m of applications are actively being assessed currently by LAGs.

This means that at the half way point in the Programme, £84m of applications have either been turned into investments within the rural community or are being worked through by the LAG members who continue to make decisions about how best these funds can benefit their areas.

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what legislation her Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) the following years of this mandate.

(AQW 690/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Proposals for primary legislation are currently being developed to regulate reservoir safety and for a range of subordinate legislation to give effect to provisions in the Forestry Act (NI) 2010, the Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011 and the Dogs (Amendment) Act (NI) 2011. Proposals are also being developed for subordinate legislation to give effect to provisions relating to Loughs Agency functions in respect of the Foyle and Carlingford areas and to transpose various EU Directives relating to animal and plant health, animal welfare, marketing of agricultural produce and products, and fisheries and aquaculture. These proposals are subject to consultation with the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development and where appropriate, to Executive agreement. Further legislative proposals will be brought forward during 2011/12 and the following years of the mandate, to give effect to new, or changes to existing policies.

Decentralisation of Headquarters

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her Department's position on the possible decentralisation of its headquarters to the Loughry College site.

(AQW 747/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: No decision has been taken yet on where the proposed new DARD HQ will be located. The details about location and configuration of the new HQ have yet to be determined. These and other matters will be for a project team to consider and address at the appropriate time. The project will be subject to the Executive's usual requirements in respect of business cases and procurement. However, the Bain Report recommended that the new DARD HQ should be relocated to a rural area outside of Greater Belfast.

Forests

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many acres of forest is privately owned; and how many acres are owned by Forest Service NI.

(AQW 770/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The published figures indicate that for the year 2010/2011, the total area of Forest Service managed woodland is 61,040 hectares (150,769 acres) and the total area of privately owned forest is 26,917 hectares (66,485 acres).

You will wish to note that Forest Service is currently carrying out work to establish baseline data of woodland cover and type in the north of Ireland, using other available woodland information, to provide more comprehensive data.

Fish Stocks

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what meetings she has held with fish producers in advance of the annual negotiations for the new levels of Total Allowable Catch for fish stocks; and if such meetings took place, what issues were discussed.

(AQW 841/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There has been no discussion on this matter yet because the scientific advice from ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) will not be published until 29 June. When that is analysed and considered in conjunction with the Commission's policy statement on fishing opportunities we will have an insight into what the Commission is likely to propose by way of TACs for 2012. As always the Nephrops TAC for Area VII is likely to be a key priority and I will be keen to meet with stakeholder representatives to discuss this and other TACs of interest in due course. I shall be visiting Kilkeel before the end of June when I will have an opportunity to discuss a range of issues with representatives from the fishing industry.

North-South Ministerial Council Meetings

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) all the North-South Ministerial Council meetings that she, or her predecessors, have attended since May 2007; (ii) the Ministers from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland who attended each meeting; (iii) the issues which were discussed at each meeting; and (iv) the outcomes and achievements that resulted from each meeting.

(AQW 898/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since May 2007, either I or my predecessor as Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, attended NSMC meetings on the following dates:-

PLENARY MEETINGS

Date	Minister
17 July 2007	Michelle Gildernew
7 February 2008	Michelle Gildernew
23 January 2009	Michelle Gildernew
6 July 2009	Michelle Gildernew
5 July 2010	Michelle Gildernew
21 January 2011	Michelle Gildernew
19 June 2011	Michelle O'Neill

SECTORAL MEETINGS

Date	Sectoral	Minister
9 November 2007	Agriculture	Michelle Gildernew
21 November 2007	Aquaculture & Marine	Michelle Gildernew
30 April 2008	Agriculture	Michelle Gildernew
21 May 2008	Aquaculture & Marine	Michelle Gildernew
26 June 2008	Aquaculture & Marine	Michelle Gildernew
20 March 2009	Agriculture	Michelle Gildernew
30 April 2009	Aquaculture & Marine	Michelle Gildernew

Date	Sectoral	Minister
20 July 2009	Aquaculture & Marine	Michelle Gildernew
21 July 2009	Agriculture	Michelle Gildernew
18 November 2009	Aquaculture & Marine	Michelle Gildernew
18 November 2009	Agriculture	Michelle Gildernew
31 March 2010	Agriculture	Michelle Gildernew
31 March 2010	Aquaculture & Marine	Michelle Gildernew
9 September 2010	Aquaculture & Marine	Michelle Gildernew
31 October 2010	Agriculture	Michelle Gildernew

Michelle Gildernew also attended the following NSMC meetings:-

Date	Sectoral
8 November 2007	Tourism
28 November 2007	Health & Food Safety
28 May 2008	Health & Food Safety
29 May 2008	Tourism
29 May 2008	Trade & Business Development
16 January 2009	Language
16 January 2009	Inland Waterways
1 April 2009	Tourism
10 June 2009	Health & Food Safety
25 November 2009	Health & Food Safety
2 June 2010	Health & Food Safety
10 November 2010	Health & Food Safety

In relation to the other aspects of your question, following each NSMC meeting an agreed Joint Communiqué is issued and this is posted on the NSMC website (www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org). Also, after each NSMC meeting, a Minister or Junior Minister who participates in a NSMC meeting is required to make a Statement to the Assembly. Details of these Statements are recorded in Hansard and copies are available on the Assembly website

(<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/hansard.htm>).

The North South Ministerial Council provides an important forum for the development of co-operation and action on matters of mutual interest. Examples of the outcomes and achievements include:

Animal Health

There have been a number of very positive developments on Animal Health and Welfare including the development of a common chapter in contingency plans for Foot and Mouth Disease, Bluetongue and Avian Influenza. We are also working together to secure freedom from Aujeszky's Disease on the island of Ireland.

Mutual Recognition of Ram Genotyping Schemes both north and south was achieved in October 2010.

Electronic Identification (EID) system for Sheep was implemented during 2010 following close co-operation north and south. I am pleased that officials will consider the impact of forthcoming Commission EID proposals on cattle EID jointly.

We have recently identified how data on animal movements can be better shared and significant progress is being made in this area.

Close liaison is on-going in relation to the Commission's developing proposals for a new EU Animal Health law.

There has recently been agreement of a protocol on welfare of animals during transport breaches and work in this area is progressing well.

Plant Health

A comprehensive report on a joint strategic approach to plant health and pesticide matters has been produced and a work programme will be presented at the next meeting of the NSMC.

CAP and WTO

The discussions at the NSMC on Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform and World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations have enabled DARD and DAFF to keep abreast of each others positions and generally there is a large measure of agreement. A satisfactory outcome to the EU CAP Health Check negotiations was achieved in 2008 and I intend to continue discussions on the CAP at future NSMC meetings given the upcoming CAP reform negotiations at EU level.

Rural Development

Achievements in North South co-operation in relation to Rural Development include progress on the opening of a Rural Development sub-theme on EU INTERREG IVA and endorsement of a PEACE III project aimed at addressing sectarianism and racism in a rural context.

Aquaculture

In the Aquaculture and Marine sector, the NSMC approves the Corporate and Business Plans for the Loughs Agency of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission. The NSMC has given approval for a significant number of Regulations to ensure conservation and protection of the fisheries in the Foyle and Carlingford areas (which have included the introduction of controls and licensing of the wild oyster fishery in Lough Foyle); a hardship scheme for the rationalisation of commercial salmon fishing to ensure conservation and protection of declining salmon stocks; and a Marine Tourism Strategy for the Foyle and Carlingford areas.

Partnerships on marine tourism have been developed between the Loughs Agency and other agencies north and south. Delivery of a €4m euro funding package covering marine tourism, water based leisure and angling development, has begun, including major projects on the river Foyle which were critical in attracting the Clipper Round the World yacht race in 2012. Other tourism projects are being developed throughout the two catchments, including along the Mourne Coastal Route and in Omeath.

Disease Compensation Arrangements

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when the submissions to the consultation on the proposed new disease compensation arrangements will be published.

(AQW 910/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Officials are due to brief the ARD Committee on the responses to the public consultation on proposals for revised compensation arrangements for TB and brucellosis at its meeting on 28 June 2011. Copies of the consultation responses will be provided to the Committee in advance of this date. A summary of the responses will be published on the DARD website immediately following the meeting.

Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how much funding her Department allocated to the Axis 3 Rural Development Programme in each financial year for the period 2007 to 2012; (ii) how much of this money has been spent; (iii) on what projects it has been spent; and (iv) what happened to the funds that were not allocated to projects.

(AQW 1010/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Axis 3 allocations from 2007-08 to 2011-12
- | | |
|---------|--------|
| 2007-08 | £0.07m |
| 2008-09 | £1.00m |
| 2009-10 | £5.4 m |
| 2010-11 | £14.8m |
| 2011-12 | £24.5m |
- (ii) Axis 3 spend from 2007-08 to 2011-12
- | | |
|---------|---|
| 2007-08 | £0.07m |
| 2008-09 | £0.76m |
| 2009-10 | £3.7m |
| 2010-11 | £10.3m |
| 2011-12 | £0.5m (end May 2011 / first 2 months of the financial year) |
- (iii) To be able to list spend on 170 completed projects and include the phased payments in relation to many more projects would be impractical in this reply so I am interpreting your question as meaning what measures has the funding been spent on. Funding has been spent across all the measures (see below) with the highest spend on measures 3.1 – 3.3.
- Measure 3.1 Farm Diversification
 - Measure 3.2 Micro business Creation and development
 - Measure 3.3 Tourism
 - Measure 3.4 Basic Services
 - Measure 3.5 Village Renewal
 - Measure 3.6 Cultural Heritage
- (iv) If spend within a financial year is not realised within one area of the NIRDP it can be reallocated to other measures.

DARD: Headquarters

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the relocation of her Department's headquarters.

(AQO 127/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The DARD HQ relocation project began in earnest in March 2011. A Project Team, established by the DARD Permanent Secretary as a Committee of the Departmental Board, met on four occasions and has agreed a scoping paper which outlines the considerations necessary to progress the project. The paper covers issues such as policy context, project management, equality screening and human resource issues.

The Department has recently appointed a Project Manager to work full time on this project, initially to develop a more detailed Strategic Outline Case - a necessary component in a project of this scale. In moving forward with this important project DARD will continue to work closely with key stakeholders including NI Public Service Alliance and Department of Finance and Personnel.

Programme for Government

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when she intends to publish her Department's plans and priorities for inclusion in the next Programme for Government.

(AQO 125/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: OFMDFM is in the lead in developing a new Programme for Government (PfG) for the period 2011-15. Work on this is underway and it is intended that the new PfG will build on the achievements of the last programme.

At present the First Minister and deputy First Minister are considering all aspects of the new Programme including structure, content and timetable. In due course, the Executive as a whole will wish to consider the shape, size and content of a draft PfG.

DARD input has been provided to the draft PfG in respect of key objectives and potential performance indicators for the four year period, along with a range of comments on the structure and content of the draft. It is too early to say precisely when the Executive will be in a position to approve and publish a draft PfG.

DARD has, in parallel with development of the draft PfG, taken forward work to develop a new Strategic Plan and 2011/12 Annual Business Plan.

Work in relation to the development of the Department's new Strategic Plan, to cover the period 2011-20, is ongoing. This includes senior management consideration of the DARD Vision, Aim, Role and the Strategic Goals and Objectives for the period in question.

As the 2011/12 business year is already underway, a draft Business Plan for the year has been developed and it is intended to present this to the ARD Committee for consideration.

As the new DARD Strategic Plan and Annual Business Plan are developed, revisions to the Department's input to the draft PfG will be inserted as appropriate.

Both the new DARD Strategic Plan and the Annual Business Plan (2011/12) will be published as soon as possible, taking account of developments in regard to the PfG.

Food: Marketing

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of how marketing our food products on an all-island basis might benefit the agri-food sector and local farmers. **(AQO 126/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: From the outset, I want to make clear that food labelling in the north of Ireland is the responsibility of the Food Standards Agency, via the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Nevertheless, as DARD Minister, I am keen that the agri-food sector takes all opportunities to support its expansion on the global stage.

The north is fortunate to be a net exporter, and so its products are sold in a wide range of markets and branding is tailored for specific markets in a manner that optimises benefit to the industry. I welcome the important trade in food products here and the South and consider that we should foster a joint approach to the marketing of products from the island of Ireland which I believe would benefit all farmers.

I raised this when I met recently with my southern counterpart, Simon Coveney TD, and intend to discuss this further with him as our agri-food sectors share many of the same global challenges, north and south.

Broadband: Rural Areas

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department will work with other Departments and agencies to improve rural broadband coverage. **(AQO 128/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: As you know I have made access to rural broadband one of my key priorities. To date my department has invested two lots of funding in broadband under the Rural Development Programme, £1.5 million under the European Union Economic recovery funds and secondly £1 million under the Anti Poverty Programme. The funds invested were delivered on the ground by the Department of

Enterprise Trade and Investment through the Next Generation Broadband programme. This investment has attracted private match funding in excess of £2.5 million enabling over £5 million to be targeted specifically at rural areas.

Officials from my department sit on the DETI project board and we liaise closely with them as regards future programmes and investment in rural broadband. It is my view that no rural dweller should be disadvantaged because of lack of access to broadband and I will continue to press for greater access in rural areas and work proactively to ensure this.

Common Agricultural Policy: Greening

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how she will ensure that additional 'greening' actions, particularly those in relation to the first pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy, will not have an adverse effect on farm incomes.

(AQO 129/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The EU Commission is advocating a greening component for the CAP Pillar 1. So far the ideas it has put forward have been at a high level and until the detail is published it is difficult to assess the potential impact on farm incomes. However, I am mindful of the risk that additional greening actions may impose unreasonable costs on farmers as well as a significant administrative burden. Therefore, I will be pushing strongly for these issues to be given careful consideration, alongside the potential environmental benefits that a greening component might deliver, during the CAP reform negotiations. It will be important that a balanced view is taken in relation to any additional greening actions.

Foyle: Marine Tourism

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline how the Loughs Agency intends to promote and facilitate marine tourism on the Foyle catchment, particularly in the lead up to 2013.

(AQO 130/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Loughs Agency has engaged with Derry City Council and Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners to provide crucial infrastructure in the form of moorings and pontoon facilities in the city centre for the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race in 2012 and City of Culture in 2013 and beyond.

The investment, funded through the INTERREG IV Programme by the Special EU Programmes Body, is part of the Agency's wider €4m programme for the Foyle and Carlingford areas which will have lasting impact on tourism in the North West and beyond.

The Loughs Agency is also partnered with Derry City and Convention Bureau and Londonderry Port and Harbour on the 'Cruise North West Initiative' which has developed promotional literature and attends trades sales shows annually to promote the Foyle as a destination for cruise vessels.

Later in 2011 the Agency hopes to re-launch its small grants scheme, the Sustainable Development Fund, which will allow stakeholders to access financial support for the promotion and development of tourism in the North West.

In addition, following the development of the Riverwatch Aquarium Phase 3, which was co-funded by NI Tourist board, the Agency has this year welcomed the 100,000th visitor to the facility, with both local people and tourists making use of the visitor's centre and education programmes.

Common Agricultural Policy: Consultation

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when the consultation on the Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy will commence.

(AQO 133/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department carried out a consultation on the CAP Reform Communication paper which was issued by the EU Commission on 18 November 2010. This consultation was launched on

17 December 2010 and ended on 31 January 2011. The responses received were used to inform the Department's response to the Commission paper which was presented to the Commission on 24 March 2011. Formal CAP reform legislative proposals are expected to be published by the Commission in October 2011 and I intend to launch a further local consultation shortly after their publication.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Departmental Documentation

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has requested that her staff undertake a review of all departmental documentation to remove references to either 'Northern Ireland' or the 'United Kingdom'.

(AQW 550/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): I have not requested DCAL staff to undertake any such review.

Meetings with Organisations

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list the organisations that have requested meetings with her since she took up office; and the organisations she has agreed to meet.

(AQW 658/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Since my appointment as Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure I have received requests for meetings from the following organisations;

Organisation

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ Cycling Ulster | ■ Newry and Mourne Famine Commemoration |
| ■ Government Action for Our Urban Environment | ■ Ardoyne Youth Club |
| ■ Shared History Interpretive Project | ■ Older People's Advocate |
| ■ Cinemagic | ■ Big Lottery Fund |
| ■ POBAL | ■ Save Gilford Library Campaign |
| ■ Lough Erne Eel Fishermen | ■ Athletics NI |
| ■ NI Screen | ■ Ulster Sports Museum |
| ■ Newington FC | ■ Shakespeare United |
| ■ National Trust | ■ Fuel Poverty Coalition |
| ■ Gaelgoiri na Chuirte | ■ Park Giants Sports Village |
| ■ Irish Pages | ■ Ulster Council of the GAA |
| ■ NI Commissioner for Children and Young People | ■ Conradh na Gaeilge |
| ■ Cross Border Orchestra for Ireland | ■ Culturlann Ui Chanain |
| ■ Foras na Gaeilge | ■ Audiences NI |
| ■ Aisling Ghear Theatre Company | ■ Greater Shantallow Arts Community |
| ■ CBI | ■ Ballymurphy Massacre Committee |
| ■ Toccata | ■ Down District Council |
| ■ Arts and Disability Equality Charter | ■ Arts and Public Space |
| ■ Culturlann | ■ Artability |
| ■ Cow Parade | ■ Ulster Rugby |
| ■ Sport and Recreation Alliance | ■ Heritage Lottery Fund |
| ■ British Council in NI | ■ CPANI |
| | ■ Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann |

- Child Development through Sport
- Participation and Practice of Rights
- NIPSA
- Communities Against Lough Neagh Incinerator

Further to this I have agreed to meet with the following organisations:

Organisation

- Shared History Interpretive Project
- Cinemagic
- POBAL
- Lough Erne Eel Fishermen
- NI Screen
- Newington FC
- NI Commissioner for Children and Young People
- Foras na Gaeilge
- Aisling Ghear Theatre Company
- CBI
- Arts and Disability Equality Charter
- Culturlann
- Cow Parade
- Sport and Recreation Alliance
- British Council in NI
- Ardoyne Youth Club
- Older People's Advocate
- Big Lottery Fund
- Athletics NI
- Ulster Council of the GAA
- Conradh na Gaeilge
- Culturlann Ui Chanain
- Audiences NI
- Greater Shantallow Arts Community
- Ballymurphy Massacre Committee
- Down District Council
- Artability
- Ulster Rugby
- Heritage Lottery Fund

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what legislation her Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) the following years of this mandate.

(AQW 691/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I intend to bring forward proposals for legislation for an Irish Language Act to meet the commitment in the St Andrews Agreement. I am in the process of establishing a timeframe for this task.

My Department also intends to introduce the following subordinate legislation in 2011/12 and the following years of this mandate:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Fisheries Amendment Regulations | - | 1 October 2011; |
| Eel Fishing Amendment Regulations | - | 1 October 2011; and |
| Public Use of the Records | - | Proposed amendment 2015 |
| (Management and Fees) Rules | | |

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 157/11-15, to detail (i) the subject matters on which the consultants were engaged; (ii) the consultants engaged; and (iii) the costs incurred on each project.

(AQW 698/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The tables on the following pages (split by financial year) provide the requested information. Please note that the 2010-11 figures vary slightly from the value reported in AQW 157/11-15. This is due to a reclassification of expenditure following preparation of the Department's Resource Accounts for the year.

2007-08

Name of Consultant/Firm	Subject of Consultancy	Contract Value (£)
Adventure Activities Associates	Safety at Outdoor Activity Centres regulation	12,701
Beeches Management Centre	Advice on Competence Based Training	990
Bernard McCloskey QC	Legal Advice to Minister iro Board Membership	850
Cadan Solutions	Electronic Catalogue for Northern Ireland Project	18,025
CAPITA Resourcing	Recruitment of Chief Executive Designate for NI Library Authority	2,470
CILIP	Interview Panel Member for Recruitment of Chief Executive Designate for NI Library Authority	530
CIPFA	Review of Governance in Arms Length Bodies	27,000
Central Procurement Directorate	Elite Facilities Programme – Advice	1,302
Central Procurement Directorate	Article 4 & 10 Site Visits	6,195
David Gibson	Corporate Governance of Ulster Scots Agency	4,139
Dept of Employment & Learning	Investors in People Review	1,050
Deloitte	Options for Corporate Services of NI Library Authority	53,525
Deloitte	Interim Performance Evaluation of Irish Language Broadcast Fund	12,716
Deloitte & Touche	Accountancy Services	4,013
Deloitte MCS Ltd	Review of Arts Council/Sport NI operating costs	14,464
Denton Wilde Sapte	IFA/Linfield Contract – legal advice	32,062
Dept of Education	Internal Audit	67,227
Departmental Solicitors Office	Title Deeds	5
Derek Evans/QUB	Eel Research Project	53,000
Donal O'Riagain	Specialist Advice on European Charter	842
Evolve Business Consultants	Business Continuity Plan	29,826
Fire IMC	Naming Rights – Multi Sports Stadium	10,374
Goldblatt McGuigan	Facilities Management Business Case	22,345
GSL UK Ltd	Chartermark Assessment	740
Helm Corporation	Asset Title Project	47,657
Joan Ruddock	Sport NI Chair/Vice-Chair Appointments	2,927
Julia Bracewell	Sport NI Board Appointments	274

Name of Consultant/Firm	Subject of Consultancy	Contract Value (£)
Kentwood Associates	Transitional HR Support and Advice	6,423
KPMG	IFA/Linfield Contract – financial advice	20,120
KPMG/Davis Langdon	Programme Management – Multi Sports Stadium	181,302
KPMG/John Caldwell	Consultancy Assignment – NI Events Company	89,509
Mazars	Financial Audit – Foras na Gaeilge	2,133
Miller Partnership	Facilities Audit – Windsor Park	24,659
Mott MacDonald	Design – Multi Sports Stadium	2,417,634
Orla Moore	NI Events Company Board Appointments	437
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Business Planning – Multi Sports Stadium	196,935
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	VALCAL – Value of Culture, Arts & Leisure	25,703
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	PRONI Review	6,359
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Job Description for Head of Division	950
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	W5 Strategic Plan	52,387
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Social & Economic Impact of Recreation Fisheries, Angling & Angling Resources in NI	-2,628 #
	Total	£3,449,172

negative contract expenditure due to contribution received from North South body in respect of expenditure incurred in 2006-07.

2008-09

Name of Consultant/Firm	Subject of Consultancy	Contract Value (£)
APEM Ltd	Fishing Consultancy Services	9,975
Cadan Solutions	Electronic Catalogue for Northern Ireland Project	11,025
CIPFA	Review of Governance in Arms Length Bodies	24,150
Deloitte MCS Ltd	Refresh of Business Case/Economic Appraisal for Ulster Scots Academy	21,038
Dept of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	Ulster Canal Outline Business Case	12,804
Donal O'Riagain	Specialist Advice on European Charter	1,064
FGS McClure Watters	Review of Sport NI	11,200
Finegan Gibson	Review of NI Events Company financial transactions	6,055
Goldblatt McGuigan	Facilities Management Business Case	8,895
GSL UK Ltd	Chartermark	790
John Hunter	Advice – NI Events Company	600

Name of Consultant/Firm	Subject of Consultancy	Contract Value (£)
KPMG	Establishment of Navigation Authority for Lough Neagh	45,802
KPMG/Davis Langdon	Multi Sports Stadium	17,943
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Briefing with Minister – Multi Sports Stadium	1,491
	Total	£172,832

2009-10

Name of Consultant/Firm	Subject of Consultancy	Contract Value (£)
Cybertrust UK Ltd	Security Check of Street Directories web application	1,000
Deafworks	Direction of Sign Language Partnership Group	6,792
Digital Assurance	IT Health Check on CALM System	3,875
FGS McClure Watters	Irish Language Broadcast Fund Post Project Evaluation	14,527
Goldblatt McGuigan	Digital Preservation Business Case	16,320
KPMG	Review of Payments made under Water Based Tourism Project	18,846
Mr D Howard	Office of Commissioner of Public Appointments assessor – NI Library Authority board appointments	1,268
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Libraries NI Senior Management Pay Review	9,337
Tandem Design	A Century of Change Exhibition – Phase 1 Design	5,564
	Total	£77,529

2010-11

Name of Consultant/Firm	Subject of Consultancy	Contract Value (£)
BWMC Ltd	Toolkit for Marching Bands	15,926
Deloitte	Refresh of Ulster Scots Academy Business Case	12,596
Electric Cat Ltd	IT Health Check of CALM & Public Internet systems	4,180
Goldblatt McGuigan	Digital Preservation Business Case	4,080
Tandem Design	A Century of Change Exhibition – Phase 1 Design	16,692
Valerie Adams	Ulster Scots Archivist Project	1,200
	Total	£54,674 *

* varies by £863 from figure reported in AQW 157/11-15 due to reclassification of expenditure in 2010-11 Resource Accounts

Pre-Olympic Training Camps

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure which sporting venues are being promoted as potential venues for pre-Olympic training camps.

(AQW 701/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Twenty-six facilities have been approved by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) as Olympic standard training facilities. They are included in the London 2012 official Pre Games Training Camp (PGTC) Guide which includes all sporting venues across the UK.

SportNI has promoted the 26 approved venues since the Handover in Beijing in 2008, and continues to promote them at every opportunity. However, facilities at Bangor Castle Leisure Centre are no longer being promoted as the 50 metre pool will not be completed in time.

SportNI has promotional materials available, including a brochure on Pre Games Training in Northern Ireland and a DVD.

