

Written Answers to Questions

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Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 1 July 2011

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Funding for Victims Groups

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given that the core funding for many victims groups expired on 31 March 2011, to detail the reasons for the gap in payments to those groups under the Strategic Support Fund.

(AQW 94/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): There will be no gap in funding for groups under the Strategic Support fund. Groups have been notified of their awards for the 2011/2012 financial year.

Freedom of Information Requests

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the number of Freedom of Information requests received by their Department during the 2007-11 mandate; (ii) the number of requests answered within the stipulated time; (iii) the number of instances in which the Information Commissioner had to intervene; (iv) the number of requests which remain outstanding; (v) the average time taken to answer a request; and (vi) the longest time taken to answer a request.

(AQW 114/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In answer to your question:

- (i) 564
- (ii) 422
- (iii) The Information Commissioner has been asked to intervene on 11 occasions.
- (iv) 35
- (v) The Department does not hold this information
- (vi) 192 days.

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the establishment of the Victims and Survivors Service.

(AQW 194/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It is anticipated that we will have the Victims and Survivors Service established as an organisation with key personnel in post by autumn 2011.

Work has been ongoing within the Department this year in taking forward the design element of the Service. Progress has been made in the areas of individual assessment, management information

systems, evaluation mechanisms, service delivery and standards. A recruitment plan for the Service has been developed. A business case exploring all of the potential options for the organisational model of the Service has been drafted and is in the process of obtaining the necessary approvals. The agreed model will be implemented following final approval.

Significant changes have already been made this year to the funding schemes for individual victims and victims groups, to move them towards a needs-based approach in preparation for establishment of the Victims and Survivors Service.

While the process of developing the Service is ongoing, we will continue to deliver support and resources to the sector. We have allocated £50 million to meet the needs of victims and survivors over the next 4 years.

Consultancy Procurement

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps have been taken to strengthen expenditure approval processes in their Department, and its arm's-length bodies, particularly in relation to consultancy procurement; and the reason for any such changes.

(AQW 474/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Policy and procedures for the approval of spend, including consultancy spend, have been reissued to all staff in OFMDFM and its Arms Length Bodies by the Accounting Officer. Refresher training on the preparation of economic appraisals and the approval requirements for spending proposals is also being delivered to staff.

All Departmental proposals for the use of consultants with a value of £10,000 or more require the approval of the Accounting Officer, Ministers, and the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). The consultancy delegation available to OFMDFM's Arms Length Bodies has correspondingly been reduced to £5,000, with the exception of the Strategic Investment Board which is subject to separate controls.

A Casework Sub-Committee of the OFMDFM Departmental Board exercises a review, challenge, and approval role in relation to spending proposals with a cumulative value of £1 million or greater over a three-year period, and/or which require the approval of DFP.

The skills base of Departmental staff is also being strengthened through the addition of specialist staff from audit, economics, and accounting backgrounds.

These steps have been taken in response to identified weaknesses in the approval processes in OFMDFM and its Arm's-Length Bodies following reviews undertaken by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and DFP, and the Department's internal test drilling exercise on the preparation of economic appraisals.

2010/12 Victims and Survivors Groups' Core Funding Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the groups who applied to the 2010/12 Victims and Survivors Groups' Core Funding Scheme; (ii) those groups which were successful; (iii) the amount of funding they received; and (iv) when they received the funding.

(AQW 570/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Core Funding Scheme for groups working with victims and survivors ended on 31 March 2011. It was replaced by the Strategic Support Fund. Victims groups could choose to apply to one of two application windows for support under the Strategic Support Fund: an 18-month programme of funding beginning 1 October 2010 or a 12-month programme of funding beginning 1 April 2011. There was no open application process for victims groups to apply to the Core Funding Scheme as this funding stream had been rolled forward on a yearly basis since it was established in 2003.

Public Assemblies Parades and Protest Body

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why their departmental budget allocation provides £2.2 million in 2013-14 and £2.39 million in 2014-15 for a Public Assemblies Parades and Protest Body when such a body has been rejected and is not provided for in legislation.

(AQW 696/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are committed, as outlined in the Hillsborough Castle Agreement of 5 February 2010, to establish a new and improved framework for the management and regulation of public assemblies, including parades and related protests.

It is our desire to proceed with this work by consensus of the key stakeholders during the course of this budget period. It is therefore prudent to plan and budget for any associated costs that may be incurred and these are currently recorded under the title of the Public Parades and Protest Body. If this is not realised, the funding can be redistributed in the in-year budget process monitoring.

We will continue to review our Budget plans, and the underlying assumptions underpinning those plans through the course of the four-year Budget period.

Budget Earmarked for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Groups

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much of their Department's budget for their four year term is currently earmarked for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups.

(AQW 725/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There is no current budget allocation earmarked for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups.

Procurement

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 477/11-15, to list the name of each supplier secured through each single tender action; and the date on which retrospective approval was granted by the Accounting Officer in each case.

(AQW 878/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The table below details the name of each supplier secured through each single tender action and the date on which retrospective approval was granted by the Accounting Officer.

SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS SINCE MAY 2007 WITH NO PRIOR ACCOUNTING OFFICER APPROVAL

Financial Year	Single Tender Action	Name of Supplier	Expenditure £	Accounting Officer Approval
2008-09	Safeguarding Policy	NSPCC	13,510	01/08/2007
2008-09	Consultation of Parents	Parents' Advice Centre	4,500	03/03/2008
2008-09	Public Appointment Survey	IPSOS	6,965	26/02/2009
2008-09	Review of Capital Asset Realisation Taskforce	Ed Vernon	51,750	04/02/2009
2009-10	Play and Leisure Policy	Playboard	270,000	24/03/2011

Financial Year	Single Tender Action	Name of Supplier	Expenditure £	Accounting Officer Approval
2010-11	NI Water Investigation	P Holder & H Moorhead	24,500	14/01/2011
2010-11	Software Licence and telephone support	Acorn IT Solutions Ltd	2,150	Retrospective approval to be sought
2010-11	Software Maintenance	Acorn IT Solutions Ltd	341	Retrospective approval to be sought
		Total Expenditure	£373,716	

North South Parliamentary Forum

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made on establishing the North South Parliamentary Forum.

(AQW 885/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The establishment of the North South Parliamentary Forum is primarily a matter for the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas. At the NSMC Plenary meeting held on 10 June Ministers noted the intention of the Ceann Comhairle and the Speaker to hold a joint meeting of the Working Groups in Dublin on 23 June 2011.

Suspension of a Senior Civil Servant

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will publish the findings of Sir Jon Shortridge's investigation into the events which led to the suspension of a senior civil servant in the Department for Regional Development.

(AQW 889/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The investigation commissioned by the Head of the NI Civil Service and carried out by Sir Jon Shortridge was part of an internal Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) management process as part of its disciplinary policy.

In accordance with the disciplinary policies and procedures contained in the NICS Human Resources Handbook and the obligations placed on employers by data protection legislation, the contents of Sir Jon's report will not be published. This was set out in letters sent by the Head of the NI Civil Service to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee and the Chair of the Regional Development Committee.

Suspension of a Senior Civil Servant

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, to date, who has been informed of the findings of Sir Jon Shortridge's investigation into the events which led to the suspension of a senior civil servant; and whether any Members of the Public Accounts Committee were informed of the decision to demote this senior civil servant prior to members of the press being informed.

(AQW 890/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Only people directly involved in the disciplinary process were aware of the findings of the Sir Jon Shortridge investigation.

The Head of the NI Civil Service informed the First Minister, the deputy First Minister, the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee and the Chair of the Regional Development Committee on the morning of 13 June 2011 of the outcome of the disciplinary process. No one else was informed prior to this.

Seven Principles of Public Life

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what consideration was given to the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' in the recent disciplinary action taken against the former Permanent Secretary of the Department for Regional Development.

(AQW 923/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Head of the NI Civil Service has advised us that he took the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' into consideration as part of the disciplinary process. The process was carried out in accordance with the disciplinary policies and procedures contained in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Human Resources Handbook.

Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives

Mrs Cochrane asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives since May 2007 that have received co-operation from (a) a Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies; and (b) any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation; and (ii) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which they intend to seek co-operation from these bodies.

(AQW 989/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There have been five departmental initiatives since May 2007 that have received co-operation from a Republic of Ireland Government Department, agency or nongovernmental organisation. The details are shown in the table below:

Details of Project, Scheme or Initiative	Name of ROI Government Department or Agency or Nongovernmental Organisations	Branch Name	Year
North West Gateway Initiative (NWGI)	Contact primarily with the Department of Foreign Affairs but the initiative involves most Departments north and south to varying degrees.	North South East West Team (NSEWT), OFMDFM	Initiated 2005 and re-launched 2008 following suspension
Establishment of the Children's Research Network for Ireland and Northern Ireland. OFMDFM research branch official attended meetings of the steering group. Steering group had circa 30 members mainly academics and third sector organisations but also ROI civil servants.	Centre for Effective Services (offices in both Belfast and Dublin)	Research Branch	2010/11
Attendance as advisory group member of the UNESCO Children and Youth Programme	University College Galway and UU Coleraine. Establishment of an all-Ireland research programme on Children and Youth.	Research Branch	2010/11

Details of Project, Scheme or Initiative	Name of ROI Government Department or Agency or Nongovernmental Organisations	Branch Name	Year
Messines - Maintenance of a war Memorial in Belgium.	Department of Social Welfare	Regeneration Sites Team OFMDFM - Financial provision only.	Ongoing project within OFMDFM for foreseeable future.
Development and Refurbishment of Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe	Department of Finance, Department of Foreign Affairs and Office of Public Works	European Policy & Co-ordination Unit (EPCU)	Project initiated in 2002 and concluded in 2010

There are currently no planned future departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which we intend to seek co-operation from a Republic of Ireland Government Department or its agency, or a Republic of Ireland nongovernmental organisation.

Suspension of a Senior Civil Servant

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the costs of Sir Jon Shortridge's investigation into the events which led to the suspension of a senior civil servant. **(AQW 1023/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We refer to our responses to AQW 3767/11 and AQW 4098/11. The costs of the investigation remain as provided in these answers.

Disciplinary Charges Against a Senior Civil Servant

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the independent board of inquiry that was convened to consider the disciplinary charges against a senior civil servant, to detail (i) the terms of reference; (ii) the members on the panel; and (iii) the cost of the inquiry. **(AQW 1024/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The independent board of inquiry was part of the disciplinary process which has been managed in accordance with the policy and procedures contained in the Northern Ireland Civil Service HR Handbook.

The terms of reference of the board of inquiry were set out in a letter from the Head of the NI Civil Service to each board of inquiry member as follows:

Sir John Shortridge has completed his investigation and following his report to me I have written setting out specific disciplinary charges and inviting Paul Priestly to reply in writing. The role of the board of inquiry, which will consist of 3 members, is to consider the facts of the case, taking account of the investigation report, any written response to the disciplinary charges, other relevant documentation and representations made at hearing as appropriate and submit a report to the Head of the NICS which will set out the opinion of the board of enquiry as to whether the offence has been committed and a recommendation on what, if any, disciplinary penalties should be imposed in accordance with NICS disciplinary policy. In conducting its proceedings the board will invite Paul Priestly to attend a hearing to answer the specific allegations of misconduct and to put forward any additional facts or information that he wishes to be taken into account.

On receipt of the board's report it will be for me to decide whether disciplinary action is appropriate. Should disciplinary action be taken then the officer has the right of appeal. All these procedures are in accordance with the NICS Staff Handbook.

The board of inquiry was comprised of Margaret Elliott CBE, Sir Patrick Haren and Sir John Semple.

The cost of the board of inquiry was £12,672.

Disciplinary Charges Against a Senior Civil Servant

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister who carried out the review in relation to a senior civil servant's appeal against the findings of the independent board of inquiry that was convened to consider the disciplinary charges against him,
(AQW 1025/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Head of the NI Civil Service has advised us that the disciplinary process has been managed in accordance with the policy and procedures contained in the Northern Ireland Civil Service HR Handbook.

The appeal was considered by an independent person, Sir Peter Housden, with no prior involvement in the case.

Social Investment Fund and the Social Protection Fund

Mr Craig asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made with the Social Investment Fund and the Social Protection Fund.
(AQW 1031/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our officials are currently engaged in discussions both with officials from other government departments and key stakeholders to develop a consultation paper on the Social Investment Fund.

It is hoped to issue this paper for a period of public consultation in the next few weeks.

In addition to the Social Investment Fund, the Executive proposes a Social Protection Fund that will assist those most in need within the wider community. The Social Protection Fund will target individuals and families facing hardship due to the current economic downturn.

This Fund will operate as an Executive Fund therefore we will be working with other departments to identify the most appropriate and effective means of targeting interventions at appropriate families and individuals.

Suspension of a Senior Civil Servant

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) when they will publish Sir Jon Shortridge's report on his investigation into the events which led to the suspension of a senior civil servant in the Department for Regional Development; (ii) why it took from November 2010 until now to take action against the senior civil servant; and (iii) whether the civil servant has had his salary reduced to Grade 3 level.
(AQW 1049/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We refer to our response to AQW 889/11-15 on the Sir Jon Shortridge report. The process was managed strictly in accordance with the disciplinary policy and procedures contained in the Northern Ireland Civil Service HR Handbook. The stages involved in this process have taken since November 2010 to complete.

The civil servant has been downgraded from his current civil service grade of Permanent Secretary (Grade 2) to Deputy Secretary (Grade 3). His salary has been reduced to Grade 3 level.

Social Investment Fund

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the criteria that will be applied to applications for funding under the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 1080/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our officials are currently engaged in discussions both with officials from other government departments and key stakeholders to develop a consultation paper on the Social Investment Fund. This paper will consider a range of issues including proposed application arrangements.

It is hoped to issue the paper for public consultation in the next few weeks.

Air Passenger Duty

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why the Executive did not respond to the Treasury's consultation on Air Passenger Duty.

(AQW 1096/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As the department with the policy lead on Air Passenger Duty, the Department of Finance and Personnel responded to the consultation, having sought the views of Executive members. We also raised the issue with both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer at our recent meetings with them.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Dickson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why the Executive did not respond to the Treasury's consultation on Air Passenger Duty.

(AQW 1103/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As the department with the policy lead on Air Passenger Duty, the Department of Finance and Personnel responded to the consultation, having sought the views of Executive members. We also raised the issue with both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer at our recent meetings with them.

Suspension of a Senior Civil Servant

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will publish Sir Jon Shortridge's report on his investigation into the events which led to the suspension of a senior civil servant in the Department for Regional Development.

(AQW 1167/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The investigation commissioned by the Head of the NI Civil Service and carried out by Sir Jon Shortridge was part of an internal Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) management process as part of its disciplinary policy.

In accordance with the disciplinary policies and procedures contained in the NICS Human Resources Handbook and the obligations placed on employers by data protection legislation, the contents of Sir Jon's report will not be published. This was set out in letters sent by the Head of the NI Civil Service to the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee and the Chair of the Regional Development Committee.

Department of Justice

Mr McNarry asked First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they have had with their Executive colleagues regarding the need for either a resolution of the Assembly or a second Act, as set out in the Northern Ireland Act 2009, to ensure that the Department of Justice is not dissolved on 1 May 2012.

(AQW 1175/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are aware of the provisions of Schedule 1 to the Northern Ireland Act 2009. We will consult with Executive colleagues on these matters as, and when, necessary.

Department of Justice

Mr McNarry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps their Department has taken to ensure that any second Act of the Assembly would complete the legislative process in time to ensure that the Department of Justice would not dissolve on 1 May 2012.

(AQW 1176/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are aware of the provisions contained in paragraph 8 of Schedule 1 to the Northern Ireland Act 2009 and the timescales applying. We have been considering the matter with our officials.

Minister of Justice

Mr McNarry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have sought legal advice in relation to the consequences for the Executive should a second Act of the Assembly repeal the initial provision for a Minister of Justice provided for in the Northern Ireland Act 2009.

(AQW 1178/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are aware of the provisions of Schedule 1 to the Northern Ireland Act 2009. We have access to a wide range of professional legal advice, including specialist expertise on constitutional law.

Suspension of a Senior Civil Servant

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether disciplinary action was taken against any other staff in relation to Sir Jon Shortridge's report on his investigation into the events which led to the suspension of a senior civil servant in the Department for Regional Development.

(AQW 1184/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No disciplinary action was taken against any other NICS staff in relation to Sir Jon Shortridge's report.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the timescale for the implementation of the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 1199/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our officials are currently engaged in discussions both with officials from other government departments and key stakeholders to develop a consultation paper on the Social Investment Fund.

It is hoped to issue this paper for a period of public consultation over the summer.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the geographical breakdown of the areas which will benefit from the Social Investment Fund will be completed.

(AQW 1200/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As advised in our answer to AQW1199/11-15 our officials are currently developing a consultation paper on the Social Investment Fund.

We have identified 8 possible Social Investment Zones in the pre-consultation paper although we are still considering which approach will best address the priority needs of the most disadvantaged

communities within these. The identification of needs and how resources will be targeted on specific geographic areas will be important issues in the consultation exercise.

Single Tender Actions

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to procurement by their Department, (i) on how many occasions since May 2007 a supplier has been secured through a single tender action in advance of authorisation by the Accounting Officer and the reasons; (ii) the level of expenditure in each case; (iii) the name of each supplier secured through each single tender action; and (iv) the date on which retrospective approval was granted by the Accounting Officer in each case.
(AQW 1238/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We refer the Member to previous responses to AQW 477/11-15 and AQW 878/11-15.

Maze/Long Kesh: Economy

Mr Craig asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of how the development of the Maze/Long Kesh site will contribute to the economy.
(AQO 187/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In establishing the Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation, a body working at arm's length from government and with statutory objectives and powers, we want to send the message that we are committed to unlocking and realising the full economic potential of this former security site.

Maze/Long Kesh will be regenerated in phases. Subject to statutory processes and value for money appraisal, the first phase could see the relocation of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society to the site in the next few years and the construction of a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre on the site by 2015.

Initially the construction industry will benefit, but the initiatives outlined above would help attract significant private sector investment with the firm intention that the outcomes will help revive our economy, provide significant job creation, reduce deprivation, and develop prosperity and social regeneration here and further afield.

Commissioner for Older People

Ms Boyle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what is the position on the appointment of a Commissioner for Older People.
(AQO 191/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The recruitment process to select a Commissioner for Older People is ongoing. It is our hope that we will announce the successful applicant shortly and we expect the person appointed to take up post by September 2011.

Business in the Community

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of Business in the Community and whether it could be better equipped to inspire young people to achieve more ambitious goals.
(AQO 185/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Whilst we engage with Business in the Community in areas of common interest, it does not receive public funding, and stands independently from government as a not-for-profit membership organisation. We have therefore undertaken no formal review of either the organisation's capacity or its ability to inspire our young people.

OFMDFM Junior Ministers intend to meet with Business in the Community later this month to explore ways in which our organisations can work together on a range of issues – issues such as raising the aspirations of young people in deprived areas.

The Junior Ministers will explore with Business in the Community opportunities to engage businesses in addressing some of the needs in tackling disadvantage and unemployment. They will also want to hear ideas from the organisation on where they see the business community – working in partnership with government – getting involved in addressing the priority of the Executive in the future.

Corporation Tax

Mr Hamilton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on their discussions with HM Treasury in relation to the devolution of Corporation Tax powers.

(AQO 189/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We, along with Minister Foster and Minister Wilson, met with David Gauke, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, and Secretary of State Owen Paterson, at the start of this year to give them our thoughts on rebalancing our economy. Following our discussions, HM Treasury published its consultation document “Rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy” on 24 March 2011. As part of the consultation, we attended a consultation event in London on 8 June to discuss with key representatives of UK business the impact of reducing the Corporation Tax rate. Minister Wilson, Minister Foster, the Secretary of State and Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury were also in attendance. This was a positive meeting with the general view that this would increase the attractiveness of the local economy as a location for investment. Another event is planned for Belfast on 7 July.

The consultation period for this report runs to 1 July 2011. The paper considers the impact of lowering the Corporation Tax rate here but also includes consideration of other fiscal measures for example, extension of the National Insurance holiday, enhanced R&D tax credits, increased capital allowances. The HMT report in particular considers the impact of investment locally of lowering the rate.

Ethnic Minority Communities

Mr A Maskey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the support that is currently available to the bodies that represent ethnic minority communities.

(AQO 190/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As part of our work to build a cohesive, shared and integrated society, we recognise and value the vital role played by those groups on the ground that provide help and advice to minority ethnic people and migrant workers.

The OFMDFM Minority Ethnic Development Fund provides vital support not simply for bodies that represent these communities but for bodies that provide aid and support to minority ethnic communities. Funding of £1,142,060.60 was agreed for financial year 2011-2012 and all successful applicants will shortly be informed of their allocation.

This funding will enable these groups to build up capacity and provide the practical support and advice which is needed within our communities.

In conjunction with the fund, OFMDFM officials provide advice and support to organisations working in the sector. The Department also supports the work of both the Racial Equality Forum and Racial Equality Panel facilitating a partnership approach together with the exchange of information and best practice.

Maze/Long Kesh: Peace-building and Conflict Resolution Centre

Mrs Dobson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the Peace III funding application that was submitted for the development of the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution facility at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQO 192/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: On 14 January 2011, MLK Programme Delivery Unit submitted a £18.2m (£20m Euro) Peace III funding application to help develop a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

The Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre will be an international centre of excellence dedicated to peace building and the transformation of societies. The Centre will have 4 key functions:

- International Exchange;
- Education, Research, Teaching and Learning;
- Exhibition Space and Archive; and
- Shared Location and Facilities.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Forest Service NI

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the benefits of allowing private companies and land owners to manage land owned by Forest Service NI.

(AQW 769/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): My Department is committed to the efficient management of the forest estate and our strategic objective to obtain better value from the Forest Estate through wider use of our assets. Forest Service is currently engaged in a Commercialisation programme and this has identified renewable energy and leisure as two sectors which are to be taken forward to market. The benefits to be gained from allowing the private sector to manage ventures / facilities in our forests will not only result in significant returns from windfarm development but private investment in leisure project types, eg caravan and camping, will result in enhanced provision of the existing leisure facilities and services and improved all-round visitor experience.

Forest Service NI

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether Forest Service NI raises revenue from publicly owned forests; (ii) if so, what mechanisms are used to raise the money; (iii) how much revenue has been raised in each of the last five years; and (iv) if Forest Service NI does not raise revenue from publicly owned forests does it intend to do so.

(AQW 772/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service generates revenue from its lands and assets through a number of different means such as timber production, commercial recreational income, rental income and charges for use of facilities and licences for planned activities.

**THE AMOUNTS RAISED FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS ARE DETAILED IN THE TABLE BELOW
(ACCOUNTS FIGURES FOR 2010/11 HAVE NOT YET BEEN APPROVED).**

Income stream / Financial year	2005/06 £'000	2006/07 £'000	2007/08 £'000	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000
Timber ¹	5,479	5,928	6,803	7,606	7,243
Other Forest Products ²	68	70	74	4	110
Recreation Income, split:					
Commercial Recreation ³	381	393	432	416	453
Non-commercial Recreation ⁴	339	371	388	324	376
Rentals	-	-	-	315	278
Other Activities ⁵	436	545	604	89	225
Total Annual Revenue	6,703	7,307	8,301	8,754	8,685

Notes:

- 1 Timber income is generated through harvesting, production, felling and sale of timber throughout various forest sites.
- 2 Other Forest Products income relates to Firewood, Foliage, Christmas tree and Game income.
- 3 Commercial Recreation relates to Recreation Income from caravan and camping.
- 4 Non-Commercial Recreation relates to income generated from entrance charges to forests.
- 5 Income from Other Activities relates to other non-trading income. Note that the financial years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 Rental Income was classified within Other Activities.

In addition to the above we have a strategic objective to obtain better value from the forest estate through wider commercial use of our assets.

Forest Service is currently engaged in a commercialisation programme and this has identified renewable energy and leisure as the two sectors which are to be taken forward to market. Indicators are that there are potentially significant returns from wind farm development on our estate. In line with our Business Plan 2011/12 target we plan to go to market later in this business year.

Properties Entrance Fees

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many properties under her Department's control charge an entrance fee; and how much each of these properties has raised in revenue in each of the last three years.

(AQW 783/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are 10 properties under my Department's control for which fees are charged. However, in the case of 9 of these properties, which relate to forests, the fee represents charges for the use of recreational facilities, including car parking, at forest parks.

In addition, there are fees and income generated at the Forest Service headquarters for a range of services and these are outlined in the footnote to the table below.

The following table summarises the revenue raised at each of the properties, including the Forest Service headquarters. It should be noted that information relating to Forest Service could not be provided for the financial year 2010/11 as their accounts have not yet been finalised. In this regard I have provided information for the preceding 3 financial years for which figures are available.

Property	Financial Year			
	2007/08 £'000	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000
Greenmount Campus	Not Applicable	Nil	Nil	7
Tollymore Forest	223	247	264	Not available
Castlewellan Forest	274	201	250	Not available
Glenariff Forest	60	56	59	Not available
Gosford Forest	135	120	131	Not available
Drum Manor Forest	36	35	29	Not available
Gortin Glen Forest	3	3	3	Not available
Ballypatrick Forest	2	3	3	Not available
Portglenone Forest	10	10	12	Not available
Florencecourt Forest	9	4	7	Not available
Forest Service HQ*	68	61	71	Not available

* Forest Service HQ income relates to recreational income generated on an ad-hoc basis for the accommodation of special events such as motoring, shooting and group recreational activity across the estate. Additionally, Forest Service HQ generate income from Forestry land through direct sale of caravan and camping (Touring in the Trees) and car permits whereby the recipient has opted to cover their car parking fees on an annual basis which allows unlimited parking in the specific Forest Parks that are covered under the permit conditions.

Single Farm Payment

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the long-term damage to wildlife habitat on farms as a result of the need to meet the area based system requirements of the Single Farm Payment.

(AQW 784/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: All area aid schemes are subject to strict EU land eligibility requirements. To ensure compliance with these, it is essential that farmers claim only on eligible land. In doing so, however, great care is taken to protect wildlife habitat.

Indeed, land within a business, irrespective of whether it is used to claim SFP entitlements or claim payment under another aid scheme, must be maintained in accordance with the Cross-Compliance Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and must be kept in good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC). GAEC measures cover the protection of habitats (Wildlife Areas), Archaeological Sites and Permanent Pasture.

If land is currently ineligible because of, for example, scrub encroachment or the state of heather, then farmers, provided they do not breach their cross-compliance obligations, can restore its condition to meet the eligibility conditions for the scheme.

I can reassure you that my Department is committed to ensuring the GAEC measures on the protection of habitats are strictly adhered to, to minimise any impact on wildlife habitat and any possible breaches will be thoroughly investigated.

If farmers need more help on these issues, I would encourage them to contact the Single Farm Payment Land Eligibility helpline on 0845 30 44 508.

Ministerial Drivers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) to detail the arrangements relating to the recruitment, status and payment of her ministerial driver; (ii) whether the arrangements differ from those that were in place prior to 1 April 2011; and (iii) if so, how the arrangements differ.
(AQW 826/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In January 2011 the Executive agreed to transfer arrangements for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers along with associated budgets to the relevant departments. Prior to this DFP was responsible for providing ministerial transport to my predecessor.

My Department has no involvement in the recruitment or other employment arrangements for my driver as he is not a civil service employee.

Single Farm Payment

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Single Farm Payment is classed as income and is subject to means testing when applications are being considered for grants.

(AQW 888/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Council Regulation 73/2009 which lays down the implementing rules for the Single Farm Payment describes the payment as direct income support and therefore it is correct to class the Single Farm Payment as income.

There are no grant schemes currently operated by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development that takes the Single Farm Payment into consideration as part of a means testing process.

Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives since May 2007 that have received co-operation from (a) a Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies; and (b) any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation; and (ii) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which she intends to seek co-operation from these bodies.

(AQW 900/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Small Farm Owners

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department has taken in the last twelve months to encourage and assist small farm owners to install anaerobic digestion plants to supply their farm with heat and electricity.

(AQW 916/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The DARD Renewable Energy Action Plan was published in June 2010. The Action Plan outlines the activities that DARD has committed to carry out with a view to creating an environment that will enable the agricultural and forestry sectors to exploit the opportunities associated with renewable energy.

The implementation of the actions within the Action Plan are currently underway and are aimed at encouraging all farm owners to take informed decisions on the most appropriate renewable energy technologies to suit their business needs.

These activities include:

- The Research Programme on AD conducted at the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institutes (AFBI), at Hillsborough.

- Supply chain development activities through the Supply Chain Development Programme.
- A programme of training and awareness through the College of Agriculture, Food and Enterprise (CAFRE) focusing on AD.
- The establishment of an AD Portal providing a range of information online.
- The availability of demonstration opportunities at the AD installation at the Renewable Energy Centre of Excellence, at AFBI, Hillsborough.
- The launch of the Biomass Processing Challenge Fund in June 2010 to support the generation of renewable energy primarily for on farm use. Under this fund letters of offer have issued to support 5 on farm AD projects.
- AD technologies and associated information will also form an important element of the Agricultural Renewable Energy Event to be held by CAFRE, Greenmount Campus, later in the year.

My Department has recently established a small External Stakeholder Group to undertake a review of the first year of the implementation of the Action Plan to provide advice on future direction and will report before the end of summer 2012.

Welfare of Animals Act

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether she will enact the provisions in the Welfare of Animals Act through subordinate legislation to stop wild animals being used in circuses; (ii) how such regulations could be enforced; and (iii) what plans her Department has to allow officials to inspect circuses without a police presence.

(AQW 924/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Welfare of Animals Act 2011 provides a range of new powers to regulate any activity involving vertebrate animals. My priorities on animal welfare over the coming period will be the roll-out of the Act and the roll-out of the Dogs Amendment Act 2011.

However, I can assure you that in time I do plan to take advice on the legal implications of banning wild animals in circuses and on the options open to me for example, an outright ban or the introduction of a robust regulatory system so that the welfare of wild animals in circuses is fully protected. Before making any decision I would also want to examine developments in the south of Ireland, Britain and Europe and also to engage with stakeholders, including circus operators, and their representatives, to ensure that their views are properly considered.

The Welfare of Animals Act 2011 contains powers for inspectors to enforce any regulations made under it. Under the Act where there is reason to believe an animal is suffering or likely to suffer an inspector can, without a police presence, take immediate action to alleviate the suffering of an animal.

Commission Regulation EC 1739/2005, which lays down the animal health requirements for the movement of circus animals between Member States, requires circuses to be registered in the Member State where they are resident before moving to another Member State. While we have no circuses based in the north of Ireland, there are a number of circuses registered in the south, some of which regularly travel here. My Department has an agreed protocol with the Department of Agriculture, Marine and Food which provides for an inspection of animals from these registered circuses before moving back to the south. My Department has powers to inspect circus animals under this Regulation without a police presence.

Quota for Nephrops

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she intends to have with her counterparts in Westminster and the European Commission in relation to increasing the quota for nephrops at the annual negotiations in Brussels in December 2011.

(AQW 954/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I will be attending the Agri-Fish Council in Brussels on 19th July and I will be meeting then the Scottish Minister, Richard Lochhead and Defra Minister, Richard Benyon and I will be raising the topic of Nephrops with them. I will also be meeting with Simon Coveney TD, on the 12 July to discuss a range of issues including the December Council. I hope to have other meetings with the European Commission during the Agri-Fish Council in Brussels. There will be further meetings between Ministers about negotiating priorities for fishing opportunities for 2012 following publication of the Commission's proposals in September.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department has spent on Special Advisers since May 2007, broken down by (i) salary; (ii) pension contributions; (iii) expenses; (iv) office costs; and (v) other costs.

(AQW 963/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The information requested has been set out in the table below. However, detailed information on salary and pension contributions costs cannot be disclosed as this is personal information and is protected under the Data Protection Act 1998.

(i) Salary Costs

To provide detailed salary information would risk disclosure of personal information under the Data Protection Act. Therefore salary is only being disclosed by pay band.

Salary Date	Salary Range
From May 2007	£56,100 to £78,540
From April 2008	£56,100 to £78,540
From April 2009	£57,300 to £82,531
From April 2010	£57,300 to £82,531
From April 2011	£57,300 to £82,531

(ii) Pension contributions

To provide detailed information on pension contributions would risk disclosure under the Data Protection Act as scheme membership is personal information. The Department can confirm that contributions for the Premium and Nuvos Schemes are between 18% and 25%. Contributions within the Special Adviser Pay Band were 21.5% from 2007 to 2010 and this increased to 23.5% in April 2011.

(iii) Office Costs

There were no incremental office costs as a result of the Special Adviser using existing NICS DFP provided accommodation.

(iv) Expenses

The total amount paid in expenses since May 2007 is £10,959.97

(v) Other Costs

The total spend on IT and mobile phone equipment (including rental) is £13,774.

Regeneration Strategy for Rathfriland

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made on a regeneration strategy for Rathfriland.

(AQW 1014/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD does not have a specific budget for regeneration schemes, these are the responsibility of the Department of Social Development. The current work on village renewal, which is being taken forward by my Department through the Rural Development Programme (RDP), is within the broader context of assessing the need for funding within rural villages, which will impact on communities, not just environmentally but also socially and economically. The RDP funding is about assisting rural villages to become places that are attractive to live and work in, and where tourists want to visit.

The RDP, as you will be aware, is being delivered on behalf of my Department by Council clusters who have formed into Joint Council Committees and Local Action Groups.

The Joint Council Committee that covers the Rathfriland area is the Down Rural Area Partnership (DRAP). Banbridge District Council has applied to DRAP under Axis 3 of the RDP for funding for a Rathfriland Scheme.

I am advised that DRAP are currently working with Banbridge District Council to progress this application. Outstanding issues include the need to produce a planning application and an up to date village plan for Rathfriland. On receipt of these DRAP will commence the appraisal process. Only projects identified in an up to date village plan can be considered for funding.

Designated Cycle Routes in Forests

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has any plans to introduce designated cycle routes in forests.

(AQW 1015/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Designated cycle routes are already available in a number of the Department's forests across the north of Ireland covering a distance of around 35 kilometres. These trails provide a variety of challenges depending on an individual's physical abilities and range in nature from family cycling to mountain bike trails.