The twenty six LOCOG approved venues in Northern Ireland are:

- 1 Andersonstown Leisure Centre and Holy Trinity Amateur Boxing Club
- 2 Antrim Forum and Antrim Stadium
- 3 Ballyholme Yacht Club
- 4 Banbridge Amateur Boxing Club (in conjunction with Banbridge Leisure Centre)
- 5 Bangor Castle Leisure Centre
- 6 Bangor Sportsplex
- 7 The Boy's Brigade Training Camp at Ganaway
- 8 Carrickfergus Sailing Club
- 9 Carlingford Lough Yacht Club
10. Glengormley Amateur Boxing Club
11. Glentoran Football Club, The Oval, in partnership with Ashfield Boys School and Avoniel Leisure Centre
12. Grosvenor Grammar School
13. Grove Wellbeing Centre
14. Lisnagarvey Hockey Club
15. Mary Peters Track
16. Mid Ulster Sports Arena
17. Monkstown Boxing and Community Sports Association
18. National Badminton Centre (Lisburn Racquets)
19. North West Regional Sports Campus
20. NI Civil Service Sports Association
21. Olympia Leisure Centre and Windsor Park
22. Portmore International Equestrian Centre
23. Queen's University Belfast
24. Salto Gymnastics Centre
25. Ulster Lakeland Equestrian Park at Necarne
26. University of Ulster

Capital Investment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the capital investment her Department and its agencies are planning for (i) facilities to improve participation in sport; and (ii) improvements to spectator facilities at sports venues, over the next four years.

(AQW 703/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Over the next four years my Department is planning capital investment for facilities to improve participation in sport and for improvements to spectator facilities, as shown in the tables below.

(i) Facilities to improve participation in sport

Programme/Project	Planned Investment
Sport Matters Community Capital Programme	£2.25m
Sport Matters Community Capital Programme – Invest to Save	£8m
50 Metre Pool (completion of project begun before 2011/12)	£11.621m
Building Sport Programme (completion of projects begun before 2011/12)	£0.566m
Mourne Mountain Bike Track	£0.15m

(ii) Improvements to spectator facilities at sports venues

Programme Project	Planned Investment
Regional Stadiums Development (Casement Park, Windsor Park and Ravenhill)	£110m
Stadia Safety Programme (completion of projects begun before 2011/12)	£0.536m

Waterways Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding her Department has allocated to Waterways Ireland in each year since 1998.

(AQW 729/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Waterways Ireland (WI) is funded jointly by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The WI financial year is based on a calendar year (Jan-Dec). The agreed budget for the DCAL contribution is allocated over an April to March financial year. The funding allocated by DCAL to WI since 1998 is set out in the following table.

FUNDING TO WATERWAYS IRELAND

Financial Year April to March	DCAL allocation £m
2000/01	1.30
2001/02	1.93
2002/03	2.33
2003/04	3.15
2004/05	4.55

Financial Year April to March	DCAL allocation £m
2005/06	3.50
2006/07	5.78
2007/08	8.20
2008/09	7.32
2009/10	5.36
2010/11	4.96

The increase in expenditure from 2006 to 2009 reflects increased capital costs for work on the navigations and the development of the new WI Headquarters in Enniskillen.

Venue for the Olympic Flame

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she would lobby the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games to include Dervock as a venue for the Olympic Flame to visit in recognition of Kennedy Kane McArthur's achievement in the 1912 Olympics and of the work that Dervock Community Association has done to acknowledge the achievement.

(AQW 758/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has been working closely with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) in relation to the Torch Relay. Consultation was carried out in January 2010 and all 26 councils in the North of Ireland completed questionnaires to help identify the areas, organisations, projects and events that the Torch might visit. Via this questionnaire, representatives from Ballymoney District Council recommended that the Torch travel through Dervock.

A Torch Relay Advisory Group was then set up in the North of Ireland to provide advice and guidance to LOCOG, with representation from key stakeholders including the Northern Ireland Local Government Association. Recommendations were made to LOCOG via this group that the Torch should visit Dervock.

The previous Minister also personally recommended to LOCOG that the Torch visit Dervock in light of the centenary of Kenny Kane McArthur's Olympic victory.

LOCOG has now announced the dates that the Torch will visit the North of Ireland, and the locations for the evening celebrations. A more detailed route announcement will be made later this year. A seminar with Local Authorities was held on 13 June in Belfast to help them begin to consider how to engage with the communities on route so they might best exploit the opportunities available. Representatives from Ballymoney District Council attended this seminar.

My officials have also been working with the Dervock District and Community Association to help them ensure that they can avail of a number of opportunities, including London 2012 Open Weekend and the Inspire Programme.

I have also agreed to meet with Mervyn Storey to discuss plans to celebrate the centenary of Kennedy Kane McArthur's Olympic victory.

2012 Olympics

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) how much her Department and its arm's-length bodies have spent on trying to attract Olympic Games teams to use Northern Ireland as a base for the 2012 Olympics; and (ii) for her assessment of whether value for money has been achieved.

(AQW 759/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: On approval of a business case from SportNI, DCAL agreed to provide funding to attract Olympic and Paralympic teams to use venues in the North of Ireland as a training base for the 2012 Games. To date a total of £182,000 has been spent.

It is expected that SportNI will welcome over 60 Olympic or Paralympic teams to NI in 2011 and 2012 for pre Games training camps or to compete in qualifying competitions, representing almost 1000 international athletes.

Two qualifying competitions have already been announced. The first will see 33 Countries competing in the CP ISRA Boccia World Cup in August 2011 at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown. The second is the Yonex Irish International Badminton Championships in December 2011 at Lisburn Racquets Club.

In accordance with Government accounting procedures an evaluation will be carried out at the end of the project in 2012. Assessment on value for money is an integral part of this process.

Ministerial Advisory Group for the Ulster-Scots Academy

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when she will meet with the Ministerial Advisory Group for the Ulster-Scots Academy; and whether she will take its advice on the production of a strategy to support the development of the Ulster-Scots sector.

(AQW 762/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have arranged to meet with Dr Bill Smith the Chair of the Ulster-Scots Academy Ministerial Advisory Group on 20th July 2011 and I look forward to receiving in due course a strategy on the way forward for the Ulster-Scots sector.

2013 World Police and Fire Games

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans are currently in place for the 2013 World Police and Fire Games which will be held in Belfast.

(AQW 832/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A Company Limited by Guarantee known as '2013 World Police and Fire Games Limited' has been established by my Department to deliver the Games in Belfast in 2013. The Company was registered in Companies House on 28 February 2011.

The NI Executive has allocated £6.04m to the Games. A Chairman and Board of Directors have been appointed to the Company and following a trawl a Chief Executive Officer has been appointed.

While my Department retains sponsorship and accountability responsibilities for the Company it is up to the Board and the Chief Executive to put in place the necessary plans and arrangements to ensure the successful delivery of the Games between 1 and 10 August 2013.

I understand that significant progress has already been made on a number of critical work strands including sports events and venues, transport, volunteering and ceremonies.

I am fully committed to the delivery of the Games and wish the Company well in its endeavours to host a world class event in Belfast.

Regeneration of Craigavon House, Belfast

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 551/11-15, for her assessment of the cultural and historical importance of the regeneration of Craigavon House; and whether her Department would be in a position to provide funding for its regeneration.

(AQW 863/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Craigavon House has been the setting for a number of political and social events in our history, principally in the decade after 1912, and I fully appreciate its importance to some within our community.

Responsibility for the regeneration of Craigavon House rests with the Somme Association. My Department is not in a position to provide funding for its regeneration.

Reservoirs in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure which reservoirs in North Down are owned by her Department.

(AQW 896/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department does not own any reservoirs in North Down.

North-South Ministerial Council Meetings

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) all the North-South Ministerial Council meetings that she, or her predecessors, have attended since May 2007; (ii) the Ministers from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland who attended each meeting; (iii) the issues which were discussed at each meeting; and (iv) the outcomes and achievements that resulted from each meeting.

(AQW 899/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Since May 2007, the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure has attended NSMC meetings on the following dates:

Date	Sector	DCAL Minister	Accompanying Minister	Irish Minister
17 Jul 2007	Plenary	Minister Poots	All Ministers	All Ministers
17 Oct 2007	Waterways	Minister Poots	Minister Murphy	Éamon Ó Cuív
26 Oct 2007	Language	Minister Poots	Minister Ruane	Éamon Ó Cuív
07 Feb 2008	Plenary	Minister Poots	All Ministers	Éamon Ó Cuív
04 Jul 2008	Language	Minister Campbell	Minister Murphy	Éamon Ó Cuív
04 Jul 2008	Waterways	Minister Campbell	Minister Murphy	Éamon Ó Cuív
16 Jan 2009	Language	Minister Campbell	Minister Gildernew	Éamon Ó Cuív
16 Jan 2009	Waterways	Minister Campbell	Minister Gildernew	Éamon Ó Cuív
23 Jan 2009	Plenary	Minister Campbell	All Ministers	All Ministers
09 Jul 2009	Language	Minister McCausland	Minister Ruane	Éamon Ó Cuív
09 Jul 2009	Waterways	Minister McCausland	Minister Ruane	Éamon Ó Cuív
02 Dec 2009	Language	Minister McCausland	Minister Murphy	Éamon Ó Cuív
02 Dec 2009	Waterways	Minister McCausland	Minister Murphy	Éamon Ó Cuív
26 May 2010	Language	Minister McCausland	Minister Ruane	Pat Carey
26 May 2010	Waterways	Minister McCausland	Minister Ruane	Pat Carey
05 Jul 2010	Plenary	Minister McCausland	All Ministers	All Ministers
03 Nov 2010	Language	Minister McCausland	Minister Ruane	Éamon Ó Cuív
03 Nov 2010	Waterways	Minister McCausland	Minister Ruane	Pat Carey
21 Jan 2011	Plenary	Minister McCausland	All Ministers	All Ministers
10 Jun 2011	Plenary	Minister Ní Chuilín	All Ministers	All Ministers

Following each NSMC meeting an agreed Joint Communiqué is issued and this is posted on the NSMC website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org. After each NSMC meeting, a Minister or Junior Minister who participates in a NSMC meeting is required to make a Statement to the Assembly. Details of these Statements are recorded in Hansard and copies are available on the Assembly website.

Ulster Solemn League and Covenant

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has been in contact with the Ulster Centenary Committee regarding events planned to mark the signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant; and whether she has directed that these events receive support.

(AQW 930/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Since my appointment as Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure I have received no correspondence from the Ulster Centenary Committee, nor have I issued any correspondence to them. I have issued no direction to my officials in relation to the events referred to.

However, the Ulster Centenary Committee may wish to consider applying for funding through existing programmes and initiatives delivered by my Department's Arms Length Bodies.

Arts Council's Re-imagining Communities Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure which areas have received funding through the Arts Council's Re-imagining Communities Programme.

(AQW 1019/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: All council areas, except Omagh and Strabane, have received funding through the Arts Council's Re-imagining Communities Programme. A total of 155 projects have received funding.

Libraries NI

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) who has been responsible for the leadership of Libraries NI in the absence of the appointed Board since the election on 5 May 2011; and (ii) if Libraries NI has held any meetings since 5 May 2011, what items were on the agenda and what decisions were made.

(AQW 1021/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Board of Libraries NI has continued to operate in the absence of Councillor members, since there are eight members of the Board still in place.

The Libraries NI Board usually consists of 19 members, 11 of which are Councillors.

In accordance with their Terms & Conditions of Appointment the tenure of the Councillors on the Board ended at the date of the Council Elections on 5th May 2011.

The Board met on Wednesday 25 May 2011. The Agenda for the meeting is attached at Annex A. There were 7 members present.

The minutes of the meeting will be published on the Libraries NI website once they have been approved at the next Board meeting which is scheduled for 7 July 2011.

Annex A

LIBRARIES NI
The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Board Meeting

Wednesday 25 May 2011 10.30am in Lisburn City Library

AGENDA

1.	Apologies	
2.	Declaration of Interests	
3.	Chairperson's Business	
4.	Chief Executive's Business	
5.	Minutes of the Meeting of the Board held on 14 April 2011	LNI 01.05.11
6.	Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 14 April 2011	LNI 02.05.11
7.	Minutes of the Information Systems Committee held on 14 April 2011	LNI 03.05.11
8.	Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting held on 18 May 2011	LNI 04.05.11 (to follow)
9.	Business Plan 2010/11: Report on Outcomes	LNI 05.05.11
10.	PSA Targets 2008 - 2011: Report on Outcomes in 2010/11	LNI 06.05.11
11.	Budget 2011/12	LNI 07.05.11
12.	Corporate Plan 2011/15	LNI 08.05.11
13.	Business Plan 2011/12	LNI 09.05.11
14.	Corporate Risk Register	LNI 10.05.11
15.	Service Plans and Risk Registers 2011/12 Business Areas A, B, C + D - Finance - HR - Assets - ICT - Planning and Performance	LNI 11.05.11
16.	Review of Opening Hours	LNI 12.05.11
17.	Summer Opening Hours	LNI 13.05.11
18.	East Belfast Community Development Agency: Former Templemore Avenue School	LNI 14.05.11
19.	Stock Assets Project - Project Initiation Document - Project Plan - Definitions & Accounting Policy	LNI 15.05.11
20.	Lone Working Policy	LNI 16.05.11
21.	Flexible Retirement Policy	LNI 17.05.11

22.	Major Works (Capital) Plan 2011/12	LNI 18.05.11
23.	Minor Works (Capital) Plan 2011/12	LNI 19.05.11
24.	Recurrent Maintenance 2011/12	LNI 20.05.11
25.	Surplus Property – Disposal Progress Report	LNI 21.05.11
26.	Signing of Contracts – Hollywood, Newry & Ballynahinch Libraries	LNI 22.05.11
27.	Schedule of Meetings June 2011 – June 2012	LNI 23.05.11
28.	Any Other Notified Business	
29.	Date of Next Meeting	

2011 US Open Champion, Rory McIlroy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans her Department has to celebrate and commemorate Rory McIlroy's victory in the 2011 U.S. Open Championship.

(AQW 1043/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials have already been in contact with Rory's agents to take forward the arrangement of a reception in Parliament Buildings at the earliest possible date to celebrate his tremendous victory in the US Open Golf Championship at the Congressional Country Club, Maryland. I have also written to Rory to congratulate him on this outstanding achievement and what I trust will be his first of many major titles.

2011 US Open Champion, Rory McIlroy

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will host a reception in Parliament Buildings for the 2011 US Open Champion, Rory McIlroy.

(AQW 1055/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials have already been in contact with Rory's agents to take forward the arrangement of a reception in Parliament Buildings at the earliest possible date to celebrate his tremendous victory in the US Open Golf Championship at the Congressional Country Club, Maryland. I have also written to Rory to congratulate him on this outstanding achievement and what I trust will be his first of many major titles.

Department of Education

Nursery School Places

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education whether the preference given to children with birthdays in July and August when allocating nursery school places is consistent with the Executive's local, national and international obligations on the rights of children and equality legislation.

(AQW 62/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The development of the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme in 1998, in line with wider Government policy, was an important step in making appropriate pre-school education provision available for children before they start compulsory education.

It was established, and has continued to develop, under legislative powers contained in the Education (NI) Order 1998 – Part V - Pre-School Education – Chapter 1 – Provision of Pre-School Education.

The Pre-school year is a non-compulsory phase of education, but research has confirmed that the benefits of a quality pre-school experience to the social, emotional and intellectual development of children cannot be under-estimated.

In determining the admissions criteria the Department specifies two priorities, one of which is 4-year olds with July and August birthdays – because these children do not enter compulsory education until after their 5th birthday. This targeting process, which is part of DE's wider strategy to reduce levels of educational underachievement in the long-term, has been in operation since the 1999/2000 school year.

During the debate on Nursery Provision in the Assembly on 7 June 2011, I indicated my intention to carry out a review of the Department's criteria associated with the operation of the Pre School Education Expansion Programme in the coming months, including that relating to July/August birthdays.

In respect of United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC) obligations on education, the approach to pre-school provision is in line with a progressive approach to the UNCRC requirements. Provisions contained within The Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, do not extend to the provision of education in schools.

Craigavon Primary School Principals Group

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what discussions (i) his Department; and (ii) the Southern Education and Library Board have had with the Craigavon Primary School Principals Group in advance of the publication of a consultation on the future of post-primary education within the controlled sector in Lurgan.^[R]

(AQW 267/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is the responsibility of the Board, rather than the Department, to bring forward proposals for provision in the controlled sector. As such, the Department has not had discussions with the Craigavon Primary School Principals Group.

The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) has advised my Department that it initially held meetings with stakeholders from the Post-primary schools in the Craigavon area with a view to developing a strategic plan for the schools in the Two Tier System.

The Board now proposes to issue a consultation document on options for the Lurgan schools to the Boards of Governors of the schools which are part of the system at either Primary or Post-primary level.

This will issue in June 2011 with comments to be submitted to the Board by 9 September 2011. The Board will then consider the next stage of the consultation process in the light of the information received from the initial consultation.

Pre-School Places

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education how many pre-school places were available for children in the Lagan Valley area in September 2011, compared to the number of children who were eligible for a place.

(AQW 563/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funded pre-school places are available in statutory nursery schools and nursery units attached to primary schools and in voluntary/private settings.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) has advised that in the Lagan Valley constituency there were 1234 applications for a funded pre-school place at stage 1 of the admissions process.

Following the processing of these applications 132 children remained unplaced. Eighty of these applicants stated further preferences for consideration at stage 2 of the process, 6 of whom remain unplaced when stage 2 was completed. At the time there were 25 vacant places in the Lagan Valley constituency.

In addition, 5 places in statutory nursery settings were allocated to underage children. In considering applications, all providers are required to give priority to applications from children in their final pre-school year. However when undersubscribed with applications for these places, statutory nursery schools and units are, under the open enrolment arrangements, required to consider applications from younger children and allocate available places.

The SEELB also advise that a number of late applications have been received directly by providers in the constituency and, where places are available these requests have been met. However, as such applications are made directly to providers the total number of additional places will not be known until September /October when the first claims for funded places are processed by the Board.

GL and AQE Transfer Tests

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education to detail how many children in the Belfast Education and Library Board area, who sat the GL and AQE transfer tests, were awarded a place at their (i) first preference school or (ii) second preference school, broken down by grade received.

(AQW 615/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Information about the number of children awarded places at schools following the conclusion of the transfer procedure is collected, and can be related to the preferences stated by applicants on the transfer form.

Information about the numbers of pupils sitting unregulated tests that facilitate the use of academic admissions criteria, and the grades they achieve, is not collected as the use of such tests contravenes my Department's policy on post-primary transfer. Furthermore, the transfer form no longer requires information about test results to be systematically recorded on it, and primary school principals no longer have a role in verifying information provided on the form. This question can therefore only be answered without reference to unregulated test results.

At the conclusion of the Transfer 2011 procedure in the Belfast Education and Library Board area 88% of applicants were placed at the post-primary school named on the transfer form as their first preference school, whilst 73% of applicants who named a school as their second preference school were placed at that school.

Certificate in Religious Education

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education whether he has discussed the removing the requirement for a Certificate in Religious Education with the Minister for Employment and Learning or his Department.

(AQW 673/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools has established the certificate in religious education as a mandatory requirement for all those seeking appointment to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school in the north of Ireland.

I have not discussed the certificate in religious education with the Minister for Employment and Learning or his Department. However, my Department is currently engaged in a review to assess the impact of the requirement of a religious certificate on current and future recruitment opportunities in the teaching sector. It is anticipated the review will be finalised in 2011. The outcome of the review will be shared with the Education Committee.

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what legislation his Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) the following years of this mandate.

(AQW 692/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am still considering the priorities for education legislation. There is an urgent need for reform of education administration and, subject to political agreement, I intend to bring proposals to the Executive as a matter of priority. I will also consider the need for legislation on early years to address specific issues and on special education, should the final proposals from the review of special education and inclusion require it.

Primary School Places

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education how many children in (i) Carrickfergus; (ii) Larne; and (iii) Newtownabbey, who are in their immediate pre-school year (a) have been; and (b) have not been awarded a primary school place.

(AQW 695/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) has advised that the number of children in (i) Carrickfergus; (ii) Larne; and (iii) Newtownabbey, who are in their immediate pre-school year and have been awarded a primary school place (i.e. in a "reception class") are as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| (i) Carrickfergus | 0 |
| (ii) Larne | 5 |
| (iii) Newtownabbey | 6 |

The NEELB do not hold information on the number of children in their immediate pre-school year who have not been awarded a primary school place.

Parkhall Integrated College Building in Antrim

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Education how much has been spent on maintaining the Parkhall Integrated College building in Antrim, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 715/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Responsibility for maintaining controlled integrated school buildings lies with the Education and Library Boards. North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) expenditure in relation to maintaining the Parkhall Integrated College building over the five year period commencing 2006/07 is as follows:-

2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
11,107	47,261	38,957	70,443	54,601

Teaching Staff Redundancies

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what assessment his Department has made of any further teaching or non-teaching staff redundancies.

(AQW 754/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has made funding available to assist employing authorities with the compensation costs of teacher redundancies at 31 August 2011; 252 had been confirmed by 31 March 2011. The employing authorities are currently assessing the need for further redundancies.

The number of teacher redundancies has fallen dramatically in recent years; the level is far below that of around five years ago when the figure was regularly over 500. Moreover, the majority of these are voluntary redundancies. The figure has risen in the current year as the Department of Education set aside funding to assist employing authorities to encourage volunteers and minimise the need for compulsory redundancies.

The Education and Library Boards, as the employing authorities for non-teaching school-based staff, are currently assessing the need for further redundancies.

Under the Local Management of Schools arrangements, once the size of an individual school budget is determined, it is then the responsibility of the Boards of Governors and Principals of each school to determine spend, planning and the use of the available delegated funding to maximum effect in accordance with their school's own needs and relative priorities. This includes the setting of teacher complements and other staffing levels.

Newly Qualified Teachers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what proportion of newly qualified teachers have obtained a full-time position in each of the last three years.

(AQW 777/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The proportion of newly qualified teachers who have obtained a full-time position in each of the last three years is detailed in the table below: -

Financial Year	Total NI Graduates ⁽¹⁾	Graduates registered with GTCNI ⁽¹⁾	First employed Full-time Academic Year 2008/09 ^{(2)&(3)}	Proportion employed Total NI Graduates%	Proportion employed of Graduates registered with GTCNI %
2008/09	735	638	101	13.74	15.83
2009/10	691				
2010/11	678				
2009/10					
2008/09	735	638	75	10.20	11.76
2009/10	691	607	74	10.71	12.19
2010/11	678				
2010/11					
2008/09	735	638	55	7.48	8.62
2009/10	691	607	70	10.13	11.53
2010/11	678	594	38	5.60	6.40

Notes:

- (1) Graduate data provided by General Teaching Council (in financial years)
- (2) Employment data from DE payroll as at 15 June 2011 (in academic years)
- (3) Figures do not include voluntary grammar schools as the Department does not hold their payroll information

Nursery School Places

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education how many fully funded nursery school places will be available in the Carrickfergus area from September 2011.

(AQW 786/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funded pre-school places are available in statutory nursery schools and nursery units attached to primary schools and in voluntary/private settings.

The North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) has advised that in Carrickfergus there is a total of 442 funded pre-school places available for September 2011: 312 in statutory nursery settings and 130 in voluntary/private settings. The number of places available in the voluntary/private sector may increase by September if requests for additional places are received in respect of unplaced children.

Nursery School Places

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education how many children were not offered a fully funded nursery school place from September 2011 in the (i) Carrickfergus; and (ii) Larne areas.

(AQW 787/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) has advised that at the end of stage 1 of the admissions process there were 11 children unplaced in Carrickfergus and 7 unplaced in Larne. Eight of the 11 unplaced children in Carrickfergus submitted further preferences for consideration in stage 2 of the admissions process as did 5 of the 7 unplaced children in Larne. All of these children were placed at the end of stage 2.

The NEELB also advise that they have dealt with a number of late applications which have been received directly by providers in both Carrickfergus and Larne and, where places are available these requests have been met. However, of these late applications 3 children remain unplaced in Carrickfergus and 2 remain unplaced in Larne.

Transfer Tests

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education, in light of the speculation that transfer tests had been leaked to parents in advance of the testing date, what action he intends to take to address this issue.

(AQW 803/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Further to a statement in the press alleging a breach in the security of GL test papers, the Catholic Principals Association provided to me, on 8 June 2011, the papers that the Association claims support this allegation. I initiated an investigation involving the Catholic Principals Association, the Post-primary Transfer Consortium and the company that owns the copyright of the test papers used by these schools.

As it is important that the allegations being made are looked into by the schools who are responsible for operating these tests, the Department has sought explanations and assurances in relation to this matter from the Post-primary Transfer Consortium.

I will inform the Assembly of the outcome of this investigation in due course.

Examination Mistakes

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what was the total cost to his Department of the recent examination mistakes made by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.

(AQW 809/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I was disappointed to be informed of several errors in examination papers from a range of awarding bodies, including CCEA, sat by students here in recent weeks.

The Qualifications Regulators here and in England and Wales are responsible for following up on these errors and ensuring that the interests of all candidates are protected. I welcomed their recent statement calling on awarding organisations to carry out further checks and I subsequently met with our own Regulator to receive a report from him on the impact of these errors on pupils here.

Although these errors have placed demands on my time and that of my officials, it is simply not possible to attribute a direct or total cost to the Department of dealing with them.

Post Graduate Certificate in Education Places

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Education (i) how many Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) places were available for the current academic year; and (ii) whether he has considered allowing people who are self-funded or sponsored by an organisation to access teacher training, and if so, what impact this would have on the current provision.

(AQW 811/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the approved intakes to initial teacher education (ITE) courses, including Post Graduate Certificate of Education places, are routinely published on the Department of Education (DE) website and can be accessed at www.deni.gov.uk/teachers_-_teaching_in_northern_ireland-4_approved_intakes.htm. This information is updated on an annual basis.

As autonomous bodies, the selection of candidates for admission to ITE courses is entirely a matter for the higher education institutions (HEIs), subject to candidates satisfying the minimum entry requirements set by DE in conjunction with the Department for Employment and Learning. The HEIs have advised that there are currently no students enrolled on their PGCE courses that are self-funded or sponsored by an organisation.

Any admissions to ITE courses on a self-funded or sponsored basis would be considered by DE to count towards an HEI's intakes allocation which DE determines each year.

Teaching Vacancies

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education what action he intends to take to ensure that the eligibility criteria for teaching vacancies are accessible to the widest possible number of teachers, including newly qualified teachers.

(AQW 814/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Teaching vacancies are widely advertised in the local press and open to all eligible teachers who meet the eligibility criteria. The responsibility for developing relevant and focussed job descriptions, personnel specifications and job advertisements rests with the Boards of Governors of individual schools, in consultation with the relevant employing authority. Eligibility criteria must be made known to prospective applicants, related to the ability to do the job and must be non-discriminatory.

It is imperative that newly qualified teachers are given every opportunity to obtain teaching posts and I have been advised by the employing authorities that the experience criterion used for the recruitment and selection of teachers does not differentiate between those with experience in permanent posts and those with experience in temporary or supply teaching posts. All experience (temporary or permanent) is taken into account when checking applications against criteria. If an employing authority finds evidence of inappropriate practice it does not ratify the appointment(s).

In the context of the forthcoming School Workforce Review my Department will consider whether employing authorities should review the recruitment, selection and eligibility criteria to ensure that they are accessible to the widest possible number of potential applicants, including newly qualified teachers seeking employment.

Asperger's Syndrome

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education what assistance is available for children in mainstream primary education who have Asperger's Syndrome.

(AQW 816/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have statutory responsibility for identifying, assessing and meeting the special education needs (SEN) of the children in their area. They take into account the individual needs of each child and there will be variations, therefore, in the provision for children with SEN, including Asperger's Syndrome.

The Chief Executives of the ELBs have advised that a variety of assistance is available in mainstream primary education for children who have Asperger's Syndrome including:-

- access to specialist advice, support and training from the ELB's autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) service;
- a structured transition programme during the third term of year 7 to assist children with an ASD transferring from primary to post primary schools;
- small group placement for pupils with statements of SEN in a learning support centre;

- access to the ELB's Behaviour Support Service;
- access to specialist language teachers and the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety's therapy services;
- classroom assistance and support from either a peripatetic teacher or an outreach teacher attached to a special school.

Since the publication of the Task Group Report on Autism in 2002 the Department of Education (DE) has secured additional resources totalling some £10m to support positive measures in the area of autism.

One of the most notable achievements has been the establishment of the inter-board ASD Group, set up to oversee the establishment of five board structures to enable them to offer a more comprehensive support programme to children with an autistic spectrum disorder, their families and schools.

The ASD inter-board service has achieved much in the training and professional development of school and ELB staff and made notable improvements in other areas, including early intervention, pre-school provision, multi-agency working and in the promotion of consistency and commonality of practice.

DE has also funded the production of classroom resources to support positive interventions for children with ASD. These include complementary parent and teacher videos/ CD-ROMs and guidance material on autism for use on a north/south basis, "ASD a Guide to Classroom Practice" and "Evaluating Provision for Autism" for all schools as an aid to teachers and classroom assistants.

In addition the Middletown Centre for Autism provides a range of training to education professionals and parents on supporting children with autism, including children with Asperger's Syndrome.

Newly Qualified Teachers

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last five years, to detail how many newly qualified teachers obtained a permanent full-time teaching position within (i) one year; and (ii) two years of graduating.

(AQW 834/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of newly qualified teachers who obtained a permanent full-time teaching position within (i) one year; and (ii) two years of graduating is detailed in the table below: -

Financial Year	Total NI Graduates(1)	Graduates registered with GTCNI(1)	First employed Full-time (Academic Year) 2006/07 (2&3)	First employed Full-time (Academic Year) 2007/08 (2&3)	First employed Full-time (Academic Year) 2008/09 (2&3)	First employed Full-time (Academic Year) 2009/10 (2&3)	First employed Full-time (Academic Year) 2010/11 (2&3)
2006/07	807	672	91	128			
2007/08	805	676		107	113		
2008/09	735	638			101	75	
2009/10	691	607				74	70
2010/11	678	594					38

Notes:

- (4) Graduate data provided by General Teaching Council (in financial years)
- (5) Employment data from DE payroll as at 15 June 2011 (in academic years)
- (6) Figures do not include voluntary grammar schools as the Department does not hold their payroll information

Children Statemented

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many children have been statemented in each of the last five years, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 852/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the table below.

STATEMENTED PUPILS BY EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD 2006/07 – 2010/11

Year	Education and Library Board					Total
	Belfast	Western	North Eastern	South Eastern	Southern	
2006/07	1,790	2,064	2,446	3,341	2,850	12,491
2007/08	1,951	2,151	2,504	3,302	3,066	12,974
2008/09	2,094	2,133	2,548	3,235	3,261	13,271
2009/10	2,309	2,144	2,577	3,210	3,334	13,574
2010/11	2,479	2,217	2,634	3,260	3,308	13,898

Source: School census

Note:

- 1 Figures relate to funded pupils in voluntary and private preschool centres and grant-aided nursery, primary, post-primary and special schools.
- 2 Statemented pupils are those children at Stage 5 on the SEN Code of Practice.

North-South Ministerial Council Meetings

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) all the North-South Ministerial Council meetings that he, or his predecessor, have attended since May 2007; (ii) the Ministers from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland who attended each meeting; (iii) the issues that were discussed at each meeting; and (iv) the outcomes and achievements that resulted from each meeting.

(AQW 901/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since May 2007, I, or my predecessor, have attended NSMC meetings on the following dates:-

Education Sectoral:

- 14 November 2007
- 28 May 2008
- 10 December 2008
- 20 May 2009
- 25 November 2009
- 23 June 2010
- 21 January 2011

Other sectoral (as accompanying Minister):

- 26 October 2007 (Language)
- 9 July 2009 (Inland Waterways)

- 25 November 2009 (Language)
- 26 May 2010 (Inland Waterways)
- 26 May 2010 (Language)
- 3 November 2010 (Inland Waterways)
- 3 November 2010 (Language)

Plenary:

- 17 July 2007
- 7 February 2008
- 23 January 2009
- 6 July 2009
- 14 December 2009
- 5 July 2010
- 21 January 2011
- 10 June 2011

Institutional:

- 30 October 2007

Following each NSMC meeting, an agreed Joint Communiqué is issued, listing all those who attended and the outcomes agreed, and this is posted on the NSMC website at www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org.

Also, after each NSMC meeting, a Minister or Junior Minister who participates in an NSMC meeting is required to make a Statement to the Assembly. Details of these Statements are recorded in Hansard and copies are available on the Assembly website.

Review of Procurement Practice and the Management of Contracts in the SEELB

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Education what action his Department has taken in relation to the nine recommendations made in the report on the 'Review of Procurement Practice and the Management of Contracts in the South Eastern Education and Library Board'.

(AQW 911/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In response to the 'Review of Procurement Practice and the Management of Contracts in the South Eastern Education and Library Board' (SEELB), my Department commissioned a range of measures to ensure the report's recommendations were addressed comprehensively.

Most particularly, an independent procurement expert was appointed to assist the SEELB in the development of an Action Plan to tackle the recommendations and monthly Procurement Governance and Accountability meetings between my Department and the SEELB have been introduced.

I have now considered and approved the SEELB Action Plan. I am confident that the full and immediate implementation of the plan will ensure that procurement is effectively and efficiently managed in the SEELB. The independent procurement expert will review implementation of the Action Plan in six months and report to the Department.

Indeed, a number of the review recommendations have now been implemented. Reviews of the SEELB's procurement structures, resources and skills and of the new Term Service Contract for building maintenance have been carried out. A Procurement Risk Register has also been established and both a revised anti-fraud policy and new procedures for authorising and approving Single Tender Actions introduced.

Centre of Procurement Expertise

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Education to outline a timescale for the creation of a Centre of Procurement Expertise; and what preliminary work has been completed to date.

(AQW 913/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In recognition of the need for modernisation of procurement processes and practice in the education sector, the Department has established a unit to develop proposals for a single Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE), which will ensure consistent application of best practice and delivery of Best Value for Money for the tax payer. It is envisaged that detailed proposals for the CoPE will be developed by March 2012, with implementation from April 2012.

My officials are currently researching and engaging with key stakeholders to gather best practice examples to inform the development of policy proposals. In addition, the recent Gateway Style Reviews of the procurement and contract management arrangements in each of the Education and Library Boards have provided an important baseline measure of current procurement procedures and practice, which will inform the development of proposals.

Maintenance Expenditure for Ballyclare Secondary School

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what was the total maintenance expenditure for Ballyclare Secondary School in each of the last five years.

(AQW 927/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Maintenance at Ballyclare Secondary School is carried out by the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). In the last five years the Board has spent £361,888 on maintenance works at the school as detailed in the table below:-

2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
40,015	111,648	75,322	78,572	56,331

Ballyclare Secondary School

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to provide a breakdown of (i) the number of pupils living in each postcode area who currently attend Ballyclare Secondary School; and (ii) the religious background of pupils in Ballyclare Secondary School in each of the last three years.

(AQW 931/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the tables below.

POSTCODE AREAS RESIDED IN BY PUPILS ENROLLED IN BALLYCLARE SECONDARY SCHOOL – 2008/09 – 2010/11

Postcode area	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Postcode missing/ unknown/ not provided	0	0	*
BT9	0	0	*
BT14	0	*	*
BT29	*	*	*
BT36	195	190	174
BT37	16	21	18
BT38	#	8	14

Postcode area	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
BT39	740	734	746
BT40	20	20	16
BT41	10	10	9
BT42	27	28	25
Total	1,016	1,016	1,009

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF PUPILS ENROLLED IN BALLYCLARE SECONDARY SCHOOL – 2008/09 – 2010/11

Religious Background ¹	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Protestant	838	840	849
Catholic	6	5	6
Other Christian/ Non Christian/ No religion/ religion not known	172	171	154
Total	1,016	1,016	1,009

Source: School census

Note:

- 1 Based on information provided by pupils' parents.
- * denotes fewer than 5 pupils
- # denotes figure greater than, or equal to, 5 treated to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

Careers Education and Guidance

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Education what action he intends to take to improve careers education and guidance in post-primary schools.

(AQW 951/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Access to the highest quality careers education advice and guidance is essential for our young people at key decision points in their education and beyond given the range of complex choices available to them. I am committed to the continuous improvement of the quality of careers education in schools and will be taking this forward through the full and continuing implementation of the joint DE/DEL Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Strategy that was published in 2009. Together with the Employment and Learning Minister, I recently reviewed progress in implementing this strategy and our report was shared with schools. I have arranged for a copy of that report to be placed in the Assembly Library.

As that strategy makes clear, the drive to provide good careers advice is the responsibility of a number of key stakeholders, including not just the Department of Education but also schools, the careers service and employers. Schools have a number of tools at their disposal to support them in the development of good careers education including quality standards indicators developed by ETI and the Department's own Guide to developing effective careers decision makers which aims to improve the quality of career learning opportunities and to encourage greater cohesion in the provision information advice and guidance within schools. Additionally, the professional advisors who work in the Department for Employment and Learning's Careers Service play an extremely important role including in providing young people with high quality information, advice and guidance.

I also want to develop closer working relationships with business and its representative bodies to ensure that employers too continue to play their full part in ensuring that our young people make the career decisions that are right for them and right for our economy.

CCEA Examination Papers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many pupils were affected by the errors in the CCEA examination papers.

(AQW 957/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Pupils here have been affected by errors in papers set by several Awarding Organisations. I have been advised that two of these errors occurred in papers set by CCEA.

In the first, a printing error was identified in CCEA's GCE Further Mathematics examination paper which was taken by 122 candidates, all from here.

The second error appeared in a numerical table contained within a CCEA GCSE Business Studies paper. 2,891 candidates from here and 549 candidates from England completed this examination. Because of the nature of this error, CCEA believes no student should have been disadvantaged. However, each paper will

be carefully scrutinised by its Senior Examining Team as a precaution.

In both cases, CCEA will work to ensure that no candidate has been disadvantaged as a result of these errors. Additionally the Qualifications Regulator, who briefed me last week on the errors and their impact, will be ensuring that the interests of pupils here who were affected by errors in papers set by other awarding bodies are safeguarded.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education for an update on the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 971/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The RPA is the key to achieving the objectives of raising standards and putting in place modern, fit-for-purpose administration arrangements. The case for reform is as strong as ever.

The RPA remains a priority for my department. I am meeting stakeholders across the education system. My aim is to secure consensus on the need for reform of education administration and to bring proposals to the Executive in the near future.

Staffing Needs of Schools

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education (i) whether he has made an assessment of the staffing needs of all types of schools over the next five years; (ii) if he is aware of the skills base of the current unemployed teacher workforce; and (iii) whether he has had any consultations with the Minister for Employment and Learning regarding the levels of recruitment to teacher training establishments.

(AQW 974/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) Schools have delegated authority under the Local Management of Schools arrangements to determine spending priorities. It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors of each school to determine the complement of staff required, both teaching and non-teaching, for the school to operate effectively.
- (ii) The Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register (NISTR) holds details of those teachers actively seeking work as a teacher here. The information held on NISTR includes details of the subjects, sector, and phase of education registered teachers are trained to teach. This information is shared with my Department on a quarterly basis. NISTR also provides information on previous

work experience and skills/expertise held by those seeking work, including whether or not individuals are trained to teach those with a particular special educational need or through the medium of Irish. This information assists schools in determining a best match for teacher vacancies and aids the Department in terms of forecasting the demand for teachers, including those in specific priority or shortage areas.

In addition, on an annual basis, the Department collects and analyses information from the local Higher Education Institutions on the teaching qualifications gained by new graduates. This information includes the subjects and phase of education that these newly qualified teachers are trained to teach.

- (iii) The 2011/12 intakes to initial teacher education have already been set by the previous Education Minister following consultation with the then Minister for Employment and Learning. I will however be liaising closely with Stephen Farry prior to establishing the 2012/13 intake levels in early 2012.

Capital Investment Projects

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Education what capital investment projects his Department has planned for the South Antrim constituency over the next four years.

(AQW 1027/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At this point in time I am not in a position to indicate which major capital investment projects will be taken forward in the next four years. My Department is faced with significant reductions in the capital budget available over the next four years and this will impact on the ability to deliver new school building projects, including those in the South Antrim constituency

Parkhall Integrated College is currently listed on the Department's Investment Delivery Plan. In addition, there are five Primary schools and three Post-primary schools in the South Antrim constituency which are part of a large number of projects at the early stages of planning but for which have not been announced for funding.

I will be considering how to make best use of the capital funds available to address the most pressing needs and to maximise educational benefits for children and young people. When I have considered the options it would be my intention to make a statement to the Assembly on the way forward for the school building programme.

Department for Employment and Learning

Neighbourhood Renewal in the North Antrim Area

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much funding his Department has allocated to Neighbourhood Renewal in the North Antrim area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 463/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The Department for Employment and Learning does not fund any services, either fully or partly, under Neighbourhood Renewal. It does, however, deliver a range of programmes related to employment and skills which aim to address disadvantage and are targeted at the needs of individuals, many of whom live in Neighbourhood Renewal areas.

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what legislation his Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) the following years of this mandate.

(AQW 489/11-15)

Dr Farry: The annex provided sets out the legislation that my Department proposes to introduce: during 2011/12; on an annual basis; and, insofar as longer-term developments are planned at this point, throughout the remainder of this mandate.

I would stress that the annex is indicative only. Policy work is ongoing in some areas in which important decisions remain to be taken. It is therefore possible that some legislation listed for 2011/12 will instead be introduced at a later date. Proposals are, of course, subject to consultation with the Committee for Employment and Learning and, where appropriate, Executive agreement.

Further legislative proposals may also be brought forward during 2011/12 and the following years of the mandate, as required, to give effect to new, or changes to existing, policies.

Annex A

2011/12

- Regulations to implement the Temporary Agency Workers Directive;
- A Statutory Rule to commence section 3 of the Employment Act 2010;
- Regulations to specify the arrangements in relation to the appointment of members of the Industrial Court and their terms of appointment;
- Regulations to prohibit the blacklisting of trade unionists in Northern Ireland;
- Possible Regulations to amend the Working Time Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 to implement judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union in respect of the interaction of annual leave with sick leave, maternity leave and parental leave;
- Regulations to correct a minor drafting error in the Additional Statutory Paternity Pay (General) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010;
- An Order extending the application of the grievance arrangements under the Labour Relations Agency Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance to regulation 51 of the Companies (Cross-Border Mergers) Regulations 2007 (detriment in relation to special negotiating body or employee participation);
- An Order appointing the day for the coming into effect of a revised Labour Relations Agency Code of Practice on Trade Union Duties and Activities;
- Statutory Rules revising the Regulations and Rules of Procedure governing industrial tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal;
- Statutory Rules revising the Labour Relations Agency's arbitration scheme and extending its application to a wider range of employment disputes;
- Order revising the amounts of certain employment rights-related payments in line with the annual change in the retail prices index;
- The Further Education (Student Support) (Eligibility) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011; and
- Amendments to The Further Education Teachers' (Eligibility) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.

Annual Legislation (recurring each year)

- Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland), to prescribe the basic and higher amounts which higher education institutions in Northern Ireland may charge by way of tuition fees in the following academic year;
- Education (Student Support) Regulations (Northern Ireland) to make provision for support (e.g. grants and loans) for eligible students taking designated higher education courses in the following academic year;
- Education (Student Loans) Repayment (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland), which provide the statutory framework for the collection and repayment system for income-contingent repayment (ICR) student loans; and
- Industrial Training (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland), which enables the Board to fulfil its role and raise funding through a levy on employers in the industry.

Remainder of the present Assembly mandate

- Amendments to the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order (Northern Ireland) 1999, to implement any findings of a review of the Order and to make provision for the Pensions Regulator to be added as a prescribed person;
- Further annual Orders revising the amounts of certain employment rights-related payments in line with the annual change in the retail prices index;
- Subject to the outcome of the public consultation and subsequent policy decisions, it is possible that there will be a need for amendments to the primary legislation and subordinate regulations related to higher education tuition fees and student finance arrangements in Northern Ireland; and
- Subject to the outcome of the public consultation and subsequent policy decisions related to the discontinuance of Stranmillis University College and its merger with Queen's University Belfast, it may be necessary to bring forward legislation to discontinue the College and effect the merger.

Northern Ireland: Students

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students have left Northern Ireland to attend universities in the rest of the UK in each of the last three years.

(AQW 531/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of first year Northern Ireland domiciled students enrolled at universities in the rest of the United Kingdom (excluding the Open University) in each of the last three years is detailed below:

Academic year	Enrolments
2007/08	6,310
2008/09	6,310
2009/10	6,370

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- (1) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2009/10.

University Students

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to provide a breakdown of the number of (i) Protestant; and (ii) Roman Catholic students enrolled in universities in each of the last three years.

(AQW 532/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of Northern Ireland domiciled (i) Protestant and (ii) Catholic students enrolled at Northern Ireland universities in each of the last three years is detailed in the table below:

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Protestant	14,200	13,570	14,415
Catholic	19,820	19,380	20,995

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- (1) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2009/10.

- (3) Information on religion is only collected for Northern Ireland domiciled students.
- (4) Religious affiliation is not a mandatory question and therefore can have a high non-response rate. In 2009/10, for example, 5,990 students (14%) did not provide a response to this question.
- (5) As well as Protestant and Catholic, the religion breakdown has an "Other" category. In 2009/10, this accounted for 5% of students (2,270).

Proposed Merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when he will be in a position to report on the results of the consultation into the proposed merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQW 561/11-15)

Dr Farry: The consultation on the proposed discontinuance of Stranmillis University College and its proposed merger with the Queen's University of Belfast closed on Friday 10 June 2011. A factual summary of the responses received has been prepared for discussion by the Committee for Employment and Learning at its meeting on 22 June. I will then take time to fully consider both the responses, and the Committee's views on them, before reporting on the consultation and taking a decision on whether or not to progress the proposal further.

Financial Assistance for Online Courses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what financial assistance is available for a person with a disability who wishes to enrol in a (i) Further Education course; and (ii) Higher Education course on-line, in their own homes.

(AQW 569/11-15)

Dr Farry:

(i) **Further Education**

There are currently no courses within the Further Education sector being delivered wholly on-line. However, my Department is currently supporting a pilot in Further Education colleges under which certain nominated courses are being delivered through blended learning, which is learning delivered through a combination of face-to-face and on-line contact. The Department is working closely with the FE sector to mainstream and encourage blended learning approaches, which it is anticipated will widen access and increase flexibility for all learners.

However, the Department provides Colleges with £1.5m annually through the Additional Support Fund to help meet the additional costs associated with Further Education provision for Students with a Learning Difficulty and/or a Disability. This funding can be used to assist with the cost of technical and/or personal support. In addition, Colleges receive a further £2m annually to assist with the additional costs of delivering discrete provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All students enrolling with a disability undergo a needs assessment to establish the most effective method of delivery. Assistance provided will depend on the nature of the course and the degree of impairment. Support available may include assistive technologies such as software and on-line assistance via college communication tools.

(ii) **Higher Education**

All eligible Northern Ireland domiciled students, including students with a disability, undertaking a designated full-time or part-time distance-learning higher education course may be eligible to receive a fee grant to assist with tuition fees, and a course grant to help with the cost of books and other expenditure.

In addition, students with a disability may also be entitled to receive Disabled Students' Allowances to help pay for any extra costs that they may incur when studying their course as a direct result of their disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty.

Also, students with a disability who are studying an undergraduate course at a university or university college, which is not a distance-learning course, and who are unable to attend full-time

due to their disability, will be eligible to apply for the standard student support package, which includes a tuition loan, a maintenance grant or special support grant, and a maintenance loan if living and studying in Northern Ireland.

Students with a disability may also be eligible to apply for support from the university's or university college's Support Funds if they are in financial hardship and need extra financial help to remain on their course.

First Year Law Students

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) how many first year law students will be admitted to (a) Queens University, Belfast; and (b) the University of Ulster in the 2011/12 academic year; and (ii) how this figure compares to the intake in the last five years and the reasons for any significant variation.

(AQW 588/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) The proposed intake for first year full-time undergraduate law students at Queen's University for the 2011/12 academic year is 240 students. At the University of Ulster the proposed intake for first year full-time undergraduate law students is 76 students.
- (ii) The intakes for each of the last five academic years are set out in the table below. This information has been provided by the respective institutions.

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Queen's University	245	253	253	243	232
University of Ulster	123	170	205	190	148

The number of full-time undergraduate places at Northern Ireland universities is regulated as a means of controlling the cost to government of student support. The University of Ulster has in the past exceeded its allocation and I am advised by the University that it is reducing intakes across a range of subject areas in order to address this.

Further and Higher Education

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much has been spent on further and higher education in each of the last three years.

(AQW 606/11-15)

Dr Farry: Spending on further and higher education consumes a significant proportion of my Department's budget. The spend covers funding for the institutions and for the students who attend the institutions. The total spent in each of the last three years is detailed in the table below.

	2008/09 £'000s	2009/10 £'000s	2010/11 £'000s
Further Education	217,589	241,278	228,888
Higher Education	349,289	378,076	407,805
Total	566,878	619,354	636,693

In addition, student loans to cover fees and living expenses amounting to £188m, £214m and £222m were issued in 08-09, 09-10 and 10-11 respectively

Financial Assistance for Students

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what financial assistance is available for students from Northern Ireland studying at third level colleges and universities in the Republic of Ireland. (AQW 617/11-15)

Dr Farry: EU undergraduate students, including those from Northern Ireland, attending a Higher Education Institution in the Republic of Ireland are charged an annual registration fee (€1,500 in the current academic year 2010/2011). However, Northern Ireland domiciled students benefit from special student support arrangements in that the cost of their registration fee is currently met in full by my Department.

In the current academic year 2010/11, Northern Ireland domiciled undergraduate students studying in the Republic of Ireland are also eligible to apply for a maintenance loan of up to £4,840 and a means-tested higher education bursary of up to £2,000.

Apprentices

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he is considering how the public sector can further assist the retention of apprentices during the economic downturn. (AQW 619/11-15)

Dr Farry: Public Sector employees, including those employed by local Councils, are not eligible for ApprenticeshipsNI funding. The Public Sector can benefit from the ApprenticeshipsNI training model but the funding of this for employees is a matter for their Department or Public Sector organisation.