There are also 32 kilometres of Sustrans routes available on Forest Service land located throughout a number of our forests, including Florencecourt, Muckamore, Binevenagh, Downhill, and Garvagh forests. These are part of a wider national network of cycle trails.

Forest Service has also facilitated various bike events with individual trails identified and designated for the period of the event.

My Department launched a Recreation and Social Use strategy for forests in July 2009. This strategy sets out how we propose to promote the recreational and social use of forests in the north of Ireland, including cycling. I am personally very keen that this strategy should help realise the full potential of our forests.

This strategy acknowledges that Forest Service, on its own, will have neither the resource nor expertise to fully develop the opportunities that exist. For this reason, we will have to work in partnership with a range of other providers, and my officials in Forest Service are continuing to explore partnership opportunities with a number of stakeholders including NI Tourist Board, Countryside and Activities Network, National Trust and District Councils.

This strategy is now bearing fruit with the recent launch of a trails project at Castle Ward in County Down. This is a great example of the strategy in action. My officials in Forest Service have been working closely with the National Trust for the last two years on this £750,000 development. A significant section of the trails are located on Forest Service land and our commitment to partnership working has been essential to the successful completion of the project. The multi-purpose trail

network covers a distance of 34 kms and includes cycling, pony trekking and walking routes, as well as elements of the trails which are all access.

A major mountain bike project for the Mournes is also being progressed with Down DC and Newry and Mourne DC with 40 kms of trails being proposed in Castlewellan Forest Park and Rostrevor forest at an approximate cost of £1.5 million. If the project proceeds, it will be a further significant development of cycling opportunities in our forests.

Cycle Tourism Projects in Forests

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she has any plans to develop cycle tourism projects in forests, similar to the 7stanes project in Scotland which has generated significant income.

(AQW 1016/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service manages 75,000 hectares of forest land in the north of Ireland. As outlined in the strategy document "NI Forestry – A Strategy for Sustainability and Growth (2006)", we are committed to managing these forests in a sustainable way and, as a result, provide a balance of social, environmental and economic benefits. This recognises that forest areas play an essential role in meeting their core objectives of delivering commercial, environmental and social benefits to the people in the north of Ireland and particularly to local communities.

We believe that our forests already deliver significant recreational and social benefits and that the potential exists for further development, particularly through working with other recreational and tourism providers.

In promoting the further development of recreation and tourism benefits, Forest Service wish to work with Local Authorities and other recreational providers to ensure that opportunities are realised, where they can be incorporated within broader Forest Management Plans and objectives.

An example of this strategy in action is the recently launched 34 km trails project in Castle Ward, where National Trust is the operating partner. Significant effort has also been invested in close co-operation with a range of partners including NITB, Sport NI, CAAN as well as Down and Newry and Mourne district councils in the development of a 40km mountain bike trails project in the Mournes, with the proposed location being Castlewellan Forest Park and Rostrevor forest and an approximate cost of £1.5 million. If this project proceeds, it will add greatly to recreation in the two forest sites, and will offer significant tourism potential, as a mountain biking destination.

Additionally, to assess the existing and potential tourism development opportunities available from forests in the north of Ireland, a Tourism Study has been jointly commissioned between the NI Tourist Board and Forest Service. The purpose of the study is to gather and analyse tourism information and provide evidence-based proposals for tourism development in our forests. This will inform the Forest Service planning review process and assist the NI Tourist Board and other partners to support the case for tourism development in forests.

The study will improve the quality of information available to forest managers in developing forest plans, the tourism sector and potential recreation and tourism operating partners, by demonstrating the benefits of forests and identifying opportunities to realise the tourism potential through forest plans that will enhance the visitor experience and maximise economic benefits.

Rural Development Programme and Farm Modernisation Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) how many farmers applied to (a) the Rural Development Programme; and (b) the Farm Modernisation Programme; and (ii) how many farmers have had their business benchmarked.

(AQW 1020/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Details on the number of applications received from farmers under the Rural Development Programme and the Farm Modernisation Programme are set out in the table below, along with the

number of farm businesses benchmarked. Information on the number of farmers who have applied to the Programme is not available as individual farmers may have submitted multiple applications to different Measures.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Q. i (a)	29,715	23,133	27,795
Q. i (b)	9,271	Nil	7,940
Q. ii	673	764	927

Rural Community Networks

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps she will take to ensure the future of rural community networks, including the continued provision of funding over the next four financial years.

(AQW 1042/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department currently provides around £1.2 million a year in support of community development in rural areas, supporting the Rural Community Network, the NI Rural Women's Network and 9 Rural Support Networks.

I am currently considering how my Department, working with others, can most effectively support the sustainability of our rural communities and what local and regional community development structures will be needed to do so.

I am keen to see more integrated community development structures at the local and regional level which have a strong rural component and which best support those on the ground in our rural communities.

Gorse Fires

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the damage caused to the countryside by the recent deliberately started gorse fires.

(AQW 1046/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is currently finalising work on surveying the extent of Forest Service woodland recently damaged by fire. It is imperative that action is taken to assess the damage caused by the fires which will inform further decisions on restoration of the affected areas.

In addition, DARD inspectors will identify the extent of areas damaged by the fires during the course of land-based inspections in 2011. These inspections verify that farmers have met the eligibility and Cross-Compliance requirements for Single Farm Payment and aid schemes for which they have applied.

It is possible that, as result of the fires, some land that was previously eligible for these area-based schemes may now be ineligible or that land may not now meet with the requirements for Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC). To date my Department has received 240 requests from farmers to set normal scheme rules aside under force majeure because the fires have affected their land in this way. My Department will carefully consider the impact of fire damage in relation to land eligibility for those affected.

Investigation into the causes of recent gorse fires is a matter for the NI Fire and Rescue Service and Police Service of NI and it is not for DARD to speculate whether or not they were started deliberately.

Import Controls

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when the import controls will be lifted on cattle and sheep from the rest of the UK which were imposed to restrict the spread of Blue Tongue. **(AQW 1072/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: Currently, susceptible animals moving from the Bluetongue Lower Risk Area in Britain to here are required to meet the conditions of Council Regulation 1266/2007 with regard to vaccination.

You will be aware that on 13 June Defra announced that with effect from 5 July 2011 Britain would become a Bluetongue Free Area and the Bluetongue Lower Risk Area would be lifted. This means that from 5 July 2011 trade in susceptible animals to the north from Britain can resume without the need to meet the requirements of Regulation 1266/2007.

Movement of susceptible animals to the north from bluetongue restricted zones in Europe will still be required to meet the conditions of Council Regulation 1266/2007.

I want to build on the good work done and continue the determination in keeping Bluetongue out of the local industry. In order to maintain our Bluetongue freedom here, my Department will continue with risk-based mitigation measures consisting of post import testing and the restriction of imported animals, such as those which have originated from continental Europe, pending the test results.

My Department has advised key stakeholder groups of the change at meetings and via email communications. The Department's website has been updated and further updates will be made. Any farmer intending to import animals from Britain after it becomes a free area will also be advised of the new requirements on applying for an import licence.

Cattle Scab

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures are in place to guard against and monitor Cattle Scab. **(AQW 1073/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: Psoroptic Mange or 'Cattle Scab' is a severe and debilitating skin disease of cattle caused by an infestation of mites. The disease has never been detected here. The disease is not notifiable nor does my Department have any legal powers in relation to this disease

Since 2007 there have been a number of cases in Britain linked to imports of Belgian Cattle. Cases had been previously reported in continental Europe and the USA but prior to these outbreaks psoroptic mange had not been detected in Britain since the 1980s.

As a result of the increasing risk from outbreaks in Britain in 2009 my Department wrote to importers and breed societies advising them to consider the risks to the industry here of importing potentially infected animals, and also advising them of the clinical signs of the disease and advice on diagnosis and treatment. My Department also issued a Press Release providing similar advice. Information is also available on the DARD website.

Farmers suspecting that their cattle have psoroptic mange should consult their veterinary surgeon as treatment is not straightforward. Failure to kill the mites will lead to a prolonged and more serious disease outbreak and increase the risk of spread to other animals on the farm or other herds.

My Department's Veterinary Service continues to monitor the risks of disease coming here and in the event of an increased risk my Department will issue advice to importers and breed societies.

Milk Production

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her Department's strategy for milk production over the next ten years. **(AQW 1081/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: The dairy industry makes a very important contribution to the agri-food sector in the north of Ireland. My Department's overall aim for the next ten years will therefore be to help the dairy industry improve its performance in the market place. It is vital that it remains competitive and continues to bring benefit to the local economy, particularly in rural areas.

For many years activity in the dairy sector (including the level of milk production in each Member state) has been subject to various EU restraints and support mechanisms. These have in large measure had a significant impact on the development of the industry. However, important changes have already taken place and others lie ahead.

Prior to the 2003 CAP Reform, relatively high intervention prices and other EU support mechanisms meant that an increase in milk quota would normally have been followed by an increase in production, but as a result of the 2003 reforms the intervention mechanism now operates as a safety net. This means that production levels are now more likely to be determined by market conditions than by EU decisions. In view of this my Department's strategy will be to support the industry as it seeks to achieve higher added value and introduce additional innovative products that meet modern day consumer requirements.

As regards future levels of milk production I believe that a market-led strategy is vital for the dairy industry. In practice this means, especially when milk quotas end in 2015, that decisions on milk production should be taken by milk producers in the context of their input costs and market returns (i.e. the milk price achievable). Therefore, to help ensure that the industry remains sustainable, my Department through CAFRE and AFBI remain available to provide education, training, technical support and research to help improve efficiency and competitiveness. In particular good animal husbandry and grassland management skills will continue to be the solid foundation of any dairy farm and these must be continually updated to take account of best practice, new technologies and other developments.

As our producers consider future production levels I can confirm that they are in a very different position to those in the south. Since the deregulation of milk marketing arrangements in Britain and here in 1995 they have been free to purchase milk quota from producers in Britain (and they have done so, with quota rising from 1.29 billion litres to 1.85 billion litres) whereas producers in the south have been constrained by their Member State limit. So much restructuring on farms in the north has already taken place and this puts them in a good position to face future challenges.

My Department will continue to help the industry to improve its competitiveness over the next ten years. We need genuine efficiencies and added value which is sustainable. Research, innovation, increase in skills and economies of scale all have a role to play. We will work together with the industry for an outcome which is in the best long term interests of the sector and local economy.

Next Generation Broadband Fund

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much money her Department contributed to the Next Generation Broadband Fund.

(AQW 1264/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department 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 very positive impact on rural dwellers. I have said publically that access to broadband for rural dwellers is one of my priorities, and I have asked officials to examine ways in which we can work to extend broadband coverage in liaison with the relevant Departments and providers.

Forestry Bye-Laws

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to explain the rationale behind the proposed changes to forestry bye-laws which will prohibit the public use of forests between sunset and sunrise, given that forests are used during this time by groups such as mountain bike enthusiasts.

(AQW 1390/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Forest Service has proposed daylight access hours to help it deal with antisocial activity and to meet its duty of care obligation to protect forest visitors, which you will appreciate, is more difficult during the hours of darkness. Nevertheless, we do not wish to restrict legitimate night-time access and activities, and indeed the Byelaws give scope for this, with written permission, which, among other things, alerts us to the presence at night of visitors, and facilitates the giving of any necessary guidance or precautions. Indeed, night-time closing times are a widespread feature of byelaws for urban and country parks.

Nevertheless, I am aware of the strength of feeling around this proposed byelaw, with the recent ending of the consultation period, and I will consider carefully the range of views. If it is possible to address these concerns in a balanced and reasonable way, I will certainly do so.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Ministerial Drivers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) to detail the arrangements relating to the recruitment, status and payment of her ministerial driver; (ii) whether the arrangements differ from those that were in place prior to 1 April 2011; and (iii) if so, how the arrangements differ.

(AQW 825/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): In January 2011 the Executive agreed to transfer arrangements for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers along with associated budgets to the relevant departments. Prior to this DFP was responsible for providing ministerial transport to my predecessor.

My Department has no involvement in the recruitment or other employment arrangements for my driver as he is not a civil service employee.

Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives since May 2007 that have received co-operation from (a) a Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies; and (b) any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation; and (ii) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which she intends to seek co-operation from these bodies.

(AQW 906/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department together with the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht jointly sponsors the North South Language Body (Foras na Gaeilge and Ulster-Scots Agency) and Waterways Ireland.

A table detailing the other schemes, projects and initiatives that my Department, and its associated Arms Length Bodies, receive (and are receiving) co-operation from Government Departments, agencies and non-governmental organisations in the South of Ireland is attached at Annex 1.

Department's Priorities for 2011-15

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline her Department's priorities for 2011-15.

(AQW 932/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: At present the priorities for my Department, which will contribute to the Economy, Social Inclusion and Equality, Health, Education and the Environment, are as follows;

- To progress the Regional Stadium Developments;
- To maximise the benefits from 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games;
- To successfully deliver the World Police and Fire Games 2013;
- To bring forward legislation to protect the Irish Language and strategies to enhance and protect the development of the Irish Language; and to develop the Ulster Scots language, heritage and culture;
- To develop the Creative Industries;
- To increase north/south cooperation to develop innovative and efficient public services;
- To promote the positive impact that participation in culture, arts and leisure activities has on both physical and mental health, including suicide prevention;
- To continue to promote social interventions including Community Based Arts and Community Festivals;
- To promote the STEM agenda and the DCAL family's contribution to education and lifelong learning;
- To secure resource from the Executive to ensure PRONI provides the significant support required to the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry;
- To maintain effective governance and take forward the review of DCAL's Arms Length Bodies to examine if their current structure is the most efficient and effective; and
- To manage Salmon and Inland Fisheries to provide for long term sustainability.

Library Members

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many members there are in each library; and how many members each had in each of the last three years.

(AQW 960/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The following table details how many active members* each library had in each of the last three years.

LIBRARIES NI - ACTIVE MEMBERS SUMMARY 2008 - 2011

Library Location	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Andersonstown Library	1,261	1,122	Closed
Antrim Library	2,166	3,567	4,098
Ardoyne Library	1,174	1,222	1,628
Armagh Library	5,266	5,768	4,882
Ballycastle Library	1,984	2,010	1,748
Ballyclare Library	2,792	2,832	2,759
Ballyhackamore Library	3,152	2,995	3,178
Ballymacarrett Library	704	594	Closed
Ballymena Central Library	8,081	8,108	7,070
Ballymoney Library	3,747	3,643	3,312

Library Location	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Ballynahinch Library	2,442	2,378	1,733
Banbridge Library	4,775	4,907	4,309
Bangor Library	11,191	13,456	9,924
Belfast Central Library	7,830	6,980	9,098
Belvoir Park Library	525	495	Closed
Bessbrook Library	1,335	1,353	1,582
Braniel Library	500	467	Closed
Broughshane Library	951	829	786
Brownlow Library	2,043	2,290	2,088
Carnlough Library	485	460	662
Carrickfergus Library	5,399	5,344	6,766
Carryduff Library	1,325	1,256	1,225
Castlederg Library	1,610	1,670	1,410
Castlewellan Library	1,463	1,466	1,297
Centre for Migration Studies	3	18	11
Chichester Library	2,577	2,357	2,082
Cloughfern Library	1,088	1,012	911
Coalisland Library	2,163	2,368	2,140
Coleraine Library	5,315	5,430	5,209
Colin Glen Library	3,541	3,370	3,247
Comber Library	2,720	2,515	2,292
Cookstown Library	5,596	5,800	6,885
Cregagh Library	1,897	1,987	2,343
Creggan Library	1,342	1,311	1,391
Crossmaglen Library	1,125	1,217	1,112
Crumlin Library	1,540	1,517	1,207
Cushendall Library	872	811	826
Derry Central Library	10,170	10,239	10,589
Donaghadee Library	2,279	2,246	2,227
Downpatrick Library	5,476	5,526	5,008
Draperstown Library	846	888	798
Dromore Library	1,224	1,198	933
Dundonald Library	2,302	2,351	2,047
Dungannon Library	5,800	6,148	11,824

Library Location	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Dungiven Library	1,157	1,136	1,453
Dunmurry Library	658	635	Closed
Enniskillen Library	5,456	5,836	4,681
Falls Road Library	1,932	2,008	3,072
Finaghy Library	2,651	2,756	2,614
Fintona Library	534	596	783
Fivemiletown Library	887	911	891
Garvagh Library	707	685	703
Gilford Library	507	494	582
Gilnahirk Library	584	592	Closed
Glengormley Library	6,407	6,337	5,714
Greenisland Library	1,310	1,338	1,293
Greystone Library	2,235	2,158	1,955
Grove Library	1,644	1,186	2,360
Hollywood Arches Library	3,029	2,936	2,942
Hollywood Library	3,301	3,260	2,606
Irish & Local Studies Library	30	39	28
Irvinestown Library	1,522	1,562	1,158
Keady Library	1,395	1,313	1,424
Kells & Connor Library	670	546	582
Kilkeel Library	2,575	2,680	2,121
Killyleagh Library	1,235	1,211	969
Kilrea Library	821	821	697
Larne Library	4,140	4,319	4,058
Ligoniel Library	617	619	Closed
Limavady Library	3,793	4,060	5,563
Lisburn Library	12,359	12,182	10,981
Lisburn Road Library	3,074	2,950	2,803
Lisnaskea Library	1,847	1,946	1,543
Lurgan Library	6,309	6,398	6,219
Maghera Library	2,178	2,121	1,994
Magherafelt Library	4,476	4,688	5,177
Moirra Library	1,543	1,432	1,298
Moneymore Library	554	546	642

Library Location	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Moy Library	631	578	573
Newcastle Library	3,590	3,609	3,187
Newry Library	7,281	7,579	5,714
Newtownards Library	4,463	4,174	3,452
Newtownbreda Library	2,995	2,933	3,327
Newtownstewart Library	432	649	559
Oldpark Road Library	188	145	Closed
Omagh Library	9,815	10,500	9,801
Ormeau Road Library	3,863	3,822	3,451
Portadown Library	5,683	5,689	6,624
Portaferry Library	1,263	1,401	1,428
Portglenone Library	891	862	730
Portrush Library	1,483	1,581	1,421
Portstewart Library	1,816	1,858	1,614
Randalstown Library	1,644	1,548	1,308
Rathcoole Library	1,587	1,646	1,828
Rathfriland Library	1,472	1,584	1,619
Richhill Library	970	1,037	917
Saintfield Library	1,595	1,540	1,422
Sandy Row Library	337	278	Closed
Shankill Road Library	1,797	1,929	1,715
Shantallow Library	3,633	3,451	2,835
Strabane Library	4,951	5,593	4,756
Strathfoyle Library	881	999	722
Suffolk Library	1,861	1,851	2,405
Tandragee Library	1,331	1,336	1,475
Tullycarnet Library	1,180	1,209	918
Warrenpoint Library	2,816	3,110	2,790
Waterside Library	4,143	4,428	3,917
Whitehead Library	1,358	1,314	1,531
Whiterock Library	1,263	1,203	882
Whitewell Library	128	93	CLOSED
Woodstock Road Library	2,080	2,101	1,860

* Active Members are defined as members who initially joined a particular library but may then have borrowed items from, or used computers in, any library location during the year in question.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much her Department has spent on Special Advisers since May 2007, broken down by (i) salary; (ii) pension contributions; (iii) expenses; (iv) office costs; and (v) other costs.

(AQW 962/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

(i) From May 2007 until 5th May 2011 Special Advisers employed in DCAL were paid in the following Pay Bands.

1 April 2007 Pay Band B Min £56,100 – Max £78,540

1 April 2008 Pay Band B Min £57,300 – Max £79,740

1 April 2009 Pay Band B Min £57,300 – Max £82,531

There has been no increase in the Pay Bands within which Special Advisers are paid since April 2009.

(ii) To give detailed information on pension contributions paid would risk a disclosure under the Data Protection Act as the scheme/arrangement the member is in is personal information. Special Advisers who choose to join the NICS pension scheme contribute 3.5% of their salary. The employer meets any other costs of the scheme.

(iii) A total of £6,319.39 was paid in expenses to Special Advisers employed in DCAL from May 2007 until 5th May 2011.

(iv) There were no incremental office costs as a result of Special Advisers using existing NICS DFP provided accommodation.

(v) A total of £623.80 other costs was paid to Special Advisers employed in DCAL from May 2007 until 5th May 2011.

Capital Investment Projects

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what capital investment projects her Department has planned for the South Antrim constituency over the next four years.

(AQW 1030/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Over the next four years from 2011 - 2015 DCAL has no confirmed Capital Investment plans for the South Antrim constituency as of now.

Libraries NI

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the number of visitors to each library in (a) 2009/10; and (b) 2010/11; (ii) the staff hours for each library in (a) 2009/10; and (b) 2010/11; and (iii) the comparison between the number of staff hours assigned to all libraries in these two years and the number of visitors.

(AQW 1038/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI has provided the following breakdown of visits and staff hours per library in each year:

Library	Annual Visits 2009-10	Annual Visits 2010-11	Staff hours per week 2009*	Staff hours per week 2010*
Andersonstown	31,300	Closed	92.92	Closed
Antrim	95,264	111,978	110.25	191.50
Ardoyne	68,550	31,600	138.00	135.00

Library	Annual Visits 2009-10	Annual Visits 2010-11	Staff hours per week 2009*	Staff hours per week 2010*
Armagh	105,456	98,200	245.00	250.00
Ballycastle	54,116	51,730	84.00	98.00
Ballyclare	64,199	63,166	138.00	102.00
Ballyhackamore	102,600	89,150	159.00	145.00
Ballymacarrett	28,550	Closed	68.00	Closed
Ballymena Central	166,531	160,737	402.50	460.00
Ballymoney	69,090	60,811	152.00	164.00
Ballynahinch	32,050	37,750	110.00	154.75
Banbridge	98,436	85,250	194.75	203.63
Bangor Carnegie	169,988	163,300	336.50	352.50
Belfast Central	713,400	731,600	1371.75	1277.00
Belvoir Park	7,124	Closed	44.00	Closed
Bessbrook	19,188	22,200	58.50	58.50
Braniel	6,604	Closed	28.00	Closed
Broughshane	17,509	15,869	29.00	31.50
Brownlow	49,764	42,150	125.00	125.50
Carnlough	17,300	16,534	25.50	29.50
Carrickfergus	139,780	57,450	308.50	242.33
Carryduff	19,916	16,450	60.50	62.50
Castlederg	19,005	18,254	58.50	66.00
Castlewellan	20,748	23,750	71.00	71.00
Chichester	153,250	67,900	108.00	108.00
Cloughfern	34,895	35,048	29.00	29.00
Coalisland	39,624	35,300	80.00	79.63
Coleraine	146,465	145,978	289.00	333.00
Colin Glen	40,092	54,100	257.00	185.00
Comber	23,660	26,950	76.00	160.00
Cookstown	147,732	118,400	226.25	226.25
Cregagh	42,328	45,150	148.50	96.00
Creggan	38,780	40,051	130.33	184.50
Crossmaglen	23,660	18,000	54.00	54.00
Crumlin	28,785	26,238	81.00	63.75
Cushendall	16,844	17,718	37.00	37.00

Library	Annual Visits 2009-10	Annual Visits 2010-11	Staff hours per week 2009*	Staff hours per week 2010*
Derry Central	362,045	354,224	532.00	533.50
Donaghadee	47,580	40,450	172.00	146.00
Downpatrick	154,232	120,900	235.00	235.00
Draperstown	19,864	18,700	30.00	30.00
Dromore	32,604	17,350	48.50	33.88
Dundonald	54,080	57,700	96.00	97.00
Dungannon	177,320	196,600	457.00	442.00
Dungiven	10,884	20,329	55.50	55.50
Dunmurry	7,540	Closed	28.00	Closed
Enniskillen	164,164	165,150	295.50	279.75
Falls Road	52,400	59,106	141.00	166.92
Finaghy	130,750	124,700	167.00	167.00
Fintona	12,220	9,750	25.50	43.50
Fivemiletown	15,080	10,000	47.00	67.00
Garvagh	13,900	18,103	20.00	23.00
Gilford	9,800	10,192	45.75	45.75
Gilnahirk	9,360	Closed	30.00	Closed
Glengormley	106,750	104,805	284.00	260.50
Greenisland	42,150	40,095	51.62	68.12
Greystone	56,857	52,606	103.25	103.50
Grove	52,950	74,800	184.50	184.50
Hollywood	98,644	78,200	166.50	166.50
Hollywood Arches	24,200	76,200	178.00	176.00
Irvinestown	33,800	34,900	81.00	110.00
Keady	12,532	23,100	91.25	64.75
Kells & Connor	13,377	17,118	27.00	24.00
Kilkeel	44,460	31,800	112.25	112.25
Killyleagh	16,900	18,750	45.00	45.00
Kilrea	17,284	14,866	27.00	27.00
Larne	103,723	112,227	270.50	270.50
Ligoneil	16,950	Closed	66.00	Closed
Limavady	95,946	99,160	265.00	305.00
Lisburn City	222,419	243,850	405.75	443.00

Library	Annual Visits 2009-10	Annual Visits 2010-11	Staff hours per week 2009*	Staff hours per week 2010*
Lisburn Road	61,450	57,500	144.00	154.00
Lisnaskea	36,816	38,250	72.50	72.50
Lurgan	160,000	135,900	312.50	296.87
Maghera	44,408	48,100	87.00	94.95
Magherafelt	82,784	93,150	201.00	201.00
Moira	19,604	19,100	67.00	67.00
Moneymore	6,760	9,300	34.00	34.00
Moy	4,628	6,250	35.00	30.38
Newcastle	68,640	62,600	153.50	153.50
Newry City	207,012	169,600	430.50	345.00
Newtownards	78,260	69,900	200.00	200.00
Newtownbreda	39,884	37,950	85.00	144.00
Newtownstewart	8,955	8,116	48.75	54.00
Oldpark	700	Closed	31.00	Closed
Omagh	185,432	172,100	397.25	357.75
Ormeau	96,950	91,900	167.00	167.00
Portadown	113,526	104,600	228.00	248.50
Portaferry	24,076	17,800	69.00	69.00
Portglenone	13,363	13,247	26.00	29.00
Portrush	46,268	48,224	96.00	96.00
Portstewart	53,418	51,678	58.00	58.00
Randalstown	35,931	35,638	54.00	61.00
Rathcoole	47,100	54,273	148.50	112.50
Rathfriland	18,720	23,350	50.34	50.34
Richhill	14,404	10,350	57.38	40.38
Saintfield	30,004	24,950	39.00	66.25
Sandy Row	3,300	Closed	3.00	Closed
Shankill	25,950	31,600	124.00	150.00
Shantallow	65,839	61,977	184.50	164.00
Strabane	93,830	100,622	429.00	344.50
Strathfoyle	40,223	40,192	84.50	74.50
Suffolk	73,350	52,200	129.00	142.00
Tandragee	25,064	22,900	60.00	77.25

Library	Annual Visits 2009-10	Annual Visits 2010-11	Staff hours per week 2009*	Staff hours per week 2010*
Tullycarnet	33,436	32,850	165.00	102.00
Warrenpoint	44,096	44,100	90.00	90.00
Waterside	59,720	73,850	242.00	238.50
Whitehead	14,100	18,850	56.75	62.75
Whiterock	16,350	61,850	114.00	113.00
Whitewell	1,050	Closed	9.00	Closed
Woodstock	59,350	54,700	163.00	151.00
Total	7,140,099	6,774,010	15,857.59	15,415.18

* As staffing hours can vary considerably Libraries NI have provided the weekly staffing hours in October each year.

Libraries NI

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether the original hard copies of newspapers pre-dating 1970 are held by Libraries NI; and how they are stored in order to preserve them.

(AQW 1146/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI hold hard copies of over a hundred newspapers published before 1970. These are located at the following libraries:

	Pre 1970's newspaper titles held
Ballymoney Library	1
Ballymena Central Library (Local Studies Department)	8
Ballymena Regional Administrative Centre	5
Belfast Central	105
Derry Central	3
Larne Library	5
Omagh Library (Local Studies Department)	7
Whitehead Library	2

The very nature of the paper used to produce newspapers means that they are fragile and the more they are used the quicker they deteriorate. In order to minimise deterioration of the bound volumes microfilm versions of many of the titles are available and users are encouraged, where possible, to make use of the microfilm rather than bound copy.

In Belfast Central, the bound volumes are on closed access and can only be accessed on request and under supervision. The bound volumes are shelved on industrial shelving. The area in which they are kept is cool but it does not have the type of environmental controls that are recommended for the preservation of this type of material.

Libraries NI has a small number of holdings of pre 1970s newspapers elsewhere and runs are often incomplete. In Ballymena, Derry Central, Larne and Omagh, the bound volumes are in storage and are retrieved on request. In Whitehead and Ballymoney volumes are for reference only.

Olympic Torch

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions she has had in relation to the route proposed for by the Olympic Torch; and whether there is any intention for the route to include North Down.

(AQW 1180/11-15)

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 completed questionnaires to help identify the areas, organisations, projects and iconic sites that the Torch might visit.

A Torch Relay Advisory Group has been established to provide advice and guidance to LOCOG, with representation from key partners including the Northern Ireland Local Government Association.

LOCOG has now announced the dates that the Torch will visit the North of Ireland, and the locations for the four 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 they might best exploit the opportunities available. Representatives from Down District Council attended this seminar and were required to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will terminate the employment of her Special Adviser in view of her refusal to co-operate with the Historical Enquiries Team's investigation into the murder of Mary Travers.

(AQW 1183/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have full confidence in my Special Adviser and I look forward to continuing to work with her in that capacity.

Ulster-Scots Community

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline what she is doing to promote the arts within the Ulster-Scots community.

(AQW 1185/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department actively promotes arts within the Ulster-Scots community. There are many activities across the Department. Just a few examples are:

The Ulster-Scots Agency has been working in partnership with the Lyric Theatre in delivering a schools drama project for the last 3 years in 30 schools. Mentors from this project have also worked with Community groups to deliver Ulster-Scots themed drama summer schools in several venues.

The Agency also plans to work with National Museums (and possibly the Arts Council) in August 2011 to develop a Titanic based drama for schools, and excerpts will be acted out by project leaders and visitors to the Folk and Transport Museum on the Bank Holiday weekend in August.

The Ministerial Advisory Group on the Ulster-Scots Academy is supporting a range of projects. One example is a digitisation of the poetry of John Hewitt and other Ulster- Scots poets.

The new Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund has a budget for 2011/12 of just under a million pounds which will provide finance for the production of film, television or other moving image projects relating to the Ulster-Scots heritage, culture and language in the north of Ireland.

Meetings with Organisations

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 658/11-15, to outline the purpose of her meeting with the Ballymurphy Massacre Committee; and what action her Department plans to take as a result of the meeting.

(AQW 1186/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The meeting with representatives of the Ballymurphy Massacre Committee has not yet taken place. The purpose of the meeting will be for them to discuss their plans for a forthcoming play and to seek assistance on sources of funding for the play.

Twelfth of July Events

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will be attending any of this year's flagship Twelfth of July events to promote a Shared Future.

(AQW 1190/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Minister receives invitations to many different sporting and cultural events. She considers all of these invitations and responds appropriately.

Waterways Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many staff are employed by Waterways Ireland in (i) Northern Ireland; and (ii) the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 1205/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The total number of staff employed by Waterways Ireland is 386. Of these 97 employees are based in the North and 289 are based in the South.

Waterways Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for a breakdown of the community background of staff employed by Waterways Ireland.

(AQW 1218/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The total number of people working in Waterways Ireland is 386. There is no legal requirement for Waterways Ireland to gather community background information for the 289 staff working in Southern Ireland and as such this information is not available. There are 97 staff working for Waterways Ireland in the North. Of these five are employees of a recruitment agency and Waterways Ireland does not, therefore, have community information in relation to these.

Of the remaining 92 the community background is Protestant 29; Catholic 59 and Others 4.

Annual Support for Organisations Programme

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) how much of the 2011/12 Annual Support for Organisations Programme (ASOP) funding went directly to community-based organisations in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas; (ii) how much of the 2011/12 ASOP funding went to organisations not based in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas; and (iii) whether she has any intention of reviewing how ASOP funding is allocated and distributed.

(AQW 1224/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Arts Council does not allocate funds based on the social deprivation indices. Decisions are made on the basis of artistic quality and public benefit.

Of the £10,744,048 Annual Support for Organisations Programme Funding allocated in 2011/2012, £8,359,299 was allocated to organisations based in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and £2,384,749 was allocated to organisations not based in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas.

I have not provided a breakdown of how much of this funding was for Community based organisations, as there is no commonly agreed definition of what constitutes community arts.

My Department has recently carried out an evaluation of the Annual Support for Organisations Programme which included a review of how the funding is allocated and distributed. The initial findings are currently being discussed with the Arts Council. Following these discussions, the Department intends to agree an action plan with the Arts Council around any recommendations that come out of the evaluation and proceed towards implementation.

Somme Association

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding her Department has allocated to the Somme Association in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1243/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The following table details the funding my Department has allocated to the Somme Heritage Centre which is owned by the Somme Association, in each of the last three years.

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
30,000	30,000	36,500

Foras na Gaeilge

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many staff are employed by Foras Na Gaeilge in (i) Northern Ireland; and (ii) the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 1274/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are seven members of staff employed by Foras na Gaeilge in its Belfast Office and 48 permanent and 11 temporary staff in its offices in Dublin, Gaoth Dobhair and Ráth Cairn in the Republic of Ireland.

Capital Projects in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what capital projects are planned for the North Down constituency in each of the next three years.

(AQW 1387/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Over the next three years from 2011 - 2014 DCAL has no confirmed Capital project plans for the North Down constituency as of now.

Commonwealth Games

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans her Department has to bid to host the Commonwealth Games in the future, given that Northern Ireland will host a bigger event, the World Police and Fire Games in 2012.

(AQW 1402/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The planning and preparation of any bid to host the Commonwealth Games in the North of Ireland in the future is a matter, in the first instance, for the NI Commonwealth Games Council (NICGC). The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure would be happy to discuss any plans by the NICGC to bid to host a future Games here should the Council decide at any stage to move in that direction and seek my Department's support.

2012 Olympics: Training

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the position on her Department's actions to attract international teams to use local sports training facilities in preparation for the London 2012 Olympics.

(AQO 214/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Following assessment, 26 facilities, catering for 22 distinct sporting disciplines were accredited for Olympic sports. Three 'hub' venues suitable for hosting Paralympic disciplines were also accredited.

A working group chaired by Sport NI developed plans, approved by DCAL, to both target national teams for the pre-games training activity and bespoke training and competitive events.

An important strand of the plan, which my Department funded, has been proactive engagement with all Olympic and Paralympic Governing Bodies to develop existing links with respective International Olympic Committees. This work will support the achievement of DCAL's aim of attracting ten countries/visiting teams.

Under the theme 'Raising Your Game in the Land of Legends' this group has promoted facilities and attractions in the North of Ireland to every single International Olympic Committee across the world. Presentations promoting the North of Ireland as a venue have been delivered in China, Germany, Holland, Spain, England, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan. Presentation has also been made to seventeen Ambassadors from South America including representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.

For many disciplines the qualification process will not be completed until late Spring 2012, so many small and medium sized countries will not yet be aware of which athletes in which disciplines will obtain the qualification standard. Some larger countries anticipating Olympic qualification have decided to locate their Pre Games Training Camps in specialist training facilities generally nearer London. Significant work is underway and I would refer colleagues to my Written Statement of 15th June for further detail.

As the First Minister and deputy First Minister indicated on the 21st June many are working hard to build a better and brighter future for all in Northern Ireland, the return of violence to our streets damages the local economy and unfairly mars the reputation of the community. The international profile of Northern Ireland has never been higher than it is now. Rioting such as we have seen recently does our reputation real damage.

This is particularly true in respect of our efforts to attract teams to train here in the run up to the 2012 Olympic Games and I wholeheartedly welcome the actions taken by the First and deputy First Ministers to ensure that the tremendous progress we have made in dealing with interface violence is not undermined by these acts of violence and recent rioting in East Belfast.

Ulster-Scots Agency

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the appointment of a new CEO of the Ulster Scots Agency.

(AQO 215/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The recruitment process for the appointment of a new Chief Executive for the Ulster-Scots Agency took place in April 2011.

I am pleased to announce that Mr Ian Crozier was selected as the successful candidate for the CEO position and will take the post on 5 July 2011.

I welcome Mr Crozier's appointment and look forward to working with him.

North West 200

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she can give an assurance that she will support the North West 200 event in the future to help maintain its position as one of Northern Ireland's premier events.

(AQO 216/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Investment has responsibility for the management of the NI Tourism Events Fund, with the aim of encouraging new and supporting the development of existing events which deliver the objectives of the draft NI Tourism Strategy.

Libraries NI

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update following the public consultation on the future of libraries.

(AQO 217/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: As the Member will be aware the public consultation on the proposals contained in Meeting the Demands for a Modern Public Library Service: Stage 2 ended on 8 April 2011.

I can assure the Member that the Libraries NI Board and Senior Management Team see the public consultation process as being an essential element in the process of taking decisions that may impact communities for years ahead.

Currently the information collected during the Review is being collated and analysed prior to being put to the Libraries NI Board in September 2011. This delay until September is due to the impact of elections on the membership of the Board of Libraries NI.

It is important that the final decisions about the possible closures are made by a full Libraries NI Board including Councillor Members and they have sufficient time to consider the responses to the consultation before being asked to make decisions.

I would stress that no decision has yet been taken on any of the proposals in the Review.

2012 Olympics: Torch Relay

Mr Doherty asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the process for nominating local people, including any associated deadlines, for the Olympic torch relay.

(AQO 218/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The London Organising Committee's six-week long nomination process for Torchbearers began on 18 May and closes at 11.59pm on Wednesday 29 June 2011. There is less than 36 hours to go, so I would ask each of you to take action now to both nominate someone who has made a difference to your life and encourage your constituents to do the same. It's important that people in rural communities as well as those in towns and cities have an opportunity to participate. We want to see more nominations from Derry, Armagh and Down.

Individuals can nominate another person via the London2012 website: www.london2012.com, by submitting 150 words explaining why their nominee is inspirational. Nominations can also be made over the telephone by dialling the Torchbearer nomination Helpline: 0800 111 6448. Nominees must be 12 years or older at the time of nomination, and you must be 12 or older to nominate someone.

The presenting partners in Northern Ireland – Coca-Cola and Samsung – have also been provided with a number of Torchbearer slots and announced their own nomination systems at the beginning of June. Nominations can be made through their websites. The deadline for nominations via Coca-Cola is 5 September and via Samsung is 30 September.

Arts: People with Disabilities

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps her Department is taking to make the arts more accessible for people with disabilities.

(AQO 219/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am committed to ensuring that everyone in our society can access and participate in the arts.

The Arts Council has made a substantial investment over a number of years, creating new opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in the arts.

It will continue to fund the core cost for organisations such as the Arts & Disability Forum, Adapt NI and Open Arts.

I met with the Arts and Disability Equality Charter Co-Ordinator and representatives from the steering group yesterday and presented awards at the Arts and Disability Equality Charter Awards this morning.

Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what support her Department is providing to mark the centenary of the signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant in 1912.

(AQO 220/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department, through its associated Arms Length Bodies, is providing assistance to a number of projects scheduled in 2012 to mark the centenary of the signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant.

Libraries NI has arranged an Ulster Covenant Exhibition to be held in Belfast Central Library, as well as talks on the subject to be given by Roger Dixon (Information Manager, National Museums NI) and John Killen (Director, Linen Hall Library).

NI Screen is providing funding for a documentary on the Covenant to be screened on BBC NI in 2012.

PRONI has provided financial support for the research and publication, and are hosting the launch in September 2012, of Dr Alan Parkinson's book entitled 'Friends in High Places – Ulster Resistance to Irish Home Rule, 1912-1914'.

Garvaghey Sports Complex

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions her Department has had with the Tyrone County GAA Board in relation to their proposals to build a gaelic games training and coaching facility at the Garvaghey sports complex.

(AQW 1429/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Tyrone County GAA Board met with my officials in March 2010 to discuss their proposals to develop a training and coaching facility at Garvaghey. In response, officials advised the Board to bring forward their discussions with Sport NI which is responsible for the development of sport including the distribution of funding. Since that meeting, the Tyrone County Board have applied to Sport NI's Sport Matters Community Capital Programme for financial assistance towards their project. As a result of this application, Sport NI has placed the project on a call-off list for funding in future years, subject to available budgets. Tyrone GAA has been informed by Sport NI of this decision.

Department of Education

Staff Training Sessions

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of (a) conferences; (b) away-days; and (c) staff training sessions held by his Department or its arm's-length bodies in each of the last five years; and (ii) of these, how many were held (a) in-house; and (b) at hotels or conference centres.

(AQW 392/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The information requested is detailed in the tables below.

2006/07

	Number of Conferences Held	Number of Away Days Held	Number of Staff Training Sessions Held	Number Held In-House	Number Held in a Hotel or Conference Centre
Department	9	20	8	0	37
Arms Length Bodies	7	9	283	238	61

2007/08

	Number of Conferences Held	Number of Away Days Held	Number of Staff Training Sessions Held	Number Held In-House	Number Held in a Hotel or Conference Centre
Department	18	24	16	4	54
Arms Length Bodies	9	6	260	212	63

2008/09

	Number of Conferences Held	Number of Away Days Held	Number of Staff Training Sessions Held	Number Held In-House	Number Held in a Hotel or Conference Centre
Department	54	22	37	19	94
Arms Length Bodies	8	28	265	213	88

2009/10

	Number of Conferences Held	Number of Away Days Held	Number of Staff Training Sessions Held	Number Held In-House	Number Held in a Hotel or Conference Centre
Department	17	25	37	28	51
Arms Length Bodies	8	8	237	181	72

2010/11

	Number of Conferences Held	Number of Away Days Held	Number of Staff Training Sessions Held	Number Held In-House	Number Held in a Hotel or Conference Centre
Department	33	8	21	27	35
Arms Length Bodies	6	5	240	226	25

Note: the figures for those events held In-House include events held in any Public Sector premises.

Proposed New Builds for Glenwood Primary School; and Springhill Primary School, Belfast

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposed new builds for (i) Glenwood Primary School; and (ii) Springhill Primary School, Belfast.

(AQW 538/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The proposed major capital schemes for Glenwood Primary School and Springhill Primary School are two of the 53 schemes remaining on the Department's Investment Delivery Plan.

Following the review of capital projects, commissioned by my predecessor, my Department raised issues with the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) in relation to the place of these projects in the wider strategic plans for the area. Specifically, the major capital scheme for Glenwood PS was categorised, as 'partially compliant' as the proposed scheme to extend and refurbish the listed building at Glenwood PS is considered to be expensive for a less than optimal solution and one which needs to take account of wider area issues. The scheme for Springhill PS was categorised, as 'non compliant' as there is a need to review overall primary provision in the local area due to concerns about declining enrolments and the close proximity of two existing small primary schools.

Departmental officials have met with BELB, as the managing school authority, regarding the issues highlighted in each case. While both schools are considered sustainable the Department has sought clarification from the BELB that the location and sizing of these schools is correct for the longer term provision within each area.

The Executive's Budget highlights significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years and this will impact on the Department's ability to deliver new school building projects.

I will wish to consider carefully how the available capital funds should be deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to address the most pressing needs across the schools estate. I cannot therefore provide you with any indication as to if or when a new build for these schools might be possible.

This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months and the relevant school managing authorities will be informed of the outcome of my decisions.

Pre-school Places

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education how many parents chose teacher-led nursery provision as their first and second preference when applying for pre-school places for their children in each of the last five years.

(AQW 589/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have advised that as initial applications for admissions to pre-school places are made directly to providers, if a child is accepted at first preference ELBs have no information on a second preference if one was specified. Therefore, they only record statistics of 1st preferences.

The following Table shows the number of 1st preference applications, from children in their final pre-school year*, for places in statutory nursery schools and nursery units in each of the last five years:

ELB	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
BELB	2632	2590	2666	2854	3119
WELB	2244	2347	2349	2507	2601
NEELB	2699	2808	2774	2952	3067
SEELB	2798	2822	3018	3208	3399
SELB	3284*	3170*	3401*	3484*	3804*
Total	13,657	13,737	14,208	15,005	15,990

* figures from the SELB include applications from underage children

Pre-school Places

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of unfilled pre-school places in the (i) 2008/09; (ii) 2009/10; and (iii) 2010/11 academic years.

(AQW 591/11-15)

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 numbers of unfilled places in statutory nursery schools and units, at the date of the School Census in October, are as follows:

- (i) 2008/09 - 29
- (ii) 2009/10 - 103
- (iii) 2010/11 - 0

All pre-school 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 numbers of statutory nursery places filled by underage children, at the date of the School Census in October, in each of the last three years are as follows:

- (i) 2008/09 - 1520
- (ii) 2009/10 - 1281
- (iii) 2010/11 - 1102

All PSEEP funded places in the voluntary/private sector are open only to children in their final pre-school year.

The Department funds pre-school places in the voluntary/private sector for those children, in their final pre-school year, in attendance each month.

The Education and Library Boards administer the funding for places in these settings. The Department does not hold information in relation to the number of unfilled places in voluntary/private settings.

Nursery School Places

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

(AQW 671/11-15)

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 total number of funded places available in the Larne area for September 2011 is 345 - 234 in statutory nursery schools or nursery units and 111 in voluntary /private playgroups.

Pre-school Places

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

(AQW 731/11-15)

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 North Down constituency there were 850 funded pre-school places available at the start of the admissions process. (This number reduced to 838 following the decision of a setting in the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme to withdraw its request for funded places.)

A total of 853 applications for a funded pre-school place was received by the SEELB at stage 1 of the admissions process. At the end of that stage 61 children remained unplaced. Forty seven of these applicants stated further preferences for consideration at stage 2 of the process, 3 of whom remain unplaced at the end of stage 2.

At the end of stage 2 there were 17 vacant places in the North Down area.

In addition, the SEELB also advise that they have dealt with a number of late applications which have been received directly by providers in the area and, where places are available these requests have been met. Four late applicants remain unplaced.

As late applications are made directly to providers the total number of places allocated/available in the North Down area will not be known until September /October when the first claims for funded places are processed by the Board.

Teachers: Early Retirement

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many teachers have taken early retirement and subsequently obtained a temporary teaching post in each of the last three years.

(AQW 778/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of teachers who have been granted premature retirement and subsequently become reemployed in temporary teaching positions in each of the last three years is as follows:

Financial Year Pension Commenced	Number of Teachers granted Premature Retirement	Number of Teachers Subsequently Re-employed at some point in period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011
2008/09	306	181
2009/10	180	90
2010/11	0	0

Temporary Variation Enrolment Numbers

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Education to detail each school in the North Belfast constituency which has been granted a temporary variation in its enrolment number in the last five academic years

and the 2011/12 academic year, including its initial enrolment numbers and the new number as a result of the temporary variation.

(AQW 810/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The schools in the North Belfast constituency which have been granted a temporary variation in their enrolment number in the last five academic years, including their initial enrolment number and the new increased number as a result of the temporary variation, are as detailed in the table below. Files detailing the reason for the approval of temporary variations at individual schools are no longer held in relation to all the academic years for which the information is sought. However, records for 2007/08 to 2011/12 are complete. Of the 137 additional places approved during these academic years 129 were approved for children seeking admission to sixth form in line with Departmental policy of supporting the increasing numbers of children wishing to undertake sixth form studies.

For 11-18 post-primary schools, no temporary variations will be approved in the 2011/12 academic year until August / September 2011 when the number of pupils accepted into each school's sixth form are known.

In the last five academic years and the 2011/12 academic year no primary schools in the North Belfast constituency received a temporary variation to their enrolment number.

School Name	2006/07		2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11	
	App	TV	App	TV	App	TV	App	TV	App	TV
Belfast Model School For Girls	1030	1042	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Little Flower Girls' School	-	-	650	666	650	661	650	680	650	682
Hazelwood College	760	783	-	-	790	814	790	814	-	-
Belfast Royal Academy	1410	1416	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

App = the approved enrolment number

TV = the enrolment number following the approval of a temporary variation

Ministerial Drivers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail the arrangements relating to the recruitment, status and payment of his ministerial driver; (ii) whether the arrangements differ from those that were in place prior to 1 April 2011; and (iii) if so, how the arrangements differ.

(AQW 820/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In January 2011 the Executive agreed to transfer arrangements for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers along with the associated budgets to the relevant departments. Prior to this the Department of Finance and Personnel was responsible for providing ministerial transport to my predecessor. My Department has no involvement in the recruitment or other employment arrangements for my driver as he is not a civil service employee.

Newly Qualified Teachers

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) how many newly qualified teachers obtained a permanent full-time position outside Northern Ireland; and (ii) how many teaching positions were filled by teachers from outside Northern Ireland.

(AQW 836/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not hold information about the number of newly qualified teachers who obtained a permanent full-time position outside the north of Ireland.

The Department of Employment and Learning has advised that while it does not have available information on the precise number of newly qualified teachers who obtained a permanent full-time position outside the north of Ireland, as a proxy, however, estimates have been derived from information collected as part of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey.

The estimated number of teacher training course qualifiers from the north of Ireland Higher Education Institutions who were employed in a full-time, permanent or open ended, teaching job, outside the north of Ireland for each of the last available five years is given in the table below.

Information on how many teaching positions were filled by teachers from outside Northern Ireland is not available as it is not collected by the Department of Education or by the General Teaching Council for NI.

Academic year	Estimated Number
2004/05	35
2005/06	33
2006/07	45
2007/08	22
2008/09	22

Notes:

1. Estimates have been calculated by applying percentages from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey to the overall number of students graduating from teacher training courses at the north of Ireland Higher Education Institutions. It is important to note that the DLHE survey has a response rate of approximately 80% and the above figures are therefore an estimate.
2. 2008/09 is the latest year that data are available for.
3. Destinations data are collected approximately six months after qualifiers leave higher education.

Teacher and Teaching Assistant Redundancies

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number and proportion of this year's teacher and teaching assistant redundancies which involved the suppression of a post; and (ii) the reasons for not suppressing a post when making redundancies.

(AQW 866/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Of the 252 teacher redundancies confirmed to date in the 2011/12 financial year, 238 (94.5%) will involve the suppression of a post.

For the period 1 April 2010 to 31 August 2011 of the 185 Classroom Assistant redundancies identified all 100% involved the suppression of a post.

Redundancy arises where an employee is dismissed either:

- because the employer has ceased (or intends to cease) to carry on business; or (more usually)

- because the employer's requirements for employees to carry out work of a particular kind in the place where s/he is employed have ceased or diminished (or are expected to do so).

If, for example, the governors decide that a certain subject should no longer be taught as part of the school curriculum but that there was a greater demand in another subject this could give rise to a curricular redundancy which may not involve the suppression of a post.

Before funding is approved schools are required to certify that the employee has been made redundant under the terms of the Employment Rights (N I) Order 1996. Funding authorities perform a challenge function to verify that proposed redundancies satisfy the redundancy criteria.

Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives since May 2007 that have received co-operation from (a) a Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies; and (b) any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation; and (ii) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which he intends to seek co-operation from these bodies.

(AQW 902/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education and the Department of Education and Skills jointly commissioned a scoping study of North South Co-operation in the education sector. Part 1 of the report sets out an analysis of activities over the past five years and is at present with the Minister of Education in the South for his formal approval. I will write to the member with a copy of the report as soon as it is available.

Clerical and Technical Staff in the Voluntary Grammar School Sector

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education whether funding will be provided for job evaluations for clerical and technical staff in the voluntary grammar school sector.

(AQW 914/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) conducted a range of Job Evaluations (JEs) from 1995 for their non-teaching staff. Clerical and technical grades were part of the first tranche of staff to be evaluated and ELBs were able to meet the additional costs of implementing the JE process from within their existing resources.

That aside, the agreement on the outcome of the JE process was between the ELBs, as employing authority, and their non-teaching staff. The agreement did not have a direct read across to employees of other employing authorities such as the voluntary grammar school sector. Accordingly, any decision to implement the JE process in respect of particular categories of staff was a matter for the Board of Governors of each Voluntary Grammar School, as employing authority. However, as with the ELBs, DE did not make any funds available to those VG schools who chose to implement the JE process.

My Department did, however, provide funding to the ELBs in 2005 and 2009 following the introduction of the Single Status agreement in 1998 for manual workers. This was due to the large volume of staff to be evaluated. Although this was again an issue for the Board of Governors of voluntary grammar schools as employing authorities, the former Minister for Education, Caitríona Ruane, listened to and took on board the concerns raised by these schools about the potential financial implications and, therefore, without prejudice, made additional resources available to those VGS who wished to implement these job evaluations.

Pupil Underachievement

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Education what steps he intends to take to address pupil underachievement in Maths and English at GCSE level.

(AQW 949/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have made it a priority to tackle underachievement in literacy and numeracy, so that more of our young people leave school having achieved at least a grade C in GCSE English and maths. This is a level 2 qualification, which is increasingly recognised as the minimum skills level our young people need to contribute to economic growth.

Work is now underway to implement Count, read: succeed – A Strategy to Improve Outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy. This strategy, which applies to all schools, sets out the central role of teachers, supported by parents and school leaders, in tackling underachievement. Teachers are supported to use their professional judgement to identify and address underachievement, including where pupils are being prepared for GCSE English or maths.

The strategy is supported by the other reforms I am advancing to raise standards and tackle underachievement. These include the school improvement policy; the developing early years' strategy; and the Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how much his Department has spent on Special Advisers since May 2007, broken down by (i) salary; (ii) pension contributions; (iii) expenses; (iv) office costs; and (v) other costs.

(AQW 964/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since May 2007, my Department has spent the following on Special Advisers:

(i) Salary, in the following pay bands:

8 May 2007 – 31 March 2008 - £56,100 - £78,540.

1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009 - £57,300 - £79,740.

1 April 2009 - 5 May 2011 - £57,300 - £82,531.

Salary payable from 16 May 2011 is under consideration.

(ii) Pension entitlement is set out in the Model Contract – Letter of Appointment.

(iii) Expenses - £1901.

(iv) Office costs – There were no incremental office costs as a result of Special Advisers using existing NICS DFP provided accommodation.

(v) Other Costs - £2608.

Post-Primary Schools in the Lurgan Area

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education for an update on the progress of proposals for the development of a pattern of post-primary schools in the Lurgan area.

(AQW 970/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: 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.

When this process is completed the SELB will bring forward its proposals for post-primary provision in the Lurgan area for consideration by the Department.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education to detail the costs incurred to date by the pilot Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 972/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the costs to date in respect of the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority are set out in the table below:

	05-06 £'000	06-07 £'000	07-08 £'000	08-09 £000	09-10 £'000	10-11* £'000	Totals £'000
ESA Implementation Team	-	258	1,032	1,909	2,697	2,314	8,210
RPA Policy & Legislative Team	107	956	832	810	580	21	3,306
Totals	107	1,214	1,864	2,719	3,277	2,335	11,516

* Figures for 2010-11 are as at 31 March 2011 and are unaudited.

These costs are an 'invest to save' measure. The establishment of the ESA will release £20 million per year from unnecessary bureaucracy and will provide more effective arrangements for raising standards, planning the education estate and ensuring access to the curriculum on the basis of equality.

A considerable amount of work has been done in preparation for ESA. A range of operational and back office services which can be moved from the current nine organisations to the new authority over a period of time have been explored.

Work on the development of common terms and conditions of staff is well advanced, along with the implementation of consistent workforce strategies for recruitment and re-deployment. This will create a cohesive system for the non-teaching workforce for all aspects of HR support including industrial relations, employee welfare and general workforce development.

A robust ICT infrastructure has been created to support schools and the wider education service. Common ICT platforms have been designed and implemented across the sector. Existing organisations are linked on one robust network covering multiple sites. Common helpdesk, intranet and internet facilities have been created. Software licensing has been centralised, delivering savings through economies of scale, and common practices and standards have been agreed.

The ESA Implementation Team has designed and is currently implementing, in shadow form, a new financial reporting system including a single finance and accounts system. This system provides access to a range of important management information across the education sector for the 2009-10 financial year which is instrumental to convergence planning and the creation of regionalised services. This system will support ESA.

Common policies and procedures to underpin effective information governance across both schools and the nine affected organisations are being completed. This work is based on the identification and sharing of best practice across organisations and incorporates the most recent developments in information governance within the NICS.

Shared Teaching Between Schools

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of (i) the current level of shared teaching between schools; and (ii) the total savings that could be achieved in all school types by the use of this practice.

(AQW 973/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold information on and is not aware of the numbers of teachers that are shared between schools. However, we do know from the experience of specialist schools which have been working closely with partner primary, post-primary and special schools and from the collaborative arrangements developed by many post-primary schools that there are many benefits that can be gained through sharing and working together. These are benefits that can be shared at teacher, school, pupil and community level.

While it is not possible to quantify savings, it is clear to me that collaboration and joint working can avoid unnecessary duplication of provision within local areas and can therefore provide schools with opportunities to reduce costs and deliver value for money while also enhancing opportunities for their pupils.

School's Budget

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education, given that an estimated 80 per cent of a school's budget is used for staff salaries, what steps he is taking to protect school budgets from cuts rather than administration budgets.

(AQW 975/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB) equates to almost 60% of the education budget, so it will be difficult to protect this budget in its entirety.

My core priorities are to raise educational standards and target education inequalities, reduce bureaucracy, drive-up efficiency and eliminate duplication. The savings measures in place to enable the department to live within budget are therefore aimed at protecting spend on these priorities and bearing down on administration and duplication. My clear intention is to minimise the impact on frontline services in the classroom.

Given the tough budget settlement, I intend to work with my Executive colleagues in the months and years ahead to help alleviate pressures on the education budget.

Agreement on the establishment of ESA will ensure greater consistency and efficiency in service delivery. Without it, scarce resources will continue to be spent on unnecessary bureaucracy and spread too thinly over existing institutions.

Pre-school Places

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education, given that research indicates a £7 return for every £1 of investment in pre-school places, how many additional places he intends to fund in future.

(AQW 976/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The policy for pre-school provision currently relates to "a place for every child whose parents wish it" thereby reflecting its non-compulsory nature. In planning for the overall demand, the Department took account of surveys in the early phases which indicated that about 10% of parents do not want a pre-school place for their child, for a number of reasons. The remaining 90% of children, and more in recent years, have availed of the opportunity of pre-school education in all settings, including the Irish medium.

There has been steady investment in funding for pre-school provision over the years. Following an unprecedented demand for funded pre-school places in the 2009/10 school year, the then Minister announced additional funding of up to £1.3m to provide places for those children unplaced at the end of the pre-school admissions process in May 2010. In setting the budget for 2011/12 the increased level of funding allocated for PSEEP took into account the increasing demand for places caused by an upturn in the birth rate and an increase in the number of newcomer children.

Approximately two thirds of funded provision is in the statutory sector with the remaining third delivered through pre-school settings in the voluntary/private sector. In 2010/11 there were more than 22,500 children in funded pre-school education. Of these, over 14,000 children attended statutory nursery school and units, and over 7,500 in funded places in voluntary/private settings.

For the forthcoming school year there are approximately 22,800 funded pre-school available places, and the vast majority of parents who applied for a funded pre-school place for their child have been facilitated.

In terms of overall provision, the Department will seek to improve the current level of take up and will continue to work with the Education and Library Board's to ensure the best possible match of places to demand.

Teacher to Pupil Ratio

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what steps he is taking to reduce the teacher to pupil ratio in schools.

(AQW 977/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Beyond the requirements that apply to Foundation and Key Stage 1 pupils, pupil:teacher ratios are not determined by the Department as it is for the Board of Governors and Principal of each school to determine the setting of teaching and non-teaching staff complements through use of their delegated budget.

Research evidence suggests that, except during the very early years, there is little correlation between class size and pupil outcomes. Rather the main factor in raising standards is high quality teaching supported by strong and effective leadership.

The Department's policy position reflects and has been informed by this evidence. Our policy is that our youngest pupils, those in Foundation and Key Stage 1, should not be educated in classes of larger than 30. The Department of Education monitors the class sizes requirement and also recently issued a Circular to all grant-aided primary schools to remind them of their statutory responsibility. Where it is appropriate, Education and Library Boards can provide funding to cover the costs of an additional teacher. They also have the power to approve an exception to the class size requirements for one year only in order to avoid unreasonable public expenditure or for other valid reasons, for example to facilitate a direction by an admissions appeal tribunal or by an ELB or in response to a school attendance order or specific provisions in a statement of special educational needs.

Within all stages of a child's education in school, our focus is also on supporting and promoting high quality teaching and learning and our school improvement policy is designed with this purpose in mind.

Skill Levels in the Workforce

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what discussions he has had with the Minister for Employment and Learning regarding the improvement of skill levels in the workforce through curricular action in primary and post-primary schools.

(AQW 978/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I met earlier this week with the Minister for Employment and Learning and we discussed a range of issues, including the important contribution that both Departments will be making to the development and implementation of the Executive's new economic strategy. The success of that strategy will depend on us having a workforce with the skills, creativity and flexibility to respond and adapt to new opportunities.

Our focus on rebuilding and rebalancing our economy demands a renewed focus on raising skills levels in literacy, numeracy and ICT at every level from primary school right through to sixth form, work which, I am pleased to say, is well underway. My Department, together with DEL, is taking action to develop a STEM skilled workforce with an emphasis too on the building of the personal, social and employability skills in young people that employers tell us they need. My Department also continues to work with DEL to ensure access to a coherent and effective provision of education and training for the 14-19 age group and on our joint careers strategy and has an important contribution to make to wider work to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

I welcome this continued and regular engagement and am keen that, at all levels, we continue this joint working for the benefit of our young people.

Rural Primary Schools with Low Enrolments

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education whether he has considered group management solutions for rural primary schools with low enrolments in order to keep sites open wherever possible.

(AQW 981/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am clear that we need to develop a more sustainable pattern of school provision, particularly to deal with the challenges facing rural communities. In moving forward we need to be innovative and creative when developing solutions and this will include considering opportunities for increased sharing, collaboration and co-location.

In the first instance it is the responsibility of school managing authorities to bring forward proposals for education provision that meets the needs of local areas. In doing so they must be able to demonstrate that schools are viable and sustainable in the longer term. I can assure you that any proposals coming forward for shared management arrangements will be considered carefully by my Department taking account of the needs of the children and the local context.

This will be done within the framework outlined in the Policy for Sustainable Schools which recognises explicitly the challenges facing small rural schools as they strive to deliver high quality education. This is reflected in the lower enrolment threshold for rural primary schools and the accessibility criterion which provides guidance on home to school travel times.

Department Staff

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education to detail the current salary levels and number of staff employed by (i) the Department of Education; (ii) the Education and Library Boards; (iii) the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; (iv) the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments; (v) the Staff Commission for the Education and Library Boards; (vi) the Youth Council for Northern Ireland; (vii) Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta; (viii) the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland; and (ix) the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education.

(AQW 1037/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current salary levels and number of staff employed are as follows

Organisation	Staff Numbers	Salary Range
(i) Department of Education	582.60	£14,981 - £205,000*
(ii) Education and Library Boards	12186	£11,664 - £101,551
(iii) Council Catholic Maintained Schools	70	£12,488 - £83,448
(iv) Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment	350	£13,190 - £73,000
(v) Staff Commission	6	£12,488 - £51,866
(vi) YCNI	15	£14,981 - £62,407
(vii) Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	13	£15,039 - £49,043
(viii) General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland	16	£12,489 - £80,460
(ix) Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	12	£15,725 - £53,664

* this denotes the maxima of the salary scale for a particular grade and does not infer any member of staff is on that salary point.

Proposals for New Builds

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education to list all (i) development proposals; and (ii) proposals for new builds that are awaiting a decision by his Department.

(AQW 1057/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) There are currently 19 Development Proposals which have been published, but for which a decision has yet to be taken. These are listed in Table 1 below. Only at the end of the 2-month statutory consultation period can I consider all information pertinent to a DP and make my decision.
- (ii) The Department's current Investment Delivery Plan contains proposals for new builds at 53 schools which are awaiting a decision by my Department. These are listed below at Table 2.

In addition I would inform you that there are in excess of 100 proposals in the early stages of development logged with my Department. However, none of these have been announced for funding.

TABLE 1 LIST OF CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

DP	School	ELB	Published	Objection Period Ends	Description
205	Gaelscoil na Mona	BELB	07/04/11	07/06/11	New statutory Irish-medium nursery unit
258	Gaelscoil Eanna	NEELB	14/03/11	14/05/11	New statutory Irish-medium nursery unit
259	Braid PS	NEELB	12/04/11	12/06/11	Closure
260	Lourdes PS Whitehead	NEELB	13/04/11	13/06/11	Closure
220	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	SEELB	22/03/11	22/05/11	New statutory Irish-medium nursery unit
221	Connor House Prep Dept Bangor GS	SEELB	22/03/11	22/05/11	Closure of Prep Dept
255	Bocombra PS, Portadown	SELB	21/04/11	21/06/11	New statutory nursery unit
256	Drumadonnell PS, Ballyroney	SELB	21/04/11	21/06/11	New statutory nursery unit
257	Orchard County PS	SELB	21/04/11	21/06/11	New statutory nursery unit
258	Waringstown PS	SELB	21/04/11	21/06/11	New statutory nursery unit
259	Seagoe PS	SELB	21/04/11	21/06/11	Additional nursery unit
260	St Mary's PS, Banbridge	SELB	21/04/11	21/06/11	Additional nursery unit

DP	School	ELB	Published	Objection Period Ends	Description
261	St Patrick's PS, Mayobridge	SELB	21/04/11	21/06/11	Convert Reception Class to a Nursery Unit
262	Portadown Int PS	SELB	21/04/11	21/06/11	Additional nursery unit
263	Gaelscoil Ui Neill	SELB	21/04/11	21/06/11	Extend capacity from 5 to 7 class base.
264	St Francis of Assisi PS, Keady	SELB	26/05/11	26/07/11	New statutory nursery unit
216	Jones Memorial PS	WELB	6/04/11	06/06/11	Autistic Spectrum Disorder Class for KS1& Learning Support Class for KS2
217	St Mary's Boys' PS & St Mary's Girl's PS	WELB	05/05/11	05/07/11	Amalgamation
218	Portora Royal School	WELB	04/05/11	04/07/11	Co-Educational Post 16 provision

TABLE 2 SCHEMES ON INVESTMENT DELIVERY PLAN LISTED BY EDUCATION & LIBRARY BOARD

Schools	Board Area
Colaiste Feirste	BELB
Glenwood PS, Edenderry NS	BELB
Greenwood Assessment Centre	BELB
Little Flower	BELB
Methodist College	BELB
Mitchell House Special School	BELB
Springhill PS	BELB
Strandtown PS	BELB
Victoria College	BELB
Victoria Park PS (Strand & Sydenham)	BELB
Ballymoney High	NEELB
Dromore Central PS	SELB

Schools	Board Area
Edendork PS	SELB
Holy Trinity College, Cookstown	SELB
Lurgan College	SELB
Portadown College	SELB
St Bronagh's PS	SELB
St Clare's and St Colman's PS	SELB
St Joseph's Convent PS	SELB
St Louis' Grammar, Kilkeel	SELB
St Mary's PS Banbridge	SELB
St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon	SELB
St Patrick's College, Banbridge	SELB
St Patrick's Grammar, Armagh	SELB
St Teresa's PS Lurgan	SELB
Tannaghmore PS	SELB
Artigarvan PS	WELB
Arvalee Special School	WELB
Ballykelly PS	WELB
Belmont Special School	WELB
Dean Maguirc College	WELB
Devenish College	WELB
Ebrington PS	WELB
Eglinton PS	WELB
Enniskillen Model PS	WELB
Foyle & Londonderry College	WELB
Loreto College, Omagh	WELB
New Buildings PS	WELB
Omagh Integrated PS	WELB
Rossmar SS (Limegrove / Glasvey)	WELB
St Columbkille's PS	WELB
St Conor's PS	WELB
St Paul's PS, Irvinestown	WELB

Classroom Assistants

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education how many teachers and classroom assistants have been made redundant in the current academic year to date, broken down by (i) Education and Library Board; and (ii) education sector.

(AQW 1058/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: From the start of the current academic year until 21 June 2011, 12 Classroom Assistants and 14 teachers have been made redundant, as set out in the table below;

Education and Library Board Area	Classroom Assistants	Teachers
Belfast	2 Controlled	8 Controlled 2 Maintained
Western	4 Controlled	0
North Eastern	0	0
South Eastern	0	2 Controlled 1 Maintained 1 Grant Maintained Integrated
Southern	4 Maintained 2 Controlled	0

Teaching Schools

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education whether he has any plans to follow the lead of the Education Secretary in England, to set up teaching schools, along the lines of teaching hospitals, so that teachers can be trained on-the-job using a system of mentoring.