However, social clause provisions within Public Sector contracts are designed to encourage successful tenderers to employ apprentices in accordance with the level of public contract awarded. This will have particular significance during the economic downturn. My Departmental officials are engaged proactively with Central Procurement Directorate and other Departments to ensure contractors are fulfilling their social-clause requirements of employing apprentices in accordance with the level of contract spend.

Women in Apprenticeships

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to promote women in apprenticeships. (AQW 620/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department continues to give priority to promoting equality of opportunity for all section 75 categories and ensuring fair and inclusive delivery of its programmes and services. The ApprenticeshipsNI programme offers and promotes a range of apprenticeship opportunities in over 100 occupational areas for both existing and newly recruited employees.

There are currently 11,381 participants on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. 5,375 are female, representing 47% of the overall occupancy figure.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much his Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years. (AQW 645/11-15)

Dr Farry: The following table details the amount spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

Year *	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Spend	£4966	Nil	Nil

* Information provided in financial years.

Full-Time Senior Lecturers

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the number of full-time senior lecturers employed by (a) Queen's University, Belfast; and (b) the University of Ulster; and (ii) how many earn an additional income through other employment.

(AQW 656/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) Queen's University currently employs 145 senior lecturers on a full-time basis. The University of Ulster currently employs 150 full-time senior lecturers.
- (ii) Queen's University does not hold such information. The University of Ulster advises that, in the 2009/10 academic year (the most recent year for which complete data is available), 26 full-time senior lecturers carried out consultancy work. The University advises that its staff are permitted to undertake such work with the net income being shared with the University.

Queen's University Belfast

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what discussions or contact he has had with Queen's University Belfast in relation to the proposed cost-cutting measures which could result in redundancies.

(AQW 663/11-15)

Dr Farry: Budgetary decisions made by the Executive resulted in my Department having to request efficiencies of all the Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions. I discussed the situation with the Vice Chancellors of both Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster when I meet with them on 25 and 31 May respectively.

Public funding accounts for a significant proportion of each institution's income and the potential consequences of the efficiencies were also discussed with the Vice Chancellors. However, as autonomous institutions, it is for each university to make its own decisions on managing resources, including staff, in the light of the funding available to it.

Adult Apprenticeships

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what are his plans for a new funding policy for adult apprenticeships.

(AQW 668/11-15)

Dr Farry: The removal of funding for adult apprenticeships (those aged 25 and over) was put forward as a proposal to reduce expenditure for the Department over the period 2011-2015.

Following the final budget decisions, my Department is reviewing the funding position for adult Apprentices. My officials are currently working through the detail of a revised funding proposition and I hope to be in a position to communicate the future policy arrangements for adult apprenticeships very soon.

North West Regional College's Derry Campus

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for a breakdown of the religious background of students currently enrolled at the North West Regional College's Derry campus.

(AQW 750/11-15)

Dr Farry: The breakdown of the religious background of student professional and technical enrolments at the North West Regional College's Derry campus for 2009/10 is detailed in the table below:

Religious Background	Number	% of Total Known
Catholic	9,708	81.1

Religious Background	Number	% of Total Known
Protestant	1,994	16.7
Other Christian	60	0.5
Other	212	1.8
Total known	11,974	100.0
Unknown religious background	2,607	-
Total enrolments	14,581	-

Source: Further Education Statistical Record (FESR)

Notes:

- (1) Religious affiliation is not a mandatory question and therefore can have a high non-response rate.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2009/10.

Tuition Fees

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline his Department's revenue-generating proposals to off-set any shortfall in the budget as a result of tuition fees not being increased.

(AQW 819/11-15)

Dr Farry: If fees are not increased the Department will face a recurring shortfall of some £40m in its budget by 2014-15. Given the nature of the work of the Departments and our client base, the options to generate revenue are extremely limited other than through an increase in fees. The direct consequence of no increase in fees, or an Executive strategy to address the resultant gap, would be a cut in the range of services provided by my Department, which may include areas such as ApprenticeshipsNI, Essential Skills, the Employment Service and Training for Success. All of which would reduce services and training opportunities for our young people and the unemployed.

Newly Qualified Teachers

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many newly qualified teachers graduated in each of the last five years, broken down by the institution from which they graduated.

(AQW 833/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of newly qualified teachers graduating in each of the last five years from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions is detailed in the table below:

Academic year	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Stranmillis University College	St Mary's University College	Total
2005/06	200	175	225	210	810
2006/07	195	175	225	215	810
2007/08	175	150	205	185	715
2008/09	155	135	195	180	660
2009/10	160	130	170	165	625

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- (6) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and therefore may not sum to totals.
- (7) The latest available data are for 2009/10.

Driving Lessons for People in Receipt of Benefits

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what assistance is available for people over 25 years of age and in receipt of benefits, who wish to take driving lessons to make them more independent and increase their chances of gaining employment.

(AQW 845/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not provide assistance with the cost of driving lessons. The ability to drive, while making people more independent, is not regarded as necessarily contributing to improved employability.

Proposed Merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the expected breakdown of the religious background of students if the proposed merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast proceeds.

(AQW 851/11-15)

Dr Farry: Stranmillis University College's Equality Impact Assessment of the proposed merger shows the potential number of students who would be attending the Stranmillis School of Education by religion, based upon information from the 2008/09 academic year. These are detailed in the following table:

	Stranmillis University College	Queen's School of Education	Stranmillis School of Education (Merged)
Protestant	654	354	1,008
Catholic	195	445	640
Other	27	58	85
Missing data	448	529	977
Total	1,324	1,386	2,710

Notes:

- (8) Data on religious belief is collected as part of the Stranmillis and Queen's enrolment processes in accordance with the internal equality monitoring return. This question is not compulsory and therefore there are some missing data as set out in the table.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Social Networking

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department has taken to encourage businesses to avail of the benefits of social networking to aid growth.

(AQW 574/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): In June 2009 my Department launched the Logon-NI broadband advice programme specifically for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The programme offers free of charge, impartial guidance on the benefits that broadband can bring to businesses in terms of productivity, efficiency and increased sales through increased take-up and higher value business use of broadband. Within the many ICT solutions offered, Logon-NI encourages companies to consider social media sites within their marketing campaigns. Some 3200 SMEs have benefitted from the programme to date.

Invest Northern Ireland also has a network of ICT advisors based across Northern Ireland helping businesses make best use of ICT to be more productive or access new online markets. This includes

help for businesses wishing to make use of appropriate online marketing channels such as social networking sites to grow their businesses.

These advisors can offer one to one advice to businesses and regularly organise seminars on a range of ICT topics. 165 businesses received specific training on the use of social networking last year. There is also online guidance available on the nibusinessinfo.co.uk website which uses a range of social media to interact with businesses.

Gas Exploration Licence

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions her Department has had with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in Dublin in relation to (i) the awarding of a gas exploration licence for parts of Counties Leitrim, Cavan and Sligo; (ii) the potential impact this exploration may have on nearby border counties that lie on the same carboniferous basin; and (iii) the potential for operators to use a technique known as 'fracking'.

(AQW 577/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) Officials in my Department have been kept informed about the recent invitation for applications and subsequent awards of Onshore Petroleum Licensing Options over the Northwest Carboniferous Basin by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
- (ii) The exploration, if successful, may help to enhance Northern Ireland's security of energy supply. Production of indigenous natural gas would strengthen the economic case for extending Northern Ireland's gas network into County Fermanagh.
- (iii) If the companies proceed to the drilling phase of exploration they would wish to 'fracture' (or 'frac') the reservoir interval in order to improve the flow rate of gas from the well. This technique was successfully used in the basin when, in 1981, the Dowra No. 1 well in County Cavan was re-entered and the reservoir interval 'fracced'. This resulted in a tenfold increase in the gas flow rates from the well.

Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact the removal of the Northern Ireland Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme has had on the retention of jobs within the quarry industry in border constituencies, including Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 578/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The UK Treasury announced the suspension of the 80% Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme with effect 1 December 2010. The suspension was as a result of the EU General Court decision September 2010, following an EU legal action against the scheme taken by The British Aggregates Association and two quarry companies from the Republic of Ireland.

Following an EU Court Hearing 16 May 2011, The European Commission is carrying out a review of the decision September 2010 regarding the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme.

An outcome from the review is anticipated September 2011.

The negative impact of the removal of the Northern Ireland Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme is only beginning to be realised. A combination of bad weather at the start of 2011 and contracts secured pre the suspension of the levy credit scheme, which largely continued up until April 2011, masked the true impact.

The application of this levy in tandem with low demand is likely to lead to some job losses close to the border including Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

I understand that approximately 20 jobs have already been lost in Fermanagh with an additional 21 at risk.

I understand the importance of a swift and positive outcome to the review and will continue to make representations to DOE and HMRC to ensure the matter is dealt with promptly by the Commission.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how the Northern Ireland Tourist Board intends to promote this year's (i) 12th July celebrations; and (ii) 13th July Sham Fight in Scarva. **(AQW 584/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) remit is to promote Northern Ireland to the domestic and Republic of Ireland markets.

For the last five years NITB has been working closely with the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland to develop the Tourism Flagship concept which focuses on those parades that want to broaden their appeal to attract a tourism audience. This involved training stewards to be welcome hosts and ensuring that all information produced takes into account the needs of the tourist and not just those familiar with the Orange tradition. This year Randalstown and Comber parades have been awarded flagship status and will feature on www.discovernorthernireland.com as will, the Sham Fight at Scarva. All campaigns direct visitors to this website which gets over 2.5 million hits a year.

Tourism Ireland who have responsibility for promoting the island of Ireland in Great Britain and overseas continues to be engaged in discussions with the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Orange Fest and other interests in Northern Ireland, with regard to the 12th July celebrations and the portrayal of other aspects of Northern Ireland culture and heritage.

I have been invited by the Royal Black Preceptory to attend the celebrations on 13th July in Scarva and I intend to be present.

Additionally I will launch Orangefest early in July 2011.

Indigenous and Foreign Direct Investors

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number and types of jobs created by (i) indigenous investors; and (ii) foreign direct investors from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011, broken down by District Council area.

(AQW 607/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The tables below show the number and types (sector based) of jobs expected to be created, which are described as 'Jobs Promoted', by (i) indigenous investors; and (ii) foreign direct investors that had an offer of assistance approved by Invest NI between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011, broken down by District Council area.

However, it should be noted that Invest NI does not allocate budgets by geographic areas such as District Councils. Assistance patterns are demand-led by those businesses which have come forward with projects suitable for Invest NI assistance.

TABLE 1: JOBS PROMOTED IN ANTRIM DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Inward Investor Jobs	Indigenous Investor Jobs	Total
Business Services		6	6
Construction Products		236	236
Creative		5	5
Electrical & Electronics		3	3
Food		12	12

Sector	Inward Investor Jobs	Indigenous Investor Jobs	Total
General Manufacturing		8	8
Life Sciences		254	254
Transport	130	2	132
Total	130	526	656

TABLE 2: JOBS PROMOTED IN ARDS DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		4	4
Clothing	4	1	5
Construction Products		2	2
Electrical & Electronics		1	1
Engineering		6	6
Food		4	4
Total	4	18	22

TABLE 3: JOBS PROMOTED IN ARMAGH DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		6	6
Computer Software & Services		2	2
Electrical & Electronics		6	6
Food		14	14
General Manufacturing		8	8
Life Sciences		2	2
Transport		2	2
Total		40	40

TABLE 4: JOBS PROMOTED IN BALLYMENA DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		6	6
Construction Products		12	12
Electrical & Electronics			
Engineering			
Food			
General Manufacturing		3	3

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Life Sciences		5	5
Printing		4	4
Tourism		20	20
Total		50	50

Table 5: Jobs Promoted in Ballymoney DCA 2010-11 by Ownership

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Construction Products		28	28
Electrical & Electronics		7	7
Engineering		5	5
General Manufacturing		3	3
Total		43	43

TABLE 6: JOBS PROMOTED IN BANBRIDGE DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		2	2
Drink		6	6
General Manufacturing		4	4
Total		12	12

TABLE 7: JOBS PROMOTED IN BELFAST DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services	532	73	605
Clothing		2	2
Computer Software & Services	323	48	371
Construction Products		23	23
Creative		20	20
Drink		8	8
Electrical & Electronics		10	10
Engineering	30	3	33
Financial Services	545		545
General Manufacturing		1	1
Life Sciences		1	1
Primary Textiles		2	2
Printing		1	1

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Renewable Energy Products		2	2
Total	1,430	194	1,624

TABLE 8: JOBS PROMOTED IN CARRICKFERGUS DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Construction Products		1	1
Creative		3	3
General Manufacturing		3	3
Transport	196		196
Total	196	7	203

TABLE 9: JOBS PROMOTED IN CASTLEREAGH DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		3	3
Clothing		1	1
Computer Software & Services		5	5
Construction Products		2	2
Creative	1	5	6
Electrical & Electronics		3	3
Engineering		54	54
Printing		4	4
Total	1	77	78

TABLE 10: JOBS PROMOTED IN COLERAINE DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services	1	4	5
Clothing		1	1
Construction Products		7	7
Engineering		1	1
General Manufacturing	1	3	4
Materials Handling/ Quarry Plant		2	2
Telecoms		4	4
Transport		7	7

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Total	2	29	31

TABLE 11: JOBS PROMOTED IN COOKSTOWN DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Computer Software & Services		6	6
Construction Products		4	4
Creative		1	1
Engineering		29	29
Food		11	11
Furniture		6	6
General Manufacturing		7	7
Materials Handling/ Quarry Plant		1	1
Total		65	65

TABLE 12: JOBS PROMOTED IN CRAIGAVON DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services	37	1	38
Computer Software & Services		11	11
Engineering		6	6
Furniture		1	1
General Manufacturing		2	2
Life Sciences		46	46
Packaging		8	8
Printing		3	3
Renewable Energy Products			
Transport		1	1
Total	37	79	116

TABLE 13: JOBS PROMOTED IN DERRY DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services	297	14	311
Computer Software & Services		12	12

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Construction Products		2	2
Creative		4	4
Engineering		27	27
Food		2	2
Furniture		5	5
General Manufacturing		5	5
Giftware		2	2
Total	297	73	370

TABLE 14: JOBS PROMOTED IN DOWN DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		3	3
Computer Software & Services		6	6
Construction Products		2	2
Electrical & Electronics		10	10
Engineering		6	6
Food		28	28
Renewable Energy Products		1	1
Tourism		3	3
Total		59	59

TABLE 15: JOBS PROMOTED IN DUNGANNON DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		8	8
Construction Products		11	11
Engineering		1	1
Food	1	102	103
Furniture		1	1
General Manufacturing		4	4
Horticulture		28	28
Materials Handling/ Quarry Plant		3	3
Primary Textiles		4	4
Transport		1	1

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Total	1	163	164

TABLE 16: JOBS PROMOTED IN FERMANAGH DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		2	2
Clothing		5	5
Computer Software & Services		6	6
Construction Products		1	1
Electrical & Electronics		4	4
Engineering		1	1
Food		16	16
Furniture		14	14
Primary Textiles		2	2
Tourism	1	4	5
Transport		8	8
Total	1	63	64

TABLE 17: JOBS PROMOTED IN LARNE DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		3	3
Construction Products		3	3
Food		8	8
Furniture		4	4
Life Sciences	1		1
Total	1	18	19

TABLE 18: JOBS PROMOTED IN LIMAVADY DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		11	11
Construction Products		6	6
Creative		3	3
Engineering		4	4
General Manufacturing		3	3
Total		27	27

TABLE 19: JOBS PROMOTED IN LISBURN DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services	3	23	26
Computer Software & Services		25	25
Construction Products		28	28
Creative		31	31
Engineering		2	2
Furniture		2	2
General Manufacturing		3	3
Life Sciences		1	1
Materials Handling/ Quarry Plant		6	6
Printing		8	8
Renewable Energy Products		7	7
Transport	128		128
Total	131	136	267

TABLE 20: JOBS PROMOTED IN MAGHERAFELT DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Building Materials		6	6
Business Services		3	3
Computer Software & Services		1	1
Construction Products		57	57
Creative		4	4
Electrical & Electronics		1	1
Engineering		6	6
Furniture		1	1
General Manufacturing	1	2	3
Total	1	81	82

TABLE 21: JOBS PROMOTED IN MOYLE DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		4	4
General Manufacturing		4	4

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Tourism		6	6
Total		14	14

TABLE 22: JOBS PROMOTED IN NEWRY & MOURNE DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		135	135
Computer Software & Services		362	362
Construction Products	1	31	32
Creative		22	22
Drink		1	1
Electrical & Electronics	3	3	6
Engineering		1	1
Food		72	72
General Manufacturing		3	3
Transport		3	3
Total	4	633	637

TABLE 23: JOBS PROMOTED IN NEWTOWNABBEY DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		10	10
Construction Products		8	8
Drink		5	5
Engineering		9	9
Food		2	2
General Manufacturing		1	1
Printing		1	1
Total		36	36

TABLE 24: JOBS PROMOTED IN NORTH DOWN DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services		11	11
Computer Software & Services		2	2
Creative		2	2
General Manufacturing		2	2

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Printing		3	3
Tourism		2	2
Total		22	22

TABLE 25: JOBS PROMOTED IN OMAGH DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Business Services	33	4	37
Computer Software & Services		2	2
Construction Products		5	5
Electrical & Electronics		10	10
Engineering		1	1
Materials Handling/ Quarry Plant	2	1	3
Other Energy Products		1	1
Printing		1	1
Transport		1	1
Total	35	26	61

TABLE 26: JOBS PROMOTED IN STRABANE DCA 2010-11 BY OWNERSHIP

Sector	Externally-Owned	Locally-Owned	Total
Computer Software & Services		1	1
Engineering		2	2
Food		4	4
Printing		1	1
Renewable Energy Products		1	1
Total		9	9

Notes to Tables:

- 1 Jobs Promoted represents the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
- 2 Sectors are based on Invest NI's internal reporting structure.
- 3 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.

In addition, Invest NI supported over 1,800 new jobs indirectly through the Enterprise Development Programme (formerly the Start a Business programme), delivered in conjunction with Enterprise Northern Ireland. Table 27 below shows the associated breakdown by District Council Area.

TABLE 27: JOBS PROMOTED THROUGH THE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME BY DCA (2010-11)

DCA	Jobs Promoted
Antrim	42
Ards	56
Armagh	60
Ballymena	35
Ballymoney	25
Banbridge	48
Belfast	281
Carrickfergus	18
Castlereagh	59
Coleraine	72
Cookstown	69
Craigavon	72
Derry	86
Down	64
Dungannon	102
Fermanagh	77
Larne	35
Limavady	57
Lisburn	98
Magherafelt	69
Moyle	18
Newry & Mourne	96
Newtownabbey	79
North Down	64
Omagh	85
Strabane	44
Not Yet Located	7
Total	1,815

Note: At the time of writing 7 jobs supported by the project were still to be located.

Foreign Direct Investors

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many visits foreign direct investors made to each District Council area from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

(AQW 608/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 Invest NI hosted a total of 124 foreign direct investment (FDI) inward visits to District Council Areas. This is an increase from the total of 105 FDI inward visits across the DCAs in the previous financial year 2009/ 2010

The breakdown of credible¹ visits by District Council Area (DCA) is as follows:

DISTRICT COUNCIL VISITS

	Financial Year 09/10	Financial Year 10/11
Antrim	0	2
Ards	1	0
Armagh	0	0
Ballymena	0	1
Ballymoney	0	0
Banbridge	1	0
Belfast	60	71
Carrickfergus	0	0
Castlereagh	4	1
Coleraine	4	2
Cookstown	0	0
Craigavon	0	0
Londonderry	13	10
Down	0	0
Dungannon	0	0
Fermanagh	0	0
Larne	2	3
Limavady	1	0
Lisburn	3	7
Magherafelt	0	0
Moyle	0	1
Newry & Mourne	1	6
Newtownabbey	11	18
North Down	4	2
Omagh	0	0
Strabane	0	0
Total	105	124

Notes:

- 1) A credible visit is one where Invest NI can claim to have promoted a district council or parliamentary constituency area by bringing a potential investor into that area.

- 2) In addition to the above listed visits, Invest NI has also facilitated a number of visits by other organisations e.g. influencers, overseas governments and trade bodies, which serve to strengthen FDI & Trade links in overseas markets.

Invest NI works closely with potential investors when preparing a draft visit programme to ensure that the locations to be visited meet their requirements and also provide the best opportunity for Invest NI to sell the Northern Ireland proposition.

However, it is important to emphasise that it is the investor's decision to select a business location. This is based on a number of factors, including availability of skills and workforce, transport links, availability of suitable property and the presence of existing sectoral clusters within Northern Ireland. And, in the case of existing investors, most will choose to expand in their current location.

Household Electricity Bill

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given that the average household electricity bill in Northern Ireland is higher than the rest of the UK, (i) what plans she has to oversee a reduction in the cost of electricity; and (ii) can she give an assurance that she will prevent further increases.

(AQW 659/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Household electricity bills in Northern Ireland have tended to be higher than the rest of the United Kingdom due to a number of factors, including the fact that the Northern Ireland electricity market is much smaller than the GB market, and that there are fewer electricity supply companies operating in the market. Having said that, in June 2010 Airtricity entered the domestic electricity market in Northern Ireland and has been offering discounts of up to 14% against certain NIE Energy tariffs. The Department and the Utility Regulator will continue to encourage other electricity suppliers to enter the domestic electricity market.

In addition, the ending of a legacy generation contract, and completion of payment for Flue Gas Desulphurisation equipment at the AES Kilroot power plant has assisted in lowering Public Service Obligation charges within overall electricity tariffs, therefore benefitting all electricity consumers.

The Member should be well aware that I cannot give assurances that further price increases will be prevented. Retail electricity tariffs are highly dependent on wholesale energy costs, and there have been increases in natural gas costs in world markets. Such increases will impact on retail electricity prices, given that most of our electricity is generated by gas fired power stations. The Single Electricity Market will continue to put downward pressure on electricity prices, however higher wholesale energy prices will ultimately result in higher retail electricity tariffs.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for a breakdown of the marketing budget of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board for each of the last three financial years, including details of the places/events being promoted.

(AQW 674/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) expenditure on Marketing in each of the last three years is as follows (please note this includes 50% EU match funding i.e. £2million each year is from core NITB budget):

2008/09	£4,187,000
2009/10	£3,829,000
2010/11	£3,954,000
Total	£11,970,000

NITB's remit is to promote the whole of Northern Ireland to both the domestic and Republic of Ireland markets with a view to increasing visitor numbers and spend. Each year, NITB undertakes a series of seasonal marketing campaigns in both markets. The huge variety of products, regions and events featured from throughout Northern Ireland are based on what motivates our key customer segments which have been identified through substantial research.

These award winning campaigns have successfully driven both domestic and Republic of Ireland visitor numbers and spend over recent years with both markets performing extremely well. Last year's campaigns cumulatively delivered a return on investment of £8 for every £1 invested.

Milk Cup Funding

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the reasons why the funding application for this year's Milk Cup was rejected by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board; and for her assessment of the application process.

(AQW 711/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) introduced a new tourism events scheme this year to support events in 2011 -12. The main aim of the tourism event fund scheme is to develop existing and new events which demonstrate how they support the draft Tourism Strategy 2020. After a thorough assessment process, NITB funded 59% of all eligible events that were seeking funding.

The Milk Cup passed stage 1 of the application process but unfortunately failed to score highly enough across all of the criteria in stage 2 and therefore did not achieve a score which would warrant funding this year. On 19th May NITB met with representatives from the Milk Cup to explain why their application for funding had not been successful and to provide advice on how future applications for funding support could be developed.

The new events scheme was developed following considerable industry consultation and benchmarking against similar event schemes. All applications were assessed against the same 10 key criteria by two separate assessors using an agreed scoring matrix. All unsuccessful applications were subject to an appeals process. To ensure fairness and objectivity only the information provided with the application form was scored. I am content that the application process was transparent and applied consistently.

In light of the regard in which this youth sports event is held, I have asked my officials to discuss alternative funding arrangements with relevant organisations.

Broadband for Rural Areas

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline her Department's strategy in addressing the lack of high speed broadband available for businesses in rural areas, particularly in the Ahoghill area.

(AQW 741/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Under Programme for Government 2008-2011 my Department, with support under the EU Sustainable Competitiveness Programme, has invested £17.3million in fibre-to-the-cabinet technology to deliver access to next generation broadband services to at least 85% of businesses across all of Northern Ireland. This includes Ahoghill, where five cabinets have been upgraded to deliver services of up to 40Mbps for business users. A further £2.5million has been contributed by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in support of this commitment through a mixture of funding from the EU Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and its core budgets. £13million of the overall Government investment in this project was specifically earmarked for rural areas. My Department has also supported seven projects under the Northern Ireland Broadband Fund, which was launched in August 2008 and, with support from the European Regional development Fund, has made available a range of business broadband services across Northern Ireland using fibre and wireless technologies.

Looking forward, my Department recently completed a public consultation exercise seeking stakeholder feedback on telecoms investment priorities for the period 2011-2015. Alongside this work my Department has also engaged with the Department for Culture, Media and Sports and Broadband

Delivery UK to access funding from the £530million made available for investment in next generation networks across the UK. Funds sourced through this initiative and through Budget 2010 will be used to further improve broadband services in rural areas.

Credit Unions

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has to meet with the Department for Work and Pensions in relation to Credit Unions accessing the Modernisation Fund.

(AQW 829/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have no current plans to meet the Department of Work and Pensions about the Modernisation Fund, the scope of which does not extend to Northern Ireland.

My prime focus is on working with the Financial Services Authority (FSA) and Her Majesty's Treasury on making the legislation needed to bring about the transfer of regulatory responsibility from DETI to the FSA. When in place this will allow Northern Ireland credit unions to seek to offer members the same range of services as their counterparts in Great Britain, members' savings will be covered under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, and members will have access to the Financial Ombudsman Scheme. This is expected to be completed in March 2012.

Renewable Heating Incentive

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she has any plans to introduce a renewable heating incentive.

(AQW 879/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In September 2010, I announced that DETI would seek to introduce a Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) in Northern Ireland, providing it was economically viable to so.

DETI has recently concluded an economic appraisal of a RHI for Northern Ireland. I plan to shortly launch a public consultation on the preferred method of incentivisation for the Northern Ireland renewable heat market.

Funding of £25million, over the next four years, has been made available by Her Majesty's Treasury for the introduction of a RHI in Northern Ireland.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what actions have been taken, or are planned, to address the imbalance in Air Passenger Duty which gives the Republic of Ireland an economic advantage over Northern Ireland.

(AQW 908/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am very aware of the negative impact of Air Passenger Duty (APD) on Northern Ireland and I and Executive colleagues have raised this issue with HM Treasury Ministers. The impact of APD on Northern Ireland is exacerbated because of competitive pressure from the Republic of Ireland, which has become even more acute following the Irish Government's decision to reduce, and possibly remove altogether, their equivalent tax.

HM Treasury has been consulting on the structure of APD. The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) has been leading on the Northern Ireland response to the consultation. My officials have worked closely with counterparts in DFP to ensure that a strong case has been put to HM Treasury in respect of the impact of APD on Northern Ireland.

Crescent Capital I Fund

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 352/11-15, (i) how much her Department invested in the Crescent Capital I fund as venture capital; (ii) how much on

the fund's closure was (a) distributed to private investors; and (b) returned her Department; and (iii) how much Crescent Capital received in management fees.

(AQW 1001/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) Crescent Capital 1 was established in 1995 with £7m provided in the form of a loan, subordinated to private investors.
- (ii) (a) On the closure of the Fund, the limited partners received £13.27m. The private investors received a return of 7.8% pa over the life of the Fund.
(b) The DETI investment was written off. Nothing was returned to DETI.
- (iii) Crescent Capital received fees of £3.6m over the twelve year life of the Fund. This was paid out of the £14m fund.

Broadband and WIFI Access in the North Down Area

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what action has been taken to improve broadband and WIFI access in the North Down area; and (ii) what grants are available to increase such access.

(AQW 1006/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI currently does not offer grants to individuals to access broadband services, rather, it delivers interventions which are aimed at increasing competition in what is a fully privatised marketplace with a view to driving down prices and offering additional availability.

Significant action has been taken to improve broadband not just across North Down but across all of Northern Ireland. In December 2009, building on the successful implementation of the Local Broadband Access Contract which ensured that a first generation broadband service of at least 512 kilobits per second (Kbps) was available to every premise, DETI embarked on the Next Generation Broadband Project. The aim of this project, which is being delivered by BT, is to bring higher speed broadband services to 85% of businesses by 2011. However through the wholesale arrangements set down by the contract, residential consumers can also have access to these higher speed services through the new fibred access points. Pursuant to my response to Assembly Question AQW 704/11, cabinet upgrades have been completed across some 32 areas in the North Down constituency making available broadband services with potential download speeds of up to 40mbps. Details of where these upgrades are located can be found at www.fasterbroadbandni.com or www.nibroadband.com.

It is recognised that, due to distance from a cabinet or an exchange, not all premises will benefit from the technology deployed under the Next Generation Broadband Project. For that reason, DETI also has a contract in place with Avanti Communications to ensure broadband services of between 512kbps and 3mbps are available to all premises in Northern Ireland.

In addition, the NI Broadband Fund, launched in August 2008, has provided support for businesses and organisations wishing to promote solutions for delivery of commercial, high speed broadband services in rural locations. Five calls for projects have been completed under this competitive fund to date with a sixth call anticipated in the summer of this year. In each instance when calls are launched, as well as advertising in the press, Departmental officials alert the Chief Executives and Economic Development Officers in all District Councils providing them with an opportunity to work with local service providers to develop applications seeking support for localised broadband solutions. However to date there have been no applications for funding to improve services in the North Down area.

Credit Unions

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she intends to contact the Department for Work and Pensions in relation to equality funding for Credit Unions.

(AQW 1022/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have no plans to contact the Department of Work and Pensions about equality funding for Credit Unions in Northern Ireland.

The scope of the Modernisation Fund, which is administered by the Department of Work and Pensions, does not extend to Northern Ireland.

Department of the Environment

Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Programme for Local Government

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the implementation of the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Programme for Local Government.

(AQW 328/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The Department has been advised by NILGA that the sector's consultation on its Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) Programme has been completed. I am currently awaiting a copy of the final ICE outturn report which, I hope, will be made available in the coming weeks.

I can also confirm that on receipt and consideration of the report I have agreed to meet with the NILGA President and Chief Executive, as well as SOLACE representatives so they can brief me on developments and discuss the key issues regarding local government reform and the next steps in the ICE process.

I believe that early opportunity for savings and efficiency exist that should be exploited. I will be adopting this approach going forward.

Staff Sick Leave

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of the Environment what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of staff taking two or more periods of sick leave in a year.

(AQW 336/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department must apply the terms set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Inefficiency and Sickness Absence policy. This policy includes Review points i.e. points at which a sickness absence record must be reviewed. The NICS Review points are 4 occasions or 10 working days within a rolling 12 month period.

In the case of probationers or those appointed on a fixed term or temporary basis, each absence will prompt a review.

When a member of staff reaches a Review point an electronic alert is issued to the line manager and to Departmental HR. Inefficiency action, including Written Warnings and ultimately dismissal, may be initiated at that stage. However, this is a matter that I will interrogate further in order to contribute to a further reduction in sickness absence.

Turf at Ballykenver, Armoy

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment what action he intends to take to ensure that local people can continue to cut turf at Ballykenver, Armoy, to retain a local source of fuel in the area.

(AQW 343/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The cutting of turf for purposes other than for sale does not constitute development and as such does not require planning approval. Thus a person may cut turf for domestic purposes without the need to obtain planning approval.

You may wish to note that Turf cut for sale is defined as development under the Planning legislation and as such requires planning approval.

Anyone wishing to extract turf on a commercial basis from the Ballykenver Wood area or indeed any other area would therefore be required to submit a planning application for the development.

Ballykenver Wood is partly affected by the Moyarget Lower Site of Local Nature Conservation Interest in the draft Northern Area Plan 2016. As such this and any other relevant designations, policies or material considerations and the weight to be attached to them will be considered as part of the determination of any planning application submitted to the Department.

I have met with officials to make assessments about turf cutting policy and opportunities, including particularly in relation to fuel poverty.

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department has spent on external consultants in each financial year since May 2007.

(AQW 409/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides details of my Department's expenditure on external consultancy for the financial years 2007-08 to 2010-11.

	2007-08 £	2008-09 £	2009-10 £	2010-11 £
External Consultancy Costs	1,993,716	1,821,675	1,460,069	901,601

I can confirm that, I instructed on becoming Minister, that all consultancy requirements of all values are to be approved by me

Local Council Staff

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 136/11-15, whether he will consider collating data in relation to the number of staff employed by local councils who have a disability, given that an employee with a disability must advise Human Resources of their disability; and can he ensure that the criteria for the appropriate inclusion of people with a disability in the work place are being met.

(AQW 545/11-15)

Mr Attwood: District councils are bodies corporate in their own right and as such, are directly responsible for compliance with their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The legislation places a duty on each council to submit a Disability Action Plan (DAP) to the Equality Commission showing how it proposes to fulfil the two statutory duties in relation to its functions.

All of the 26 district councils published their Disability Action Plans in 2007 and submitted them to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland. These DAPs have been updated regularly.

I will write to councils to remind them of the Equality Commission's requirements and urge them to review and upgrade their Action Plans now that the new councils are in place. I will also consider the issue further.

Reform of Public Administration

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the reform of public administration within his Department.

(AQW 630/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The reform of Local Government is a priority. I am actively considering all issues and hope to conclude my consideration quickly and move forward positively.

However it is essential that there is not a replay of summer 2010 when there was a political stand off around the Executive table. A re-run of this would serve to damage public confidence.

Local Government Boundaries

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment whether he intends to proceed with the final recommendations contained within the June 2009 report on 'Local Government Boundaries'.

(AQW 631/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am considering the recommendations made by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner in his report of June 2009. I hope to present a paper on the reduction of council numbers and the boundaries of the new local government districts for the Executive's consideration sooner rather than later.

Reform of Local Government

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail any outstanding issues his Department has in relation to the reform of local government.

(AQW 632/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A number of issues are not concluded including council boundaries, timetable, certainty on functions to transfer, councillor conduct, the powers of the Local Government Audit or and a number of other matters. All of these are under active consideration.

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what legislation his Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) the following years of this mandate.

(AQW 642/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department continues to consider and develop policy with the ultimate aim of promoting a sustainable economy, a healthy society and making the best possible use of our natural resources.

I look forward to working in partnership with colleagues in the Environment Committee and in this Assembly to bring forward a comprehensive range of primary legislation, within the lifetime of this mandate. At this time I can confirm that I will bring forward legislation focused on Local Government Reorganisation and a Marine Bill. I will return to this House with an update on my intentions in due course.

An extensive range of subordinate legislation will also be brought forward within this Mandate, a timetable for which will be supplied to Environment Committee members through the Programme of Work.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 647/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides details of my Department's expenditure on renting storage space for financial years 2008-09 to 2010-11.

	2008-09 £	2009-10 £	2010-11 £
Storage Space Costs	83,483	121,107	94,677

Rose Energy's Proposal for an Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment whether a full economic appraisal has been carried out on Rose Energy's proposal for an incinerator at Glenavy.

(AQW 720/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A full economic appraisal does not form part of the supporting information submitted to the Department by Rose Energy in respect of their planning application for a Biomass Fuelled Power Plant at Glenavy.

During the processing of the planning application the Departments' Economic Branch clarified that they did not require a full economic appraisal at the planning stage but required an Options Appraisal.

Economic Branch were re-consulted with the Options Appraisal on 18 June 2009. They concluded that, having examined the information, they were content that all potential options had been fully investigated and that a reasonable case had been provided to support the decision to progress with the development of a biomass fuelled power plant.

Following the receipt of further third party objections from representatives of Communities against Lough Neagh Incinerator (CALNI) and Radox Laboratories Ltd., further querying the economic aspects of the Rose Energy proposal, a re-consultation issued to Economic Branch on 7 June 2011 and their response currently remains outstanding. Following discussions with Economic Branch is hoped that their response will be forthcoming shortly.

I will of course consider other options if they are forthcoming.

Single Use Carrier Bags

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the practical challenges in relation to the implementation of the proposed levy on single use carrier bags.

(AQO 99/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The introduction and implementation of the single use carrier bag levy is a complex matter which presents a number of significant practical challenges.

These include: the level at which the levy should be set to deliver the key objectives of reducing bag usage and generating revenue; the specific types of bags to which the levy will apply; how the level will be collected and enforced; and ensuring that the staff and operational arrangements are in place to enable the levy to be collected effectively.

A secure, fit-for-purpose and value for money Information Technology (IT) system also will need to be procured, developed, tested and refined to enable the levy to be collected effectively and efficiently. Some advice suggests that the required timescale to complete the IT project is estimated to be up to eighteen months, though I am looking closely at this.

An economic appraisal is being developed for the set-up costs and to choose the preferred option for taking the levy forward. This will require approval from the Department of Finance and Personnel.

I have instructed my officials to accelerate progress on the development of the detailed proposals and wish to assure members that adequate time to consult with stakeholders on the emerging policy proposals will be built into the programme timescale. Ultimately, it should be remembered that this proposal is an environmental one – any financial consequences are secondary, though ones which have an impact on the DOE budget going forward.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Civil Service: Temporary Contracts

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how the number of staff in each Department currently on temporary contracts compares with May 2007; and whether there is any correlation between these figures and the use of outside consultants.

(AQW 649/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency do not hold details of staff employed at 1 May 2007, these details are held at 1 April 2007 and therefore that is what has been provided. The data for 1 May 2011 has been sourced directly from the departments.

Departments have advised that there is no correlation between the number of temporary staff employed and the use of outside consultants.

Dept	No of temporary employees	
	1 April 2007	1 May 2011
DARD	59	13
DCAL	8	6
DE	33	5
DETI	7	3
DFP	126	21
DEL	33	8
DHSSPS	31	3
DOE	118	1
DRD	17	5
DSD	264	107
OFMDFM	3	0
DOJ	DOJ did not exist at this date.	3
PPS	PPS did not exist as a separate NICS Department at this date.	19
Total	699	198

Still Births

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many still births have been attributed to Group B Streptococcus in each of the last 4 years.

(AQW 704/11-15)

Mr Wilson: During the period 2007 to 2010, there were no stillbirths registered where the cause of death was Group B Streptococcus.

Staff Employed by the North South Ministerial Council

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide a breakdown of the community background of staff employed by the North South Ministerial Council.

(AQW 727/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Community background information is held on the 12 members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service working in the North South Ministerial Council. Information on the community background of individual members of staff is protected by the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. In order to comply with the Order and to protect the confidentiality of this information it is our policy not to release community background data where the number of staff in any category (ie Protestant, Roman Catholic or Not Determined) is less than 10. It is therefore not possible to provide the information requested.

Ministerial Transport

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 472/11-15, whether (i) funding is allocated to each Department for Ministerial transport, and, if so, how much; (ii) there are any DFP or other guidelines which govern the recruitment of Ministerial drivers; (iii) Ministers are able to fund the cost of a driver of their choice from their departmental budget without recourse to normal Civil Service recruitment procedures; and (iv) all drivers, under the new arrangements, will have Civil Service status.

(AQW 766/11-15)

Mr Wilson:

- (i) Prior to 1 April 2011 DFP was responsible for Ministerial transport. From 1 April 2011, DFP transferred funding to other Government Departments as follows:

Department	Total £K
DSD	34
DEL	62
DHSSPS	34
DoE	34
DCAL	34
DETI	34
DARD	6
DRD	6
DE	6
OFMDFM	74
Total	324

DFP has retained £62K to meet the continuing Ministerial transport needs of the Department.

- (ii) Ministerial drivers employed by the NICS are recruited using standard NICS recruitment practices.
- (iii) At its meeting of 27 January 2011, the Executive agreed to transfer responsibility for ministerial cars and official drivers to relevant Departments. With effect from 28 January 2011, departmental delegations were revised to permit Departments to operate ministerial/official transport services. Accordingly, funding and recruitment are now matters for individual Departments.
- (iv) This is a matter for individual Departments.

Welcome Home Parade in Belfast for the Royal Irish Regiment

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the decision not to hold a 'welcome home' parade in Belfast for the Royal Irish Regiment, whether he will make representations to the Ministry of Defence about the possibility of hosting such an event in the Stormont estate.

(AQW 848/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I am fully supportive of a homecoming parade. However, the First Minister is currently in discussions with the Secretary of State and the Ministry of Defence for alternative venues. It would be inappropriate for me to make any further approaches while there are other options being explored.

Fiscal Policy Levers

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the fiscal policy levers designed to stimulate the economy that he has discussed with HM Treasury.

(AQW 858/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The First Minister, deputy First Minister, DETI Minister and I met with Exchequer Secretary David Gauke and Secretary of State Owen Paterson on 2 February 2011 and 7 March 2011 to discuss the Government consultation document on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy. At these meetings, we discussed the issues raised in the document regarding the devolution of corporation tax, and emphasised the importance of considering other non corporation tax options to rebalance the economy such as R&D tax credits, investment allowances and national insurance holidays.

Furthermore, I also met separately with the Economic Secretary, Justine Greening on 16 March 2011 to discuss the impact Air Passenger Duty is having on the Northern Ireland economy, and the work that is ongoing to obtain EU approval for a replacement for the Aggregate Levy Credit Scheme which was suspended on the 1 December 2010.

I intend following up on these issues when I meet with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander on 29 June 2011.

Small Business Rate Relief Scheme

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme will operate; and who will be the beneficiaries.

(AQW 860/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The small business rate relief scheme has been in operation since 1 April 2010. It provides relief to eligible businesses where the net annual value (NAV or assessed rental value) is £5,000 or less. At present 50% relief is awarded where the NAV of the property is £2,000 or less, with 25% relief awarded where the NAV is between £2,001 and £5,000. Further detail on the main scheme, as well as the post office element and exclusions, can be found at http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps/lps_fact_sheet_-_small_business.14jan2010.pdf and

http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/lps/lps_fact_sheet_-_post_office.pdf

My Department will shortly be bringing forward proposals that would significantly extend the small business rate relief scheme for the spending review period (through to 31 March 2015). This would be conditional on a similar sum being raised through a large retail levy. I would hope to be able to roughly double the total relief provided under the main small business rate relief scheme and increase the number receiving help by around 50%. Additional support of around £6.5m would be provided, at 2011/12 levels.

Virtually all business ratepayers in occupation of premises below the prescribed NAV limits are eligible. There are some exceptions such as car parks, advertising hoardings and telecommunications masts.

As with the current scheme it is intended to provide any additional relief automatically. While this is of great benefit to ratepayers it does mean that relief will be awarded on some non-domestic premises

that are not strictly commercial in nature, for example small clubs. Their inclusion is unavoidable if the automatic nature of the scheme is to be maintained, without requiring a radical overhaul of Land and Property Services' systems.

Consultation will shortly begin on the way forward. I would hope that final decisions can be reached in the autumn, with both measures in place by 1 April 2012 if the Assembly is able to pass the legislation through without difficulty. The changes would apply for three years, through to 31 March 2015.

Investors in People Accreditation

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he intends to seek a review by the awarding body of the Investors in People accreditation for Departments where a serious breach of discipline at a senior level has occurred.

(AQW 893/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I will not be asking for the Investors in People accreditation to be reviewed for Departments where a serious breach of discipline at a senior level has occurred.

North-South Ministerial Council Meetings

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) all the North-South Ministerial Council meetings that he, or his predecessors, have attended since May 2007; (ii) the Ministers from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland who attended each meeting; (iii) the issues which were discussed at each meeting; and (iv) the outcomes and achievements that resulted from each meeting.

(AQW 988/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Since May 2007, the Minister of Finance and Personnel has attended NSMC meetings on the following dates:

SEUPB Meetings

7 November 2007, 8 September 2009, 17 February 2010 and 13 January 2011.

NSMC Plenary Meetings

17 July 2007, 7 February 2008, 5 July 2010, 21 January 2011 and 10 June 2011.

Following each NSMC meeting an agreed Joint Communiqué is issued and this is posted on the NSMC website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org. After each NSMC meeting, a Minister or Junior Minister who participates in a NSMC meeting is required to make a Statement to the Assembly. Details of these Statements are recorded in Hansard and copies are available on the Assembly website.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Outpatient Appointments

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the increase in the number of outpatients waiting more than nine weeks for a first outpatient appointment, and his predecessor's assertion that Health Service staff cannot stretch any further, how he intends to increase productivity of staff in the wake of further reductions in staff.

(AQW 609/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): I am at present considering a number of matters that impact on staff productivity, including revised targets on staff absence, improved technology and multi-faceted inter-agency approaches to the provision of care. While it is unlikely that the size of the workforce will change significantly, I am confident that there are areas where further productivity gains can be made.

Mid Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what additional services were provided by the Ambulance Service in the Mid Ulster area as a result of the £875,000 additional funding which was provided following the reduction in services at the Mid Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt. **(AQW 670/11-15)**

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) that it has introduced the following service developments within the Northern area in support of improvements in patient care and also in response to changes in acute service provision.

Following relocation of in-patient surgical services from both Whiteabbey and Mid Ulster to Antrim Area and Causeway Hospitals in late 2009, an additional ambulance based in Magherafelt was introduced to provide 24/7 accident and emergency cover at a cost of £500,000 per annum. A&E ambulance cover based in Antrim and Whiteabbey, and intermediate care vehicle cover based in Whiteabbey was also increased at a total cost of £375,000 per annum.

In April 2010, there was further investment of £514,000 to introduce another A&E ambulance based in Magherafelt to provide additional cover following the introduction of a minor injuries unit at Mid-Ulster Hospital.

In addition to the above, and as part of the NIAS programme of reform to increase rapid response cover, a net increase of 1,929 hours has been made available in the Magherafelt area.

Sensory Processing Disorder

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what support is available to the parents of children diagnosed with Sensory Processing Disorder. **(AQW 678/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Due to Sensory Processing Disorder not being included in recognised criteria (International Statistical Classification of Diseases (ICD) version 10, and Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) version IV), therapists are currently unable to formally diagnose SPD as a stand alone disorder (however, SPD is due to be considered for inclusion in the revised DSM version V to be published in 2013).

Instead, children are currently referred to as having sensory processing difficulties. Support for children with sensory processing difficulties and their families is provided through the Occupational Therapy service in Health and Social Care Trusts. Occupational Therapists have a range of skills and expertise to help identify these difficulties and to provide a range of interventions, from training and advice to direct therapeutic interventions, depending on the assessed needs of the child and their family.

Sensory Processing Disorder

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many practitioners in each Health and Social Care Trust area have been trained to diagnose and treat Sensory Processing Disorder. **(AQW 680/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Due to Sensory Processing Disorder not being included in recognised criteria (International Statistical Classification of Diseases (ICD) version 10, and Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) version iv) (Sensory Processing Disorder is due to be considered for inclusion in the revised DSM version v to be published in 2013), therapists are unable to formally diagnose SPD as a stand alone disorder. Instead children and young people they are referred to as having difficulties with sensory processing. .

Information on the number of practitioners trained to treat patients presenting with sensory processing difficulties is provided in the table below.

Practitioners Trained to Treat Patients Presenting With Sensory Processing Difficulties within the NI HSC by Trust at June 2011

Trust	Headcount	WTE
Belfast	13	12.06
Northern	11	9.10
South Eastern	16	12.74
Southern	20	17.12
Western	10	7.40
Total	70	58.42

Source: NI Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

- 1 WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
- 2 Treatment for patients presenting with sensory processing difficulties is mainly provided by Occupational Therapists, with some Speech and Language Therapists also providing treatment.

Haematologists

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many haematologists are working in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 709/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is provided in the table below.

Medics, Clinical Scientists and Biomedical Scientists specialising in Haematology employed within the NI HSC by Trust at June 2011

Trust	Headcount	WTE
Belfast	79	76.25
Northern	42	37.00
South Eastern	21	19.80
Southern	28	26.13
Western	32	29.90
Total	202	189.08

Source: NI Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

- 3 WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
- 4 South Eastern Trust reported that the Down and Lisburn areas are served by Belfast City Hospital laboratories.
- 5 Southern Trust figures include 1 Locum Consultant (1.00 WTE).
- 6 Western Trust figures include 1 Locum Consultant (working 3 Programmed Activities (sessions) per week).

Food Safety Promotion Board

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much funding his Department has allocated to the Food Safety Promotion Board in each year since 1998.

(AQW 730/11-15)

Mr Poots: Expenditure committed to FSPB in the NI block grant in each financial year since it was established is as follows.

2001/2002	£1,500,000
2002/2003	£1,251,500
2003/2004	£1,598,000
2004/2005	£1,824,000
2005/2006	£1,849,000
2006/2007	£2,083,000
2007/2008	£1,978,000
2008/2009	£2,299,284
2009/2010	£2,542,374
2010/2011	£2,091,000

FSPB operates on a calendar year, not the British financial year.

Gorse Fires

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the cost to his Department of the recent gorse fires, broken down by the cost in each constituency.

(AQW 734/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service does not record incidents by parliamentary constituency. The figures provided in the table relate to Station Areas, mapped to constituency and are estimates based on the 2010/11 average cost of mobilisation.

**TABLE: NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE: ESTIMATED COSTS OF GORSE FIRES 1
JANUARY – 12 JUNE 2011**

Station Location (Constituency)	Number of Incidents	Cost (£'000)
Belfast East	30	76
Belfast North	63	159
Belfast South	99	250
Belfast West	77	194
East Antrim	137	345
East Londonderry	237	597
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	360	908
Foyle	134	338
Lagan Valley	58	146

Station Location (Constituency)	Number of Incidents	Cost (£'000)
Mid Ulster	183	461
Newry and Armagh	269	678
North Antrim	162	408
North Down	51	129
South Antrim	135	340
South Down	519	1,308
Strangford	102	257
Upper Bann	178	449
West Tyrone	383	966
Total	3,177	8,009

Psychiatric Services

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the future configuration and location of (i) acute; and (ii) in-patient psychiatric services in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 776/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Trust is proposing to develop a single 67 bedded Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit at the Lagan Valley Hospital site. The Trust wishes to co-locate 4 psychiatric intensive care beds alongside the acute inpatient wards. Transferring acute inpatient care to the Lagan Valley Hospital will free up the acute ward in the Downe Hospital which has been purpose built for people with mental health needs. The Trust proposes to use this ward for patients who require longer term care in a low secure environment. Many of these patients are currently resident in the Downshire Hospital, which is no longer fit for purpose.

Services for People with Challenging Behaviour

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has held with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust regarding the current and future provision of services for people with challenging behaviour.