(AQW 1074/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have no plans in the foreseeable future to establish Teaching Schools here.

Our schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have complementary roles in Initial Teacher Education (ITE), with each having a distinctive and particular contribution to make to the professional development of student teachers. HEIs offer students an academic and professional framework of courses around which students' development as competent teachers will be built, whilst placement schools provide students with the necessary practical experience of teaching.

The current ITE programmes here aim to strike the correct balance between theory and practice, and a significant proportion of a student's time is spent in school settings: 32 weeks on the 4-year BEd programmes; 24 weeks on the one-year Post-Primary PGCE programmes; and 18 weeks on the one-year Primary PGCE programmes. During this time, and in order to broaden their experience, students teach a range of classes appropriate to their phase and specialist area in at least two schools. They are supported by an experienced teacher (teacher-tutor) and are able to observe a variety of teachers and a range of teaching styles.

On foot of the Teacher Education Review consultation exercise, the Department plans to review the school placement arrangements for ITE students to ensure that placement schools are fully supporting student teachers in line with guidance and policy direction.

The HEI-based ITE programmes here have been fully accredited by the General Teaching Council as being fit for purpose and as providing a professional preparation which enables students successfully completing such programmes to register with the Council to teach in our schools. In addition, recent

Education and Training Inspectorate reports on the ITE programmes have assessed the quality of provision as being of a high standard.

In the light of the factors outlined above, I see no pressing need to introduce Training Schools here.

Possible Federations, Confederations and Mergers Between Schools

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education for an update on work that is being carried out in preparation for possible federations, confederations and mergers between schools across different education sectors.

(AQW 1076/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In moving forward we need to be innovative and creative when developing solutions and this will include considering opportunities for increased sharing, collaboration and co-location. I can assure you that any proposals coming forward for shared management arrangements will be considered carefully by my Department taking account of the needs of the children and the local context.

In the first instance it is the responsibility of school managing authorities to bring forward proposals for education provision that meets the needs of local areas. In doing so they must be able to demonstrate that schools are viable and sustainable in the longer term.

As yet, no formal proposals have been submitted to my Department by school managing authorities in this regard.

Nursery School Places

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education how many children in the Upper Bann constituency have not been allocated a nursery school place for September 2011; and what action he intends to take to address this shortfall.

(AQW 1084/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Southern Education and Library Board has advised that their information on provision in the Upper Bann constituency is based on figures for Craigavon and Banbridge District Council Areas. The information relates only to those children in their final pre-school year.

In the Craigavon Borough Council Area there were 105 target age children unplaced at the end of Stage 1 of the procedure (1 April 2011). Of these 41 nominated a further preference and 35 were placed in Stage 2 of the procedure.

In the Banbridge District Council Area there were 47 target age children unplaced at the end of Stage 1 of the procedure (1 April 2011). Of these 26 nominated a further preference and 20 were placed in Stage 2 of the procedure.

The Board has secured additional funded places to address a shortfall of places in the Craigavon Borough Council Area through afternoon sessions in two existing voluntary playgroups, both of which were allocated 16 additional places. A new provider was also brought into the Programme.

In addition a number of Development Proposals for new or additional Nursery Units at existing primary schools are being studied by the Department.

In the Banbridge District Council Area one new provider was brought into the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme and allocated 15 funded places. Development Proposals are also at consultation stage for new nursery units at two existing primary schools.

Nursery School Places

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education whether his Department monitors birth rates in the Belfast area to determine the number of nursery school places required.

(AQW 1085/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: While my Department retains policy and budgetary responsibility for the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme, the planning and implementation at local level is the responsibility of the Pre-School Education Advisory Groups (PEAGS) within each Education and Library Board. These groups undertake an annual review of provision at local level taking into account factors such as demographic changes and the relocation/closure of settings, in order to ensure that the allocation of places to voluntary/private sector providers continues to meet the needs of each area.

The management of pre-school places is a complex process. The information which is available from NISRA only provides the projected number of children in an age band based on birth rates in a particular year down to district council level. There is no statistical data available at a local level which provides detailed information on the projected number of children which will be in their final pre-school year – those aged between 3 years 2 months and 4 years 2 months – each September.

In addition, whilst statistical projections can indicate an overall rise, they cannot predict specifically where increased demand will occur, and what proportion of parents in any given area will want a pre-school place for their child. Therefore the P1 number, which is collated as part of the annual School Census, is used as a proxy for the size of the pre-school cohort. This method is considered to be the most accurate way of predicting likely demand in an individual locality. Other factors, such as birth rate figures, are taken into account but they are of limited use as they cannot be disaggregated below District Council level. The numbers of newcomer children in a given area, and whether parents will request full-time or part-time provision are also factors which cannot be predicted.

Nursery School Places

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of nursery school places available in each nursery in the South Belfast area, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1086/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of nursery school places available in each nursery in the South Belfast area, in each of the last five years has been 52 places, except for Rosetta Primary, Fane Street Primary, Botanic Primary and Loughview Primary schools which had 26 places. Scoil An Droichid has had 26 places in the last three years since it opened.

Music Therapy Services

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education which special needs schools have been affected by the withdrawal of funding for Music Therapy Services.

(AQW 1090/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I understand that given other extensive pressures on the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety's (DHSSPS) budget and the priorities competing for that funding, that DHSSPS is not in a position to continue funding the Northern Ireland Music Therapy Trust which provides music therapy in special schools.

I have been advised by the chief executives of the education and library boards that the following special schools have been affected by the withdrawal of funding for music therapy services.

Belfast Education and Library Board

- Glenveagh

North-Eastern Education and Library Board

- Castle Tower
- Hill Croft
- Riverside
- Roddensvale
- Sandelford

South-Eastern Education and Library Board

- Clifton
- Knockevin
- Parkview
- Tor Bank

Southern Education and Library Board

- Sperrinview
- Lisanally
- Rathore

Western Education and Library Board

- Arvalee
- Elmbrook
- Foyleview
- Knockavoe
- Rossmar

Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 618/11-15, to detail (i) the programmes designed to promote (a) enterprise and entrepreneurship; and (b) the activities relating to work experience and career-related activities; and (ii) to provide a breakdown of the funding allocated to external bodies for the provision of these services.

(AQW 1093/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My department provides funding to a number of organisations to provide enterprise and entrepreneurial opportunities for young people and to undertake activities designed to help provide schools with links to the world of work and pupils with work experience.

A list of these programmes and the funding allocated in 2011-12 is provided in the table below

Provider	Programmes delivered	DE funding 2011-12
Young Enterprise NI	Ourselves Our Families Our Community Our City Our Nation Our World Company Programme Team Programme Quickstart Your School Your Business Moving On Project Business Enterprise in Action Learn to Earn Personal Economics Success Skills Presentation Skills Study Skills Industry Masterclass Entrepreneurship Masterclass	£650,000

Provider	Programmes delivered	DE funding 2011-12
Sentinus	Industry Challenge Primary Challenge STEM Ambassadors STEM Experience Robotics & Family Days Sector Skills Challenge STEM Design Challenge STEM Careers Programme STEM Careers Roadshows Crest Awards Industrial Bursary Scheme Insight into Careers Formula 1 Challenge Industry R&D Challenge Young Innovators Employability Skills STEM Experience for Special Schools	£400,000
School Employer Connections	Work experience placements Class study visits Work open days	£110,000
Charter Work Experience	Work experience placements Work inspiration programmes Work open days	£100,000
Business Education Partnerships	Careers conventions Careers workshops Business insight days Business open days Interview skills programmes	Approximately £290,000 (final disbursement of grant to be determined)

Joint Efficiency Review Stage Two Report (PEDU)

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education when the recommendations contained in the Department of Education and the Department of Finance and Personnel's Joint Efficiency Review Stage Two Report (PEDU) will be published and made available to the public.

(AQW 1108/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The second stage of the Joint Efficiency Review on Home to School Transport and School Catering Services is currently being undertaken by the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU). The work is expected to be concluded with the publication of a report over the summer. The report will be made available to the Education Committee and on the Department's website.

Programme for Government for 2011-2015

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education what progress has been made on the development of key education priorities for the Programme for Government for 2011-2015.

(AQW 1109/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Work on developing the priorities for the Programme for Government for 2011-2015 is being led by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. As a member of the Executive, I will be engaging with my Ministerial colleagues on that work, and will be highlighting the importance of education to the Programme.

Foyle and Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education when he intends to announce the commencement of the move by Foyle and Londonderry College and Ebrington Primary School to a new site in Clooney.

(AQW 1110/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Executive's Budget highlights significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years, which will have a detrimental effect on the Department's ability to deliver new school building projects.

I now need to consider how the available funds should be deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to address the most pressing needs across the schools estate. This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

The proposed major capital schemes for Foyle College and Ebrington Primary School are two of 53 schemes on the Investment Delivery Plan. The schemes are at an early stage of planning, with the Stage C submission (initial sketch plans and costs) approved by the Department on 21 March 2011. It is the intention to hold the projects at their current stage until such times as it is decided, which, if any, projects can be advanced.

Unfortunately, therefore, I cannot provide you with any indication as to when Foyle College and Ebrington Primary School will move to the Clooney site.

Teacher Vacancies

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of teacher vacancies in the (i) integrated; and (ii) maintained education sectors.

(AQW 1121/11-15)

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

(I) NUMBER OF TEACHER VACANCIES IN THE 2010/11 ACADEMIC YEAR IN INTEGRATED SCHOOLS AT 1 NOVEMBER 2010.

	Primary	Post-Primary
Full-Time Permanent Vacancies	0	3
Full-Time Temporary Vacancies	2	2
Part-Time Permanent Vacancies	0	0
Part-Time Temporary Vacancies	0	1
Total Vacancies	2	6

(II) NUMBER OF TEACHER VACANCIES IN THE 2010/11 ACADEMIC YEAR IN CATHOLIC MAINTAINED SCHOOLS AT 1 NOVEMBER 2010.

	Primary	Post-Primary
Full-Time Permanent Vacancies	22	10
Full-Time Temporary Vacancies	9	5
Part-Time Permanent Vacancies	3	2
Part-Time Temporary Vacancies	7	1
Total Vacancies	41	18

Source: Teacher Vacancy Survey

Note:

- 1 Number of vacancies is for classroom teachers only.
- 2 Primary Catholic Maintained figures include 1 special school.
- 3 "Integrated" includes Grant-maintained and Controlled Integrated Schools.

Lisanelly Education Campus

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Education for an update on the current state of negotiations and consultations with primary schools in the Omagh area regarding participation in the proposed Lisanelly Education Campus.

(AQW 1134/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The aim of the Lisanelly Education Campus is the development of post-primary education facilities. There are no plans for primary education facilities on site.

However, I recognise that as the primary schools in the area will play a vital role as feeders for the post-primary schools on the new campus, their inclusion and involvement in the process is very important.

I can confirm that all principals and chairs of Boards of Governors of primary schools in the area were invited to attend a seminar held in March 2011 regarding the Lisanelly Campus and that follow-up visits to individual schools were offered.

This support will continue to be available to the local primary schools throughout the process. I further expect that the post-primary schools involved with the project will continue to cultivate the strong links they already have with their feeder schools.

Pre-school Places

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 231/11-15, for the South Antrim constituency, to detail (i) the names of the schools which offer funded pre-school places; (ii) the number of remaining pre-school places available for September 2011; and (iii) the total number of pre-school places filled in the 2010/11 academic year.

(AQW 1137/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The following table shows a breakdown of pre-school provision in South Antrim. As the information supplied in response to AQW 231/11-15 was based on funded pre-school provision in the South Antrim area, which crosses the boundaries of Antrim and parts of Newtownabbey District Council areas, this further information has been provided on the same basis.

Pre-School Provider	Places Remaining for Sept 2011 *	Total Places Filled in the 2010/2011 * *	District Council
Mount St Michael Ps NU	0	53	Antrim
St Joseph's Ns, Antrim	0 FT 0 PT	26 FT 52 PT	Antrim
St Joseph's Ps Nu, Crumlin	0 PT	104	Antrim
St Oliver Plunkett Ps Nu	0 PT	26	Antrim
Steeple Ns	0 PT	156	Antrim
Templepatrick Ps Nu	0 PT	52	Antrim
Ashgrove Ns	0 FT 0 PT	26 FT 52 PT	Newtownabbey
Ballyclare Ns	0 PT	156	Newtownabbey
Ballyhenry Ns	0 FT	52	Newtownabbey
Earlview Ps Nu	0 FT	26	Newtownabbey
Monkstown Ns	0 FT 0 PT	26 FT 52 PT	Newtownabbey
Mossgrove Ps Nu	0 PT	52	Newtownabbey
Mossley Ns	0 FT 0 PT	26 FT 52 PT	Newtownabbey
Rathcoole Ps Nu	0 FT	52	Newtownabbey
St Bernard's Ps Nu	0 PT	52	Newtownabbey
St James' Ps Nu	0 FT 0 PT	26 FT 52 PT	Newtownabbey
Whitehouse Ps Nu	0 FT	52	Newtownabbey
Playgroups			
Abc Day Nursery	0	28	Antrim
Crumlin Integrated Pre-School Playgroup	0	9	Antrim
Little Hands Pre-School	1	8	Antrim
Laughterland Early Years, Toomebridge	0	15	Antrim
Maine Integrated Playgroup	0	17	Antrim
Muckamore Pre-School	0	26	Antrim
Naiscoil Ghleann Darach, Crumlin	0	15	Antrim
Randalstown Community Playgroup	0	20	Antrim
Round Tower Playgroup	1	22	Antrim

Pre-School Provider	Places Remaining for Sept 2011 *	Total Places Filled in the 2010/2011 **	District Council
St Comgall's Playgroup	0	24	Antrim
Taylorstown Playgroup, Toome	0	22	Antrim
Thrushfield , Templepatrick	0	20	Antrim
Tannaghmore Playgroup	9	New provider for 2011/12	Antrim
Tiny Tots Pre-School, Toome	0	23	Antrim
Glengormley Playgroup	0	45	Newtownabbey
Greendale Day Nursery	0	17	Newtownabbey
Kilbride Playgroup	1	17	Newtownabbey
Mallusk Community Playgroup	0	8	Newtownabbey
Newtownabbey Methodist Mission Playgroup	2	17	Newtownabbey
Naiscoil Eanna, Glengormley	1	24	Newtownabbey
St. Bernard's Playgroup	0	16	Newtownabbey
St Macnissi's Playgroup	0	14	Newtownabbey
St. Mary's-On-The-Hill Playgroup	0	24	Newtownabbey
Tiny Tots Centre	0	12	Newtownabbey
TIR-na-NOG Pre-School	0	17	Newtownabbey

* The total number of places remaining for September 2011 is taken at 22 June 2011.

** The total number of places filled in the 2010/2011 academic year is taken as at the date of the School Census in October 2010.

Holy Trinity Primary School, West Belfast

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Education, in relation to Holy Trinity Primary School, West Belfast, (i) what action his Department has taken, or intends to take, in relation to the flooding and drainage problems that occur during periods of heavy rain; (ii) whether there are any plans for a window replacement scheme; (iii) whether he would consider extending speech and language therapy for mainstream children with speech difficulties who attend this school; and (iv) whether it is possible for P2 children to have a Classroom Assistant.

(AQW 1159/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In relation to the questions you have raised in relation to Holy Trinity Primary School:

- (i) Minor Works to resolve the flooding and drainage problems are proceeding in two phases. Phase 1 was approved on 1st November 2010 at a cost of £17,000 and is now complete. Phase 2 is proceeding within the 2011-12 Minor Capital Works programme. It is estimated to cost £121,000 and work will commence of the site in the near future.
- (ii) An application has been received for replacement windows at the school. The Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB) has confirmed that, while all windows identified will need to be replaced the future, there is one block in the school in which the windows need to be replaced as soon as practicable. These priority works costing in the region of £25,000 will proceed in 2011-12 Minor

Works programme and will be managed by the BELB. The remainder of the works required will be registered on the Minor Works database and will be considered when finance becomes available.

- (iii) The issue surrounding Speech and Language Therapy being extended for mainstream children with speech difficulties who attend this school is one that would need to be addressed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.
- (iv) In relation to your query on a Classroom assistant this is a matter for the School Principal and Board of Governors who have responsibility as to how best to deploy staff in their schools.

Statementing Process for Children with Dyslexia

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Education what steps he is taking, in conjunction with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, to address the difficulties associated with the statementing process for children with dyslexia.

(AQW 1160/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is the education and library boards (ELBs) which are responsible under special education legislation for identifying, assessing and, in appropriate cases, making special educational provision for children with special educational needs (SEN), in their areas. When an ELB decides to make a statutory assessment, the timeframe is set out in the Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations (NI) 2005.

Boards have 26 weeks to complete a statutory assessment of a child's SEN and to issue, if appropriate, a completed final statement, subject to permitted exceptions. In the course of the statutory assessment and statementing process advice will be sought from all relevant bodies including the relevant health and social services trust. This process is the same for all children with SEN including those with dyslexia.

The Department of Education (DE) has set a target in the ELBs' resource allocation plans requiring ELBs to adhere to this timeframe. All ELBs have reported that, subject to permitted exceptions, this target is currently being met. DE is not aware of any specific difficulties associated with the statementing process for children with dyslexia.

The statementing process was among the issues addressed within the consultation document on the review of special educational needs and inclusion and, as proposals from that review are finalised, any issues which are relevant to the health sector will be discussed with the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety.

New Build for Scoil Na Fuiseoige, Twinbrook

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Education what action his Department intends to take to address the projected deficit of two classrooms in the plans for the new build for Scoil Na Fuiseoige, Twinbrook.
(AQW 1162/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department uses standard methodologies for the calculation of Long Term Enrolments (LTE) for all schools involved in major capital works projects. For primary schools this is based on the average of the schools' intakes in years 1-3. The LTE is reviewed on an annual basis during the planning of the project to ensure that schools are built at the right size. The figure is agreed with the school managing authority.

The Department must be consistent in its approach to the provision of accommodation for new school building projects. To do so it adheres to the schedules of accommodation, set out in the school Building Handbook, which are based on LTEs. The Building Handbook recommends that new buildings should, where possible, be located so as to allow for future expansion should demand dictate.

The new Scoil na Fuiseoige represents an investment of almost £1.7 million. This is to provide a five classroom school which is designed to accommodate 116-145 pupils. There are no plans to increase the number of classrooms currently being constructed as the school is correctly sized based on the

agreed LTE of 119. However should the enrolment numbers significantly increase in the future the Department will reassess the accommodation needs of this school.

Nursery and Pre-school Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of nursery and pre-school places available in the North Down area in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1171/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below shows the number of funded pre-school places available in the North Down area over the last 10 years.

PROVISION IN NORTH DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

Providers	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Statutory nursery	442	494	494	494	494	494	468	468	468	468
Voluntary/ private	280	254	297	269	266	299	314	304	314	359
Total	722	748	791	763	760	793	782	772	782	827

Appointment to an Education and Library Board

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many councillors proposed by their local council for appointment to an Education and Library Board are still awaiting approval from his Department.

(AQW 1173/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I appointed 15 councillors to the Education and Library Boards on 23 June 2011. All of these councillors had previously been members of the respective Boards up until the May elections, and following the elections the relevant Council confirmed to the department that the councillor was being nominated again for the Board. The processes with six other Councils are continuing and further appointments will be made when those processes have been completed.

Education and Library Boards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many councillors have been appointed to Education and Library Boards in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1174/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is as follows:

Year	Reason for Appointment	Number
2009	Vacant posts as a result of resignations	3
2010	2010 Reconstitution	15 (appointed December 2010)
2011 to date	2010 Reconstitution	9 (appointed Jan/Mar 2011)
	Re-appointments following May 2011 elections	15

Teacher to Pupil Ratio

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what is the current teacher to pupil ratio.
(AQW 1179/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The overall Pupil - Teacher Ratio (PTR) in 2010/11 is 16.8 and is routinely published on the DE website.

St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Belfast

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposed new build for St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Belfast.
(AQW 1188/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are two proposed major schemes for St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School, both of which are at Economic Appraisal stage. One scheme is to address the main school provision and the other is in relation to the provision of a sports hall. However, the Department has not agreed to fund these projects.

The Executive's Budget highlights significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years and this will impact on the Department's ability to deliver new school building projects.

I will wish to consider carefully how the available capital funds should be deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to address the most pressing needs across the schools' estate. This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

In addition, the Department has not yet been notified of the findings of the Commission for Catholic Education Post Primary Review. The outworkings of the review may also impact on a number of proposed major capital schemes, including that for St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School.

I therefore cannot provide you with any indication as to if or when the proposed major capital schemes for St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School might be possible.

Gaelscoil na Móna, Belfast

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Education for an update on the development proposal for Gaelscoil na Móna, Belfast.
(AQW 1193/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Development Proposal No 205, for the proposed establishment of a single full time nursery unit at Gaelscoil na Móna from 1 September 2011 or as soon thereafter, was first published on 7 April 2011 by the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB). However the Development Proposal was not explicit on the pattern of attendance and had therefore to be republished on 2 June 2011 to ensure that the intent of the proposal was clear. The associated statutory 2-month consultation period which commenced on the date of re-publication ends on 2 August 2011.

After the 2-month consultation period ends, I will consider all information pertinent to the proposal and make my decision. The relevant parties will be informed of my decision at that time.

St Louise's College, Belfast

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Education to detail the outcome of the new build feasibility study that was completed three years ago for St Louise's College, Belfast.
(AQW 1195/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The proposed major scheme for St Louise's College has not been agreed for funding and is therefore not on the Department's Investment Delivery Plan. However, it is one of a large number of schemes at an early stage of planning, in this case Feasibility Study (FS) stage. The FS was submitted in July 2009 but has not been progressed due to a number of factors, mainly the lack of capital resources. Also my Department is awaiting the outcome of the Commission for Catholic Education's

Post Primary Review which will determine the long term strategic direction for the maintained sector and may impact on a number of proposed major capital schemes, including that for St Louise's College

My Department is facing significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years and in view of this I want to consider carefully how the available capital funds should be deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to address the most pressing needs across the schools' estate. This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

I cannot therefore provide you with any indication as to if or when the proposed major capital scheme for St Louise's College might be possible.

Antrim Borough Council: Schools

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Education how many children living in the Antrim Borough Council area attend a school outside the council boundary.

(AQW 1209/11-15)

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

CHILDREN LIVING IN THE ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA WHO ATTEND A SCHOOL OUTSIDE THE COUNCIL AREA – 2010/11

School type	Total pupils resident in Antrim Borough Council area	Number of pupils attending a school outside Antrim Borough Council area
Primary	5,241	568
Post-primary	4,373	2,508
Special	114	70
Total	9,728	3,146

Source: school census.

Note:

1 Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.

Irish-medium Schools

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Education to detail the Irish-medium schools attended by children from the Antrim Borough Council area; and the number of children from this area in each school.

(AQW 1211/11-15)

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

IRISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS ATTENDED BY CHILDREN WHO ARE RESIDENT IN ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA – 2010/11

School name	School type	Total pupils
Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	Primary	*
Gaelscoil Na Bhfal	Primary	*
Gaelscoil na Mona	Primary	*
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	Primary	41
Colaiste Feirste	Post primary	9

Source: school census

Note:

Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.

‘*’ denotes fewer than 5 pupils.

Mobile Phones to Departmental Staff

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of providing mobile phones to departmental staff in each of the last three years, including the cost of handsets and bills.

(AQW 1212/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The costs of providing mobile phones to departmental staff in each of the last three years, including the cost of handsets and bills, are shown in the following table:

2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
£000	£000	£000
55	51	62

Draft Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail the results of the consultation on the draft Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy with particular reference to education; and (ii) whether, in light of the consultation responses, his Department plans to redraft its key priorities.

(AQW 1241/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The results of the public consultation on the draft Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy are not expected before the end of June. As my Department has not had sight of the results, I am unable to comment further.

Extended Schools and Full Service Schools Programmes

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education (i) which initiatives, under the Extended Schools and Full Service Schools Programmes, are designed to raise standards by fostering a culture where education is valued and parents work in partnership with schools; and (ii) for his assessment of any such initiatives to date.

(AQW 1244/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: Extended Schools receive additional resources to provide targeted support services for those children and young people most in need. Extended Schools and Full Service Schools establish effective partnerships with statutory and voluntary/community organisations that work closely with children and families on a range of issues including increasing the value placed on education by parents and the wider community.

- (i) The Extended Schools and Full Service Schools programmes offer a range of activities aimed at overcoming barriers to learning including a range of programmes aimed at promoting parental and community engagement and supporting educational development.
- (ii) The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) Extended Schools report in July 2010 updates previous evaluations and records that in almost 90% of cases where Extended Schools are serving disadvantaged communities effectively significant improvements are evident in the educational outcomes and the personal and social well-being of pupils. The following independent evaluations of the activities and services provided through the Full Service programmes, alongside the 2009/10 Annual Reports for both programmes demonstrate the emerging success of these programmes:

FGS McClure Watters – Evaluation of the Full Service School Project – June 2008;

FGS McClure Watters – Evaluation of the Full Service Community Network – March 2011.

I have arranged for copies of these documents to be placed in the Assembly library. The 2010 ETI Extended Schools evaluation is available on the ETI website and can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.eti.gov.uk/index/surveys-evaluations/surveys-evaluations-post-primary/surveys-evaluations-post-primary-2010/an-evaluation-of-extended-schools-july-2010.pdf>

Prevailing Youth Culture Outside Schools

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what action his Department intends to take to counter the prevailing youth culture outside schools, which does not value education and undermines the work of schools and limits a pupil's achievements.

(AQW 1245/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have made it a priority to tackle underachievement and promote equality and the raising of standards across education. I want to work collectively with a range of sectors within and outside education to ensure that those at greatest of risk of educational underachievement are supported to reach their full potential. I believe that by fostering a more collaborative approach, involving all educational stakeholders, we can secure much needed improvements in the entire education system.

The Department of Education seeks to engage young people through a range of policies and related actions, including early interventions in the class room, and through the extended and full service schools programmes which seek to address barriers to engagement and learning.

Non formal education through youth work can have a profound impact on the lives of all children, but is particularly relevant for marginalised young people, those falling through the net of formal education or those whose needs are outside of the mainstream. Participation in youth work is voluntary. For those young people who choose not to be involved outreach and detached youth workers are deployed across all board areas to engage young people in their own environment. The Department is developing a new policy for youth work which will provide a framework for the effective delivery of services in the coming years.

Shared Classes Between Schools

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last three years (i) to detail all shared classes that have taken place between schools; (ii) to detail all shared classes that have taken place which involved cross-community involvement; (iii) the estimated savings made as a result of these classes; and (iv) for his assessment of how shared classes can be further developed to increase integrated education.

(AQW 1248/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold the information requested. However, I know that many schools do work together on a cross-sectoral basis at a number of levels, including as partner schools to specialist schools; in delivering a wider range of courses for pupils at Key Stage 4 and above; and in many other areas, including the provision of out-of-school sporting and enrichment activities. Of the schools that participated in the 2010/11 Extended Schools programme, for example, 453 (96%) worked in partnership with neighbouring schools involving cross-phase or cross-sector working.

I believe that schools working together to share resources and expertise can enhance the educational experience for the whole school community and can help to break down barriers – actual or perceived – through joint working. Schools working collaboratively in Area Learning Communities, for example, are able to reduce duplication and provide new opportunities for pupils that otherwise might not be available. One of the most positive developments over the last number of years has been the role the special schools sector has played in increasing collaborative delivery for pupils at these schools in partnership with mainstream schools.

Transfer 2011

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education whether legal action has been taken against his Department in relation to Transfer 2011; and if so, to detail the outcome of the case.

(AQW 1250/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No legal actions have been taken against the Department of Education in relation to Transfer 2011.

Errors in Examination Papers

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the recent errors in examination papers; (ii) the number of pupils affected; and (iii) the awarding bodies involved in each case.

(AQW 1277/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There have been 10 reported incidents this summer involving errors in examination papers from a number of awarding bodies. The details are outlined in the table below.

Awarding organisations have procedures in place to ensure that marking is fair to all candidates and the qualifications regulators have emphasised to the awarding organisations that no candidate should be disadvantaged by errors within papers.

Awarding Org	Subject	Nature of Error	Total number of candidates	NI candidates
OCR	GCE AS Maths	The paper included two incorrect expressions which made it impossible for the candidates to prove them.	6,790	3
OCR	GCSE Latin	There were 3 errors in this paper all involving the use of the incorrect name of the writer of, or character in, the Latin passage.	7,920	105
OCR	GCE A2 Physics	A question contained two conflicting units of measurement; centimetres and metres, when both should have been metres.	7,707	58
CCEA	GCE Further Maths	A question contained a plus sign instead of a minus sign.	122	122
CCEA	GCSE Business Studies	There was an error in one cell of a table of data.	3,440	2,891
AQA	GCE AS Business Studies	Candidates were not given a profit figure to calculate a question.	41,612	738
AQA	GCE AS Geography	A figure which should have read 0.05 was printed as 0.5.	19,000	185
AQA	GCE AS Computing	A diagram within one question was inaccurate causing possible confusion.	3,651	59
AQA	GCSE Maths	An error occurred during the printing of additional copies of the paper which resulted in the insertion of questions from a previous paper.	31,659	tbc*

Awarding Org	Subject	Nature of Error	Total number of candidates	NI candidates
Edexcel	GCE AS Biology	There was an error in a multiple choice question in the paper.	17,003	0

* 52 centres in Northern Ireland entered for this examination. To date 2 NI schools with a total of 10 students have been identified as having received affected papers. A further school has been identified as potentially having received affected papers and we are awaiting confirmation from AQA on the number of students.

Newly Qualified Teachers in Voluntary Playgroups

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education how his Department recognises the experience gained by newly qualified teachers in voluntary playgroups.

(AQW 1278/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Qualified teachers employed in voluntary playgroups are not employed on teachers' terms and conditions of service. However, Boards of Governors have the discretion to take into consideration any previous teaching or non-teaching experience when deciding on the salary placement of a newly appointed teacher. Guidance issued by the employing authorities recommends that non-teaching experience should be gained in paid employment and should be directly relevant to the teaching post to which the teacher has been appointed. In deciding on the relevance of non-teaching experience, Boards of Governors should be satisfied that it is of comparable quality and standard to teaching.

Experience in a setting such as a voluntary playgroup may also be considered as contributing towards completion of the Induction stage of a beginning teacher's career, subject to arrangement with the Education and Library Boards' Curriculum Advisory Support Service (CASS) on appointment to the post. In this context, it would be for CASS to assess, through a portfolio of evidence maintained by the beginning teacher, whether the criteria for the successful completion of Induction have been met.

Special Schools: Enniskillen

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Western Education and Library Board's proposal to amalgamate the Erne Special School and Elmbrook Special School in Enniskillen.

(AQO 227/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am pleased to confirm that I have recently approved the Development Proposal to amalgamate Erne and Elmbrook Special Schools which will take effect from 1 September 2012.

I welcome the strategic approach which the Board has developed for Special School provision for the Enniskillen area. I believe the amalgamation will result in a more inclusive school, which can only benefit the children it serves. This proposal will enable the pupils to benefit from a more flexible and wide ranging programme of services and avail of increased opportunities for social and educational interaction and development for both pupils and staff.

Pre-School Education Expansion Programme

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Education how many children in total have successfully obtained pre-school places since the introduction of the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme in 1998.

(AQO 228/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since the introduction of the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme in 1998, and including the 2010/2011 school year, 257,926 children have received a funded place in a pre-school setting broken down as follows:-

Year	Statutory Nursery	Voluntary/ Private	Reception	Total (Excluding Reception)	Total
1998/99	8850	1945	2521	10795	13316
1999/00	9999	3407	2330	13406	15736
2000/01	11931	3957	1990	15888	17878
2001/02	13105	5340	1474	18445	19919
2002/03	14092	5804	1180	19896	21076
2003/04	14014	5913	1044	19927	20971
2004/05	14016	5939	883	19955	20838
2005/06	14224	5633	754	19857	20611
2006/07	14158	6327	658	20485	21143
2007/08	13953	6535	630	20488	21118
2008/09	14095	6629	607	20724	21331
2009/10	14151	6744	590	20895	21485
2010/11	14408	7599	497	22007	22504
Total	170996	71772	15158	242768	257926

Education: Procurement

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to explore the potential of joint procurement policies with his counterpart in the Dublin Government.

(AQO 229/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Public Procurement policy in the north is the responsibility of the Procurement Board and reflects the policy objectives of the Executive. The Board develops its policies in the context of the EU Procurement Directives and the UK Implementing Regulations. As the EU Directives also apply in the south there is a uniform approach governing public procurement in the two jurisdictions.

I understand that the Central Procurement Directorate (DFP) has provided support to the development of a new National Procurement Service, OPW, that has responsibility for putting in place pan-government arrangements across the south of Ireland. Early discussions have taken place with this unit on future opportunities for all-island procurements.

I have recently met with my counterpart in the Department of Education and Skills and we have discussed opportunities collaboration on a north-south basis. I have asked my officials to explore of the potential for joint procurement within the education sector on an all island basis.

Special Educational Needs

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister of Education what policies or protocols are in place for parents of children with special needs who may need to engage with a school regarding their child's specific needs.

(AQO 230/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is essential for the parents of children with special educational needs to have the opportunity to engage with the school and education and library board to ensure their child's special educational needs are met. The role of parents and their legal position are set out in the Education (NI)

Order 1996 (as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order 2005). Specifically Article 8A of the 1996 Order highlights the duty on the Board of Governors of a school to inform the child's parents that special education provision is being made for them at the school because it is considered that they have special educational needs.

Protocols leading from this legislation are contained in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs and the subsequently published Supplement to the Code. The Code stresses the importance of establishing effective relationships between parents and schools. Copies of these documents are available from my Department's website or alternatively a hard copy has been placed in the Assembly Library for your perusal.

Pre-School Education

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of a child's right to free pre-school education.

(AQO 231/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The policy for pre-school provision currently relates to "a place for every child whose parents wish it" thereby reflecting its non-compulsory nature. There are some who might suggest that pre-school should be a statutory right, and legally enforceable.