(AQW 780/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not had any discussions with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust about services for people with challenging behaviour. It is for the Health and Social Care Board, which commissions health and social care to services, to assess the current and future needs of local populations and to commission the range of services needed to meet that need from the relevant Health and Social Care Trust.

Community Psychiatric Services

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has had with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust regarding the current and future provision of community psychiatric services.

(AQW 781/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not had any discussions with the South Eastern Trust about its mental health services, but I understand the Trust intends to continue to develop community services including Home Treatment and Crises Response services using the investment monies previously provided.

High Suicide Rate

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to tackle the high suicide rate.

(AQW 791/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department allocates £6.7m per annum for the provision of suicide prevention services. This funding supports implementation of the Protect Life Suicide Prevention Strategy and the operation of the Lifeline 24/7 crisis response service.

Progress on specific actions includes:

- community-led suicide prevention and bereavement support services such as counselling and training;
- provision of Suicide Prevention Co-ordinator posts in each Trust area;
- the Deliberate Self-Harm Registry which provides information to inform the delivery of accident and emergency services, and psychiatric follow up;
- development of suicide cluster early identification and emergency community response plans in each Trust area;
- local research into suicide and self harm;
- regional training on suicide awareness and mental health first aid;
- enhanced mental health crisis intervention services;
- all-island public awareness programmes, evaluation of training, and information sharing;
- media monitoring; and
- education, awareness and support to address alcohol/substance misuse.

I recognise the need to keep our strategic approach under review in order to respond effectively to changing social circumstances and new evidence on effective interventions. The “Protect Life” strategy is currently being “refreshed” to reflect latest international evidence on effective practice and will be fully evaluated in 2011.

Mental Health Services

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of whether the economic recession has added to the pressure on mental health services.

(AQW 818/11-15)

Mr Poots: There has been no definitive study here into the effects of the recession on mental health services. However nationally, numerous studies have linked unemployment and other economic circumstances with poor mental health and this is likely to increase demand for mental health services.

Southern Cross Healthcare

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of care homes owned by Southern Cross Healthcare in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area; (ii) the number of residents in each of these care homes; and (iii) the number of these residents who require nursing care.

(AQW 821/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are currently 7 residential care and nursing homes managed by Southern Cross in the Western Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust area. The number of clients placed in these homes by the HSC is outlined in the table below. All clients in nursing homes require nursing care.

Care Home	Number of HSC Trust clients	Number of HSC Trust clients receiving nursing care
Ashbrooke Care Centre (Nursing Home)	36	36
Three Rivers Care Centre (Nursing Home)	26	26
Longfield Care Centre (Nursing Home)	45	45
Greenhaw Lodge Care Centre (Nursing Home)	43	43
Culmore Manor Care Centre (Nursing Home)	53	53
Melmount Manor Care Centre* (Nursing Home)	56	56
The Sperrins Care Centre* (Residential Home)	11	0

* = Two separately registered homes located on the one site

South Tyrone Hospital Minor Injuries Unit

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of patients living in Mid Ulster who have presented at the South Tyrone Hospital Minor Injuries Unit in each month since May 2010.

(AQW 823/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of patients living in Mid Ulster who have presented at the South Tyrone Minor Injuries Unit is not readily available, as the Department does not routinely collect information on the patient's area of residence. However, information is available on the number of new and unplanned review attendances at the South Tyrone Minor Injuries Unit each month since May 2010, and is detailed in the table below:

Month	New & Unplanned Review Attendances at South Tyrone MIU
May-10	1,675
Jun-10	1,638
Jul-10	1,499
Aug-10	1,558
Sep-10	1,445
Oct-10	1,387
Nov-10	1,311
Dec-10	1,088
Jan-11	1,284
Feb-11	1,196
Mar-11	1,536

Source: EC1 Departmental Return

Gorse Fires

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost to the Fire and Rescue Service of attending deliberately started gorse fires in each of the last three years.

(AQW 850/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below details the estimated cost to Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service of attending deliberately started gorse fires in each of the last three financial years.

Financial Year	Deliberate Gorse Fires	Cost of Incidents (£'000s)
2008/09	3,551	9,126
2009/10	3,100	8,348
2010/11	4,272	10,770
Total	10,923	28,244

Southern Cross Healthcare

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what arrangements are in place to secure the future of residents and staff of the 25 care homes owned by Southern Cross Healthcare.

(AQW 857/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Officials are working closely with the HSC Board to ensure that contingency plans are in place to cover a range of potential outcomes from the current negotiations to put Southern Cross on a more secure financial footing.

I appreciate that this will also be a time of some anxiety for those who work in Southern Cross homes providing care to vulnerable residents. While clearly the company needs to take steps to put itself into a more secure and viable financial position, it would be inappropriate of me to comment directly on potential realignment of staffing.

Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether he is committed to implementing fully the recommendations contained in the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability; (ii) how many people with a learning disability living in a long-stay hospital have been there for over a year; (iii) how many people with a learning disability living in a long-stay hospital he expects to resettle during 2011-12; and (iv) whether he has developed a plan to replace the Executive Action Plan 2009-2011 to ensure that no person with a learning disability is living in a long-stay hospital by 2013.

(AQW 884/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The previous Executive accepted the broad thrust of the Bamford recommendations, which spanned the responsibilities of many Departments. My Department is committed to progressing the recommendations through the promotion of good mental health and the reform and modernisation of health and social care services in mental health and learning disability.
- (ii) On 17 February 2011, 248 people with a learning disability had been resident in a learning disability hospital for 1 year or more.
- (iii) My Department is proposing a target of 45 resettlements this year along with a reduction of 15 delayed discharges, a total of 60 resettlements.
- (iv) It remains my aim that all of those currently living in long stay learning disability hospitals are resettled in the community with the appropriate care and support. I am currently considering how best that can be done within available resources.

Accident and Emergency Unit at the Mater Hospital

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will ensure that the Accident and Emergency Unit at the Mater Hospital will remain open and that a full service will continue until he has determined the appropriate level of accident and emergency services for the Greater Belfast area.

(AQW 928/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not made any decisions regarding the re-configuration of health and social care services. I shall be looking at issues which impact on the provision of treatment and care in the Trusts. I want to assure the public that the safety and quality of services will be my first concern. My focus will be on improvement in health outcomes for the population of Northern Ireland.

Mental Health Services

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are available for (i) males aged 18-30 who suffer from (a) depression; and (b) anorexia or bulimia; and (ii) their families in the (a) South Belfast; (b) Carryduff; and (c) Ballynahinch areas.

(AQW 935/11-15)

Mr Poots: A full range of Mental Health Services are available to males aged 18-30 who suffer from depression, anorexia or bulimia, and their families, in the South Belfast, Carryduff and Ballynahinch area. The type of services that will be available to this patient group will be dependent upon the level of seriousness of their presentation, but typical services range from Community supports, through to contracted Voluntary service organisations, to Specialist interventions from Community MH Teams, through to Hospital admissions with intensive follow-up from Community Home Treatment Teams.

Each individual is assessed by Mental Health Services, following referral by G.P and services developed as appropriate.

Specialist services for Adults who present with anorexia or bulimia in these areas, are provided by the Specialist Eating Disorder Services at the Belfast Trust who are contracted to deliver these services.

Downe Hospital

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the recruitment process used since 5 April 2011 for middle grade doctors for the Downe Hospital, particularly for the Accident and Emergency Unit.

(AQW 947/11-15)

Mr Poots: There has been no formal recruitment of middle grade doctors within the South Eastern Trust for the Downe Hospital since 5 April 2011.

The Trust will formally advertise for Accident & Emergency medical staff, including Specialty Doctors, across all hospital sites on 28th June 2011.

Southern Cross Healthcare

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline how he will ensure adequate quality of care for residents of homes owned by Southern Cross Healthcare.

(AQO 134/11-15)

Mr Poots: I can reassure the house that there are clear protections in place to cover the interests of the residents of all nursing and residential homes.

Members may be aware that last week Southern Cross and its landlords agreed to work towards a consensual solution to the Company's current financial problems, to be delivered over the next four months, and issued a statement that gave a clear assurance that there will be no closures in that period.

My Officials are working closely with the HSC Board to ensure that contingency plans are in place to cover the full range of potential outcomes from the current negotiations to put Southern Cross on a more secure financial footing.

My conversation last Wednesday with a Department of Health Minister underlined the importance of all four administrations staying in close touch, while ensuring that the resolution of this matter takes account of residents and families in NI, as well as Scotland, Wales and England.

North/South Feasibility Study

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to the cost-saving recommendations contained in the North-South Feasibility Study on health. **(AQO 143/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The North South Feasibility Study was completed in 2009 and was not published. I understand that a number of the recommendations within the report are already being taken forward on a case by case basis.

Driving up the quality of service provision and improving health outcomes for the population of Northern Ireland will be my first priority, and will guide all that I do.

I have already made contact with Minister Reilly in the Department of Health and Children on radiotherapy provision in Altnagelvin Hospital. Where a development, such as this one, delivers better outcomes for people and is cost effective, then I am content to work with my counterpart in the Republic of Ireland in the interests of the population in both jurisdictions.

Hospitals: Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the proposed new Local Enhanced Hospital in Omagh. **(AQO 144/11-15)**

Mr Poots: I am currently considering my capital priorities, including the Omagh hospital project, for the Budget period. I am somewhat limited by the Budget 2010 capital allocation, which only allows me to address the highest priority projects. I have, therefore, met with the Strategic Investment Board to ask them to consider methods by which the existing budget can be supplemented.

Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry

Mr Murphy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his Department's plans for the development of services at Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry. **(AQO 145/11-15)**

Mr Poots: I recently had the opportunity to visit the Daisy Hill Hospital and was most impressed by the commitment of staff and the Trust to provide the people in the Newry and Mourne area with high quality care.

I have not made any decisions on the re-configuration of health and social care services. But I have taken the opportunity to listen to patients, staff and managers and will give serious consideration to their views.

Reform and modernisation is a continuous process which requires that we look for better ways of working; this may require doing things differently and that services may not remain the same. However, I remain committed to Daisy Hill Hospital as part of the wider plan for high quality service provision in Northern Ireland.

DHSSPS: Whistle-blowers

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the current safeguards for whistleblowers.

(AQO 146/11-15)

Mr Poots: I want to ensure that an environment exists within all health and social care providers, where workers feel that they can report any wrongdoing or where standards fall below an acceptable level. The provision of a safe and effective service is fundamental. Most staff that want to report concerns already do so, but the most recent HSC staff survey indicated that 13% lack the confidence to whistle blow.

I can provide assurance that where employees in the HSC want to come forward to raise concerns in good faith and reasonably believe them to be true, they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation.

I have a specific policy in place that takes account of the fact that whistleblowers are protected by legislation. The Public Interest Disclosure (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (revised 2004) protects employees against detrimental treatment or dismissal as a result of any disclosure by them of normally confidential information in the interests of the public.

Developing Better Services

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to reviewing Developing Better Services which was published in 2002.

(AQO 147/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not made any decisions regarding the re-configuration of health and social care services. Developing Better Services was about modernising hospitals and reforming structures. There are different ways of working now and I shall be looking at all issues which impact on the provision of treatment and care for the population of Northern Ireland. My focus will be on improvement in health outcomes, and the safety, quality and effectiveness of services.

Adoption

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the proposed adoption legislation.

(AQO 148/11-15)

Mr Poots: In light of the time, which has elapsed since my department consulted on a range of options for adoption reform in Northern Ireland, I have asked my officials to revisit the original proposals and the public response to those proposals to ensure that they remain valid and fit for purpose.

Department of Justice

Criminal Damage Caused by Prisoners

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the cost and number of separate incidents of criminal damage caused by prisoners in each prison, in each of the last five years; and (ii) the number of prosecutions for these incidents.

(AQW 422/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice):

- (i) Table A, below, lists the total number of adjudications for charges of criminal damage, in each prison in each of the last five years, as well as how many of these were found to be guilty.

Adjudications are an essential element of the Prison Service's internal disciplinary system and are used to help maintain order, control, discipline and a safe environment, as well as to ensure that the use of authority in prisons is lawful, reasonable and fair.

Where a charge is upheld at adjudication it is open to the adjudicating Governor to award a range of penalties (including, for example, loss of earnings, loss of privileges or, in certain cases cellular confinement), in line with the guidance set out in the Adjudication Manual, taking into account any aggravating or mitigating factors.

Where the alleged offence against prison discipline may constitute an offence in criminal law, the Governor must decide whether to invite the police to investigate the charges or continue to deal with the matter under NIPS disciplinary proceedings (subject to the provisions of Section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 and to the guidance set out in the Adjudication Manual).

In respect of the information at Table A, where charges have not been upheld at adjudication this may be as a result of a range of reasons, for example, the charge may have been withdrawn, the adjudication may not have been completed in time, or the prisoner may have been found to be not guilty of the offence. It is not possible to provide a complete breakdown of the gravity of the individual incidents or of why charges have not been upheld, except at disproportionate cost to the public purse.

TABLE A: ADJUDICATIONS FOR INCIDENTS OF CRIMINAL DAMAGE

Year	Maghaberry		Magilligan		Hydebank Wood	
	Adjudication	Charge upheld	Adjudication	Charge upheld	Adjudication	Charge upheld
2007	87	47	6	5	47	40
2008	51	35	16	14	93	81
2009	71	53	23	18	105	84
2010	210	67	12	11	147	119
2011 (year to date)	69	24	17	13	92	71

It is not possible to detail the cost incurred by each incident of criminal damage except again at disproportionate cost to the public purse.

- (ii) Table B, below, lists the number of incidents of criminal damage which were notified to PSNI for referral for consideration for prosecution. Details regarding which of these cases resulted in prosecution are not readily available from PPS and could only be provided at disproportionate cost to the public purse.

TABLE B: NUMBER OF CASES REFERRED FOR PROSECUTION

	Maghaberry	Magilligan	Hydebank Young Offenders Centre & Females
2007	3	1	3
2008	3	0	2
2009	3	0	3
2010	16	0	2
2011 (year to date)	3	0	1

Separated Prison Unit at Maghaberry Prison

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice how much the separated prison unit at Maghaberry Prison has cost since its establishment, including a breakdown of capital and recurrent expenditure in each financial year.

(AQW 540/11-15)

Mr Ford: Maghaberry maintains a system of separation on landings within two different residential accommodations, Bush and Roe, which are treated as one operational group

The cost of maintaining a separated regime in these residential houses is not recorded independently of other costs within the accommodation. In addition to the residential costs incurred there are also costs associated with other activities such as gym, visits, education, and security which cannot be disaggregated.

The table below details the staffing costs associated with the separated regime, since its establishment on 1 March 2002.

Financial Year	Cost
Period from 1 March – 31 March 2004	£256,984
2004-2005	£3,118,842
2005-2006	£3,213,122
2006-2007	£3,280,111
2007-2008	£3,408,417
2008-2009	£3,548,594
2009-2010	£3,890,037
2010-2011	£4,342,896
2011-2012 (Budget)	£4,112,903 *

* As a result of prisoner protests in Roe House overtime was required for officers to manage the situation and prisoners to ensure peaceful lock-up within Roe House. The current estimated cost of this overtime is £39,029. NIPS continues to make every effort to bring the remaining protest action to a resolution.

Similarly, the total capital costs incurred in relation to the separated landings cannot be independently determined, as any capital works will have been in relation to improving residential areas as a whole. However, following the agreement with separated prisoners of 12 August 2010, £844,000 was spent on capital works specifically related to separated requirements.

Prisoners Formerly Released on Licence

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many prisoners who had been formerly released on licence were returned to custody in each of the last five years.

(AQW 650/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Criminal Justice (NI) Order 1996, the Life Sentences (NI) Order 2001 and the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 provide for a range of offenders to be released into the community on licence. These licences carry conditions which are designed to control behaviour and risk and thus protect the public from harm, preventing re-offending and promote the rehabilitation of the individual.

The Department of Justice is responsible for setting licence conditions and where appropriate recalling to prison individuals living in the community for breaching the terms of their licences.

Over the last five years, the number of prisoners who had been formerly released on licence who were returned to custody is as follows:

Year	Number
2006	9
2007	7
2008	12
2009	13
2010	33
2011*	37
Total	111

* as at 16/06/11

The number of licences revoked has increased dramatically since 2010 due to offenders receiving Court Sentences under the new provisions of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008. Since the commencement of this Order, there have been 175 licences issued and 55 recalls.

Belfast Family Court

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether it is practice in the Belfast Family Court to have a full panel made up of a District Judge and two lay members or a District Judge sitting alone; and (ii) for his assessment of this practice.

(AQW 660/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) In accordance with the relevant legislation it is normal practice in the Belfast Family Proceedings Court to have a full panel made up of a District Judge and two Lay Magistrates.
- (ii) No formal assessment has been carried out. However I welcome the involvement of members of the community in this very important work.

Domestic Violence Prevention Orders

Mrs Lewis asked the Minister of Justice if he has any plans to introduce Domestic Violence Prevention Orders, similar those being piloted in England.

(AQW 672/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department's Community Safety Unit has been liaising closely with colleagues in the Home Office regarding plans to introduce Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) in England and Wales on a pilot basis. I understand that a year-long pilot scheme will commence in summer 2011 in the Greater Manchester, Wiltshire, and West Mercia police areas. Home Office has indicated that if deemed successful, it would be their intention to roll out the scheme across England and Wales.

The scheme will be subject to an evaluation, and it would be my intention to draw on it to determine the appropriateness of introducing DVPOs for Northern Ireland, taking account of any necessary legislative changes required.

Speeding Tickets

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of speeding tickets issued to motorists in each constituency in the 2010/11 financial year; and (ii) the total amount raised.

(AQW 677/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information is not available in the format requested.

The table below sets out the number of speeding detections for the financial year 2010/11(1). This information is only available by Area Command.

Information is available on the total revenue received in respect of each category of Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), but this cannot be given for specific offence or police division.

SAFETY CAMERA SCHEME SPEEDING DETECTIONS BY AREA COMMAND: 2010/2011

Antrim	206
Armagh	431
Ballymena	924
Ballymoney	1526
Banbridge	1584
Castlereagh	4803
Carrickfergus	1872
Coleraine	2053
Cookstown	1185
Craigavon	603
Down	158
Dungannon	158
East Belfast	2749
Fermanagh	1485
Foyle	8465
Larne	1608
Limavady	1402
Lisburn	701
Magherafelt	2985
Moyle	1014
Newtownabbey	484
Newtownards	901
Newry & Mourne	960
North Belfast	6101
North Down	1351
Omagh	131
South Belfast	628
Strabane	431
West Belfast	160
Total	47059

Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many of the 26 men prosecuted for rioting and other associated charges over the 12 July period in 2010 were granted Legal Aid; and what is the total cost of this Legal Aid to date.

(AQW 681/11-15)

Mr Ford: All 26 of the defendants were granted legal aid.

The costs to date are £34,126.96 however there are some reports still outstanding so the total cost will increase when these claims are received.

Domestic Violence Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any plans to introduce guidelines or legislation on domestic violence cases that would make it compulsory for all such incidents to be treated as charge sheet instead of postal summons, with defendants held in custody after arrest and then produced at the first available magistrates court.

(AQW 682/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no plans at present to introduce guidelines or legislation that would make it compulsory for incidents of domestic violence to be treated as charge sheet instead of postal summons.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Justice how much his Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 683/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since its inception on 12th April 2010, the Department of Justice, its agencies and arms length bodies spent a total of £54,424.92 excluding VAT on storage space for archived departmental documentation.

Prisoner Assessment Unit

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) what levels of staff were employed at the Prisoner Assessment Unit; (ii) what were the job descriptions of these staff; and (iii) was this level of staffing consistent on a full-time basis.

(AQW 685/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) The Prisoner Assessment Unit consisted of a group of ten Main Grade Officers plus a Senior Officer. There were five staff detailed each day, Monday to Friday and three staff at weekends.
- (ii) The duty of staff working in the Prisoner Assessment Unit was to protect the public by working with prisoners who were in the last stages of a life sentence and to assist them to prepare for release into the community through a normalisation process, while also testing their suitability for release on life licence.

The job description for the Main Grade Officer working in the PAU is as follows:

Accountability

You are accountable to the Governor with responsibility for the Prisoner Assessment Unit through the Senior Officer for the security, safety entitlements and privileges of all prisoners in your charge.

Purpose

To assist in the day to day management, monitoring and improvement of the pre-release Scheme, consistent with the requirements of the establishment and business need. To work with

prisoners who are in the last stages of a life sentence and help prepare them for release into the community through a normalisation process. An important aspect of the role is to help the prisoner reduce the risk of re-offending.

Responsibilities

- 1 That you are conversant with all Governors Orders / Instructions which are relevant to your post and ensure that these orders are complied with.
 - 2 That any damage to keys or locks are reported to the Senior Officer immediately.
 - 3 Check and return numbers to the ECR at HM Prison Maghaberry when required.
 - 4 Staff working in this location will be expected to visit/carry out checks on prisoner at their work locations, hostels or home addresses.
 - 5 That you will become a personal officer and be a positive role model to designated prisoners.
 - 6 To work closely with Life Sentence Prisoners and be prepared to discuss, confidentially, elements of the offence.
 - 7 To write objective reports regarding the prisoner(s) if and when required.
 - 8 Contribute to the multi-disciplinary team meetings and provide information that will form the basis of managing risk in the community and also contribute to the Parole Commissioners process.
 - 9 When handing over to another officer at the PAU you will pass on relevant information concerning prisoners or conditions in the Unit and will report any suspicious occurrences or changes in prisoners behaviour.
 10. You will assist in searching prisoners' rooms, stores, ablutions and other areas in the Unit.
 11. You will carry out drug/alcohol testing, within the Unit when instructed.
 12. Ensure that all relevant information is recorded on prisoner's file.
 13. To ensure that any requests / complaints are acted on and are passed to the appropriate person within the appropriate time scales.
- (iii) The staffing levels, as stated above, were consistent on a full time basis. However the group was reduced from 12 to 10 from the beginning of April 2011 following an efficiency review.

Equal Pay Claim

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what progress has been made in resolving the equal pay claim for departmental staff who were seconded to the PSNI and the Northern Ireland Office.

(AQW 686/11-15)

Mr Ford: In respect of staff in the Department of Justice with previous service in PSNI and the Northern Ireland Office, it remains my position that no legal liability has been established which would justify making an equal pay settlement. However, it is also my position that my officials should meet with the trade union NIPSA if they have further or new issues to discuss.

In respect of police staff, the Department of Finance and Personnel have advised that as pay and grading delegation was granted to the Northern Ireland Office (including Police Staff) in 1996, no liability exists in respect of equal pay when comparing PSNI support staff and civil servants.

In respect of both civil servants and police staff, cases have been lodged in the County Court.

Domestic Violence Magistrates Court Sitings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to introduce special domestic violence magistrates court sittings that cover all aspects of the incident rather than just the hearing of contests, similar to those already in existence in England and Wales.

(AQW 687/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is a commitment in the 2010/12 Domestic Violence Action Plan to consider the feasibility of introducing Specialist Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs) to Northern Ireland. Following a feasibility study which will include consultation with relevant bodies, a recommendation will be put to Ministers on whether SDVCs should operate in Northern Ireland.

In the interim, the Department of Justice, Community Safety Unit, in liaison with the NI Courts and Tribunals Service and the Public Prosecution Service, is currently working towards piloting a new court listing arrangement which would see criminal adult cases, involving domestic violence, being listed on a set day each month at one of the Courts in Northern Ireland. It is envisaged this pilot will commence September 2011. Any findings from the pilot will be fed into the overall feasibility study on SDVCs.

Victim Impact Statements

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to issue guidance or introduce legislation in relation to encouraging the use of victim impact statements for sentencing in Magistrates Courts. **(AQW 742/11-15)**

Mr Ford: On 15 June, I published an Annual Action Plan for victims and witnesses. The Plan sets out the programme of work we intend to take forward during 2011/12, in partnership with the justice agencies and our voluntary sector delivery partners, to improve services for victims and witnesses.

One of the actions contained in the Plan relates to formalising practice regarding the use of victim impact statements and victim impact reports. I intend to publish a consultation document later this year.

Desertcreat College Development

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the Desertcreat College development, including the current stage of the tendering and procurement process. **(AQW 753/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The Health Minister has recently confirmed that the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) revenue element is affordable from within the DHSSPS/NIFRS current revenue budget. The Department of Justice and Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety will now review the final version of the business case before passing it to DFP for approval. This is expected to be completed very shortly.

The procurement process, including tendering can begin once DFP approval has been obtained and is expected to begin early in 2012 and construction to be finished by February 2015.

Orders Prohibiting Publicity on the Granting of Injunctive Relief

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 257/11, the date on which each of the four orders prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive relief was made; and whether each order is still extant. **(AQW 763/11-15)**

Mr Ford: Two of the four orders prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive relief, which have been made since 2007, remain extant. The two orders now discharged were made on the 21 January 2009 and 16 April 2010. Further information in respect of the extant orders cannot be provided without risking contravening the terms of the order.

Criminal Justice Inspection's Recommendation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) for his assessment of the Criminal Justice Inspection's recommendation that the Prison Service should improve its contribution to the public protection arrangements process through greater engagement with training and by strengthening its offender

behaviour programme delivery; and (ii) what action his Department will take to assist in the implementation of the recommendation.