It remains that while the benefits of pre-school education are widely known, making pre-school a compulsory phase of education would not only require changes to the legislation, but would remove parental right to choose whether it is appropriate, or fits in with wider family life, for their child.

It should also be borne in mind, that our children are already younger, at four years old, in starting compulsory education, in comparison to other European countries where children do not formally start school until six.

You are also aware that I have agreed to undertake a review of the pre-school admissions criteria. Work is currently underway to draw up a Terms of Reference for this review.

Schools: Nurture and Citizenship

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what financial assistance he will offer to schools for nurture and citizenship programmes in the current mandate.

(AQO 232/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Citizenship is already an integral part of the revised curriculum in all our schools and schools receive a delegated budget that should allow them to deliver all aspects of that curriculum.

Our youngest children now follow a curriculum that, as well as having a clear focus on literacy and numeracy, provides opportunities to explore issues such as learning to live as a member of a community. By the end of primary school, children are developing their awareness of the importance of playing an active and meaningful part in the life of their community. At post-primary school, they are focusing on their roles as both local and global citizens. Embedding these opportunities within the curriculum ensures that young people are able to develop their understanding of the importance of being a good citizen and the personal and social skills they need to play their full part in their community, now and in the future.

As well as making use of their delegated budgets, schools can access advice, support and teaching material from the NI curriculum website and from CCEA and the Education & Library Boards. Additionally, my Department has worked in partnership with Amnesty International to make the "Lift Off" resource – which addresses important aspects of citizenship relating to respecting the rights of others - available to all primary schools here.

Turning to Nurture Programmes, my Department is aware of the work of two units that are currently supported via the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. Unfortunately my Department does not have the resources available to fund nurture programmes at this time.

Irish Language Documents

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to outline the total cost, including staff costs, to his Department, since 2000, of translating, publishing and circulating departmental documents in Irish.
(AQO 233/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The total cost is £289,410. This represents the cost of translating departmental documents in Irish from 1 April 2001 until 31 March 2011, using the service-wide translation contract, and printing costs. The Department does not hold details of any costs prior to 1 April 2001 and printing costs are not available for all years. Specific staff and postage costs associated with the translating, publishing and circulating of departmental documents in Irish are not held. The Department of Education has employed two Irish Language Staff Officers from 2008 to April 2011 and one Irish Language Staff Officer from April 2011 to date to facilitate its use of Irish. The Irish Language officer undertakes a range of duties, including urgent translation work. The costs incurred in carrying out specific tasks are not separately calculated. For information, the Staff Officer salary range is currently £26,197 - £30,520 per annum.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages places obligations on Government Departments to promote and encourage the use of regional or minority languages in public life. There are duties under the Good Friday Agreement in relation to linguistic diversity, including the Irish language. The St Andrew's Agreement also refers to the need to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language. There are a significant and growing number of Irish speakers in the north of Ireland and there is an increasing demand for Irish medium education. My Department's use of Irish reflects the need to communicate with Irish speakers in their language of choice.

Education: Area Plans

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education what action he will take to ensure that adequate and up-to-date area plans are in place for education provision.
(AQO 234/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I believe that the establishment of ESA would streamline administrative processes and enhance strategic planning. ESA, when established should have operational responsibility for Area-based Planning. ESA should produce area plans with the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders for submission to the Department for approval.

Until such times as full area based planning can be delivered my Department is looking at how existing processes can be re-engineered to ensure that a strategic approach to planning is developed in the "spirit" of area planning as envisaged for ESA.

Department for Employment and Learning

Undergraduate Teaching Places

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the cost of undergraduate teaching places in each of the last five years.
(AQW 835/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The cost to my Department of funding undergraduate teaching places at St Mary's and Stranmillis University Colleges in each of the last five years was as follows:

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Total Cost of Grant	£10,539,998	£10,563,294	£8,605,604	£8,370,001	£8,138,313
Average Cost per Student	£7,165	£8,088	£7,136	£7,420	£7,522

These figures include standard teaching grant and additional funding towards other costs including those associated with recruiting and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds or of supporting students with disabilities.

In addition, there is a cost to my Department of providing student support for each of these places. While the actual cost per student will vary depending on individual circumstances, the estimated cost of support for undergraduate teaching places at the colleges in each of the last five years was as follows:

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Estimated Total Cost of Student Support	£3,068,506	£3,131,788	£3,145,248	£3,325,344	£3,397,480
Average Cost of Student Support per Student	£2,086	£2,398	£2,608	£2,948	£3,140

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

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when will the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment on the proposed merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast be made public.

(AQW 846/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Equality Impact Assessment on the proposed discontinuance of the College and its proposed merger with Queen's University was conducted by Stranmillis University College. This was put out to public consultation in June 2010. The Governing Body subsequently prepared a report on the results of the consultation on the Equality Impact Assessment in October 2010. This has been published on the College's website and has been available to the public for some time.

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

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline any other options considered in addition to the merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQW 847/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Governing Body of Stranmillis University College developed a business case to consider the various options open to the College. Seven options were considered and are detailed below:

Option 1: status quo

Option 2: stand alone as an independent degree awarding institution

Option 3: rationalisation of the site

Option 4: closure of Stranmillis University College

Option 5: collaboration either with St Mary's, University of Ulster or Queen's University

Option 6: merger with St Mary's or with an existing School of Education within a university

Option 7: Federation of Teacher Education

Rationalisation of the Stranmillis University College Site

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to provide an estimate of the cost of the rationalisation of the Stranmillis University College site if the merger with Queen's University, Belfast, did not proceed.

(AQW 849/11-15)

Dr Farry: Rationalisation of the Stranmillis site was one of the options considered as part of the December 2009 economic appraisal commissioned by Stranmillis University College. The appraisal considered all costs and income flows over a twenty-five period. I have set out below a summary of the costs and income flows, as detailed in the appraisal, which would be incurred or earned by the College over the twenty-five years should the proposed merger not go ahead. This would result in a total net cost of £56.1m.

	£'000s
Capital Refurbishment	9,413
Recurrent maintenance	18,750
Recurrent Income	(185,607)
Recurrent Costs	213,562
Net Cost	56,118

Apprenticeships

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) how many people completed an apprenticeship, funded by his Department, in each of the last three years; and (ii) how many of these people gained employment immediately as a direct result of completing an apprenticeship.

(AQW 894/11-15)

Dr Farry: Apprentices are in paid employment from the commencement of their training. The following apprenticeship frameworks, funded by my Department, were completed in the last three years:

2007/08 – 1,661

2008/09 – 2,428

2009/10 – 4,565

My Department introduced Programme-Led apprenticeships for those young people who wished to follow an apprenticeship but could not find employment due to the economic downturn. The outcomes for the first cohort of programme-led apprentices, who commenced training in September 2009, will be known when these young people have completed their 2 years in training.

Stranmillis University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether Stranmillis University College has been within budget in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 939/11-15)

Dr Farry: Stranmillis University College has provided the information shown in the table below for the last three academic years.

	Academic Year		
	2007/08 £'000s	2008/09 £'000s	2009/10 £'000s
Actual Surplus/(Deficit)	388	3	891
Budgeted Surplus/ (Deficit)	23	104	488

In 2008/09 a new funding method was introduced which linked funding to student numbers. Stranmillis received funding to ameliorate the impact of the change on its finances. It received a total of £50,000 conversion funding in the year. If this conversion funding had not been provided, Stranmillis would have sustained a deficit of £47,000 instead of its reported surplus of £3,000.

Conversion funding totalling £171,000 was provided in 2009/10. If this is removed from the actual surplus figure, the surplus reduces to £720,000. However, it should be noted that the actual surplus in 2009/10 was not a typical reflection of performance for several reasons.

Firstly, an adjustment in the year as a result of the application of Financial Reporting Standard 17 (Retirement Benefits) resulted in Stranmillis receiving a credit of £697,000 in respect of Other Pension Costs included in its overall Staff Costs. This compares to a charge of £134,000 in the previous year. Had the adjustment not taken place, the College would have sustained a surplus of just £23,000.

Secondly, Stranmillis was able to increase its income in the year from its residences, catering operations and the hire of facilities. The increase in Other Operating Income was £588,000, equivalent to a 43% increase.

These two factors need to be considered together. Had the College not been able to increase its Other Operating Income so significantly and had the pension adjustment not taken place, the College would have returned a deficit. It is unlikely that Stranmillis will benefit from another pension adjustment in the near future and it is believed that competition and the overall economic climate will significantly reduce its Other Operating Income.

Stranmillis University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) under the business case, the projected losses for Stranmillis University College if the proposed merger with Queen's University, Belfast does not proceed; and (ii) how these projected losses were calculated.

(AQW 940/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) The Business Case prepared by Stranmillis University College considered a range of options open to the College. One of these was the status quo option (Option 1). This considered what would occur should no merger take place and the College remained as an independent institution. It is considered that this option is closest to the question raised and figures below show the surplus or deficit anticipated in the business case over the five years 2008/09 to 2012/13.

	2008/09 £'000s	2009/10 £'000s	2010/11 £'000s	2011/12 £'000s	2012/13 £'000s
Surplus/(Deficit)	103	(68)	(639)	(1,194)	(1,720)

- (ii) The projected figures shown in the table above have been taken from the projections contained in the Business Case. As the Business Case was commissioned by the College, information on how the projections were prepared is contained within it. The Business Case sets out the assumptions upon which the income and costs of Option 1 were based. This is publicly available on the College's website and can be accessed at www.stran.ac.uk/informationabout/theuniversitycollege/mergerdocuments/

Career Education and Guidance

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action he intends to take to improve career education and guidance in further and higher education colleges and universities.

(AQW 952/11-15)

Dr Farry: In January 2009 my Department, in conjunction with the Department of Education, launched 'Preparing for Success', the all age Careers Education Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Strategy and Implementation Plan.

To support the strategy, the Department of Education issued guidance to assist schools, further education colleges and training organisations to improve the quality of learning opportunities and to encourage greater cohesion in the provision of CEIAG across schools, further education (FE) and training organisations. The Education and Training Inspectorate has also issued guidance to schools, colleges and training organisations in relation to the quality of CEIAG provision.

Matters relating to the provision of careers education and guidance are the responsibility of each FE College. However the FE Sector continues to work in partnership with my Department's Careers Service to support the delivery of its Careers Policy through a Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Service. Partnership Agreements between the Careers Service and the further education colleges are currently under review.

In relation to higher education, each university is responsible for the provision of student support services, including careers education. There are a number of services and initiatives available to higher education students locally. I have placed these details of these in the Assembly Library and on my Department's website.

A steering group comprising of representatives from my Department, the Department of Education, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment, the Education and Training Inspectorate and the Business Alliance has been established to oversee implementation and evaluation of "Preparing for Success". The further and higher education sectors have been invited to nominate representatives to ensure that the strategy is effectively communicated to and informed by these groups.

ERASMUS Programme

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students attended the ERASMUS Programme in each of the last two years, broken down by the higher education institution attended.

(AQW 956/11-15)

Dr Farry: The table below details the number of Erasmus study and work placements undertaken by students from Northern Ireland for 2009/10 and 2010/11 academic years.

Institution Name	2009/10			2010/11 (Interim)		
	Study	Work	Total	Study	Work	Total
Queen's University Belfast	72	117	189	104	105	209
Stranmillis University College,	22		22	16		16
St Mary's University College	29		29	38		38
University of Ulster	48	48	96	74	40	114
North West Regional College					4	4
Totals	171	165	336	232	149	381

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much his Department has spent on Special Advisers since May 2007, broken down by (i) salary; (ii) pension contributions; (iii) expenses; (iv) office costs; and (v) other costs.

(AQW 1052/11-15)

Dr Farry: Salary costs are provided in terms of the salary bands for Special Advisers. Since May 2007, Special Advisers have been paid salaries from within the following pay bands:

Pay Band A £35,120 minimum to £51,775 maximum

Pay Band B £56,100 minimum to £82,531 maximum

The amount spent on Special Advisers in relation to pension contributions, expenses, office costs and other costs since May 2007 by the Department for Employment and Learning is as detailed in the table below:

Pension Contributions	£ 37,307.95
Expenses	£ 29,649.55
Office costs	£ 561.00
Other costs	£ 3,159.12
Total costs	£ 70,116.62

Private Sector Training Organisations

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many private sector training organisations are currently contracted by his Department to provide training, including on the job training.

(AQW 1131/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department is contracted with 29 private sector training organisations to provide training, including on the job training.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

CEO of Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to 3/11-15, whether the bonus payment for the CEO of Invest NI was mandatory or payable only if sought by the office holder.

(AQW 586/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The bonus payment for the CEO is a contractual provision. It is the responsibility of the Chairman of the Board to make a recommendation, based on the achievement of targets, to the Minister on the amount of bonus to be paid each year. The postholder has no input to the process.

Foreign Direct Investment Visits

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) the foreign direct investment visits that have taken place; and (ii) the number of jobs created as a result of the visits in the (a) East Londonderry; (b) Foyle; (c) Mid-Ulster; (d) West Tyrone; (e) Belfast East; (f) Belfast West; (g) Belfast North; and (h) Belfast South constituencies.

(AQW 760/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is not possible to align individual visits with specific employment related foreign direct investment (FDI) projects. A company may visit a number of times before making the decision to invest, in which case it could be said that each visit has resulted in job promotion. On the other hand, a company may visit once, make an initial investment and then follow this up with further investment. In this case the one visit would have resulted in more than one investment project.

- (i) In the last three financial years, Invest Northern Ireland hosted 679 FDI inward visits to all Parliamentary Constituency Areas (PCAs). Of these, 493 visits took place in the specified PCAs of East Londonderry, Foyle, Mid-Ulster, West Tyrone, Belfast East, Belfast West, Belfast North and Belfast South.
- (ii) In the same period, Invest NI promoted 6,954 new jobs across the specified PCAs.

FDI INWARD VISITS (CREDIBLE1) BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA (PCA).

PCA	Financial Year			Total
	2008-092	2009-10	2010-11	
Belfast East	85	34	47	166
Belfast North	13	17	22	52
Belfast South	96	48	54	198
Belfast West	13	12	7	32
East Londonderry	2	5	2	9
Foyle	7	13	10	30
Mid Ulster	4	0	0	4
West Tyrone	2	0	0	2
Total	222	129	142	493

Notes:

1. A credible visit is defined as one where Invest NI can claim to have promoted a DCA or PCA by bringing a potential inward investor, who has an identifiable project proposal, to that area.
2. Includes visits as a result of the USNI Conference in May 2008.
3. 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.

NEW JOBS PROMOTED BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA (PCA).

PCA	Financial Year			Total
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	
Belfast East	1,089	395	925	2,409
Belfast North	117	471	66	654
Belfast South	358	641	703	1,702
Belfast West	92	46	5	143
East Londonderry	58	72	63	193
Foyle	217	264	365	846
Mid Ulster	356	228	177	761

PCA	Financial Year			Total
	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	
West Tyrone	71	105	70	246
Total	2,358	2,222	2,374	6,954

Notes:

1. New jobs promoted are those jobs that are expected to be created by the project.
2. 2008/09 figures include the Bombardier C Series project – 836 jobs promoted.
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.

Broadband for Rural Areas

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure that all residents in rural areas have access to high speed broadband.

(AQW 801/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I met with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development on 2 November 2010 in relation to the Rural White Paper and broadband was discussed at that meeting. In addition, our respective officials have met on a number of occasions and will continue to do so as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development are represented on the project board for my Department's 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 access these higher speed services through the new fibred access points. Details of where these upgrades are located can be found at www.fasterbroadbandni.com or www.nibroadband.com.

Business: Bureaucracy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQO 89/11-15, how many small businesses/micro-firms will benefit from the reduction in EU red tape for businesses with a net turnover of less than £434,000 per annum or fewer than 10 employees.

(AQW 843/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In June 2010 (the latest figure available) there were 62,413 VAT registered Northern Ireland businesses with a turnover of less than £434,000 or fewer than 10 employees.

EU Red Tape for Small Businesses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment from what accounting requirements will small businesses/micro-firms be exempt in comparison to larger businesses, as a result of the reduction in EU red tape for small businesses.

(AQW 844/11-15)

Mrs Foster: This is not a matter for my Department; but for the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Companies House in Cardiff.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has raised the possibility of a reduction in Air Passenger Duty with HM Treasury as a means of stimulating the local economy.

(AQW 859/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I and Executive colleagues have raised the impact of Air Passenger Duty on Northern Ireland with HM Treasury Ministers. APD impacts on all business sectors and in particular on long haul flights which are important for Foreign Direct Investment and tourism. The current rates of APD are the highest in Europe and place Northern Ireland at a significant disadvantage.

It was disappointing that the Budget 2011 did not announce a reduction in APD, however HM Treasury have frozen APD rates and are consulting on the structure of the duty.

The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) has been leading on the Northern Ireland response to the HM Treasury 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.

EU Red Tape for Small Businesses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much of the estimated £300 million savings as a result of the reduction in EU red tape relates to small businesses/micro-firms.
(AQW 874/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I refer the Member to the answer provided to Question 844/11-15

North-South Ministerial Council Meetings

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) all the North-South Ministerial Council meetings that she, or her 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 895/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Since May 2007 as Minister for Enterprise Trade and Investment, I have attended two Plenary North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC) meetings on the 5th July 2010 and 21 January 2011. My predecessor, Nigel Dodds, attended one Plenary NSMC meeting on the 17 July 2007.

I have attended Tourism Sectoral meetings of the NSMC on the following dates: 29 May 2008, 1 April 2009, 16 December 2009, 16 June 2010 and the 3 February 2011. I have also attended NSMC Trade and Business Sectoral meetings on the following dates: 8 July 2009, 16 December 2009, 30 June 2010 and 12 November 2010. Nigel Dodds attended a NSMC Tourism meeting on the 8 November 2007 and a NSMC Trade and Business meeting on the 29 May 2008.

Following each NSMC meeting an agreed Joint Communiqué is issued and this is posted on the NSMC website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org. This details the matters discussed, the decisions taken and the names of Ministers who attended from each jurisdiction.

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.

Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives since May 2007 that have received co-operation from (a) a Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies; and (b) any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation; and (ii) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which she intends to seek co-operation from these bodies.

(AQW 897/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI Schemes, projects and initiatives that have received co-operation from Government Departments and other organisations in the Republic of Ireland fall into the following areas:

Telecoms Infrastructure

- (i) Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) in relation to Project Kelvin and Broadband Awareness Campaign/Make IT secure
- The Letterkenny Institute of Technology and DCENR in relation to NIBEST cross Border Broadband Project.
- Community Network Services and DCENR in relation to the North West Cross-Border Community Broadband Project.
- Monaghan County Enterprise Board and DCENR in relation to the Armagh Monaghan Digital Corridor.
- (ii) There are no departmental telecoms schemes, projects or initiatives planned for which co-operation will be sought from these bodies.

Energy

- (i) The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) and Regulatory Authorities in relation to the Single Electricity Market, Common Arrangements for Gas, Security of Supply, All Island Grid Study, All Island Gas Study and an Off Shore Renewable Energy Environmental Assessment.
- (ii) DETI are currently undertaking an On Shore Renewable Electricity Strategic Environmental Assessment, part of this process will involve notifying DCENR of any transboundary issues towards the end of 2011.
- There is likely to be co-operation on legislative issues in relation to the Single Electricity Market.

InvestNI

- (i) Enterprise Ireland in relation to: Research and Development projects, Business networks, Renewable Energy Clusters, Think Outside Box Awards, Cross border Pilot Enterprise Incubation programme, Competence Centre Programme, Design and Innovation Initiatives, Framework Seven Programme, EU Innovation Relay and Enterprise Europe Network, Enterprise Ireland International Selling Programme, Carbon Measurement, Design and Innovation Initiatives, US –Ireland partnerships.
- Irish Centre for Business Excellence in relation to visits by Lean practitioners from the US.
- Bord Bia in relation to sharing overseas exhibition space, market research and intelligence.
- Failte Ireland in relation to Invest NI VISA marketing programme.
- Industrial Development Authority in relation to the North West Technology Zone.
- Sustainable Energy Authority for Ireland, National Off shore Wind Association of Ireland and Marine Institute Ireland in relation to energy studies and projects.
- (ii) Future work with Enterprise Ireland on Leadership and Management programme, maximising Renewable Technological Sector, Innovation capability of SME's and Innovation Voucher programme.

Geological Survey of Northern Ireland.

- (i) Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) and/or DCENR in relation to Tellus Border project, European Geoparks Network , geological maps website, research into geothermal sites, carbon capture and storage, collaborative geological research, Water framework Directive.
- Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin in relation to geological research.
- Cavan County Council in relation to Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark.
- (ii) Future work with Cavan County Council in relation to Border Uplands and Harnessing natural resources. Also collaboration with GSI and Irish National Commission to UNESCO in relation to global geoparks initiative.

Credit Unions

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she intends to establish a fund, similar to the Modernisation Fund provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, to help Credit Unions to develop services in areas of social deprivation.

(AQW 915/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have no current plans to establish a fund similar to the Modernisation Fund operated by the Department for Work and Pensions.

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 Great Britain counterparts, members' savings will be covered under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, and members will have access to the Financial Services Ombudsman Scheme. This is expected to be completed by March 2012.

However I also propose to hold discussions with the local credit unions' representative bodies about the services their members provide particularly in areas of social deprivation, and how they might be further developed.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to air passenger duty, what action she intends to take to ensure that Northern Ireland will be treated on a no less favourable basis than the Republic of Ireland to ensure fair competition between airlines and airports on the island of Ireland.

(AQW 919/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The impact of Air Passenger Duty (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.

I and Ministerial colleagues have made representations to HM Treasury Ministers on the impact of APD on Northern Ireland. During his visit to Northern Ireland on 17 June 2011 the Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to APD and the particular challenges presented by Northern Ireland's land border with the Republic of Ireland.

The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) has led on the Northern Ireland response to an HM Treasury consultation on the reform of APD. 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.

Camden Group, Antrim

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has had any discussions with the Camden Group, Antrim, in relation to possible redundancies.

(AQW 934/11-15)

Mrs Foster: On the 24 February 2011, I was with the Camden Group when it announced £16m investment in a project which would lead to the creation of an additional 225 jobs in Northern Ireland.

My Department was made aware on the 20 May 2011, that the Camden Group, Antrim had commenced a review of the business. The review included placing the workforce on notice.

My officials from Invest NI met with members of Camden's Senior Management Team on 24 May 2011. At the meeting, the company stated that they were at the early stages of the review process. The Senior Management Team gave assurances that plans for growth remain in place, redundancies would

be kept to a minimum and emphasised that the review was necessary given the prevailing economic conditions.

Invest NI remains in close contact with the Camden Group regarding the outcomes of the business review and will keep me apprised of the situation.

Hospitality Sector

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what jobs have been secured in the hospitality sector over the last four years; and what actions are being taken to increase the number of jobs in this sector in the next four years.

(AQW 937/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is not possible to provide an exact measure of the number of jobs secured in the hospitality sector over the last four years. However, estimates from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) can be used to provide the net change in employee job levels in the "Accommodation and Food Service Activities" (which includes hotels and restaurants) sector during this period*.

The latest estimates from the QES show that at March 2011 there were 38,600 employee jobs in the Accommodation and Food Service Activities sector. This represents a decrease of 670 (-1.7%) from the March 2007 figure of 39,270.

While there has therefore been a slight decline in the number of hospitality jobs in the last four years, I am confident that this trend will be reversed as we seek to grow and rebalance the Northern Ireland economy.

In particular, my Department is leading on the draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland which contains targets to increase visitor numbers and spend to 4.5 million and £1 billion respectively by 2020. The Strategy includes a range of actions across government and the private sector to meet these targets. It is anticipated that achieving these targets through the delivery of the action plan will create some 10,000 jobs by 2020, many of which will be in the hospitality industry.

* Users of QES data should be aware that the sampling methodology used to derive employee jobs estimates in NI has been extended, resulting in a discontinuity in the QES employee jobs series from the reference period September 2009 onwards. Hence users should now exercise caution when comparing estimates pre September 2009 with those after this period. For more detailed information regarding the discontinuity and its impact please see following link below. <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-qes/stats-qes-discontinuity-notice.htm>

Consumer Council

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) whether the Consumer Council overpaid staff from 2003-2009; (ii) how much was overpaid; and (iii) who was the Chairperson of the Consumer Council when the overpayments occurred.

(AQW 938/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The information requested for the period 2003-2009 is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. The following information is however readily available.

- (i) A review of the period 1 April 2004 – 31 March 2010 for all staff in post at 31 March 2010 confirmed that 29 staff had received salary overpayments.
- (ii) The total amount of overpayments for this period has been estimated to be approximately £231,000.
- (iii) The Chairman of the Consumer Council during the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2008 was Stephen Costello MBE and the Chairman from 1 January 2009 to date is Rick Hill.

Additional information on overpayments is included in the Consumer Council's Annual Report and Accounts for 2009-2010 which is available in the Assembly library.

EU Red Tape for Small Businesses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions her Department has had in the last twelve months with the European Commission regarding the reduction in EU red tape for small businesses and micro-firms.

(AQW 948/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My officials maintain regular contact with officials in the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, who in turn take forward discussions with the European Commission regarding the reduction in EU red tape for small and micro businesses. They work to influence and shape the policy stance taken by the Commission for the benefit of all UK businesses.

4th Company Law Directive

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what representations her Department has made in relation to the proposed directive that would exclude certain enterprises from requirements under the 4th Company Law Directive.

(AQW 991/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The European Commission's proposal to exempt micro-entities which meet the criteria from EU accounting Directives is in line with its target to reduce administrative burdens on small businesses. If the Commission's proposal is ratified by the European Parliament, Member States will have a final date by which the Directive must be transposed into legislation. Company law, while a transferred matter, is administered on a United Kingdom-wide basis. As such, legislation to implement any directive will therefore be taken forward by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

4th Company Law Directive

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an estimated timescale for the commencement of the proposed directive that would exclude certain enterprises from requirements under the 4th Company Law Directive.

(AQW 992/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Company law, which remains a transferred matter, has been administered on a United Kingdom wide basis since 2006. Legislation for implementing this welcome reduction in the administrative burden on smaller enterprises will therefore be taken forward by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). It is not possible to provide a timescale for implementation as the proposals have yet to be ratified by the European Parliament. My officials will liaise with BIS on progress.

Olympic Contracts

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether any of the 40 local businesses which have secured Olympic contracts valued at over £30 million are based in North Antrim.

(AQW 996/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is aware that some businesses based in the North Antrim constituency have won Olympics-related business. These have included contracts awarded through the Olympic Delivery Authority supply chains and by The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Ltd. (LOCOG)

Northern Ireland based companies have also won Olympic business through their supply chains but it is not possible to know precisely the number involved. It is also encouraging to hear of other success stories by companies in Northern Ireland which can be attributed to the Olympics such as that by Wrightbus to supply redesigned Routemaster buses to Arriva which are required to be in service for London 2012.

Confidentiality restrictions may apply regarding information relating to individual contracts.

Olympic Contracts

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what support her Department or its agencies have given to companies bidding for Olympic contracts; and (ii) of the companies that received this support, how many were successful.

(AQW 997/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) Olympics contract opportunities are published on CompeteFor, the official 2012 business brokerage website for contracts. To be successful, companies must comply with criteria such as Quality Management, Health and Safety, and Equal Opportunities. Invest NI has undertaken extensive activities with companies to promote 2012 business opportunities and to support them in their efforts to win related contracts.

These activities have included:

- promotion of CompeteFor
 - promotion of LOCOG opportunities
 - awareness and skill development through conferences and information seminars
 - facilitating meetings with Tier One contractors in London and Belfast
 - developing dedicated 2012 Games web pages
 - publishing guides to professional tendering and to using CompeteFor
 - workshops in professional tendering and Quality Management Systems
 - one-to-one consultancy support to selected companies to prepare tender bids.
- (ii) To date, almost 1700 local businesses have registered on CompeteFor; more than 700 companies have attended 2012 events organised by Invest NI with significant numbers receiving advice, guidance and support both at and after the events. Invest NI is aware of around 40 local companies who have:
- won main contracts
 - won supply chain contracts
 - won business through CompeteFor which they might not have been aware of otherwise.

Olympic Contracts

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance is being provided to companies to help them win any of the remaining Olympic contracts.

(AQW 998/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI, as Northern Ireland's business development agency, has responsibility for helping local companies in their efforts to win Olympics contracts. Invest NI has been promoting and raising awareness of 2012 business opportunities and assisting companies to become better prepared and fit to win contracts by increasing skills, competitiveness, capacity and capability.

- Invest NI continues to offer support to companies by:
- Promoting the CompeteFor website
- Organising events to promote business opportunities
- Distributing opportunity bulletins issued by The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Ltd (LOCOG) directly to relevant companies, business representative organisations and local councils.

- Advising companies on how to strengthen their representations to buyers in key areas such as professional tendering, quality management, health and safety, equal opportunities, website design.
- Facilitating meetings with key buyers in London and Belfast
- Providing one-to-one consultancy support with bid preparation to selected companies
- Negotiating preferential rates for managed offices in London for clients.
- Working with LOCOG.

The latest 2012 business event took place on 2nd June 2011. Invest NI organised a conference at which Charles Allen, Chair of LOCOG's Nations and Regions Group, updated local companies on the remaining opportunities open to them through LOCOG. Invest NI Business Advisers from a range of relevant subject areas were also on hand for one-to-one meetings with attendees.

Corporation Tax

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her Department's assessment of the additional number of jobs that might be created as a result of lower corporation tax.

(AQW 1000/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Economic Advisory Group (EAG) recently undertook analysis to assess the impact of a lower rate of corporation tax on the Northern Ireland economy.

The research indicates that if corporation tax was reduced to 12.5% by 2014 then employment would be anticipated to increase substantially - 58,000 higher by 2030 or around 4,500 additional jobs per year in the longer-term, peaking at over 5,800 per annum by 2030.

Invest NI

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of jobs created in each District Council area from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011; (ii) how many of these jobs were as a result of (a) foreign direct investment; and (b) local investors; and (iii) what resources were allocated by Invest NI to each District Council area in the 2010/11 financial year for (a) job creation; (b) land acquisition; and (c) property development.

(AQW 1011/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Table 1 below shows (i) the number of jobs expected to be created, which are described as 'Jobs Promoted', by (ii) (a) foreign direct investors; and (b) indigenous 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. The table also details (iii) the amount of assistance offered by Invest NI to support (a) job creation in these projects.

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: INVEST NI EMPLOYMENT RELATED ACTIVITY BY OWNERSHIP & DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (2010-11)

DCA	FDI			Local			Total		
	New Jobs	Safeguarded Jobs	Total Assistance £m	New Jobs	Safeguarded Jobs	Total Assistance £m	New Jobs	Safeguarded Jobs	Total Assistance £m
Antrim	130		1.86	526	7	4.02	656	7	5.87
Ards	4	11	0.09	18		0.16	22	11	0.25
Armagh				40	3	0.17	40	3	0.17
Ballymena				50	1,237	5.40	50	1,237	5.40
Ballymoney				43		0.12	43		0.12
Banbridge				12		0.09	12		0.09
Belfast	1,430	30	16.01	194	56	1.76	1,624	86	17.77
Carrickfergus	196		3.84	7		0.06	203		3.90
Castlereagh	1		0.02	77	6	0.39	78	6	0.41
Coleraine	2	2	0.06	29		0.20	31	2	0.26
Cookstown				65	5	0.44	65	5	0.44
Craigavon	37		0.26	79	32	0.91	116	32	1.17
Derry	297		1.26	73		0.44	370		1.70
Down				59		0.24	59		0.24
Dungannon	1		0.03	163		1.04	164		1.08
Fermanagh	1		0.02	63	6	0.30	64	6	0.33
Larne	1		0.01	18		0.09	19		0.10
Limavady				27		0.19	27		0.19

DCA	FDI			Local			Total		
	New Jobs	Safeguarded Jobs	Total Assistance £m	New Jobs	Safeguarded Jobs	Total Assistance £m	New Jobs	Safeguarded Jobs	Total Assistance £m
Lisburn	131		3.19	136	3	0.72	267	3	3.90
Magherafelt	1		0.09	81		0.62	82		0.71
Moyle				14		0.11	14		0.11
Newry & Mourne	4		0.03	633	4	5.87	637	4	5.90
Newtownabbey				36		0.23	36		0.23
North Down				22	5	0.26	22	5	0.26
Omagh	35		0.12	26		0.18	61		0.30
Strabane				9		0.09	9		0.09
Not Yet Located	545		6.27				545		6.27
Total	2,816	43	33.16	2,496	1,364	24.11	5,312	1,407	57.26

Notes

- 1 As there are part time jobs that are rounded in each individual DCA, the table totals may not add exactly.
- 2 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 2 below shows the associated breakdown by District Council Area.

TABLE 2: 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

During the 2010-11 financial year no resources were allocated by Invest NI to (iii) (b) land acquisition; however, £2.3m was spent on (c) property development. Table 3 shows the split, by District Council Area, of the £2.3m spent on land and property development in the period

TABLE 3: INVEST NI SPEND ON LAND & PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT (2010-11)

District Council Area	Total Spend (£'000)
Antrim	460
Ards	8
Armagh	322
Belfast	159
Carrickfergus	175
Coleraine	100
Cookstown	1
Craigavon	408
Dungannon	426
Fermanagh	9
Lisburn	99
Newtownabbey	114
North Down	9
Omagh	14

Businesses Trading On-line

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what percentage of businesses currently trade on-line.

(AQW 1032/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Recent figures for the UK show that 14.9% of businesses sold over a website in 2009, generating sales worth over £115bn to the UK economy. The UK performs relatively well compared to Europe, where 11% of business received online orders in 2009. Unfortunately, equivalent statistics are not available at a regional level within the UK.

In the UK just over three quarters of firms had a website, compared to an EU average of 64%. Across the UK, large businesses have adopted information technology to the greatest extent, and virtually all of them have a website. However, SMEs have also been taking up technology, with 72% of small and 92% of medium businesses having a website in 2009.

All businesses across Northern Ireland have the ability to sell online, as broadband services of at least 512kbps have been available to every business since December 2005. In addition, through my Department's Next Generation Broadband Project, 85% of businesses are also able to access higher speed broadband services. This provides the capacity for NI firms to reach new markets and increase sales by developing an online trading presence.