(AQW 793/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Service is committed to, and supports, the multi-agency approach to public protection. NIPS welcomes the recent Criminal Justice Inspectorate's positive and challenging report into this critically important area of work.

The Service has accepted the recommendation that it should have greater engagement with training and strengthen its offender behaviour programme delivery. NIPS will review its participation in PPANI training and the PPANI Co-ordinator has undertaken to ensure that NIPS staff are invited to all future training events.

NIPS is also in the process of recruiting additional psychologists to help deliver a greater number and range of offender behaviour programmes. In the meantime it is in the process of issuing a tender document to bring in experienced staff to deliver one-to-one sessions to high risk offenders.

Sex Offenders Management Model

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the current sex offenders management model; and (ii) how it differs from what was previously in place.

(AQW 794/11-15)

Mr Ford: Guidance under the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 established public protection arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI). The guidance states that the relevant agencies must ensure that the core functions of PPANI are established and procedures are in place to:

- identify relevant offenders;
- share information safely and securely;
- risk assess offenders; and
- manage offender risks with the most suitable risk management plans.

The legislation also permits the Department of Justice to appoint two lay advisors to assist in reviewing the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Although the arrangements draw on previous multi-agency working, the statutory requirement to cooperate has resulted in more effective operational working with resources targeted where they are most needed.

Environmental Allowance

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many departmental staff currently receive an environmental allowance.

(AQW 853/11-15)

Mr Ford: 2,668 departmental staff currently receive an environmental allowance.

Independent Members of District Policing Partnerships

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the current level of threat to Independent members of District Policing Partnerships.

(AQW 869/11-15)

Mr Ford: It would not be appropriate for me to comment on a specific security matter such as this but where there are concerns, either generically or to individuals, threat assessments may be sought.

Firearm Certificate Applications

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of firearm certificate applications submitted by people in the Newry and Armagh areas between January 2009 and January 2011; and how many of these were refused.

(AQW 872/11-15)

Mr Ford: The operation of firearms licensing is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Case Number 11/000893

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 376/11-15, given the costs submitted to date for case number 11/000893, whether he will revise his estimated costs for the remainder of the bill based on the Legal Services Commission's composite fee system.

(AQW 873/11-15)

Mr Ford: The estimate provided in response to AQW 376/11-15 was based on the payments for the Magistrates' Court of £1,205 and estimated costs for the Crown Court of around £9,000. The claim for Junior Counsel has now been received. Based on the receipt of this claim I have revised the estimate downwards to £9,356.

The claim from the solicitor in respect of the Crown Court trial is still awaited.

Release of Marian Price

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Justice whether he has had any meetings with the British Secretary of State to discuss the release of Marian Price.

(AQW 955/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have not met with the Secretary of State to discuss the release of Marian Price.

Domestic Violence: Victims' Fund

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice what plans there are to introduce a fund for victims of domestic violence who need protection but who do not have access to public funds.

(AQO 159/11-15)

Mr Ford: At the Assembly Debate on 6 June I welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate my continued commitment to addressing domestic violence. I appraised the Chamber of the work that is being done by the Department of Justice, along with other Departments, other elements of the justice system and a range of NGOs, to address this heinous crime.

Tangible evidence of that commitment was the delivery during my first year as Minister of two initiatives, which I believe will benefit victims of domestic violence.

Firstly I implemented changes to Legal Aid provision which gives victims greater access to the courts by removing the upper earnings and capital limits for those who are seeking the protection of a non-molestation order.

Secondly in the Justice Act (NI) 2011 I included the Victims of Crime Fund which will be resourced by the offender levy. Funding will be allocated to those priority areas where need has been identified - which could potentially include services to victims of domestic violence.

Turning to the provision of services for those victims of domestic violence who have no recourse to public funds, I am pleased to report that since 30 November 2009 Northern Ireland has been part of the UK wide Sojourner Pilot Project. This Pilot Project is for those with no recourse to public funds,

who have entered the UK on a spousal or partner visa and are eligible to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) under the Domestic Violence Rule. The Pilot Project will continue until April 2012 during which time work will be on-going to find a long-term solution to ensure victims are protected.

The Sojourner Pilot Project is a positive step, but we must not be complacent. Having no recourse to public funds has, much broader implications in terms of accommodation provision, access to benefits, and immigration status – matters which cut across a number of Departments and Agencies. It can affect a range of individuals under immigration status and cuts across a number of different communities where individuals working here legally may, through no fault of their own, find themselves destitute and in need of short-term or bridging support.

So while I, once again, give my wholehearted commitment to do all I can to tackle the issue of domestic violence, and to put measures in place to protect all victims of domestic violence, including those within the immigrant community, it remains incumbent on all to continue to work together to address the many cross-cutting issues which impact on victims of domestic violence including the issue of no recourse to public funds.

Public Prosecution Service

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Justice what action he is taking to ensure that there is transparency in the governance and accountability of the Public Prosecution Service.

(AQO 155/11-15)

Mr Ford: Arrangements for governance of the Public Prosecution Service are founded on the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 and came into effect on the devolution of justice matters.

Although I have no responsibility for the Public Prosecution Service I continue to be mindful of wider issues impacting on the criminal justice system. The First Minister, deputy First Minister, Attorney General and I have therefore agreed that the Department of Justice will lead a consultation on governance/accountability arrangements for the Public Prosecution Service.

We met last week to discuss the scope of the consultation which will consider options for the future and invite views. The consultation will launch following the usual Committee and Executive consideration.

Attacks on Orange Halls

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Justice what discussions he has had with the PSNI about reducing the number of attacks on Orange Halls.

(AQO 157/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am aware of the Member's interest in this issue, indeed it was a letter from him which led me to ask officials to explore whether further action could be taken in respect of attacks on symbolic buildings. My officials, working with the police, are currently in the process of compiling a report on this matter for me. I expect it in a matter of weeks. I then plan to meet the police once I have had an opportunity to consider this.

I will update the Member as soon as this work has been concluded.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice to outline the timescale for the implementation of Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

(AQO 160/11-15)

Mr Ford: Work is currently underway to ensure that the new partnerships are fully established by April 2012 with many key aspects of the partnerships being in place before then.

Such milestones include the establishment of the Joint Committee (that is my Department and the Northern Ireland Policing Board working together to oversee the partnerships) in September this year; the nomination of elected members by September, and the appointment of independent members in the early months of 2012; the operation of PCSPs in shadow mode from January 2012 onwards, once their policing committees have been established; and the appointment of designated organisations, who will make a wider contribution to the work of each PCSP by March 2012.

In the meantime, Councils are encouraged to commence, or continue with, joint working arrangements between their District Policing Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships. This will help to ensure that the new partnerships are fully functional come April 2012.

Prisoners: Suicide

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the recent deaths in custody, what additional steps he will be taking to prevent prisoners from committing suicide.

(AQO 161/11-15)

Mr Ford: As the Minister responsible for prisons I take extremely seriously my duty of care to all prisoners and I chair the Ministerial Forum on Safer Custody - a cross-departmental, multi agency Forum which was established to drive service improvements and bring about an increase in the quality of safer custody and the well-being of prisoners that will contribute to a sustained reduction level of self-harming of all people held in custody.

Every death in custody represents a personal tragedy for someone and lessons can be learned from every case. I am aware of the criticisms that have been levied at NIPS and take those criticisms very seriously.

Following recent deaths in custody the Director General of Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) has launched a corporate audit of compliance against safer custody processes, to ensure that appropriate processes and interventions are in place, and that they are being consistently complied with across the Service.

However NIPS faces significant challenges in seeking to respond to the level of need and the high prevalence of mental health issues and personality disorders amongst the prisoner population.

NIPS is seeking to respond to these challenges. However the figures demonstrate that the problem goes much wider than prisons. NIPS cannot meet this challenge alone and will need to rely the support and input of my Executive colleagues, in particular the Minister for Health, and other partners across the justice system and in the wider community.

NIPS continues to work in close partnership with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, which has lead responsibility in relation to the delivery of healthcare in prisons, to ensure that relevant and robust measures are in place to assess and, where necessary, provide additional support to persons entering custody.

Together with the Trust the Service is currently advancing a range of strategic measures to identify and better meet the needs of vulnerable prisoners, including:

- the appointment of a clinical educator to develop the skills base of staff working with vulnerable prisoners;
- the development of a closer working relationship with partners such as the Samaritans, particularly in relation to the Listener / Peer Support schemes for vulnerable prisoners;
- encouraging and facilitating stronger family links in partnership with NIACRO;
- the Supporting Prisoners at Risk (SPAR) process, which provides a robust procedure for the management of those persons identified as being at risk of self-harm or suicide; and
- the development of the REACH landing and a new OUTREACH day centre at Maghaberry, which is due to be handed over later this month, which will help to provide a therapeutic regime for our most vulnerable prisoners.

However, it will only be through reform of NIPS that we will be able to fundamentally change how the needs of vulnerable prisoners are met whilst in custody. That reform will be delivered through the Service's Strategic Efficiency and Effectiveness Programme, which is due to be launched on 28 June. Through the SEE Programme NIPS will see an increasing focus on getting the basics right; on becoming more efficient and effective; on professionally developing the role of prison officers; and on providing appropriate support and training to enable them to fill that role effectively in order to deliver custody which is safe, decent and secure, and which will provide appropriate interventions to support those in custody and to reduce the risk of reoffending.

Speeding: Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Justice how many speeding tickets were issued to motorists in the Carrickfergus Area Command in the 2010/11 financial year and what was the total amount raised.
(AQO 162/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information is not available in the format requested. There is no direct correlation between the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued and the revenue received for any given year.

The PSNI has advised that for the 2010/11 financial year there were a total of 2,068 speeding detections in Carrickfergus Area Command.

The NI Road Safety Partnership, which evolved from the amalgamation of the NI Safety Camera Scheme (SCS) and the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme, involves the PSNI, DOE, DRD (Roads Service) and DOJ. The Partnership is one of a number of measures supporting the Government's Road Safety Strategy 2010-20 towards casualty reduction on the roads of Northern Ireland.

In June 2010 a number of new mobile and fixed camera sites were designated in all areas, including Carrickfergus. The thresholds for speeding offences also changed in June 2010 and both initiatives will inevitably have led to an increase in detections and COFPNs. However, this increase is offset by the introduction of the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme which provides an opportunity for eligible offending speeding motorists to avoid penalty points and fine, by attending the Speed Awareness and Young Drivers schemes, educational courses specifically designed to increase road safety.

Police Ombudsman

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the independent review of the Police Ombudsman's Office following the allegations made by its former Chief Executive.
(AQO 163/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following the allegations made by the Chief Executive of the Police Ombudsman's Office I commissioned Tony McCusker to conduct an investigation into the claims of interference by DOJ officials in OPONI business.

I received Tony McCusker's final report on Monday 20 June. I will be looking carefully at the report, reflecting on the findings and conclusions and considering the issues around publication.

I understand that Michael Maguire, the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice, is currently conducting his investigation into the relationship between the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland and the Police Service of Northern Ireland, with a view to producing his report and presenting it to me by the end of June.

Department for Regional Development

Road Network Signage Contract

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development what action has been taken to restore the road network signage contract which has not been in place for over 12 months, resulting in many road signs in the North Down area being in need of replacement or repair.

(AQW 526/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): My Department's Roads Service, together with the Central Procurement Directorate of DFP, engaged in a public procurement tender competition for the Supply and Delivery of Permanent and Temporary Road Traffic Signs and Sign Posts, which was designed to have 21 contracts for the supply of traffic signs in place during August 2010.

However, a legal challenge prevented these contracts being awarded at that time. A lengthy court case ensued during which the majority of the time was taken up with allegations of bias against the Department. The judgement, made on 4 February 2011, cleared the Department completely of all the allegations of bias, however, on a technical point, the judge set aside three of the 21 contracts, and these will be retendered. Following the judgement, the Department awarded 15 contracts for traffic signs, including those for direction signs, in March of this year.

A backlog of sign requirements has built up following the legal action, which prevented the award of contracts as originally intended and this is being managed by my Department's Roads Service.

Road Entrance into the Beechfield and Ashfield Estates, Donaghadee

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has for another road entrance into the Beechfield and Ashfield Estates, Donaghadee.

(AQW 534/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has no plans to create another entrance into the Beechfield and Ashfield Estates, Donaghadee.

Flags and Advertisements on Street Light Posts

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline (i) his Department's policy and the associated criteria used for permitting flags and advertisements on street light posts; and (ii) what steps are taken by his Department to punish offenders.

(AQW 539/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has signed up to the multi-agency Joint Protocol in Relation to the Display of Flags in Public Areas. Under the Protocol, Roads Service will, when called upon by the lead Agency, provide the access equipment and resources to remove unwanted flags, once agreement has been reached for their removal and where they are not easily accessible for the local community.

Under the Protocol, where the PSNI seeks to take action or initiates prosecution regarding flags issues, partner agencies will provide any evidential material they have to support such action or prosecution.

In relation to the unauthorised use of street light posts for displaying advertising signs, Article 87 of The Roads (NI) Order 1993 gives Roads Service authority to remove any signs erected without lawful authority in or on a road, and to recover any expenses reasonably incurred in doing so.

Footpath at Dreen Road, Cullybackey

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development when phase two of the works to the footpath at Dreen Road, Cullybackey, are due to commence.

(AQW 542/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a section of footway, approximately 250 metres in length, leading from Queens Park, along Dreen Road, towards Cullybackey was completed in early 2007. The continuation of this footway, to connect to the existing footway at the junction of Cardonagh Road, a length of approximately 300 meters, would involve significant land acquisition, extensive earthworks and the possible provision of retaining structures.

Roads Service has also learned of an outline planning application lodged by the North Eastern Education and Library Board, in June 2009, for a new secondary school at Dreen Road, in the vicinity of where any new footway extension would be located.

At a consultation with Planning Service in June 2009, Roads Service requested a Transport Assessment to address traffic issues associated with this type of development, which would include, among other matters, footway provision. To date, this has not been received.

A number of traffic management issues, including footway provision, will be given due consideration by Roads Service's Development Control Section, in respect of any new school proposal. In these circumstances, Road Service considers that it would be more appropriate to await the outcome of those deliberations, before any further action is considered on this footway proposal.

Narrow Water Bridge, Warrenpoint

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress has been made on the development of the Narrow Water Bridge, Warrenpoint and whether he has any plans to make a statement on the issue.

(AQW 557/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would advise the Member that the Narrow Water Bridge proposal is being taken forward by Louth County Council and my Department has no direct involvement in this project, nor has it made any commitment to contribute funds to this scheme. In these circumstances, I do not consider it appropriate to make a statement on the issue.

Narrow Water Bridge, Warrenpoint

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Republic of Ireland in relation to the development of the Narrow Water Bridge, Warrenpoint.

(AQW 558/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can confirm that I have not had any discussions with my counterpart in the Republic of Ireland in relation to the development of the Narrow Water Bridge, Warrenpoint

As I advised the Member in my response to her previous question on this matter, (AQW557/11-15), the Narrow Water Bridge proposal is being taken forward by Louth County Council and my Department has no direct involvement in this project, nor has it made any commitment to contribute funds to it.

Road and Footpath Resurfacing Schemes

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development what road and footpath resurfacing schemes are planned for the Lagan Valley area in the current financial year.

(AQW 562/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it develops its work programmes by Council area rather than on a constituency basis. Currently, work is ongoing to finalise the Roads Service's budget allocation for individual Council areas ahead of the presentation of work programmes to the respective Councils.

I understand that the Lagan Valley constituency covers areas from both the Banbridge and Lisburn Council areas. The work programme for Banbridge Council area will be contained in the Report to the Council, which will be presented at the Council meeting on 27 June. Details of the Report can be accessed from the Department's internet site at the following web address, after the meeting:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

Due to the timing of the elections, Lisburn Council agreed that Roads Service will only attend the Autumn Council meeting during 2011. Therefore, a Council Report has not been produced for Lisburn Council area this Spring. However, I have included in the following table, a draft list of proposed road and footway improvements, which is provisional and subject to the confirmation of the various Roads Service budgets:

LISBURN COUNCIL AREA

Proposed Carriageway Resurfacing	Proposed Footway Resurfacing
A26 Moira Road at Chapel Hill	Saintfield Road from Mercer Street to the M1 roundabout
Listullycurran Road from Forthill Road to Ballygowan Road	Young Street from Sloan Street to Templar Avenue
Edenticullo Road	Riverside Drive
North Circular Road	Ferndell
Meeting Street, Moira from Main Street to Berwick View	Windeen
Harry's Road, Hillsborough near Eglantine Park	Harmony Drive
Tullyrusk Road from Budore Road to Tornagrough Road	Parkwood
Ballymacash Road/Glenavy Road, from Prince William Road to Penworth	Fairfield
Rushyhill Road from Ballycolin Road to Tornagrough Road	Tynedale Park
	Tynedale Crescent
	Malory Gardens

Severe Weather Conditions

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions he or his predecessor has had in relation to preparations for any severe weather conditions this winter.

(AQW 602/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I cannot comment on discussions my predecessor may have had in relation to preparations for any severe weather conditions this winter.

However, I can confirm that I have received detailed briefing from my Department's Roads Service on the preparations being made for the coming winter. This included an update on the ongoing discussions with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and at a local level, directly with Councils on the issue of gritting footpaths to encourage as many as possible to agree to provide this valuable service to their local ratepayers.

Immediately following the freeze/thaw incident during the December 2010/January 2011 period which led to major water supply interruptions for many consumers, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) submitted an action plan to my Department to amend its Major Incident Plan as a result of lessons learned for the remainder of the Winter period 2010/11. The amended Plan included, amongst other important areas, a new major event category of 'major emergency', improved communications and further development of website and call handling facilities to provide better information to customers.

Following publication of the investigation reports into the major incident which were commissioned by the Northern Ireland Executive and completed by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation and two individual appointees, NI Water has produced an action plan to address all recommendations that are within its power and control arising from these investigation reports.

Fares on Public Transport

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration he has given to reducing or removing fares for people with a disability using public transport.

(AQW 616/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Free travel is currently only available to men and women aged 60 and over, people who are registered blind, and holders of a War Disablement Pension.

There are no plans at present to extend the provision of the Concessionary Fares Scheme. However, should resources become available in the future, I would be keen to provide free travel to those categories of people with disabilities currently in receipt of half-fare travel.

My Department also provides funding to the Door-To-Door transport scheme which provides low cost, local transport in 29 urban areas for people with disabilities or who cannot avail of mainstream public transport. The Rural Transport Fund also supports community transport groups to provide transport in rural areas to people with reduced mobility.

Traffic Light and Pedestrian Schemes: North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what (i) traffic light schemes; and (ii) pedestrian schemes are planned for the North Down area in the 2012/13 financial year.

(AQW 621/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the 2012/13 Programme of Works for the North Down area is not yet available.

However, details of the 2011/12 Programme of Works for the North Down area, including traffic management and pedestrian measures, is contained in Council Report for North Down Area for Spring 2011 and can be accessed on the following website:

<http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=7192>

NI Water

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development why NI Water (i) restructured its services in the Ballymena area, which resulted in six job losses in the Derry area; and (ii) moved the Craigavon managed metering services to Ballymena.

(AQW 633/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) following an efficiency review of its customer connections function, the work was streamlined and centralised in Ballymena to improve service delivery to developers. None of the customer connections work was undertaken in Londonderry, so there was no loss of jobs in that area as a result of the review.

With regard to (ii), the manager role for metering services, formerly based in Craigavon, became vacant in 2009 and the post was advertised internally as being available at one of a number of NIW locations in order to attract a wider pool of eligible applicants. The successful applicant's preferred location, and one that could organisationally be accommodated by NIW, was Ballymena.

CEO of NI Water

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) whether departmental officials were advised by the General Counsel and Company Secretary of NI Water, in June 2010, of concerns in relation to the CEO of NI Water; and (ii) if so, what action was taken by the departmental officials.

(AQW 634/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Any such information would be deemed sensitive personal information under the terms of the Data Protection Act. Thus, without prejudice to this question or any other request for similar information, and in accordance with the legislation I can neither confirm nor deny the situation referred to.

On-Street Parking Charges

Mr Hilditch asked Minister for Regional Development whether he will consider reviewing the proposal to introduce on-street parking charges in provincial towns, particularly on Bank Holidays, in order to attract visitors.

(AQW 638/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am currently carrying out a review of my Department's proposal to introduce new on-street parking charges in towns and cities across Northern Ireland. I intend to make an announcement on this issue in due course.

I can further advise that for locations where on-street charges already apply, charges are not enforced on the following public holidays:

- New Year's Day (or day in lieu);
- Easter Monday;
- 12th and 13th July (or days in lieu); and
- 25th and 26th December (or days in lieu).

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what legislation his Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) the following years of this mandate.

(AQW 639/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: At this stage I intend to introduce the following items of legislation during 2011/12:

- The Belfast International Airport (Control Over Land) Order (NI)
- The Coleraine (Transfer of Harbour Undertaking) Order (NI)
- Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (NI),
- Rail Vehicle Accessibility (Application for Exemption Orders) Regulations,
- Railways (Safety Management) (Amendment) Regulations,
- The Passenger Right's and Obligations (Exemptions) Regulations,
- Train Driving Licences and Certificates (Amendment) Regulations.
- Approximately 140 x traffic regulations, roads, road races and abandonment orders.

2012/13

Approximately 140 Secondary items of legislation covering traffic regulations, roads, road races and abandonment orders.

2013/14

Approximately 140 Secondary items of legislation covering traffic regulations, roads, road races and abandonment orders.

2014/15

Approximately 140 Secondary items of legislation covering traffic regulations, roads, road races and abandonment orders.

Departmental legislation programmes are continuously under review and tailored to meet business, health and safety, EU and any other requirements.

Traffic Calming Measures

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development what traffic calming measures are planned for the (i) Carrickfergus; and (ii) Larne areas in 2011/12.

(AQW 669/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that, subject to the successful completion of the legislative processes, it plans to construct traffic calming measures in the following areas of Carrickfergus during 2011/12 financial year:

- Alexander Road - incorporating Dromore Road, Trailcock Road, Castleburn Road, Carrickburn Road and Downshire Gardens;
- Prospect Heights - incorporating Sandringham Heights and Windslow Heights; and
- Station Road, Greenisland, which will include Upper Station Road.

In relation to the Larne area, my Department's Roads Service has advised that Traffic Calming measures, in the form of road humps, have already been introduced on part of the Linn Road. Enhanced warning signage, incorporating flashing lights and additional road markings, will also be provided on the approaches to Linn Primary School and Ballycarry Primary School.

Further traffic calming measures are also planned for Upper Cairncastle Road following completion of resurfacing works, which is programmed for August/September 2011.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 684/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below contains details of expenditure on renting storage space in each of the past three financial years by my Department. The table captures details of all expenditure related to storage rental including new additions to storage, record retrievals and returns to storage:

Financial Year	Expenditure £
2010-11	4,179.40
2009-10	6,472.12
2008-09	4,286.19

Public Transport

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps his Department is taking to encourage or incentivise the use of public transport by people with a disability.

(AQW 689/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is continuing to implement its Accessible Transport Strategy through a series of Action Plans aimed at enabling people with disabilities to participate more fully in society, enjoy greater independence and experience a better quality of life.

The current Action Plan includes a number of measures designed to encourage or incentivise the use of public transport by people with disabilities including better awareness training for transport staff, improvements to services, infrastructure and information provision and research on the uptake of concessionary fares.

Additionally the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities with an annual budget of £4.6 million provides support to services such as Shopmobility and the Door-to-Door transport scheme; and

The Rural Transport Fund, with an annual budget of £4.75 million provides support to Rural Community Transport Partnerships and Translink to offer a range of transport services to people with reduced mobility, including those with disabilities, living in rural areas across Northern Ireland.

My Department also continues to make substantial funding available to enable Translink to improve the accessibility of its services. This includes the purchase of new low floor buses, upgrading of railway stations with ramps and halts and the purchase of new accessible trains.

On 15 June 2011 I launched a Travel Safe Guide for people with learning disabilities. This Guide has been developed in partnership with a number of stakeholders as a learning tool to help people with learning disabilities how to travel safely and independently on public transport.

My officials continue to work closely with transport providers and representative groups such as IMTAC to address transport accessibility issues for both older people and people with a disability

Sewerage Infrastructure in Newcastle

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline (i) the works planned for the sewerage infrastructure in Newcastle; and (ii) when these works will be completed.

(AQW 743/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it has undertaken a substantial programme of sewer network improvements in Newcastle and all work has been completed with the exception of the Castlepark Storm Retention Tank which is scheduled for completion later this year.

To ensure compliance with the revised Bathing Water Directive, NI Water is also planning to upgrade the existing wastewater treatment works at the harbour area. The project, which is currently at tender stage, is scheduled to commence on site in November 2011 with completion expected by May 2013.

Unadopted Roads in Private Housing Estates

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he intends to hold discussions with the National House-Building Council about developers who have been unable to complete roads in private housing estates.

(AQW 773/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I currently do not have any firm plans to hold discussions with the National House-Building Council (NHBC), regarding developers who have been unable to complete roads in private housing estates.

However, I can advise that my Department's Roads Service recently met with NHBC's Regional Director for Northern Ireland to discuss such issues, including the use of road bonds to complete roads in housing developments, where the developer is unable to carry out the work.

Proposed A5 Dual Carriageway Project

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development when he will announce his decision on whether he will proceed with the proposed A5 dual carriageway project.