My Department also helps local firms through the free logonni programme, offering impartial advice to SMEs on the benefits of broadband to business. Since its launch two years ago 3,200 firms have participated, with an increase of 13% in their e-business activity. Invest NI also provides a range of support to assist local businesses, with a network of ICT/eBusiness Advisors providing support through Invest NI's regional offices throughout Northern Ireland.

Foreign Direct Investment Jobs

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what percentage of the Foreign Direct Investment jobs that were created during the last Assembly mandate were located outside the greater Belfast area.

(AQO 179/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is the agency through which the Department of Enterprise Trade & Investment (DETI) provides funding to increase business productivity, the means by which wealth can be created for the benefit of the whole community. It does this by supporting projects that aim to create jobs, an aspect of the agency's work that is becoming increasingly important given the need to increase employment levels following the impact of the downturn. In addition, Invest NI supports projects that promote innovation and capability development that, although not directly related to job creation, will eventually lead to employment opportunities.

During the last Assembly mandate (8th May 2007 to 24th March 2011) Invest NI provided assistance in support of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects which expect to create 9,666 new jobs and safeguard 2,793 existing jobs. The percentage of these jobs outside the 4 Belfast Parliamentary Constituency Areas was 53% (5,100) for new jobs and 22% (612) for safeguarded jobs.

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

Availability of Wi-Fi

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of (i) the availability of Wi-Fi in hotels, restaurants and cafés compared to other countries; and (ii) the benefits of increasing the availability of Wi-Fi for the economy and in particular the hospitality sector.

(AQW 1039/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Comprehensive information on the number of hotels, restaurants and cafes with Wi-Fi access is not available. However, of the 140 hotels certified by NITB, 52 have Wi-Fi access and this contributes to the quality of the visitor experience and improves the quality of customer service and communication. DETI supported a trial of Wi-fi nodes in Ballycastle, Newcastle, Enniskillen and Antrim and all of these services have continued after the trial ended apart from Antrim. Wi-fi is just one type of mobile broadband service and mobile services is one of the themes on which views have been sought by the recently published draft Telecommunications Action Plan for the period 2011- 2015.

Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme for Farmers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what consideration her Department is giving to the provision of a renewable heat incentive scheme for farmers, (ii) what form this scheme might take; and (iii) when she expects a decision on the delivery of such a scheme to be made.

(AQW 1056/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department is currently finalising proposals on the introduction of a Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). This follows on from a commitment I made in September 2010 that my Department would seek to introduce a RHI in Northern Ireland, providing it was economically viable to so.

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

The proposed scheme will include measures to support the deployment of renewable heat in all sectors, including farming, in Northern Ireland.

AA Four Star Rated Guest Houses

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the current number of AA four star rated guest houses.

(AQW 1070/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) does not record the number of AA rated properties in Northern Ireland.

Under the existing NITB star rating scheme there are 15 four star rated guest houses in Northern Ireland.

United States Open Golf Championships

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the successes of Graham McDowell and Rory McIlroy at the United States Open Golf Championships, what steps she will take to ensure that golfing tourism at Royal Portrush Golf Club and other venues is promoted internationally.

(AQW 1071/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The current success of our Northern Ireland golfers, Rory McIlroy and Graeme McDowell, has raised the profile of Northern Ireland as a golf destination within the international marketplace.

In recent days, Tourism Ireland has stepped up its promotional programme to maximise the benefits for Northern Ireland from Rory McIlroy's historic victory in the US Open and also the announcement of North & West Coast Links as 'European Golf Destination of the Year', and indeed Graeme McDowell's success last year. Tourism Ireland is building on what was an already busy golf promotional programme for 2011, and further campaigns will be rolled out in the coming weeks.

My officials are also discussing with Royal Portrush the feasibility of Northern Ireland hosting the Irish Open.

Air Passenger Duty

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what formal written response she made to the consultation on Air Passenger Duty which ended on 17 June 2011.

(AQW 1097/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) led on the Northern Ireland response to the HM Treasury consultation on the reform of Air Passenger Duty (APD) as APD is a taxation issue.

My Department provided written input to DFP which was used to inform the DFP response to the consultation.

International Sales Conference

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the benefits to the North Coast area of the international sales conference held in the Flowerfield Arts Centre, Portstewart in March 2011.

(AQW 1112/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest Northern Ireland attended a stakeholder event at the Flowerfield Arts Centre on 30 March 2011 as part of its annual sales conference. The International and Overseas Sales Teams, along with Invest NI's Chief Executive, Alastair Hamilton, were joined by members of Coleraine Borough Council's Economic Development team and local businesses to discuss the Coleraine inward investment proposition and how best to work together to promote economic growth.

The primary aim of the event was to outline the Coleraine proposition to the overseas sales teams. This was a successful event and the overseas teams were able to see first hand the initiatives that the Council has undertaken, including Digital Causeway Ireland.

The conference is just one of the ways that Invest NI works with local stakeholders to encourage the development of regional propositions which can help ensure that the offering for their area is maximised to attract visits and investment by potential investors.

Results in terms of investment as a direct result of the conference may take some time to come to fruition. Securing an inward investment project is the end point of an extensive process which may span a considerable period, often 18 to 24 months or even longer.

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in West Tyrone

Mr Byrne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what support is available through the Omagh Enterprise Company and the Strabane Enterprise Agency to small and medium-sized enterprises in West Tyrone.

(AQW 1130/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) and Social Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP) are delivered by Enterprise Northern Ireland (ENI) through the Local Enterprise Agencies across Northern Ireland, including Omagh Enterprise Company and Strabane Enterprise Agency.

EDP is targeted at early stage entrepreneurs and start up businesses. It offers individuals a bespoke package of training and support to improve business capability. Participants are given advice on finance, marketing, sales and other fundamentals and are helped to develop a Business Plan for their new business.

Since April 2009, 315 individuals have completed a start up business plan through EDP at Omagh Enterprise Company and 143 at Strabane Enterprise Agency.

SEP focuses on supporting new social economy businesses with the potential to grow, helping them to build the skills and capabilities to make an impact on the local economy. The programme offers support at both the business idea and business planning stage. Omagh Enterprise Company delivers SEP in the West Tyrone Constituency (including Strabane).

Since 2009 in West Tyrone 28 social groups have participated on SEP with 10 of these becoming established businesses covering a range of sectors such as a community theatre, tour bus company, information technology and childcare provision.

Ballycastle Coalfields Area of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assessment her Department has made of the tourism potential of the Ballycastle Coalfields Area of Special Scientific Interest and its potential links to the Atlantic Salt Trail Project.

(AQW 1133/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has just recently been made aware of the European Ecosal Atlantis Project and understands that Carrickmore Road, Ballycastle is a potential site in terms of developing an Atlantic Salt Route trail. Therefore in light of available detailed project information no assessment has yet been made.

The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) within my department having been approached a number of years ago on the Ballycastle saltmines initiative are willing to assist the project if required, as the department has a statutory responsibility for abandoned/disused mines.

NITB understands that the Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT), with a responsibility for sustainable tourism in the Causeway Coast and Glen's region, has also been approached regarding this Ecosal Atlantis Project. CCGHT, with assistance from NITB is currently developing a heritage trails project in the region however they hope to engage with the project promoter of the Saltmines Project with input from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

Solar Energy

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans there are to enable people using solar energy to sell any excess to the Grid.

(AQW 1214/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Excess electricity generated by solar photovoltaic panels can currently be sold to the grid through an NIE Energy generation tariff.

This export tariff offers 5.49p/kWh for generators up to 100kW and a variable tariff for those above this size.

Department of the Environment

Planning Application P/2009/0357

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to planning application P/2009/0357 for lands adjacent to 51 Burren Road (i) whether he is aware (a) of residents' concerns; (b) that Roads Service determined 16 September 2010 that the road was not safe for pedestrians; (c) that Planning Service did not consider the proposal of Newry and Mourne District Council to refer the application to the Management Review Board; (ii) for his assessment of the planning application; and (iii) whether he intends to review Planning Service's decision of 24 March 2011 in relation to the application.

(AQW 309/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): I have been fully briefed on the detail of this planning application for a total of 49 residential units at Burren Road, Warrenpoint. I am therefore aware that local residents raised a number of areas of concern throughout the processing of the planning application which included the social housing element of the scheme, issues around the social housing allocation in the draft area plan, the details of the proposed layout and design of dwellings and road safety issues.

All the grounds for objection were fully considered by the Department and access and road safety matters were the subject of extensive consultation with DRD Roads Service. I am informed Roads Service has confirmed on a number of occasions that they are content with the final internal layout, access position and works on the public road.

The Councils request to have the proposal reassessed by the Management Board was considered. In terms of the criteria against which such requests are judged the Department did not consider the proposal represented an application which merited reassessment by the Board. It was noted that the proposal is for 49 units and this site is a portion of a larger area of land zoned for housing within the Draft Banbridge/Newry & Mourne Area Plan 2015. This was one factor which led to the decision in relation to the Management Board.

The Department has advised that it followed the correct procedures through its assessment and that key policies have been properly applied; that the application was considered at length during both initial stages of assessment and through the deferred process; that the concerns and points of objection raised by local residents have been fully considered and that the final determination of the application followed extensive consultation with DRD Roads Service in particular.

Full planning permission was granted on 24 March 2011. I am satisfied that there are not grounds for a review of the decision.

Planning Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether the Planning Service has any plans to improve its neighbourhood notification system.

(AQW 693/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Currently the Neighbour Notification scheme is not a statutory requirement, but has become established practice and custom.

Improvements to the Neighbour Notification system were raised during consideration of the Planning Bill. This is an issue that I am prepared to think about further, including the issue of statutory authority.

High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the timescale for implementation of the High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

(AQW 728/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Assembly amended the High Hedges Bill to require the Department to introduce subordinate legislation to limit the maximum level of fee a complainant should pay and to allow for the transfer of the fee to the hedge owner.

Both the primary and subordinate legislation are required to provide the full operational regime so the primary cannot be commenced until the subordinate legislation is ready.

As some of the proposed subordinate legislation has not been consulted on a public consultation will be required and both sets of Regulations will need to pass through the Assembly processes.

I am currently considering a timetable for delivery and I can confirm my commitment to bringing the legislation forward at the earliest opportunity. I will attempt to fast forward the implementation of the legislation.

MOT Test Centres

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the vehicle pass rates at each MOT centre in each of the last five years.

(AQW 733/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The details requested are tabulated below. For the purposes of this response, the pass rate is taken to mean the percentage of private cars that passed full tests in each of the years in question.

Test Centre	Pass Rate (%)				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Armagh	76.78	77.85	78.65	76.33	77.08
Ballymena	77.82	79.11	80.04	78.90	78.99
Belfast	79.77	80.93	82.64	81.33	81.81
Coleraine	79.23	78.92	80.01	79.32	79.43
Cookstown	72.11	73.87	77.31	77.92	76.71
Craigavon	72.66	71.15	75.15	76.39	75.86
Downpatrick	77.63	79.51	81.57	79.52	79.54
Enniskillen	77.68	76.97	78.51	78.42	77.20
Larne	82.45	79.31	78.64	76.38	77.37
Lisburn	79.53	81.66	82.10	82.19	81.82
Londonderry	75.39	75.93	76.99	75.27	75.37
Mallusk	74.74	76.87	78.27	76.72	76.54

Test Centre	Pass Rate (%)				
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Newry	79.05	80.71	81.12	80.69	78.41
Newtownards	74.91	74.93	75.09	77.96	79.61
Omagh	76.60	77.18	77.66	77.07	77.22

Capital Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to outline his Department's capital programme for the next three years.

(AQW 779/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below outlines my Department's capital programme for the next three years (2012-15).

Capital Investment Programme	2012-13 £m	2013-14 £m	2014-15
Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund	0.7	0.5	0.2
Rethink Waste Fund	2.2	2.4	2.7
Roe Valley Hydro Electric Scheme	0.5		
NI Driver Licensing System	0.9		2.7
Business Critical	1.6	1.1	2.0
Total	5.9	4.0	7.6

I will actively look at my Department's Budget, attempt to release additional monies, reduce the size of the civil service where appropriate and justified and attempt to release monies for other purposes.

New Council Boundaries

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will consider amending the current proposals for new council boundaries under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 788/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I will be considering the recommendations made by the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner in his report of June 2009 and 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.

University Road Methodist Church, Belfast

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has for the University Road Methodist Church, Belfast.

(AQW 802/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department has no plans for this building. The future use of a listed building is a matter for the owner.

Planning approval, and listed building consent, for a scheme to convert the building into 26 apartments issued in 2008. This permission will expire in 2012, if no works are undertaken before then.

Ballyholme Beach, Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what monitoring measures will be put in place at Ballyholme Beach, Bangor while the interim sewerage works to ensure compliance with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive are being carried out.

(AQW 806/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

Ballyholme Bathing Water

Monitoring is being carried out at Ballyholme bathing water, the new North Down/Ards Waste Water Treatment Works (WTTW) and at sewage pumping stations in the vicinity.

The Sewerage infrastructure in the Ballyholme area has been significantly upgraded in conjunction with the recently commissioned North Down/Ards WTTW with both designed to deliver the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWTTD) and Bathing Waters Directive (BWD).

Water quality at Ballyholme beach is measured 20 times during the bathing season, between 1 June and mid-September each year, following a pre-determined sampling programme. The water is tested for several bacterial indicators and is inspected for any visual signs of pollution. Observation is made of the general area for signs of pollution. The results of monitoring are published weekly on the NIEA web site and issued to North Down Borough Council for publication locally.

If a bathing water sample fails one of the Directive's mandatory bacterial standards NIEA will immediately initiate a pollution investigation in order to identify and resolve the issue. Similarly, any visual indicators of pollution are followed up as pollution investigations.

Following any failure of the Directive's mandatory standards, the bathing water is re-sampled daily until NIEA is assured a satisfactory standard is restored.

North Down/Ards WTTW

NIEA has set the Water Order Consent conditions to ensure that the discharge from the North Down/Ards WTTW meets the requirements of the UWTTD and thus protect the Bathing Water in Ballyholme. This works is operated under a Public Private Partnership scheme (PPP) by Veolia Water. Samples of the treated effluent are collected by Veolia against a sampling programme which is agreed in advance with NIEA. The Agency routinely assesses compliance and audits the laboratory results annually.

The sampling programme, which continues all year, measures its compliance with bacteriological parameters during the bathing season. North Down/Ards WTTW has been compliant with both its Water Order Consent conditions and the requirements of the UWTTD since its completion in 2008.

Luke's Point Pumping Station

The upgrade of the sewerage network in the Ballyholme area is nearing completion, with the exception of the provision of adequate storm storage at Luke's Point Pumping Station. This is planned for completion in the current investment period. Luke's Point pumping station has had an interim upgrade which provides storage to significantly reduce the number of spills, but not to the required 3 spills per bathing season limit. Until the final upgrade is in place Northern Ireland Water (NIW) will supply information on spills during the bathing season from this asset.

The Water Order Consent conditions for Luke's Point include the requirement for a telemetry alarm system to be in place. This allows NIW to remotely monitor the operation of the pumping station so that they can quickly respond in the event of a failure.

I have convened a Good Beach Summit on 29 June 2011 to identify what further measures may be feasible to improve beach and water standards.

Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Programme for Local Government

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to outline his Department's level of commitment to the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Programme for Local Government.

(AQW 808/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A key aspect of local government's Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) Programme is to release the required upfront savings to deliver improved services and drive positive reform before reorganisation. My Department will therefore continue to work in partnership with the local government sector to ensure that the ICE programme and the local government reform agenda support each other and are fully aligned.

I await the ICE report and will shortly meet SOLACE and NILGA. I believe that savings can be made – indeed are being realised – where council clusters can use and use their great size and expertise to reduce saving without detriment to the ratepayer. I am keen to see further and immediate progression on this.

Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Programme for Local Government

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to progress and implement the Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency Programme for Local Government and what timescales are envisaged.

(AQW 813/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I understand a copy of local government's final Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) outturn report will be available after 24 June 2011. As soon as I have considered and discussed its findings with NILGA and SOLACE representatives I should be able to form an opinion on the ICE programme and consider plans and timescales for implementation.

In going forward, however, I believe there is an early opportunity to exploit the savings and efficiencies that exist. I will be adopting this approach in my discussions with the sector.

Planning Applications

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to introduce third party appeals on planning applications.

(AQW 868/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I will consider the arguments for and against third party appeals before deciding whether or not to introduce them. This is currently being assessed.

Breaches of Conservation Areas

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many breaches of conservation areas have been reported and investigated by the Planning Service in each of the last five years; and what action has been taken in each case.

(AQW 870/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Prior to the 1 April 2009, full electronic records for enforcement were not retained. However, information extracted from the Departments ICT system for the 2009/10 and 2010/11 business years in respect of breaches of planning control relating to Demolition within Conservation Areas and Trees within Conservation Areas is set out in the table below.

Business Year	2009/10	2010/11
Demolition in Conservation Area	8	6
Trees in Conservation Area	5	8
Total	13	14

Of the 13 cases in 2009/10,

- 9 were investigated and found that no breach had occurred;
- 2 cases were considered not expedient to proceed with formal enforcement action;
- 1 case was remedied/resolved; and,
- 1 case was granted consent to demolish the building.

Of the 14 cases in 2010/11,

- 5 were investigated and found that no breach of planning control had occurred;
- 2 cases were considered not expedient to proceed with formal enforcement action;
- 1 case was granted listed building consent; and,
- 6 cases remain under investigation.

I have requested an update on all current live investigations.

Planning Service

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications that were received by Planning Service in the last year remained unprocessed for more than six months.

(AQW 871/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department was in receipt of 17,491 valid planning applications in the 2010 calendar year. 14,480 of these applications have either had a decision issued or withdrawn to date and 2,926 of these completed applications took more than six months to process.

Work continues to reduce the backlog of applications with priority focusing on major applications in the planning system for more than 12 months. Targets during 2010/11 have largely been achieved as part of an agreed action plan across the local area office network with a 50% reduction in applications over 12 months in the system during 2010/11. The action plan is being updated and progressed during 2011/12 with a view to further reducing the backlog.

However I have confirmed to the assembly that target times have been suffering in recent months. This issue and indeed creating more challenging time limits going forward are issues that I am now considering.

Land Disposal Requests from Councils

Mr Givan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of land disposal requests from councils that he has approved since taking up office, including the name of the council; (ii) the name of the organisation receiving the council asset; (iii) the value of the land; and (iv) the amount paid for the land, broken down by (a) local council area; and (b) each request.

(AQW 875/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since taking up office as Minister of the Department of the Environment, I have approved the disposal of council land in one case and the lease of council land in a further four cases. Information relating to each of these cases is set out in the table below;

Council Name	Organisation Receiving Council Asset	Disposal / Lease	Value/ Rental value of the Land	Amount/ Rental Paid for the Land	Monetary Conditions
Newry & Mourne District Council	Thomas Davis Gaelic Football Club	Disposal	£370,000	£370,000	Disposal (sale) subject to the organisation paying outstanding council loan charges of £60,000 and all legal costs.
Newry & Mourne District Council	Cullyhanna Community Partnership	Lease (25 years)	£2,500 per annum (for first 3 years)	£2,500 per annum (for first 3 years)	Rental figure reflects refurbishment cost to the organisation of £176,250.
Newry & Mourne District Council	Lower Mourne Gaelic League	Lease (25 years)	£2,500 per annum (for first 3 years)	£2,500 per annum (for first 3 years)	Rental figure reflects the organisations refurbishment costs of the vacant property to make it suitable for use.
Omagh District Council	Éire Óg Hurling & Camogie Club	Lease (99 years with 5 yearly reviews)	£300 per annum	£300 per annum	Rental figure reflects refurbishment cost to the organisation to make it suitable for use.
Castlereagh Borough Council	Dundonald Bowling Club	Lease (5 years)	£5,750 per annum	Nil	The concessionary rent reflects the council's contribution in kind to the organisation to further develop the facility.

Listed Buildings

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment how many listed buildings have been damaged or destroyed as a result of fire in each of the last five years.

(AQW 883/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below gives information on the number of listed buildings damaged or destroyed as the result of fire in each of the last five years. I have also included figures for the year to date.

06/07	1
07/08	2
08/09	3
09/10	2
10/11	1
11/12 (* incomplete for current year)	8
Total	17

In regard to this year, you should note that three of the listed buildings recorded are (now) part of a single hostel which suffered one fire.

It should also be noted that currently there is no requirement for owners to advise the Department of any damage to their buildings, thus, usually only major or noteworthy incidences are brought to our attention and only these can be included in our figures. I have asked for further details on the 11-12 incidents and on the principle of a general reporting requirement on owners.

Climate Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has considered introducing a Climate Bill. **(AQW 936/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for East Antrim on 14 June 2011 to AQO 103/11-15.

Written Answers Booklet for 17 June 2011 <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/qanda/2011mandate/writtenans/2011/110617.htm#7>

Planning Application C/2011/0131/F

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the status of planning application C/2011/0131/F, including when a decision will be made. **(AQW 1092/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The application in question is for an anaerobic digestion plant in association with Ballyrashane creamy. All consultees have now replied bar one. On the advice of the Land and Resource Management (LRM) team at NIEA, the Department consulted with the Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI) because the applicant referred to complying with the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR) within their application submission. A reply is expected shortly. Officials are assessing the application, including consultee responses and an objection and aims to consult Coleraine Borough Council at its next meeting on 26 July 2011.

I am aware of this application and that the report may have contributed to the delay in its processing. I have met with Senior Planning Management to identify findings and to put in place further process to reduce the risk of delays in other cases, particularly those with economic impact.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the pay increases or bonus payments Special Advisers have received since May 2007; and (ii) whether their pay is linked to Senior Civil Service pay grades, and if so, whether they are subject to any pay or bonus restrictions applicable to those grades. **(AQW 480/11-15)**

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Annual pay award increases for Special Advisers in all Departments since May 2007 were made within the value advised by DFP, namely 2.5% with effect from 1 April 2008 and 3.5% with effect from 1 April 2009. No pay awards have been paid in 2010 or 2011. Within this time period one Special Adviser received an increase of 6.4% with effect from 1 December 2008 on review of the post in line with the provision in Section 8 of Schedule 3 of the Arrangements for the Appointment, Terms and Conditions and Remuneration of Special Advisers.

There were no bonus payments made to any Special Advisers since May 2007.

Special Advisers' pay is linked to Senior Civil Service pay in that Section 7 of Schedule 3 of the Arrangements for the Appointment, Terms and Conditions and Remuneration of Special Advisers, May

2007, states that: “pay bands will be revalorised in line with movement to the appropriate reference points on the Senior Civil Service pay bands.” In addition, Section 8 of the Schedule states: “Annual pay progression will be based on the average Senior Civil Service salary increase”. This link was not maintained in 2009 when the maximum of Special Advisers’ pay bands increased by 3.5% while Senior Civil Service pay bands remained frozen. Special Advisers are not entitled to bonus payments under current pay arrangements and Special Advisers’ pay has been frozen in respect of the years commencing April 2010 and April 2011 in line with arrangements for Senior Civil Service pay.

Archived Departmental Documentation

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

(AQW 594/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The amount spent by DFP on renting storage space in each of the last three years is as follows:

08/09	£ 318,483
09/10	£ 332,152
10/11	£ 355,353

These costs have increased as storage has been moved out of prime office space over the period, however, the increase is more than offset by savings in rent/rates of the office accommodation.

Single Tender Actions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 477/11-15, how many contracts have been awarded through single tender actions (i) with advance approval of the Accounting Officer; and (ii) without advance approval of the Accounting Officer, since May 2007; and what steps have been taken to prevent such breaches of procurement rules.

(AQW 881/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The requirement to secure Accounting Officer approval for all single tender actions was formalised in June 2010 with the issue of Procurement Guidance Note 03/10 by Central Procurement Directorate.

My Department has issued this guidance, together with procedures for seeking Accounting Officer approval, to Departmental Board members and staff. The guidance is also included in the Department's Governance and Control Framework which is available to all staff on the departmental intranet site.

Going forward, all single tender actions will be reported to and monitored by the Departmental Board on a quarterly basis, with updates also provided to the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee.

Information on the single tender actions by the Department in 2010-11 is provided below. Information for prior years could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Single Tenders	Number in 2010-11
With Advance Accounting Officer approval	12
Without Advance Accounting Officer approval	5

Civil Service Grade 3 Posts

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what vacancies currently exist for Civil Service Grade 3 posts; and what plans there are to fill these vacancies.

(AQW 891/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information requested is set out in the attached table.

CURRENT NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE VACANT GRADE 3 POSTS AS AT 16 JUNE 2011 AND DETAILS OF PLANS TO FILL

Department	Total Number of Vacancies	Post Title	Plans to Fill
DE	1	Deputy Secretary, Schools and Youth Policy	No plans to fill this post.
DHSSPS	3	Senior Finance & Personnel Director	External recruitment. Successful candidate to take up post on 1 July 2011.
		Deputy Secretary (Social Services)	External recruitment competition under way.
		Deputy Secretary (Healthcare Policy)	Internal promotion competition under way.
OFMDFM	1	Director of Equality and Strategy	Internal promotion competition under way.

Notes: Figures relate to permanent current vacancies in the 13 Northern Ireland Departments and their Agencies

Grade 2 and Grade 3 Posts in the Civil Service

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the current salary scales for (i) Grade 2; and (ii) Grade 3 posts in the Civil Service; and what bonuses have been paid to (a) Grade 2; and (b) Grade 3 staff in each of the last three years.

(AQW 892/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The current salary scales for (i) Grade 2 and (ii) Grade 3 posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service are as follows:

	Minimum	Maximum
(i) Grade 2	£98,059	£205,000
(ii) Grade 3	£81,600	£160,000

Performance period	Eligibility Date	Total of Grade 2 Bonuses	Total of Grade 3 Bonuses
1/4/08 – 31/3/09	1 April 2009	Nil	Nil
1/4/09 – 31/3/10	1 April 2010	Nil	Nil
1/4/10 – 31/3/11	1 April 2011	Nil	Nil

Civil Service Grade 3 Posts

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what vacancies currently exist in Departments for Civil Service Grade 3 posts or equivalent levels within agencies or arm's-length bodies.
(AQW 922/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information in relation to Civil Service Grade 3 vacancies which currently exist in NICS Departments and their Agencies is set out in the response to AQW 891/11-15.

In addition, the Department of Education has 2 vacancies at Grade 3 equivalent level in its Arms Length Bodies.

Inland Waterways

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel on what legal basis do bodies such as The Honourable Irish Society and the Duke of Abercorn Estates Limited claim exclusive private ownership of some river beds and fishing rights on inland waterways.

(AQW 966/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department does not have responsibility for either of the entities mentioned, which are not public bodies. Almost certainly information in relation to such ownership and rights will be contained in the documents of title of both entities, but these are not held by Land & Property Services.

Co-operation from a Republic of Ireland Government Department

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives since May 2007 that have received co-operation from (a) a Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies; and (b) any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation; and (ii) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which he intends to seek co-operation from these bodies.

(AQW 990/11-15)

Mr Wilson: DFP serves as sponsor department for the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), the Managing Authority for the cross border PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes. DFP exercises its sponsor department role in partnership with the Republic of Ireland's Department of Finance (DOF).

The PEACE III Programme, which aims to reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and to promote reconciliation, has a budget of approximately £300 million. Its eligible area comprises Northern Ireland and the six border counties of the Republic of Ireland.

INTERREG IVA is a tripartite Programme with a value of approximately £235 million. Its eligible area comprises Northern Ireland, the six Border Counties of the Republic of Ireland, and Western Scotland. The Programme aims to support strategic cross border co-operation for a more prosperous and sustainable region. All projects assisted, including those that involve Scotland, must have a significant north/south dimension.

DFP is the accountable Northern Ireland Department for the Public Sector Collaboration Theme of the INTERREG IVA Programme. DOF is the corresponding accountable department in the Republic. The Theme has a budget of approximately £22 million. All of the Public Sector Collaboration projects approved to date have been formally approved by DFP and DOF in their role as accountable departments. These projects are listed below.

Lead Partner	Project Name	Value*
Donegal County Council	Women into Public Life	£817,223
Centre for Cross Border Studies	The Ireland/Northern Ireland Cross-Border Co-operation Observatory	£1,441,098.00
DHSSPS	Driving Change	£1,257,421
RNIB Northern Ireland	Sensory Engagement Project	£1,866,037
The Cedar Foundation	ConneXions	£469,943
Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd	Small Ferries Strategic Plan	£235,000

Lead Partner	Project Name	Value*
The Educational Guidance Service for Adults (EGSA)	Deaf Communications Infrastructure Development	£962,080
East Border Region	Management and Implementation	£899,656
ICBAN	Management and Implementation	£400,161
North West Region Cross Border Group	Management and Implementation	£784,804
COMET	Management and Implementation	£414,922
North East Partnership	Management and Implementation	£531,688
East Border Region	Action for Biodiversity	£815,455
ICBAN	Central Border Region Spatial Planning Initiative	£1,456,995
East Border Region	Energy Efficiency and Micro Generation Project	£778,814
East Border Region	Promoting Balanced and Sustainable Cross-Border Development	£700,000
North West Region Cross Border Group	Urban and Village Renewal Programme	£904,545
North West Region Cross-Border Group	SPACEial	£470,942
NEP Business Improvement Districts	NEP Business Improvement Districts	£716,000

* Where required an exchange rate of £1=€1.1 has been used.

DFP and DOF are also jointly accountable for the Technical Assistance budgets for both PEACE III (£16 million) and INTERREG IVA £14 million). Technical Assistance funds general programme administration, management and monitoring.

Accountability for the other PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Themes, and their respective budgets, is exercised by the relevant departments, north and south, based on policy competence.

- (ii) The PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes have not fully committed their allocation of funding. DFP will continue to work closely with the SEUPB, with DOF in the Republic, and with accountable departments in the two jurisdictions to ensure that both Programme budgets are fully expended and all Programme targets achieved.

The current PEACE and INTERREG Programmes will end in December 2013. DFP is currently working closely with DOF, SEUPB and the European Commission to identify the scope for a further round of EU cross border funding, post 2013. These discussions—on future PEACE and INTERREG Cross Border funding—remain at an early stage.

Corporation Tax

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an estimate of the annual amount paid in Corporation Tax.

(AQW 1054/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Government's consultation paper on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy estimates the value of corporation tax receipts in Northern Ireland in 2009-10 at around £465 million.

This is based on an analysis of the net tax liabilities of companies with a Northern Ireland postcode over a number of financial years. Northern Ireland corporation tax receipts excluding North Sea oil and gas and also branches of UK firms based in Northern Ireland broadly averaged 1.5 per cent of total UK corporation tax receipts between 2002-03 and 2007-08.

Consequently the Government took the view that 1.5 per cent was an appropriate steady state proportion to assume for Northern Ireland receipts and the main costings outlined in the consultation document are estimated on this basis.

However, illustrative costings based on a 1.25 per cent share of receipts have also been included in the document. This reflects the possibility that Northern Ireland tax receipts could remain low in the current economic climate given that the Northern Ireland share of total UK receipts fell to 1.1 per cent in 2008-09.

Corporation Tax

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what discussions he has had, or intends to have, with the Office for Budget Responsibility regarding the rate of Corporation Tax and the implications for the block grant.

(AQW 1068/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have not had, nor do I have any immediate intention of having direct discussions with the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The OBR is responsible for certifying assumptions and methodologies used by the Treasury in costing Budget measures. It does not have a role in either setting the rate of corporation tax or calculating the block grant.

Treasury used methodologies approved by the OBR to estimate the cost of reducing corporation tax, including profit shifting and tax motivated incorporation and these subsequently informed estimates within the consultation document. There is clearly much work to be done in clarifying and refining these cost estimates and I and my officials will continue to engage directly with the Treasury in this regard.

Air Passenger Duty

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what responses were made to the Treasury's consultation on Air Passenger Duty; and whether he will place the responses in the Assembly library.

(AQW 1098/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I, as the Minister responsible for liaising with the Treasury, responded to the Treasury's consultation on Air Passenger Duty on 17 June. This response has been placed in the Assembly library and is also available on my department's website.

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/dfp-response-to-apd-consultation.pdf>

Department Staff

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 481/11-15, to detail the number of staff in each Department who are from a (i) Catholic background; and (ii) not-determined background, broken down by grade.

(AQW 1099/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is not possible to provide all the data requested as to do so would risk revealing the community background of individuals, which is an offence under both the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998. The attached tables provide as much information as it is possible to reveal.

In order to protect the community background of individuals, cell sizes less than 10 have not been released. This has also necessitated the suppression of data in other cells in order to prevent the disclosure of protected data in a neighbouring cell.

NICS CATHOLIC & NOT DETERMINED PERMANENT STAFF BY DEPARTMENT BROKEN DOWN BY ANALOGOUS GRADE @ 1ST JAN 2011

DEPARTMENT: DARD

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	110	32	142
	DP	#	*	104
	S0	193	20	213
	EOI/EOII	416	26	442
	AO	#	*	249
	AA	#	*	143
	Industrial	224	19	243
	All	1428	108	1536

DEPARTMENT: DCAL

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	#	*	14
	DP	#	*	22
	S0	#	*	27
	EOI/EOII	#	*	39
	AO/AA	#	*	38
	Industrial	*	*	10
	Group Total	135	15	150

DEPARTMENT: DE

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	#	*	61
	DP	#	*	26
	SO	#	*	28
	EOI/EOII	#	*	61
	AO	#	*	56
	AA	*	*	11
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	224	19	243

DEPARTMENT: DETI

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	#	*	20
	DP	#	*	37
	SO	#	*	47
	EOI/EOII	#	*	80
	AO	#	*	39
	AA	#	*	15
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	#	#	238

DEPARTMENT: DFP

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G5+	15	0	15
	G6/G7	146	11	157
	DP	#	*	225
	SO	241	11	252
	EOI/EOII	422	22	444
	AO	473	12	485
	AA/Industrial	#	*	83
	All	1592	69	1661

DEPARTMENT: DEL

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	32	*	#
	DP	56	*	#
	SO	104	*	#
	EOI/EOII	618	13	631
	AO	384	*	#
	AA	44	0	44
	Industrial	0	0	0
	All	1238	33	1271

DEPARTMENT: DHSSPS

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	#	*	68
	DP	#	*	71
	SO	#	*	74
	EOI/EOII	#	*	74
	AO/AA	#	*	32
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	298	21	319

DEPARTMENT: DOE

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	64	19	83
	DP	140	18	158
	SO	#	#	265
	EOI/EOII	303	22	325
	AO	447	14	461
	AA	#	*	78
	Industrial	#	*	24
	All	1302	92	1394

DEPARTMENT: DRD

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	#	*	38
	DP	#	*	97
	SO	#	*	151
	EOI/EOII	318	16	334
	AO	#	*	167
	AA	#	*	174
	Industrial	217	20	237
	All	1140	58	1198

DEPARTMENT: DSD

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	65	*	#
	DP	122	*	#
	SO	246	*	#
	EOI/EOII	1504	29	1533
	AO	2147	38	2185
	AA	323	13	336
	Industrial	0	0	0
	All	4407	92	4499

DEPARTMENT: OFMDFM

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G5+	#	*	11
	G6/G7	#	*	21
	DP	#	*	37
	SO	#	*	38
	EOI/EOII	#	*	33
	AO/AA	#	*	24
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	#	*	164

DEPARTMENT: DOJ

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G5+	#	*	12
	G6/G7	#	*	51
	DP	76	15	91
	SO	150	35	185
	EOI/EOII	225	30	255
	AO	286	52	338
	AA/Industrial	#	*	43
	All	827	148	975

DEPARTMENT: PPS

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	36	*	#
	DP	65	*	#
	SO	14	*	#
	EOI/EOII	46	*	#
	AO	80	*	#
	AA	56	*	#
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	297	18	315

DEPARTMENT: ALL

		Community Background		
		Catholic Headcount	Not Determined Headcount	Group Total Headcount
Analogous Grade	G5+	86	17	103
	G6/G7	644	84	728
	DP	1051	77	1128
	SO	1543	113	1656
	EOI/EOII	4119	180	4299
	AO	4398	139	4537
	AA	954	35	989
	Industrial	475	48	523
	All	13270	693	13963

Notes:

Data sourced from HRConnect at 1st Jan 2011 and external DOJ databases

Data includes all NICS Permanent Staff in the 'Catholic' and 'Not Determined' Community Background Categories

The analogous grade groupings match those used in AQW 481 11-15 to prevent disclosure of confidential data. In cases where this would result in disclosure a total for the department has been provided.

* Cell sizes less than 10 have not been released to ensure confidentiality

Cell has been suppressed to prevent disclosure of suppressed data in a neighbouring cell.

Single Tender Actions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to procurement by his Department, (i) on how many occasions since May 2007 a supplier has been secured through a single tender action in advance of authorisation by the Accounting Officer and the reasons; (ii) the level of expenditure in each case; (iii) the name of each supplier secured through each single tender action; and (iv) the date on which retrospective approval was granted by the Accounting Officer in each case.

(AQW 1105/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The requirement to secure Accounting Officer approval for all single tender actions was formalised in June 2010 with the issue of Procurement Guidance Note 03/10 by Central Procurement Directorate.

Information on the 5 occasions in which a supplier has been secured through a single tender which did not have advance authorisation by the Accounting Officer by the Department in 2010-11 is provided at Annex A. Information for prior years could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

ANNEX A

SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS WITHOUT ADVANCE AUTHORISATION BY THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER DURING 2010-11

(i) Reason for no advance authorisation by the Accounting Officer	(ii) Level of Expenditure	(iii) Name of supplier	(iv) Date of Retrospective Approval
The branch involved did not appreciate that prior Accounting Officer approval was required in this instance. Accounting Officer approval was sought for the December 2010 accreditation exercise and the appropriate approvals will now be sought going forward.	£2,595	UK Accreditation Service	20/12/10
The branch involved did not appreciate that prior Accounting Officer approval was required in this instance. Accounting Officer approval was sought for the December 2010 exercise and the appropriate approvals will now be sought going forward.	£2,290	SGS (UK) Ltd	10/12/10
Senior management approved the expenditure on the basis that it was not viewed as a Single Tender Action. A re-assessment, resulted in this being classified as a Single Tender Action which has now been notified to the Accounting Officer.	£30,000	Business in the Community	Notified to Accounting Officer 10/6/11
Senior management approved the expenditure on the basis that it was not viewed as a Single Tender Action. A re-assessment, resulted in this being classified as a Single Tender Action which has now been notified to the Accounting Officer.	£20,000	Business in the Community	Notified to Accounting Officer 10/6/11
Senior management approved the expenditure on the basis that it was not viewed as a Single Tender Action. A re-assessment, resulted in this being classified as a Single Tender Action which has now been notified to the Accounting Officer.	£30,000	Business in the Community	Notified to Accounting Officer 10/6/11

Dormant Accounts Scheme

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the implementation of the Dormant Accounts Scheme.

(AQW 1157/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As you will be aware, this is a UK Government-led initiative and is dependent on a number of factors including the timing and the amount of funding released by the Banks to the Reclaim Fund.

It is difficult to predict the precise amount that will be available for distribution given that this will depend on the success of the ongoing campaign to reunite individuals with their assets, and the sums held back by the Reclaim Fund for future customer reclaim.

Therefore, I have decided to wait until there is greater certainty around the amounts which are likely to be available for the Dormant Accounts Scheme, before making my recommendations to the First Minister and deputy First Minister for endorsement I will then bring them to the Executive.

Rateable Valuations

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what relationship exists between the median rent for a property in a town centre and the level of rateable valuations for properties in the same town centre.

(AQW 1221/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The rateable values of all commercial properties in Northern Ireland are based on their Net Annual Value (NAV) which, for the current Valuation List, is an estimate of rental value at a common valuation date of 1st April 2001. Under rating law in Northern Ireland, rateable values (NAVs) are generally not altered unless at a general Revaluation, at which time all properties are re-valued at a new valuation date.

The existing legislation, therefore, does not allow for indexing between declines in footfall and drops in median rentals in town centres and the level of current rateable valuations in these town centres. Such factors can only be considered at a future Revaluation of commercial properties, the next scheduled to come into effect in 2015.

Rateable Valuations

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what relationship exists between the footfall in town centres and the level of rateable valuation for properties in the same town centres.

(AQW 1222/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The rateable values of all commercial properties in Northern Ireland are based on their Net Annual Value (NAV) which, for the current Valuation List, is an estimate of rental value at a common valuation date of 1st April 2001. Under rating law in Northern Ireland, rateable values (NAVs) are generally not altered unless at a general Revaluation, at which time all properties are re-valued at a new valuation date.

The existing legislation, therefore, does not allow for indexing between declines in footfall and drops in median rentals in town centres and the level of current rateable valuations in these town centres. Such factors can only be considered at a future Revaluation of commercial properties, the next scheduled to come into effect in 2015.

Rateable Valuations

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether any form of indexing exists between (i) declines in footfall; and (ii) drops in median rentals in town centres and the level of rateable valuation in those town centres.

(AQW 1223/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The rateable values of all commercial properties in Northern Ireland are based on their Net Annual Value (NAV) which, for the current Valuation List, is an estimate of rental value at a common valuation date of 1st April 2001. Under rating law in Northern Ireland, rateable values (NAVs) are generally not altered unless at a general Revaluation, at which time all properties are re-valued at a new valuation date.

The existing legislation, therefore, does not allow for indexing between declines in footfall and drops in median rentals in town centres and the level of current rateable valuations in these town centres. Such factors can only be considered at a future Revaluation of commercial properties, the next scheduled to come into effect in 2015.

The Block Grant

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for a detailed breakdown of the £900m over and above the block grant which has been included in the budget.

(AQW 1432/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As part of the budget process the Executive explored a wide range of initiatives that might generate additional revenue for the Executive to allocate.

The £900 million included in the Budget 2011-15 over the four year period is in addition to the annual Block Grant and the existing level of rates receipts.

- £200 million additional revenue to be generated from the regional rate increase;
- £444 million of capital receipts identified by departments;
- £100 million of capital receipts to be generated by the Central Asset Management Unit;
- £23 million of capital carried forward from 2010-11
- £40 million contribution from the Belfast Port
- £80 million in respect of the Housing Associations' increased contribution to housing starts; and
- £12 million from the Plastic Bag Levy.

The ministerial Budget Review Group will continue to assess other initiatives that might offer up further funding resources that might be available for allocation over the forthcoming four year budget period.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Abortions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 203/11-15, whether he will review the current practice of not recording and collating the reasons for abortions.
(AQW 768/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): On 13 March 2009 my Department asked the then HSS Boards and Trusts to develop a regional care pathway and pro-forma to record terminations of pregnancy in Northern Ireland.

This work has ceased pending a decision on how to comply with the 2004 Court of Appeal order requiring my Department to produce Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy.

North-South Ministerial Council Meetings

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 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 985/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since May 2007, the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has attended NSMC meetings on the following dates:

Health and Food Safety Sectoral Meeting on 28 November 2007

Health and Food Safety Sectoral Meeting on 28 May 2008

Health and Food Safety Sectoral Meeting on 10 June 2009

Health and Food Safety Sectoral Meeting on 25 November 2009

Health and Food Safety Sectoral Meeting on 2 June 2010

Health and Food Safety Sectoral Meeting On 10 November 2010

Plenary Meeting on 7 February 2008

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.

Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives since May 2007 that have received co-operation from (a) a Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies; and (b) any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation; and (ii) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which he intends to seek co-operation from these bodies.

(AQW 986/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) By definition, co-operative activities may be put forward by one or other Department but would become “joint” when adopted. Since May 2007, the following schemes, projects and initiatives have involved co-operation between my Department and:
 - (a) Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies:
 - Co-operation And Working Together (CAWT) projects (see www.cawt.com/)
 - The Ireland-Northern Ireland-National Cancer Institute of the USA Cancer Consortium including a wide range of co-operative projects, schemes, conferences and initiatives (including cancer registries co-operation, cancer prevention fellowship programme and courses, telesynergy, clinical trials network, and nurse training in clinical research, etc) (see www.allirelandnci.com/)
 - Oral and Maxillo Facial Surgery co-operation in the North-West (this service is now main-streamed)
 - GP Cross-border Out-of-Hours Pilot Projects (one between Inishowen and Derry/Londonderry; and the other between Keady and Castleblaney)
 - Exercise Medical Bridge – participation in cross-border emergency planning exercises (2007 and 2008)
 - Pandemic Flu Planning and co-operation (this involves the sharing of information on planning and preparedness, and has not involved funding or joint working on operational issues)
 - Fire and Rescue co-operation with regard to fire prevention and planning, and for incidents such as road traffic accidents, fires in property, forest fires and flooding
 - Cross-border First Responder Schemes

- Co-operation on Radiotherapy Services (including the present arrangements for Donegal Patients to receive treatment at the Belfast Cancer Centre and the planned Satellite Radiotherapy Facility at Altnagelvin Hospital)
- Co-operation in Health Promotion including physical activity, research, nutrition, health promoting hospitals, training, workplace health, men's health, mental health and breastfeeding, tobacco controls, drugs and alcohol initiatives
- All-Island Action Plan on Suicide Prevention (incorporating a rolling programme of initiatives to encourage cross-border co-operation in the prevention of suicide and self-harm)
- Child Protection Inter-Departmental Coordinating Group (with sub-groups on Internet Safety; Protocol for Movement of Children/Vulnerable Families across borders; All-Island Media Awareness; Research; and Vetting and Barring – with separate initiatives and schemes in each)
- the North/South child protection hub, which is a dedicated online resource to be used by policymakers, professional practitioners, researchers and educators to share and improve knowledge, develop evidence-based practice and, ultimately, assist the safeguarding of vulnerable children was launched by Ministers on 10 November 2010 (see www.nscph.com/ and www.childlink.co.uk/)
- “Out of Programme” Training initiative enabling doctors to undertake training in the RoI (run by the the NI Medical and Dental Training Agency)
- Paediatric and Congenital Cardiac Surgery Services
- All-Ireland Contract for Clinical Waste Management
- Programmes and initiatives of the Food Safety Promotion Board (SafeFood) (see www.safefood.eu/)

Note - in the case of the above list the Department of Health and Children was the main Republic of Ireland Government Department involved – this is now split between the Department of Health and the separate Department of Children. In respect of the Fire and Rescue Services item, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is the main link.

(b) any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation

- The Institute for Public Health (funded by both DHSSPS and DoH) is involved in a number of projects and initiatives on an all-island basis - aimed at strengthening public health intelligence, supporting health impact assessment in N Ireland, capacity building and policy and programme development, and evaluation (see www.publichealth.ie/)
- The National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) is jointly involved in the All-Island Suicide Prevention Plan (see www.nosp.ie/)
- Some Republic of Ireland NGOs participate in the Child Protection Sub-Groups eg the Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) and Barnardo's Ireland are contributing members.

(ii) I anticipate that we will continue to have collaboration at various levels on these and other issues of mutual interest in the future.

Southern Cross Healthcare

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the impact of the redundancies recently announced by Southern Cross Healthcare.

(AQW 1008/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the Member to the answer I gave to AQW 722/11-15.

Cystic Fibrosis

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what research his Department has carried out on gene therapy as a preventative measure for people with Cystic Fibrosis. **(AQW 1013/11-15)**

Mr Poots: Research on Cystic Fibrosis is especially strong in Northern Ireland, involving Health and Social Care Trusts and both universities. The Health & Social Care Research & Development Fund, provided by this Department, supports this work in two ways.

Firstly, funding goes to Trusts for the employment of research nurses, physiotherapists and other support staff in the Northern Ireland Clinical Research Network. This enables patients to be involved in clinical trials of potential new treatments.

Secondly, research funding supports individual projects. One major project involves collaboration between clinical researchers at Queen's University Belfast, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and University of North Carolina in the United States of America. Our funding goes only to researchers in Northern Ireland while the work in the Republic of Ireland and the United States is funded separately from within those jurisdictions. The work is at the forefront of international efforts to provide better treatments for cystic fibrosis patients and will represent a total investment of some £5 million.

These international collaborations have led to the development of a new drug, called VX-770. The drug is a significant breakthrough for all cystic fibrosis sufferers as it is the first drug shown to be an effective treatment against the basic defect in that disease. Through the Department's support for research and clinical trials, patients in Northern Ireland have been provided with access to the treatment.

Gene therapy for cystic fibrosis is a longer term objective. Research and clinical trials are underway in the UK and our local cystic fibrosis clinical research leader, Professor Stuart Elborn, chairs the Scientific Advisory Committee of the UK Gene Therapy Consortium. Professor Elborn and his clinical colleagues will ensure that people with cystic fibrosis in Northern Ireland will benefit from this therapy in the future if it is shown to be effective.

George Sloan Centre in Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) average; (ii) shortest; and (iii) longest distance travelled by clients to the George Sloan Centre in Ballymena using Trust supplied transport, including the time taken to travel to the Centre and the time taken to return home from the Centre, **(AQW 1041/11-15)**

Mr Poots: In relation to distances travelled and time taken by clients using Trust provided transport to attend the George Sloan Centre in Ballymena is as follows:

- (i) average distance travelled - 5-6 miles;
- (ii) shortest distance travelled - ½ mile; and
- (iii) longest distance travelled - 15 miles.

I am advised that clients who live within the town area would be on the transport provided for approximately 30 minutes while those who live in country areas could be on transport for approximately 1½ hours.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department has spent on Special Advisers since May 2007, broken down by (i) salary; (ii) pension contributions; (iii) expenses; (iv) office costs; and (v) other costs. **(AQW 1053/11-15)**

Mr Poots: In relation to (i), the disclosure of actual salary is exempt under the Data Protection Act. Information on spending in relation to Special Advisers for the period May 2007 to 21 March 2011, the latest date available, is set out below.

- (i) Annual Salary costs: within the Pay Band £57,300 (Min) - £82,531 (Max)
- (ii) Employers Pension Contributions: 21.5% - 23.5% over the period
- (iii) Expenses: £340 (rounded to the nearest £10)
- (iv) Office costs: there were no incremental office costs as the Special Adviser used existing accommodation
- (v) Other costs: £36,840 (rounded to the nearest £10)

School Nurses

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the eligibility criteria used to determine whether a nurse is allocated to (i) a primary school; and (ii) a special needs school.

(AQW 1060/11-15)

Mr Poots: All schools in Northern Ireland have a named school nurse. Through school nursing the school age population receive the universal child health promotion programme.

Where children are educated in schools for children with special needs, Trusts support these schools with an appropriate model of provision of nursing services based on the assessment of pupil health needs within the school. This is continuously reviewed and updated as needs of pupils change.

Rosemount Care Centre, Portadown

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures are being taken to ensure that the care arrangements for residents in Rosemount Care Centre, Portadown are not adversely affected as a result of the financial difficulties being experienced by Southern Cross Healthcare.

(AQW 1083/11-15)

Mr Poots: Southern Cross Healthcare is currently working with its landlords to restructure and stabilise the company in order to ensure continuity of care for all residents. Throughout this process my primary concern is the welfare of residents in Southern Cross homes, including Rosemount Care Centre, and 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 these discussions to ensure the welfare of residents is protected.

Regulating the Administration of Treatments

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will consider regulating the administration of treatments such as botox to minors.

(AQW 1104/11-15)

Mr Poots: As a prescription only medicine, botulinum toxin for injection is covered by the Medicines Act. As a result there are strict controls on its manufacture, supply, storage and administration. Any breach of these controls may constitute a criminal offence which would be pursued by The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in collaboration with my Department. Good professional practice in this area was highlighted recently in correspondence from The Chief Nursing Officer, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer and The Department's Lead allied Health Professional.

Botox must be administered by, or under the supervision of a registered healthcare practitioner who must comply with the standards set by their professional regulator. All regulators have issued guidance on obtaining consent for treatment, for which there are particular considerations when treating minors.

I have no plans to extend beyond this regulatory regime at present.

Patient Transfers from the Down and Mourne Area

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many patients from the Down and Mourne area were transferred for treatment and investigation to each hospital in the greater Belfast area between 1 April 2011 and the 31 May 2011; (ii) how many of these patients were transferred between 10pm and 8am; and (iii) what were the comparable figures for patient transfer for the same period in (a) 2009; and (b) 2010.

(AQW 1125/11-15)

Mr Poots: For the purpose of answering this question, the Down and Mourne area has been defined as the South Down Parliamentary Constituency.

(I) THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS FROM THE SOUTH DOWN PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY THAT WERE TRANSFERRED FOR TREATMENT AND INVESTIGATION TO EACH EMERGENCY CARE DEPARTMENT IN THE GREATER BELFAST AREA BETWEEN 1 APRIL 2011 AND THE 31 MAY 2011 IS DETAILED IN THE TABLE BELOW:

Emergency Care Department	No. of transfers from the South Down Parliamentary Constituency
Belfast City Hospital	40
Royal Victoria Hospital	81
Mater Hospital	*
Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children	33
Lagan Valley Hospital	56
Ulster Hospital	218

Source: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSC Trust

(II) THE NUMBER OF THESE PATIENTS THAT WERE TRANSFERRED BETWEEN 10PM AND 8AM IS DETAILED IN THE TABLE BELOW:

Emergency Care Department	No. of transfers from the South Down Parliamentary Constituency between 10pm and 8am
Belfast City Hospital	10
Royal Victoria Hospital	20
Mater Hospital	*
Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children	12
Lagan Valley Hospital	28
Ulster Hospital	69

Source: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSC Trust

(III) (A) COMPARABLE FIGURES FOR PATIENT TRANSFER FOR THE SAME PERIOD IN 2009 IS DETAILED IN THE TABLE BELOW:

Emergency Care Department	No. of transfers from the South Down Parliamentary Constituency	No. of transfers from the South Down Parliamentary Constituency between 10pm and 8am
Belfast City Hospital	37	5
Royal Victoria Hospital	41	8
Mater Hospital	*	0
Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children	48	8
Lagan Valley Hospital	46	9
Ulster Hospital	152	51

Source: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSC Trust

(B) COMPARABLE FIGURES FOR PATIENT TRANSFER FOR THE SAME PERIOD IN 2010 IS DETAILED IN THE TABLE BELOW:

Emergency Care Department	No. of transfers from the South Down Parliamentary Constituency	No. of transfers from the South Down Parliamentary Constituency between 10pm and 8am
Belfast City Hospital	37	7
Royal Victoria Hospital	68	13
Mater Hospital	*	0
Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children	24	8
Lagan Valley Hospital	31	10
Ulster Hospital	152	45

Source: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSC Trust

In order to avoid personal disclosure an ‘*’ represents a cell count of less than 4.

Accident and Emergency Units

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what is the target waiting time for a patient presenting at an accident and emergency unit to be seen by a senior house doctor, staff grade registrar or a consultant; (ii) what the current average waiting time for patients presenting is at the (a) Ulster Hospital, Dundonald; (b) Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast; and (c) Mater Hospital, Belfast; and (iii) what the waiting times are between 10pm and 8am.

(AQW 1126/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department set out the following emergency care waiting times Priorities for Action (PfA) target for 2010/11:

- (i) ‘From April 2010, HSC Board and Trusts should ensure 95% of patients attending any A&E department are either treated and discharged home, or admitted within four hours of their arrival in the department. No patient should wait longer than 12 hours.’

- (ii) Information on average emergency care waiting times is not readily available, as my Department does not routinely collect information on emergency care attendances at a patient level. However, information is available on the number of patients waiting less than 4 hours, from 4 to 12 hours, and over 12 hours in emergency care departments during the month of May 2011, and is detailed in the table below:

Emergency Care Department	Emergency care waiting time from arrival to departure			Total New & Unplanned Review attendances
	Within 4 hours	4 to 12 hours	Over 12 hours	
(a) Ulster	5,343	1109	105	6,557
(b) Royal Victoria	4,645	1,425	148	6,218
(c) Mater	2,564	872	131	3,567

Source: Departmental EC1 Return

1 Information for May 2011 is provisional

- (iii) Information on emergency care waiting times between 10pm and 8am is not readily available, as my Department does not routinely collect information on emergency care attendances during specific time periods.

Single Tender Actions

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to procurement by his Department, (i) on how many occasions since May 2007 a supplier has been secured through a single tender action in advance of authorisation by the Accounting Officer and the reasons; (ii) the level of expenditure in each case; (iii) the name of each supplier secured through each single tender action; and (iv) the date on which retrospective approval was granted by the Accounting Officer in each case. **(AQW 1139/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The requirement to secure Accounting Officer approval for all single tender actions was introduced in June 2010 through Procurement Guidance Note 03/10 issued by DFP's Central Procurement Directorate. Subject to that, the following table contains data relevant to the period covered by the question:

Period	No. of Single Tender Actions	Full Contract Value £	Approval under PGN 03/10
May 2007 to March 2008	2	11,900	-
2008-09	3	8,329	-
2009-10	4	20,284	-
April 2010 to 16 June 2010	-	-	-
17 June 2010 to March 2011	1*	45,000	Yes

* This item represents Professor Appleby's report updating his 2005 Independent Review of Health and Social Care Services in Northern Ireland, which had been commissioned by DFP

3fivetwo Healthcare

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the position in relation to the review of patients who have been referred to 3fivetwo Healthcare for a consultation or

for treatment; and who is responsible for any complications that might arise as a result of treatments provided.

(AQW 1150/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board manages contracts with the independent sector on behalf of the HSC in Northern Ireland.

The Board has advised me that it is the independent sector provider which is responsible for review appointments up to a maximum specified in the terms of the contract. This will vary according to specialty.

The responsibility for any complications which might arise is dependent on the nature and circumstances of the complication and where and when it arises. Emergencies will be referred to the nearest HSC facility which can treat the case. Complications arising from surgery are the responsibility of the independent sector provider unless the matter is complex and requires to be treated in the local HSC.

Point of Sale Ban on Tobacco Products

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the point of sale ban on tobacco products will be implemented on 1 July 2011; and when the regulations relating to this ban will be published.

(AQW 1169/11-15)

Mr Poots: Regulations to ban the display of tobacco products at point of sale will not be implemented from 1 July 2011, as proposed in the public consultation exercise.

I will decide on a new commencement date for a tobacco display ban once I have fully considered the responses to the consultation exercise. In making my decision, I will take into account the need for retailers to have a reasonable period of notice in order to make the necessary adaptations to their premises.

Agenda for Change Joint Negotiating Forum

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what progress has been made by the Agenda for Change Joint Negotiating Forum which met in June 2011 to discuss pay band issues; (ii) to detail the Forum's terms of reference; (iii) when its final report will be published; and (iv) what impact these meetings will have on the inequality of pay of some Theatre Assistants at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast.

(AQW 1192/11-15)

Mr Poots: I should first of all point out that the particular issue that has been raised is not confined to the Belfast HSC Trust; it has the potential to affect over 2,000 staff within all Health and Social Care organisations. It is therefore important that this matter is resolved on a regional basis and not in piecemeal fashion.

My Department is currently facilitating delicate regional negotiations between HSC employers and Health Service Trade Unions to resolve this particular issue in a pragmatic way. These negotiations are at a critical stage and I would not wish to jeopardise the outcome by making assumptions on the outcome or indeed a date for the resolution of these matters.

I understand that the Trade Unions are using their normal democratic structures to communicate with their members on this matter.

Food Safety Promotion Board

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many staff are employed by the Food Safety Promotion Board in (i) Northern Ireland; and (ii) the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 1253/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Food Safety Promotion Board employs 30.8 Whole-Time Equivalent (WTE) staff, all of whom are employed in the Republic of Ireland.

Research on Animals

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many licences have been granted for research on animals in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1256/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of new project and personal licences granted in each of the last three years in Northern Ireland is given in the table below.

	2008	2009	2010
Project licence	22	23	16
Personal licence	73	75	60

A project licence is granted when the Department considers that the use of living animals in a programme of work, for a purpose permitted by the Act, is justified and that the methods proposed are appropriate.

A personal licence is the Department's endorsement of the holder as a suitable and competent person to carry out specified procedures on specified animals, under supervision where necessary.

Use of Primates for Research Purposes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he would consider introducing a ban on the use of primates for research purposes.

(AQW 1258/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am not considering introducing a ban on the use of primates for research purposes. No primates have been used for research in Northern Ireland since the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 came into force.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Working Group

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the current status of his Department's Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Working Group which last met in June 2010; and to outline its forward work programme.

(AQW 1335/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am aware of the stakeholder group which was established in 2009 in association with the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), the Public Health Agency, the Belfast Trust and patient representatives to examine how access to the services required by Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) sufferers might be improved. I understand that at the time the group last met in June 2010 it was clear that the issues being raised in the group would be best handled in the context of commissioning of services and so the HSCB, who have responsibility for commissioning, were asked to consider arrangements for engaging with ME stakeholders.

The HSC Board advises that each of the Commissioning Service teams within the Board and the five Local Commissioning Groups, have already established, or are in the process of establishing, arrangements to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including patients and clients. Specifically in relation to ME, the relevant Commissioning Service team has been asked to consider how best to engage with this group of patients and will report to the Department on progress in due course.

Coeliac Disease

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have been diagnosed with Coeliac disease in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 1336/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of people diagnosed with coeliac disease in Northern Ireland is not available.

The only information held by the Department in relation to coeliac disease is the number of patients admitted to hospital for inpatient or day case care with a diagnosis of coeliac disease; these data have been tabled below.

Financial Year	No. of Admissions
2000/01	353
2001/02	448
2002/03	358
2003/04	368
2004/05	451
2005/06	544
2006/07	581
2007/08	636
2008/09	662
2009/10	729

Source: Hospital Inpatients System.

It should be noted that any individual could have been admitted to hospital more than once during any given time period and would therefore be counted more than once in the above figures.

Angiogram

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what the current waiting time is for an angiogram.

(AQW 1363/11-15)

Mr Poots: The waiting time for an angiogram at 31st March 2011, the most recent date for which data are available, is presented in the table below:

	Waiting time in weeks for an angiogram at 31st March 2011						Total
	0-6	>6-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26-36	>36	
Number of people waiting	498	380	174	82	19	1	1,154

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

Animal Experimentation

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 5026/11, whether he will consider developing a policy on animal experimentation which is separate from that of the Home Office.

(AQW 1398/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have no plans to develop a policy on animal experimentation separate from that of the Home Office.

Department of Justice

Sex Offenders: Addresses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the two recent cases where registered sex offenders gave addresses of 'a park bench' and 'under a bridge', whether he intends to amend existing or introduce new legislation to deal with instances where vague addresses are provided.

(AQW 735/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): I intend to publish a consultation paper, in July, on a number of reforms to the sex offender notification requirements in the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

The consultation paper includes a proposal to amend the Act to require notified sex offenders who have no sole or main residence to notify weekly to the police details of a place where they can be found.

Kettling

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the use of 'kettling' by police as a form of riot control.

(AQW 748/11-15)

Mr Ford: Decisions regarding crowd control 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 the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Convictions for Riot Related Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how many people have been (a) prosecuted; and (b) convicted for riot related offences which occurred in Belfast during the 12th July period 2010; and (ii) of these, how many (a) had a previous criminal record; and (b) had a previous criminal record for similar offences.

(AQW 795/11-15)

Mr Ford: Based on information provided by the Public Prosecution Service (as of 22 June), 39 defendants have been proceeded against in respect of riots in Belfast (Ardoyne) during the 12th July period 2010. Of these, 38 have been convicted and summary proceedings against one defendant are ongoing. One additional youth was dealt with by way of a diversionary youth conference.

A further 37 persons were proceeded against in respect of an earlier incident at Ardoyne, connected to a 'sit down protest'. Of these, one has been convicted; 29 have pleaded not guilty and are awaiting trial; proceedings against one defendant are ongoing; and summonses are being issued / re-issued for six persons.

As the majority of those convicted are awaiting sentence, the disclosure of the number with previous criminal records could be deemed prejudicial to the matter of sentencing and interfere with Article 6 of The European Convention on Human Rights.

Independent Members of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether he will reconsider the decision not to pay independent members of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, given the dangers associated with such appointments.

(AQW 855/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Justice Act passed by the Assembly in May 2010, included a measure to pay expenses only, and not allowances, to independent members of the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs).

Not paying allowances to members of the PCSPs will protect the amount of funding that can be directed towards front line projects which can make a real difference on the ground. This was my main intention in recommending this course of action.

I am keen that members are not out of pocket as a result of their contribution to PCSPs, and they will be able to claim expenses.

I am extremely grateful to all members of the current District Policing Partnerships, and in particular those who have suffered cowardly attacks and intimidation, for their strength of purpose, courage of conviction and determination to serve. However, allowances were not intended to compensate for any risks to the personal safety of DPP members that may have arisen during their service and I do not intend to reinstate them for the new PCSPs.

CCTV Cameras in the Coleraine Borough Council Area

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Justice whether the CCTV cameras in the Coleraine Borough Council area are considered to be state-of-the-art, and whether he has any plans to upgrade them.

(AQW 876/11-15)

Mr Ford: This response deals with the town centre CCTV cameras funded by the DoJ under the 'Looking Out for You' CCTV Challenge Fund Competition, which included 4 in Coleraine, 5 in Portrush and 3 in Portstewart.

DoJ funded the installation of the cameras but under the terms of the Challenge Fund competition, ownership of the cameras and equipment rests with the CCTV operators.

As the cameras funded by DoJ in Coleraine, Portrush and Portstewart have only recently become fully operational I understand there are no plans to up-grade them.

There may be a number of other CCTV cameras operational within the Coleraine Borough Council area, both private and statutory, however,

these do not fall to the responsibility of the DoJ.

Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what percentage of Magistrate Court cases have been paid for by Legal Aid in each of the last twelve months, broken down by court division.

(AQW 945/11-15)

Mr Ford: As the award of legal aid is recorded by defendant, I have provided figures for the percentage of defendants who have been awarded legal aid. In a very small number of cases the same defendant may have appeared more than once in the Magistrates Court and been awarded legal aid on more than one occasion.

The percentage of defendants in Magistrates' Court cases paid for by legal aid over the past twelve months cannot yet be provided, as not all claims have yet been lodged with the Legal Services Commission.

% OF TOTAL DEFENDANTS IN THE MAGISTRATES' COURT WHO HAD AT LEAST ONE LEGAL AID ORDER MADE(JUNE 2010- MAY 2011)

June 2010	Month												
	July 2010	Aug 2010	Sept 2010	Oct 2010	Nov 2010	Dec 2010	Jan 2011	Feb 2011	Mar 2011	April 2011	May 2011	Total	
Belfast	43%	46%	44%	43%	49%	46%	49%	48%	48%	46%	55%	46%	47%
Londonderry	48%	45%	48%	47%	49%	44%	52%	40%	52%	50%	42%	47%	47%
Antrim	43%	46%	48%	42%	47%	39%	43%	47%	53%	50%	44%	49%	46%
Fermanagh and Tyrone	36%	42%	35%	37%	36%	34%	30%	34%	36%	36%	36%	37%	36%
Armagh and South Down	32%	44%	34%	34%	31%	33%	32%	35%	29%	26%	33%	37%	33%
Ards	35%	37%	42%	43%	41%	44%	51%	45%	44%	47%	42%	48%	43%
Craigavon	37%	47%	44%	39%	42%	49%	36%	42%	45%	43%	43%	50%	43%
Total	40%	44%	42%	41%	43%	42%	43%	42%	44%	43%	44%	45%	43%

Convicted Juveniles and Young Adults

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of (i) juveniles; and (ii) young adults who have been convicted of an offence in each of the last three years, broken down by court division. **(AQW 950/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The tables below give the number of juveniles (aged 10 to 17) and young adults (those aged 18 to 30 have been documented) convicted of an offence broken down by age group and court division.

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included. The tables cover the calendar years 2004 to 2006, the latest year for which figures are currently available. This was due to changes in how such data are collected but steps are now being taken as a matter of urgency to derive data for subsequent years. It is hoped information for the period 2007 to 2009 will be available for the new Assembly session in September; work on data for 2010 is also progressing in parallel.