(AQW 789/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The A5 scheme is currently the subject of a Public Inquiry. It is expected that the Independent Inspector's Report of the Public Inquiry will be presented to the Department before the end of this year.

I therefore intend to consider the Independent Inspector's report and proposed investment levels across my Department, including the impact of Budget 2010 on the strategic roads programme, before making any announcement on the proposed scheme.

Water Treatment Works

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of complaints his Department has received from (a) the Northern Ireland Environment Agency; and (b) the public, and others, in relation to the spreading of material from Water Treatment Works; and (ii) what plans there are to address this issue.

(AQW 797/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has not received any complaints in relation to the spreading of material from Water Treatment Works.

I am advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the residuals from the water treatment process are no longer spread on land owned by it but disposed of to licensed landfill sites. In the past two years NIW received only one complaint from a member of the public about the practice of spreading water treatment residuals on its land.

Rail Halt at Culmore, Portstewart and Downhill, Castlerock

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to provide a rail halt at (i) Culmore, Portstewart; and (ii) Downhill, Castlerock.

(AQW 798/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink do not have provision within their current Capital Plan for a rail halt at (i) Culmore, Portstewart and (ii) Downhill, Castlerock. There are no current plans for such halts to be developed within existing budgets as agreed at Executive level. Translink's priority at this point is to ensure essential safety works are carried out between Coleraine and Londonderry over the next two years. Budgetary provision has been secured for this project.

Traffic Calming Measures

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to introduce traffic calming measures on the Maybuoy Road, Garvagh and the St Columba's Park area in Garvagh.

(AQW 799/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that Mayboy Road and St Columba's Park, Garvagh, do not meet the criteria for consideration for traffic calming measures, as the roads are not within an urban area. Therefore, Roads Service has no plans to introduce traffic calming measures at these locations.

Defective or Negligent Roads and Footpaths

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development how much compensation has been paid to claimants for (i) personal injuries; and (ii) damage to vehicles as a result of defective or negligent roads and footpaths in each of the last two years.

(AQW 800/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The particulars of the compensation payments are set out in the table below.

Year	Personal Injury Compensation Roads	Personal Injury Compensation Footpaths	Vehicle Damage Compensation Roads	Vehicle Damage Compensation Footpaths
2009/10	£872,297.11	£772,277.43	£201,980.14	£11,601.77
2010/11	£1,009,088.41	£892,596.37	£301,231.42	£2,230.74

Grit Boxes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the criteria used to determine the location of a grit box; and whether he has any plans to review or change the criteria.

(AQW 807/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Salt bins or grit piles may be provided for use by the public, on a self help basis, on roads which do not qualify for inclusion onto the gritting schedule, providing the necessary criteria are met. There are no limits placed on the number of salt bins which may be provided, although they will not normally be provided within 100m of another bin.

Roads Service will consider the provision of a salt bin when the following criteria are met:

- the location in question must be on the publically maintained road network;
- the gradient of the road in question must be over 5%;
- no reasonable alternative route shall be available; and
- the subject road attains a minimum overall score, derived using a specific formula, where points are awarded depending on road geometry, residential usage, community welfare and commercial usage.

Salt boxes can also be provided to schools that are regularly affected by severe wintry weather.

New bins will not be provided unless requested by a member of the public, who also agrees to spread the salt provided.

You will appreciate Roads Service already commits significant resources to maintain approximately 4,200 salt bins provided on public roads which represents an increase of over 700 over the last two seasons.

In light of the significant level of resources already deployed, and based on the fact that the number of salt bins is increasing significantly to deal with public demand, I currently have no plans to review the criteria used for the placement of grit boxes.

Ballyholme Beach in Bangor

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps NI Water is taking to ensure that the problems relating to the water quality at Ballyholme Beach in Bangor are permanently resolved.

(AQW 831/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that following the introduction of the new North Down/Ards Wastewater Treatment Works at Donaghadee, an investment of £44m, NIW is focussing on the upgrade of the sewerage infrastructure in the Bangor area. NIW has already carried out improvement work to sewage pumping stations in the Ballyholme area and over the next three years it plans to invest approximately £7m on a capital works programme to upgrade and rationalise combined sewer overflows in the wider Bangor catchment at Carnalea, Rathmore Stream, Bangor Marina, Seacliff, Clandeboye Stream, Lukes Point and Orlock/Sandeel. While NIW cannot address the impact of agricultural runoff to streams, and ultimately to the foreshore, it believes that the comprehensive programme of pumping station and sewer upgrades, along with ongoing maintenance

improvements will make a significant improvement to water quality at Ballyholme and the coastal area in the general vicinity.

On-Street Car Parking Charges

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed on-street car parking charges for town centres.

(AQW 842/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In response to the potential impact on retail trade, I have initiated a review of the policy of introducing new on-street parking charges in towns throughout Northern Ireland.

I intend to announce my decision in due course.

Street Furniture

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) his Department's policy on the removal of advertising material and cable ties from road signs, traffic lights and lamp posts; (ii) how often this street furniture is cleaned; and (iii) whether it is intended to clean street furniture more regularly in areas visited by a high number of tourists.

(AQW 861/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that advertising hoardings are normally subject to planning application and any infringements of planning laws would normally be pursued under the relevant planning legislation.

Where advertising hoardings are erected illegally in or on a road, Roads Service has the powers to remove and to recover any expenses that it reasonably incurs in doing so, under Article 87 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993.

Roads Service carries out regular inspections of all public roads and footways to ensure that essential maintenance works are identified and completed as necessary. During these inspections all defects are noted, including for example, defective signs and signs requiring cleaning to improve their visibility. The frequency of these inspections depends on the type of road and the volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Town centres and major traffic routes are inspected monthly, while all other roads and footways are inspected at either two or four monthly intervals.

These standards were last reviewed in 2006 and are still deemed to be appropriate. There are currently no plans to alter these arrangements in areas visited by high numbers of tourists.

Yellow Lines on Bruce Street and Holmes Street, Belfast

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he intends to remove, where possible, the single and double yellow lines on Bruce Street and Holmes Street, Belfast, to allow for extra city centre parking.

(AQW 862/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has no plans to remove the existing waiting restrictions on Bruce Street or Holmes Street in order to provide extra city centre parking.

Parking Fines

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development how much revenue has been generated from parking fines in the (i) Carrickfergus; and (ii) Larne areas since January 2011.

(AQW 864/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that income from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) is not compiled on a town by town basis. However, I can advise that total PCN income from 1

Jan 2011 to 31 May 2011 was £1.91 million, with 1.0% of all PCNs issued in Larne and 1.4% of all PCNs issued in Carrickfergus.

Reservoirs in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development which reservoirs in the North Down area are owned by his Department.

(AQW 905/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it owns the following reservoirs in the North Down area.

Reservoir Name	Location
Hollywood High Impounding	Church Road, Hollywood
Creightons Green Impounding	Whinney Hill, Hollywood
Ballysallagh Upper	Ballysallagh Rd., Craigantlet
Ballysallagh Lower	Millbrook Rd., Craigantlet
Conlig Low Impounding (old)	Main St, Conlig
Conlig Lower Impounding	Old Bangor Rd, Conlig
Portavo Impounding	Orlock Rd, Groomsport

Easibus Service

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he intends to review the decision to discontinue the Easibus service by 2014.

(AQW 1034/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Easibus services in Bangor and Londonderry were discontinued in June 2010. This decision was based on an assessment of alternative services provided by Translink and the existence of Door-to-Door services provided under contract. At this time I have no plans to review this decision. No decision has been made to discontinue Easibus services in Belfast by 2014 and the Department continues to provide support to Translink for services in that location.

Any review of Easibus Belfast will take into account usage levels and the existence of other Translink and Door-to-Door services to ensure the most efficient and effective use of public expenditure to meet customer demand for transport schemes used by people with disabilities and those with reduced mobility. It will also take account of Translink financial and service plans generally, which are reviewed annually.

NI Water

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions he intends to have with NI Water in relation to introducing an exemption/compensation allowance for customers who received high bills for the period covering 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011, as a result of the severe weather during December 2010 and January 2011.

(AQW 1061/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are many recommendations coming out of the Freeze/Thaw report which Northern Ireland Water (NIW) is implementing and I am following progress in all those areas identified. However, this is an operational matter for NIW. The allowances available to customers in respect of supply pipe leakages are set out in the company's "Scheme of Charges" (5.25-5.29 of 2011/12) which is approved by the Utility Regulator. It is important that customers with meters regularly check them to detect any leakage. As the freeze/thaw incident demonstrated, unchecked leakage can have very dramatic consequences for the entire network. NIW has assured me that it will work with customers

who have received exceptionally large bills in a sympathetic manner, with a view to reaching a mutually agreed repayment profile.

Water Supply for the Knockalossoet to Corranry Area in Rosslea, Co. Fermanagh

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) for an update on plans to alleviate the intermittent and low pressure water supply for the Knockalossoet to Corranry area in Rosslea, Co. Fermanagh; and (ii) when this work will start and finish.

(AQW 1075/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that a water distribution Zonal Study, carried out for area serving Knockalossoet to Corranry recommended dividing the existing distribution area into two supply sections. This will be undertaken by construction of a new booster pumping station, the extension of the watermain, and the installation of a number of new boundary valves. This will permit a more sustainable supply of water to the existing lower lying properties, with the other higher lying properties receiving improved water pressure through the booster station. The civil work has been added to an existing contract being undertaken in the Tyrone/Fermanagh areas and has been classified as "high priority" to be advanced in the contractor's programme of work. Subject to receiving statutory approvals from Northern Ireland Electricity, Roads Service and Planning Service, it is expected that work will start on site in October this year and that the infrastructure will be operational before the winter.

Roads: Maintenance

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development how his Department and Roads Service intend to address the roads structural maintenance backlog.

(AQO 172/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would like to reassure the Member that the maintenance of road and footway surfaces and their underlying structure continues to be a high priority for my Department's Roads Service. However, there are many pressures on the resources available and the road maintenance programme must compete for funding along with the many other Departmental spending programmes.

At 2011 prices, £116.5 million per annum is required to maintain the structural integrity of the entire network at frequencies in line with good practice. The structural maintenance budget for 2011/12 is currently estimated at £88 million, leaving a shortfall of £28.5million.

Roads Service officials acknowledge that unplanned reactive patching work of road surfaces does not provide good value for money. Nonetheless, in the short term, such work is essential to maintain the serviceability of roads and footways, where localised failures occur.

It is widely recognised that an optimum level of expenditure on reactive patching would be in the region of a tenth of the structural maintenance budget. The current level of expenditure on reactive maintenance would not, therefore be considered to be sustainable, as the cost of relatively expensive patching to avoid public liability claims and maintain road safety, is drawing scarce funds away from better value for money resurfacing and surface dressing activities.

It is difficult to estimate how the level of patching would increase if the underinvestment in structural maintenance continues. This is because, as the level of underfunding and backlog increases, the rate of deterioration and the need for patching is also likely to increase. The numbers of public liability claims and their associated costs are also likely to increase.

Of course, it is always the case that if additional funding was available, more maintenance work would be carried out, but I can assure the Member that Roads Service will continue to make strong bids for additional structural maintenance funds. In the meantime, Roads Service will continue to make the best use of resources available to it to develop and maintain the road network.

A32 Omagh to Enniskillen

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the three proposed major road schemes on the A32.

(AQO 174/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has developed a strategy to improve the A32 route between Omagh and Enniskillen through a series of road improvements to be undertaken on a rolling programme. The highest priority schemes, identified within the current programme, are at Drumskinny, Shannaragh and Cornamuck, which together represent a capital investment of £13.5 million on this route.

Advance site works were undertaken on a 0.9 km on-line widening scheme at Drumskinny in the 2009/2010 financial year. It is anticipated that a contract for the remainder of the works can be awarded in September of this year with a view to completion by the end of the current financial year.

At Shannaragh, design work is substantially complete on a 2.2 km off-line realignment scheme and the procurement process is now underway with a view to awarding a contract for construction in December of this year.

Design work is also well advanced on the third scheme, a 1.4 km off-line improvement at Cornamuck. Timing of the works will be dependent upon the availability of funds.

There has also been significant progress on the A32 Cherrymount Link Road in Enniskillen. Tender submissions for the completion contract were due for return on or before 16 June 2011. It is hoped to award the contract in September to facilitate the completion of the works before the end of the 2012/2013 financial year.

Roads Service remains committed to delivering a programme of improvement works along this route. However, the timing of further works will be dependent on the extent of subsequent funding allocations to my Department.

Water Supply

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he intends to take to ensure that water supplies are at minimum risk of disruption during the coming winter months.

(AQO 175/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As Minister I have responsibility for the policy and legislative framework and for appointing the Northern Ireland Water Board to deliver water and sewerage services. Under the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006, operational matters are the responsibility of NI Water.

After the major incident over the Christmas 2010/New Year 2011 period which led to water supply interruptions for many consumers, NI Water has amended its Major Incident Plan as a result of lessons learnt. It is implementing the relevant recommendations of the review into the incident and has already made significant improvements to its communications capacity.

The implementation of these actions will allow NI Water to be better prepared for similar weather events and will reduce the risk of interruptions to the water supply. Of course, no action could completely ensure that there was no risk to supplies given a repeat of the severity of last winter's weather.

Park-and-Ride Facilities: East Antrim

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to increase park and ride facilities in the East Antrim area, adjacent to the Larne railway line.

(AQO 176/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are plans to provide over 60 spaces at a Park and Ride facility at Jordanstown Station. This project is currently being assessed by Translink and will be subject to approval by my Department.

There is also a newly completed Park and Ride facility at Carrickfergus. This has increased capacity from 126 to 295 spaces. This represents a significant investment and greatly increased capacity at this popular location.

In order to be effective Park and Ride should not be considered in isolation but must be part of an integrated transport strategy which takes account of the long-term transport needs and priorities. In support of the review of the Regional Transportation Strategy, my Department is therefore carrying out a strategic review of Park and Ride facilities with the aim of developing proposals for future provision, which would offer the best prospect of maximising modal shift. Whilst the review is in its final stages and the Department has secured some funding in its budget for Park and Ride, as with all areas, the implementation of Park and Ride will be taken forward in a more constrained budgetary context and this may impact on the ability to deliver priority projects that may be identified in the review.

Compensation Claims

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he is taking to reduce the legal costs involved in compensation claims made against his Department.

(AQO 177/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department receives approximately 4,500 claims every year. It is the Department's policy to robustly defend any case that it does not consider justified, and indeed almost three-quarters of all claims are successfully defended. Where possible the Department will always seek to recover legal defence costs from unsuccessful claimants. Where there is no defence it is our policy to settle claims at as early a stage as possible and also at the lowest cost in both terms of compensation and other related costs.

The Department has a single Service Level Agreement with the Departmental Solicitor's Office. This agreement provides for the monitoring of both the quality and cost of legal services provided to the Department.

Ballynahinch Bypass

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on Roads Service's plans to construct a bypass for Ballynahinch.

(AQO 178/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As Minister for Regional Development, I am determined to ensure that there are improvements across the Strategic Road Network, which will enhance safety, reduce journey times and provide value for money.

On that basis, I intend to consider the proposed investment across my Department, including the impact of Budget 2010 on the strategic roads programme, and to explore opportunities to bring forward schemes, such as the A24 Ballynahinch Bypass proposal.

Department for Social Development

Urban Regeneration Company ILEX

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how much public money has been spent on salaries, maintenance, capital costs, legal costs and other associated expenditure in relation to the urban regeneration company ILEX since its inception to 31 March 2011.

(AQW 497/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): Information on how much public money has been spent on salaries, maintenance, capital costs, legal costs and other associated expenditure in relation to the urban regeneration company Ilex since its inception to 31 March 2011 is summarised in the table below. All figures are shown in thousands (£'000's).

	2003/04 £'000	2004/05 £'000	2005/06 £'000	2006/07 £'000	2007/08 £'000	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	Total £'000
Salaries	59	317	343	556	690	777	1,034	998	4,773
Maintenance	12	3	1	5	0	0	0	0	21
Capital Costs	99	5	38	3	8	1,827	4,481	3,850	10,312
Legal Costs	7	13	8	32	9	22	61	25	176
Other Associated Expenditure	288	1,299	1,474	1,636	2,903	1,704	2,366	3,149	14,818
Total Public Funding	467	1,637	1,863	2,232	3,610	4,329	7,941	8,022	30,101

Notes

Ilex is a non-departmental public body funded by my Department and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). The public monies reported include my Department and OFMDFM funding. All figures up to 2009/10 reflect the amounts as published in Ilex's annual statutory accounts, with 2010/11 figures based upon Ilex's management accounts.

During the financial years 2008/09- 2010/11, Ilex managed capital works at Fort George and Ebrington to a total value of £10,105K which were classed as 'Assets Under Construction' by my Department & OFMDFM. These costs are included in the 'capital costs' figure in the table above.

In addition to the above, £13,023K was spent on the Peace (Foot & Cycle) bridge across the River Foyle under the Shared Space programme of PEACE III. Of the total costs, my Department has contributed £2,075K to this project in match funding up to 31 March 2011.

Rural Priority Areas

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development what additional help is available to tackle rural unfitness and disrepair in the ten wards which were identified by the Housing Executive as Rural Priority Areas.

(AQW 571/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that there is no longer any additional assistance specifically available for Rural Priority Areas due to the reduced level of funding for the Private Sector Grants system. Discretionary grants are still available for dealing with unfitness but these are awarded on the basis of exceptional circumstances only, regardless of the geographic location. Mandatory grants, such as Disabled Facilities Grants and statutory Repair Grants continue to be available across Northern Ireland.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 625/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total amount spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years is detailed below.

Financial Year	£
2008-09	17,899.12

Financial Year	£
2009-10	23,329.37
2010-11	20,718.24

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what legislation his Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) the following years of this mandate.

(AQW 641/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In terms of primary legislation, I anticipate introducing, subject to Executive approval, Bills in relation to Pensions and Welfare Reform in 2011/12 along with a Bill on Shop Opening Hours. I will also be considering legislation in a number of areas including housing, further reform of gambling and liquor licensing in the following years. Throughout 2011/12 and the remainder of the mandate I will also bring forward a range of subordinate legislation in relation to social security, housing and urban regeneration.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people who applied for Disability Living Allowance in the (i) North Down; and (ii) Ards areas were refused the benefit in each of the last five years.

(AQW 721/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not available. The data for Disability Living Allowance refusals/disallowances is held on the Department for Work and Pensions IT Systems and is only available on a Northern Ireland wide basis. This information is provided in the table below. The data cannot be broken down by Local Council area as the Department for Work and Pensions IT Systems are not configured to capture refusals/disallowances in the same manner as it does for those in receipt of benefit.

Year	Number disallowed DLA
2006/07	13,891
2007/08	16,992
2008/09	15,277
2009/10	14,539
2010/11	12,500
Total	73,199

Job Seekers Allowance and Income Support

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development how many people were claiming (i) Job Seekers Allowance; and (ii) Income Support for the years ending (a) April 2005; (b) April 2006; (c) April 2007; (d) April 2008; (e) April 2009; (f) April 2010; and (g) April 2011 in the districts of (i) Magherafelt; (ii) Cookstown; (iii) Dungannon; (iv) Omagh; and (v) Strabane.

(AQW 732/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is set out in the tables below.

TABLE 1: JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE

District Council Area	April 2005	April 2006	April 2007	April 2008	April 2009	April 2010	April 2011
Cookstown	356	373	331	341	884	1090	1006
Dungannon	537	456	420	481	1409	1619	1737
Magherafelt	325	348	265	299	985	1128	1046
Omagh	795	737	627	620	1240	1531	1587
Strabane	1012	1085	996	1010	1383	1602	1743

TABLE 2: INCOME SUPPORT

District Council Area	April 2005	April 2006	April 2007	April 2008	April 2009	April 2010	April 2011
Cookstown	2028	1951	1859	1752	1715	1593	1514
Dungannon	3141	3045	2987	2829	2704	2517	2390
Magherafelt	1689	1629	1598	1513	1533	1414	1306
Omagh	3076	2990	2924	2896	2851	2649	2531
Strabane	3216	3112	3078	2992	2893	2732	2582

Housing Executive Properties

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties have been boarded up and unused for over 6 months in each district.

(AQW 756/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the number of Northern Ireland Housing Executive properties that have been boarded up and unused for over six months in each Housing Executive district.

District	Boarded Up Over 6 Months
West Belfast	12
East Belfast	4
North Belfast	70
Shankill	164
South Belfast	322
Area Total	572
Bangor	7
N'ards	27
Castlereagh	0
Lisburn (Antrim St)	7
Lisburn (Diary Farm)	0
Downpatrick	5
Area Total	46

District	Boarded Up Over 6 Months
Banbridge	0
Newry	0
Armagh	0
Lurgan/Brownlow	91
Portadown	1
Dungannon	3
Fermanagh	4
Area Total	99
Ballymena	9
Antrim	1
N'abbey 1	0
N'abbey 2	0
Carrick	0
Larne	91
Ballycastle	0
Ballymoney	0
Coleraine	0
Area Total	101
Waterloo Place	0
Waterside	1
Collon Tce	0
Limavady	0
Magherafelt	0
Strabane	0
Omagh	1
Cookstown	0
Area Total	2
NI. Total	820

Housing Executive Properties

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether the (i) age; (ii) condition; and (iii) profile of a Housing Executive property is taken into consideration when deciding when a work scheme should commence.

(AQW 774/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that its planned maintenance programme considers age, condition and profile, as well as a number of other factors. In general, the criteria considered for their major works programmes is as follows:-

- Heating – priority is given to those homes which do not have programmable heating, mainly room heaters and open fires. Economy 7 appliances may also be included to address fuel poverty issues. Gas/oil boilers have a life expectancy of 15 years and this is also considered when developing programmes.
- Kitchens – are programmed based on a life expectancy of 20 years. Condition and space/layout are also considered.
- Health and safety – these programmes address health and safety issues as well as legislative requirements. Recent examples include asbestos removal, carbon monoxide detectors, smoke alarms and fire doors.
- Special schemes – these address other issues such as re-roofing, lift replacement and are initiated when an element has exceeded its life expectancy.

The level of work in a particular category is dependant on the amount of finance available

Housing Executive Properties

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what criteria are used to prioritise external work schemes for Housing Executive properties.

(AQW 775/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the main criteria used to prioritise external work schemes is as follows:-

- Requirement to wind and weatherproof all Housing Executive properties
- Condition of particular elements such as windows
- Age of the property
- Repairs/maintenance history of the property
- Feedback from residents

Housing Executive Properties

Mr Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive requires properties with self-contained flats which have been created by conversion to be registered as houses of multiple-occupancy regardless of whether they are occupied by one person or a married couple.

(AQW 785/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A house is regarded as in multiple occupation if it is a person's main residence and is occupied by more than two persons not of the same family. Where a house has been converted into self contained flats, it is still considered a "house" for the purposes of multiple occupation however it will only be registered under the Housing Executive's HMO registration scheme if there are more than two persons living there who are not part of the same family unit.

Former Police Station in Belcoo, County Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the impact his decision to remove house building powers from certain Housing Associations will have on the redevelopment of the former police station in Belcoo, County Fermanagh.

(AQW 877/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The proposed scheme on the site of the former PSNI building at 9 Main Street, Belcoo for 8 general needs units of accommodation was previously programmed to be delivered by Helm Housing Association.

Following Helm's suspension from the Social Housing Development Programme the Housing Executive are in the process of nominating another Housing Association to take the scheme forward for delivery during 2011/12.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Northern Ireland Assembly Website

Mr Kinahan asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) the progress made on the development of a new Assembly website and a timescale for its delivery; and (ii) what plans it has to (a) extend the search options available to the public through the Assembly Website for Assembly Questions, and other Plenary business; and (b) create search options for the Official Report.

(AQW 567/11-15)

Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):

- (i) The project to redevelop the Assembly website aims to provide a site that is modern, fresh and engaging with dynamic content that will improve the user experience.

Following comprehensive consultation and research with internal and external stakeholders the design phase of the project was completed earlier this year. The procurement of a content management system that will be used to publish content to the website is nearing completion.

This system will streamline and improve how the Assembly's information is published on the website allowing individual business areas to edit, update and maintain their own content. The current timescale for delivery of the new website is in the autumn this year.

- (ii) A key part of the project to redevelop the Assembly website is its integration with the Assembly Information Management System (AIMS) which will allow visitors to the Assembly website to take advantage of the search options for Assembly Questions etc. that is currently only available to those inside the Assembly and will also be used to publish the Official Report to the website when that part of AIMS is released. It is therefore anticipated that the new website will offer a better search solution for all users.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 24 June 2011

(AQW 4547/09)

My Department made funding available as follows in the 2006/07 and 2007/08 financial years:

(1) **Ulster-Scots Academy:**

2006-2007

£392,412

2007-2008

£405,189

(ii) **Ulster-Scots projects**

Through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's funding programmes (Annual Support for Organisations Programme, Lottery, Awards for All, Arts Development Fund, and Support for Individual Artists Programme) funding has been made available as follows:

2006-2007

£65,739

2007-2008

£37,240

In addition, the Ulster-Scots Agency has received a budgetary allocation of £2.557m for the calendar year 2007 and £3.315m for the calendar year 2008. In accordance with its statutory remit, the Agency supports funding through its Financial Assistance Scheme to organisations and groups involved in projects, festivals and events relating to Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language.



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