NUMBER OF JUVENILES (AGED 10-17) AND YOUNG ADULTS (AGED 18-30) CONVICTED BY AGE GROUP AND COURT DIVISION 2004

Court division	Age group			
	10-17	18-21	22-25	26-30
Antrim	264	799	589	562
Ards	236	781	613	535
Armagh and South Down	130	570	469	466
Belfast	467	1,766	1,460	1,174
Craigavon	145	550	364	346
Fermanagh and Tyrone	168	728	558	483
Londonderry	178	639	469	469
Total	1,588	5,833	4,522	4,035

NUMBER OF JUVENILES (AGED 10-17) AND YOUNG ADULTS (AGED 18-30) CONVICTED BY AGE GROUP AND COURT DIVISION 2005

Court division	Age group			
	10-17	18-21	22-25	26-30
Antrim	183	802	584	500
Ards	194	666	514	423
Armagh and South Down	129	572	517	489
Belfast	439	1,409	1,196	1,076
Craigavon	160	531	435	332
Fermanagh and Tyrone	140	699	545	460
Londonderry	210	769	495	477
Total	1,455	5,448	4,286	3,757

NUMBER OF JUVENILES (AGED 10-17) AND YOUNG ADULTS (AGED 18-30) CONVICTED BY AGE GROUP AND COURT DIVISION 2006

Court division	Age group			
	10-17	18-21	22-25	26-30
Antrim	156	764	593	503
Ards	189	648	537	462
Armagh and South Down	64	583	563	517
Belfast	372	1,084	955	865
Craigavon	150	569	438	378
Fermanagh and Tyrone	170	1,086	808	747
Londonderry	172	772	555	448
Total	1,273	5,506	4,449	3,920

Young Offenders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the number of young offenders who have spent a period of their life living in care; and whether he has had any discussions with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety about decreasing this trend.

(AQW 980/11-15)

Mr Ford: I cannot offer such an assessment because the Department of Justice does not have access to the “living in care” histories of all young offenders. However the Youth Justice Agency in conjunction with DHSSPS monitors on a continuing basis the number of current Looked After Children (LAC) placed in Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre and also those children under supervision by its Community Services Directorate. Details are as follows:-

1) Children in Custody
INITIAL ADMISSIONS TO THE WOODLANDS JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTRE – 2006/07 TO 2010/11:

Status(i)		06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
LAC:- Subject to Care Order	N	96	97	73	116	88
	%	29	28	27	33	21
LAC:- Voluntary Accommodated	N	-	-	-	10	65
	%	-	-	-	3	16
Not from Care	N	225	249	196	221	251
	%	68	72	72	63	61
Unknown	N	12	0	2	2	7
	%	4	0	1	1	2

(i) Year on year comparisons should be made with caution due to changes in recording in 2008/09

2) Children under Supervision

Of the 832 cases under supervision by the Youth Justice Agency Community Services Directorate at 31st March 2011, 7% were subject to a care order and a further 3% were voluntarily accommodated.

To date I have not had the opportunity to meet with the new Minister of DHSSPS. However, our respective officials are working together closely on a range of issues, including early interventions and ways of diverting LACs from the justice system.

Legal Aid Rates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many barristers have agreed to work under the new Legal Aid rates.

(AQW 993/11-15)

Mr Ford: To date, 3 barristers have indicated that they are willing to undertake Crown Court work under the new remuneration arrangements.

Legal Aid Rates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many solicitors or legal firms have agreed to work under the new Legal Aid rates; (ii) of these, how many regularly practise criminal law; and (iii) what was their Crown Court case load prior to the new rates being introduced.

(AQW 994/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) There are seven firms of solicitors included currently in the list of those willing to undertake Crown Court work under the new Legal Aid rates.
- (ii) & (iii) Information from the Law Society website indicates that all seven of the firms on the list practise criminal law. Since the introduction of the Legal Aid for Crown Court Proceedings (Costs) Rules 2005, in April 2005, a total of 52 criminal aid certificates have been granted in respect of six of the seven firms. No criminal aid certificates have been granted to the remaining firm.

Police Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice when payments under the Police Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme will be made to former RUC officers.

(AQW 1007/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is the Department's intention to make payment to verified applicants of the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme as soon as possible. We are, however, presently awaiting the final view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the tax and National Insurance treatment of these payments.

Preliminary Enquiry of a Case at a Magistrates Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to remove the need for a preliminary enquiry of a case at a Magistrates Court before committal to Crown Court for trial, given that such hearings are mostly a formality and that the set Legal Aid fee could be saved.

(AQW 1044/11-15)

Mr Ford: Proposals for reforming committal proceedings are currently being considered and officials are planning to brief the Justice Committee after the summer break in the context of wider work on speeding up justice, with the intention of launching a public consultation shortly thereafter. It is intended that views will be sought on the potential for different ways of transferring cases to the Crown Court.

Legal Aid Rates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to inform defendants, presently without representation and awaiting trial, of the details of solicitors and legal firms who are prepared to work under the new Legal Aid rates.

(AQW 1045/11-15)

Mr Ford: Officials in the Courts and Tribunals Service have written to all solicitors' firms in Northern Ireland asking if they are willing to take on Crown Court work under the new remuneration arrangements. They have compiled a list of firms willing to carry out legally aided Crown Court work. This list will continue to be provided to all defendants who are returned for trial without representation.

Preliminary Investigation of a Case at a Magistrates Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to dispense with the preliminary investigation of a case at a Magistrates Court before committal to Crown Court for trial.

(AQW 1047/11-15)

Mr Ford: Proposals for reforming committal proceedings are currently being considered and officials are planning to brief the Justice Committee after the summer break in the context of wider work on speeding up justice, with the intention of launching a public consultation shortly thereafter. It is intended that views will be sought on the potential for different ways of transferring cases to the Crown Court.

Mandatory Six-Month Driving Disqualification

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, for each of the last three years, how many people have had the mandatory six-month driving disqualification imposed for accumulating the maximum penalty points on a driving licence in a three year period.

(AQW 1062/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information on the number of people is not available as a person may have more than one order imposed. However, the number of driving disqualification orders made, where a six-month driving disqualification was imposed for accumulating the maximum penalty points, is set out below:

238 in 2008

310 in 2009

347 in 2010

Historical Enquiries Team

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost of the Historical Enquiries Team since its inception.

(AQW 1063/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Historical Enquiries Team 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 the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Historical Enquiries Team

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) prosecuted; and (ii) convicted as a result of investigations carried out by the Historical Enquiries Team.

(AQW 1064/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Historical Enquiries Team 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 the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Historical Enquiries Team

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many (i) Republican; and (ii) Loyalist cases have been investigated by the Historical Enquiries Team since it was established.

(AQW 1065/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Historical Enquiries Team 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 the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Child Contact Order

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice whether it is a criminal or civil offence to breach a Child Contact Order granted in the Family Court.

(AQW 1066/11-15)

Mr Ford: Breach of a contact order made by the Family Proceedings Court is not a criminal offence. Proceedings in respect of such a breach, however, may result in a fine or imprisonment.

North-South Ministerial Council Meetings

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Justice 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 1079/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since the devolution of justice in April 2010 I have attended one North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) Plenary meeting on 5 July 2010.

Following each NSMC meeting an agreed Joint Communiqué, which sets out the issues and outcomes of each meeting, 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.

As Minister of Justice I do not attend 'sectoral' meetings of the NSMC. However, I meet regularly with the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence under the auspices of an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) on Co-operation on Criminal Justice Matters

That Agreement provides a framework for co-operation on criminal justice matters including public protection, management of sex offenders, support for victims of crime, youth justice, forensic science and promoting social diversity.

Since 12 April 2010, I have attended three formal meetings under the IGA, two with Dermot Ahern TD and one with Alan Shatter TD. At those meetings, Ministers were updated on a range of cross-border issues as well as discussing the progress of ad hoc Project Advisory Groups that cover a number of areas of mutual benefit.

Notable successes over the last twelve months have included agreement on a joint proposal to evaluate the use of the stable and acute risk assessment tool for sex offenders, as well as the

organisation of a joint seminar for the two probation services to showcase the extent of co-operation in public protection.

At our most recent meeting on 8 June 2011, Alan Shatter and I also signed a Memorandum of Understanding between our forensic science services which has been developed to provide for mutual support in the event of sudden loss or damage to facilities. We also agreed a new work programme, setting out priorities for cross-border co-operation over the next 12 months.

Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people who currently have cases at Crown Court level are not in receipt of Legal Aid.

(AQW 1088/11-15)

Mr Ford: As of 23 June 2011 there are 315 defendants currently before the Crown Court who do not have legal aid.

Magistrates Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether District Judges can refuse to grant solicitors' applications to come off record at Magistrates Court following a preliminary enquiry.

(AQW 1091/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no statutory provision in this regard. The response to solicitors in Magistrates' Courts who indicate that they intend to withdraw from proceedings and cease to act for a defendant is a matter for each District Judge (Magistrates' Courts).

Domestic Violence Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 682/11-15, whether he envisages the introduction of such guidelines or legislation on domestic violence in the future; and if so, what is the likely timescale.

(AQW 1198/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no plans 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 in the foreseeable future. I will, however, keep the matter under review.

High Court of Justice

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice, for each of the last two years, (i) how many applications to the High Court of Justice have been granted for orders prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive relief to convicted criminals who have served their sentence; and (ii) of these, how many applicants received legal aid and at what cost.

(AQW 1216/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information sought cannot be provided in respect of orders prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive relief which are still in place (whenever granted), as this would risk contravening the terms of an order of the court. In relation to orders prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive relief which are no longer extant, one has been made in the last two years. However, in relation to the specific information sought regarding an applicant, it is not possible to provide any information from which an applicant might be identified.

High Court of Justice

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice, for each of the last two years, (i) how many applications to the High Court of Justice have been granted for orders prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive

relief to convicted criminals who are currently in prison; and (ii) of these, how many applicants received legal aid and at what cost.

(AQW 1217/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information sought cannot be provided in respect of orders prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive relief which are still in place (whenever granted), as this would risk contravening the terms of an order of the court. In relation to orders prohibiting publicity on the granting of injunctive relief which are no longer extant, one has been made in the last two years. However, in relation to the specific information sought regarding an applicant, it is not possible to provide any information from which an applicant might be identified.

Drumcree Parade

Mr S Anderson asked Minister of Justice (i) whether he has met (a) the Parades Commission; and (b) the PSNI in relation to this year's Drumcree parade; and (ii) whether he discussed the public order implications of the Parade Commission's practice of issuing a determination each week to the Garvaghy Road Resident Group which continues to refuse to engage in dialogue.

(AQW 1377/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have not discussed the Drumcree parade or the Parades Commission's approach to issuing determinations with either the Commission or the police.

Decisions in respect of parades are a matter for the Parades Commission, which is an independent body, and the policing of any determination made by the Commission is an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

Department for Regional Development

North-South Ministerial Council Meetings

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Regional Development 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 909/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Since May 2007, the Minister for Regional Development has attended NSMC meetings on the following dates:

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| ■ 17 July 2007 | Plenary |
| ■ 14 September 2007 | Transport Sectoral |
| ■ 17 October 2007 | Waterways Sectoral (Accompanying Minister) |
| ■ 12 December 2007 | Transport Sectoral |
| ■ 21 May 2008 | Transport Sectoral |
| ■ 04 July 2008 | Waterways & Language Sectorals (Accompanying Minister) |
| ■ 23 January 2009 | Plenary |
| ■ 03 April 2009 | Transport Sectoral |
| ■ 06 July 2009 | Plenary |
| ■ 08 July 2009 | Trade & Business Development Sectoral (Accompanying Minister) |
| ■ 04 November 2009 | Transport Sectoral |
| ■ 02 December 2009 | Waterways & Language Sectorals (Accompanying Minister) |

- 14 December 2009 Plenary
- 03 March 2010 Transport
- 30 June 2010 Trade & Business Development Sectoral(Accompanying Minister)
- 05 July 2010 Plenary
- 20 October 2010 Transport & Environment Sectorals
- 12 November 2010 Trade & Business Sectoral
- 21 January 2011 Plenary
- 09 February 2011 Transport Sectoral
- 10 June 2011 Plenary

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.

Capital Works

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development what capital works his Department has planned for the South Antrim area over the next four years.

(AQW 933/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the detailed budget for planned capital works by my Department's Roads Service for the next four years has not yet been finalised, I am unable to provide the Member with details of such works in the South Antrim Parliamentary Constituency beyond the current financial year. Funding for capital works is allocated within each of Roads Service's four Divisions to council areas. The South Antrim Parliamentary Constituency area includes a number of council areas, namely Newtownabbey, Lisburn, Carrickfergus and Antrim.

I can advise that in the current financial year the following capital works are planned in that part of the Newtownabbey Council area which falls within the South Antrim Parliamentary Constituency:

Signalisation Scheme	B90 Doagh Road/Carntall Road/Carnmoney Road North junction;
Street Lighting Renewal	Ballyearl Rise, Mossley;
Traffic Calming Scheme	Ballyeaston Village (incorporating Ballyeaston Road, Main Street, Trenchill Road, Ballynashee Road and Lower Ballyboley Road);
Traffic Calming Scheme	Rashee Park, Ballyclare (incorporating Rashee Drive, Erskine Park and Charles Way).

No capital works are planned for this financial year in the South Antrim area which falls within the Lisburn Council area. Details of the planned works for the current financial year in Carrickfergus and Antrim Council areas can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address: http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

In addition, the Member will be aware that the A8 scheme is currently subject to a Public Inquiry. Subject to the successful completion of the statutory procedures, and the availability of funding, it is anticipated that construction will commence in 2012, with completion of the scheme in 2014.

Information on work programmes for future years will, when detailed budgets are finalised, be presented in the Spring and Autumn reports to Councils.

I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it does not hold specific details of capital projects by parliamentary constituency. However, it is believed that the following projects are within the South Antrim Constituency and are currently programmed for delivery over the next four years, subject to the availability of funding and the outcome of any future price control review:

Project Name

- Newtownabbey Zone Watermain Improvements Phase 2
- Carrickfergus Zone Watermain Improvements Phase 1
- Newtownabbey Zone Watermain Improvements Phase 1
- Capital Maintenance at Whitehouse WWTW
- A2 Shore Road Re-alignment – Greenisland
- Ballywonard Zone Watermain Improvements
- Ballyclare Waste Water Treatment Works Upgrade
- Greenisland Waste Water Treatment Works Refurbishment
- Ross's, Caughlins Lane, Ballyclare, Foul and Storm Sewer Extensions
- Dunore West Zone Watermain Improvements
- 390-404 Antrim Road, Newtownabbey, Storm Sewer Extension
- Birch Hill Road, Antrim, Foul & Storm Sewer Extensions
- Shane Street Randalstown Storm Sewer Extension
- 4 Steeple Road, Antrim, Foul and Storm Sewer Extensions
- Drumsough Road, Randalstown, Sewerage Scheme
- Ballyeaston Sewage System Upgrade
- 131 Doagh Road, Ballyclare, Storm Sewer Extension
- Granger's Mill, Muckamore, Wastewater Pumping Main Relocation
- Ballyrobert Road, Ballyclare, Storm Sewer Extension
- Bush Road, Antrim, Foul and Storm Sewer Extension
- Aspen View, Newtownabbey, Foul Sewer Extension
- Rashee Drive, Ballyclare, Storm Sewer Extension & Upgrade
- Cunningham Way, Antrim, Foul & Storm Sewer Extension
- Moneynick Road, Toomebridge, Foul Sewer Extension
- Milltown Road, Antrim, Sewer Extension
- Crosskennan SR, Antrim, Water Pumping Station
- Glenavy Road, Crumlin, WWPS Site Investigation
- The Plains, Burnside Road, Doagh, Foul Sewer Extension

With regard to Translink's Capital Works, the first part of the table below details works planned for the South Antrim area over the next four years. The second part of the table provides expenditure on projects which will also benefit the South Antrim area:

Projects	2011/12 £000s	2012/13 £000s	2013/14 £000s	2014/15 £000s
Ballymartin / Templepatrick Passing Loop	0	0	25	25
Antrim Integrated Bus / Railway Station	965	1,214	0	0
Total	965	1,214	25	25
Others benefiting South Antrim Constituency				
New Trains Two	51,907	1,812	73	
Class 3000 Trains Overhaul (Phase 1)	1,907	1,613	2,779	2,469
Class 4000 Trains Overhaul	0	0	1,498	1,628
Class 3000 Trains Wi-Fi Equipment	600			
Long Line Public Announcement Renewal & Expansion Programme	192	288	0	0
Customer Information Service Programme	0	0	39	37
35 New Goldliners	7,000			
School Bus Signage and Lighting	493	501	0	0
Ulsterbus Engineering Workshop Pit Modifications	596	440	0	0
Building Services Upgrade Programme	448	1,150	58	1,079
Total	63,143	5,804	4,447	5,213

Winter Weather Conditions

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how much grit has been allocated for the North Down area to combat the potential winter weather conditions of 2011/12; how does this compare to the previous two year's allocation.

(AQW 958/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the North Down area is serviced from a Roads Service depot located in Bangor, which also serves the Ards Peninsula and parts of Castlereagh and Belfast South. The proportion of salt allocated at the start of each winter service period and available for the North Down area, is approximately 700 to 750 tonnes per year. However, depending on the severity of the winter, the actual quantity of salt used in the area may be much more. I can advise that in the winter of 2009/10, Roads Service spread approximately 1550 tonnes of salt in the North Down area and approximately 1600 tonnes in the winter of 2010/11.

Throughout the winter period, Roads Service will continue to replenish salt stocks, as the need arises, to ensure that sufficient supplies are maintained.

Procurement and Allocation Procedures for Grit

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what changes have been made to this year's procurement and allocation procedures for grit.

(AQW 959/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has confirmed that no changes have been made to this year's procurement procedures for grit, as this is a local resource that is readily available across Northern Ireland, if and when required.

However, I can advise that the arrangements put in place last year to ensure salt stocks were successfully maintained have been enhanced, with procurement plans to increase both salt stocks and monthly delivery quotas, prior to and during the winter season.

These salt stocks will be allocated to salt barns, which are strategically placed in depots throughout Northern Ireland, and they will be filled to capacity prior to the start of the winter period.

New Road Surfacing Programmes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the new road surfacing programmes which are planned for Holywood in this financial year.

(AQW 961/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would advise the Member that details on road surfacing programmes planned for the North Down Borough Council area, including Holywood, can be found under the "Network Maintenance" section of the Roads Service Spring 2011 report to the Council and can be accessed from the following web address: <http://applications.drdni.gov.uk/publications/document.asp?docid=21894>

Blue Badges

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 357/11-15, how many people who were successful in their appeals to renew their Blue Badge after further medical evidence was submitted, had medical evidence submitted by their GP at the request of and at the expense of his Department.

(AQW 995/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Road Service has advised that the database used to administer the Blue Badge Scheme does not hold the information requested. However, officials estimate that in only a relatively small number of successful appeal cases i.e. not more than 10 a year, has medical evidence been obtained at the Department's expense.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on Special Advisers since May 2007, broken down by (i) salary; (ii) pension contributions; (iii) expenses; (iv) office costs; and (v) other costs.

(AQW 1005/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Expenditure by my Department on Special Advisers since May 2007 is set out below.

Category	Expenditure
Salary	May 2007-March 2008: £56,100-£78,540 (Pay Band B) April 2008-March 2009: £57,300-£79,740 (Pay Band B) April 2009-May 2011: £57,300-£82,531 (Pay Band B) June 2011-Ongoing: £57,300-£82,531 (Pay Band B) Employer's National Insurance contributions, based on salary, were also paid at the appropriate rates
Employer's Pension Contributions	Employer's contribution rates are based on salary/age and are determined by the particular scheme/arrangement to which the Special Adviser belongs

Category	Expenditure
Expenses	£9,552 for the period May 2007 – May 2011
Office Costs	No office costs were incurred, given that the Special Adviser used existing NI Civil Service accommodation
Other costs	£1,830 (IT equipment) for the period May 2007 – May 2011

Residents Only Parking Scheme in the Rosstulla Park Area

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he intends to introduce a residents only parking scheme in the Rosstulla Park area, adjacent to the University of Ulster, Jordanstown, to ensure that residents are not restricted by vehicles parking in this area to avoid car parking charges at the University.

(AQW 1077/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the purpose of Residents' Parking schemes is to enable residents to find convenient on-street parking places close to their home. As the properties in Rosstulla Park have private driveways, a Residents' Parking Scheme is not considered to be a priority and there are no plans to introduce such a scheme in the area.

NI Water

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he can give an assurance that a more thorough and effective system for the public to report faults will be implemented by NI Water to avoid a repeat of the difficulties experienced last winter.

(AQW 1094/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that comprehensive internal and external reviews covering all aspects of the company's performance during last winter have identified areas for improvement. Implementation of the necessary corrective actions is a priority for NIW. The measures include improving call handling availability and improved arrangements for providing information on areas affected. These arrangements and improvements will be tested before the Winter.

The severe weather conditions experienced last December also led to customers suffering frozen pipes and burst pipes within their property. This was a significant contributory factor to the difficulties experienced and NIW is planning to raise public awareness of the need for pipes to be insulated and for supplies in vacant properties to be turned off.

Translink

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister for Regional Development, following his meeting with Translink officials, whether he can give an assurance that Translink will not enforce a fare rise or a reduction in less popular services in the coming months and years.

(AQW 1095/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink have indicated that, on the basis of the assumptions within the agreed financial plan, there are no plans for any general fare increases for train and bus services during this year. Translink will continue to review service provision and will make service adjustments if necessary in order to reduce costs. This, in itself, ensures fare levels can be kept as low as possible.

South Tyrone Rural Transport

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) for his assessment of the ongoing difficulties communities in the Erne East area of Fermanagh have experienced with Fermanagh and South Tyrone Rural Transport (FAST) in the last eight years including (a) the breaking of a contract in relation to payment for the lease of the Erne East bus; (b) groups being asked to pay more for transport than they

would if they had used private operators; (c) the blocking of funding for Erne East Social Car Service; and (d) the crashing of a bus and not informing the owners; (ii) whether his Department is aware that (a) FAST, in the knowledge that community transport services are to be reviewed, has paid a number of years' rent in advance for a larger property in Irvinestown; and (b) there is speculation of links between FAST directors and the owners of this building; (iii) whether his Department was involved in this arrangement; and (iv) whether the Department informed FAST that it would receive funding in future years.

(AQW 1127/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) I am not aware of any on-going difficulties being experienced by the communities in the Erne East area of Fermanagh with Fermanagh and South Tyrone Rural Transport Limited (FAST). I cannot make an assessment in regard to a-d. (ii) (a) My Department has not been made aware that FAST has paid a number of years' rent in advance for a property in Irvinestown. Funding from the Rural Transport Fund will be based upon the agreed business and financial plans agreed with the Partnership in the area.
- (ii) (b) My Department is aware that some Directors from FAST are also on the board of ITEC (Irvinestown Trustee Enterprise Company Ltd), and is also aware that FAST are based in one of their buildings. It is not clear if this is directly relevant to the speculation you refer to.
- (iii) My Department is not involved in this arrangement. FAST is an independent company, limited by guarantee.
- (iv) My Department has not informed FAST that it would receive funding in future years.

My officials are due to meet FAST on 07 July 2011. These matters can be raised at that time.

By-pass for Enniskillen

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on Roads Service plans to construct a by-pass for Enniskillen.

(AQW 1128/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a preferred corridor for the Enniskillen Southern Bypass has been identified and it is intended that details will be put on public display in Enniskillen in July 2011.

Current funding levels do not allow for construction of the Bypass and the timing of further development work will be dependent on other competing priorities and the availability of funding in the future.

Schedule of Major and Minor Road Schemes

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress he has made in negotiations with the Minister of Finance and Personnel on the allocation of funding for the implementation of a schedule of major and minor road schemes in each of the next four financial years.

(AQW 1138/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As you will be aware, the Executive's Final Budget sets out NI departments' funding for the four years 2011-15. The table below sets out the capital funding allocated to Roads Service for the next four years.

	2011-12 £m	2012-13 £m	2013-14 £m	2014-15 £m
Capital Expenditure	155.9	257.5	385.4	379.2

The funding for Roads Service will support a number of major and minor roads schemes across the Budget period and these are set out in DRD's Spending Proposals published on the Department's website. As with any department, the allocations do not provide sufficient funding to enable all plans to be taken forward. However, the Department of Finance and Personnel has made clear that Departments should plan on the basis that this allocation represents a final allocation and will only be subject to adjustment as part of a future budget or in-year monitoring process. No further negotiation has taken place or is planned with the Minister of Finance and Personnel. Roads Service will register pressures or slippage on those schemes funded from the existing allocation at the appropriate monitoring round.

Defective Footpaths

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been paid in compensation for claims for personal injuries as a result of defective footpaths in the Carrickfergus area in each of the last two years.

(AQW 1225/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The particulars of the compensation payments are set out in the table below.

Year	Compensation Paid
2009/10	£7,200.00
2010/11	£14,450.00

Flags

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what steps he has taken to address the issue of flags which are flown throughout the summer in mixed communities and on arterial routes; and (ii) what steps he plans to take to remove flags bearing paramilitary slogans and emblems.

(AQW 1227/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is signed up to the multi-agency Protocol on the Display of Flags in Public Areas. The protocol indicates that the PSNI will take the lead where the display of flags of emblems is having a detrimental affect on the quality of life in a community.

Under the Protocol, Roads Service will, when called upon by the lead Agency, provide the access equipment and resources to assist in the removal of unwanted flags, once agreement has been reached with the local community.

Roads Service will continue to cooperate with the PSNI and provide support facilities, such as tower wagons, to assist in the removal of flags, when asked to do so.

Department for Social Development

Boiler Scrappage Scheme

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Social Development when his Department will introduce a boiler scrappage scheme.

(AQW 736/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): 'Warmer Healthier Homes - a new Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland' includes a new pilot boiler replacement scheme targeted at households where:

- the owner or tenant is aged 60 years or more;
- has an older inefficient boiler, i.e. 15 years or older; and,
- receives state pension with rates relief award.

Thirteen hundred homes across Northern Ireland will get their boilers replaced in a £2 million pilot scheme. The scheme will be launched in early July 2011.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been spent on Jobseeker's Allowance in each of the last five years.

(AQW 790/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The amounts spent on Jobseekers Allowance in each of the last five years are as follows:

	2010-11 (£000s)	2009-10 (£000s)	2008-09 (£000s)	2007-08 (£000s)	2006-07 (£000s)
Jobseekers Allowance- Income Based	£157,807*	£130,352	£74,589	£57,465	£64,360
Jobseekers Allowance- Contribution Based	£26,666*	£31,637	£20,370	£10,193	£11,386
Total	£184,473*	£161,989	£94,959	£67,658	£75,746

* The figures for 2010-11 are draft and are subject to an audit review by the NI Audit Office.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department will continue to pay the Winter Fuel Allowance; and to detail the current rate paid to eligible applicants.

(AQW 822/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department will make winter fuel payments to all those eligible for the coming winter. The winter fuel payments scheme in Northern Ireland corresponds to that for Great Britain and in the winter of 2011/2012 people aged 60 and over will receive £200 and those aged 80 and over will receive £300.

Maintenance of Trees

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development what assistance is available to people who are in receipt of the state pension for the maintenance of trees on their land which are at risk of falling.

(AQW 856/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Depending on an individual's circumstances assistance from the Social Fund may be available to people in receipt of state pension, in these circumstances. Subject to the eligibility criteria being met, an individual pensioner may be entitled to an interest free crisis loan to help them alleviate this problem if there is a serious damage or risk to their health or safety.

Welfare Reform Bill

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions he has held with his Ministerial counterparts in Westminster regarding the implications of the Welfare Reform Bill for disadvantaged people in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 887/11-15)

Mr McCausland: While the Welfare Reform Bill does not extend to Northern Ireland, under the long established doctrine of "Parity" both I and my officials have been consulting with colleagues in the Department for Work and Pensions with a view to ensuring that, so far as is appropriate, there will be a

single system of social security throughout the United Kingdom. I have had early discussions with Lord Freud, the Welfare Reform Minister, and I hope to meet him over the course of the summer, to continue the discussion in more detail.

Benefits

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development what is the maximum sum of money any one person can receive in benefits at any one time.

(AQW 917/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As Social Security Benefits are paid to an individual based on that individual's particular circumstances it is not possible to indicate what the maximum sum of money anyone can receive in benefits at any one time might be.

Socially Deprived Areas

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development which areas are currently classed as socially deprived.

(AQW 918/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As a Department we target social deprivation at a spatial level using relative rankings from the Multiple Deprivation Measures produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Areas have been identified by the Department for intervention and assistance using a combination of the 2001 and 2005 Multiple Deprivation Measures. The areas identified are: 36 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, 27 Areas and Risk and 17 Small Pockets of Deprivation located throughout Northern Ireland.

Social Deprivation

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development what criteria his Department uses for measuring social deprivation.

(AQW 920/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- 1 The Department uses a range of criteria to identify social deprivation. It is useful to think of poverty as a measure of low income and social exclusion/multiple deprivation as being a broader definition that encapsulates some of the wider causes and consequences of poverty such as; unemployment, low educational qualifications, poor health, and high crime rates etc.
- 2 As a Department, we measure social deprivation at a spatial level using relative rankings from the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMDM) produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). These measures rank small geographical areas across Northern Ireland in terms of multiple deprivation. Areas have been identified by the Department for intervention and assistance using a combination of the 2001 and 2005 Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures. The areas identified are: 36 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, 27 Areas and Risk and 17 Small Pockets of Deprivation located throughout Northern Ireland.
- 3 We also measure social deprivation at a group level, for example children in poverty. Relative income poverty is defined as the proportion of children living in a household whose income is less than 60% of UK median household income not including housing costs. In other words, child relative income poverty is the proportion or number of children who live in households below the income poverty line in each year.
- 4 Finally, the Department also measures deprivation at an individual level, giving appropriate benefits depending on an individual's circumstance.

North-South Ministerial Council Meetings

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development 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 925/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Since May 2007, as Minister for Social Development I have attended one Plenary North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC) meeting on the 10 June 2011. My predecessors, Margaret Ritchie and Alex Attwood attended seven Plenary NSMC meetings respectively on the following dates: 17 July 2007, 7 February 2008, 23 January 2009, 6 July 2009, 14 December 2009, 5 July 2010 and 21 January 2011.

Margaret Ritchie and Alex Attwood attended Environment Sectoral meetings of the NSMC on 26 October 2007, 20 March 2009, 30 October 2009 and 5 March 2010. Both my predecessors attended Special European Union Programmes Body Sectoral meetings of the NSMC on 7 November 2007, 17 February 2010 and 13 January 2011. Margaret Ritchie also attended two meeting so the Institutional meetings of the NSMC on 28 April 2009 and 11 November 2009.

Following each NSMC meeting an agreed Joint Communiqué is issued and this is posted on the NSMC website www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org. This details the matters discussed, the decisions taken and the names of the Ministers who attended from each jurisdiction.

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.

Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives since May 2007 that have received co-operation from (a) a Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies; and (b) any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation; and (ii) the departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which he intends to seek co-operation from these bodies. **(AQW 926/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Since May 2007, the Department has received the following co-operation from Republic of Ireland government Departments.

- Between October 2008 and March 2011, my Department and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCRGA) in the Republic of Ireland jointly funded a pilot initiative on Volunteering in Sports, Arts and Faith Based Organisations. DCRGA provided funding of £140,000 and my Department provided funding of £186,022.
- There is ongoing co-operation at the strategic and operational levels between my Department, the Department for Work and Pensions (GB) and the Department of Social Protection in the Republic of Ireland on identifying and investigating benefit fraud with a cross border dimension.
- My Department is the accountable department for Measure 2.1 of the Peace III programme. Projects supported under this measure are co-funded by contributions from the Northern Ireland Executive and the republic of Ireland Government.

The Department has not received co-operation from any republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation.

The funding for the pilot initiative on Volunteering in Sports, Arts and Faith Based Organisations has been confirmed up to 31 March 2012. The contribution from DCRGA in the current financial year will be £70,000. I intend to continue the cross-border co-operation with the Department for Social Protection in the Republic of Ireland to tackle benefit fraud.

If opportunities arise to secure further European Structural Funds money for Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland through new INTERREG V or Peace IV programmes, I will seek co-operation from the relevant authorities in the Republic of Ireland to maximise the benefits to Northern Ireland.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in South Antrim have applied for and received Jobseeker's Allowance in each of the last six months.

(AQW 929/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below shows the number of successful Jobseeker's Allowance claims in the South Antrim area in each of the last six months.

JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE ON-FLOW IN SOUTH ANTRIM NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY AREA

Month	On-Flow
December 2010	295
January 2011	424
February 2011	395
March 2011	380
April 2011	444
May 2011	301

Transfer of 55 Housing Executive Properties in the Creggan Area of Londonderry

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development whether an Equality Impact Assessment was conducted prior to the transfer of 55 Housing Executive properties in the Creggan area of Londonderry to a Housing Association Multi-Element Improvement pilot scheme.

(AQW 941/11-15)

Mr McCausland: An equality screening exercise was carried out by the Housing Executive in June/July 2010 and this concluded there was no need to undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Housing Executive Properties

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development who took the decision to transfer 55 Housing Executive properties to a Housing Association Multi-Element Improvement pilot scheme.

(AQW 942/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Following their meeting on 30 March 2011, the Board of the Housing Executive approved a transfer proposal for the 55 properties in the Creggan estate to Apex Housing Association and subsequently sought consent of my Department to this transfer under Article 88c of the Housing (NI) Order 1981 (as amended).

This consent was given in a letter of 12 April 2011 and I understand work is already well advanced to give effect to this decision.

Housing Executive Properties

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development when the Board of the Housing Executive was notified that the transfer 55 Housing Executive properties in the Creggan area of Londonderry to a Housing Association Multi-Element Improvement pilot scheme was being considered.

(AQW 943/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive's Board was first presented with a paper on the Rinmore transfer proposal in December 2009

Multi-Element Improvement Pilot Scheme in 2009

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development what areas, other than the Creggan area of Londonderry, were considered for the Multi-Element Improvement pilot scheme in 2009; and what selection criteria were applied.

(AQW 944/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The pilot scheme the member is referring to in Creggan is for a small scale stock transfer between the Housing Executive and a Housing Association who will undertake a Multi-Element Improvement Scheme planned for the remaining 55 homes in the area.

Work on this pilot started in April 2009 when the community approached the then Minister for Social Development to see if such a transfer was possible. Community support is essential given that tenants must support such a proposal before any transfer could take place.

This was the first time a community had come forward in this manner and was in effect why they were chosen for this first pilot. With the overwhelming support of tenants in a recent ballot, the transfer will now be completed and if other similar areas may benefit from this sort of transfer I will be more than happy to explore that potential further.

Housing Renovation Schemes

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development what renovation schemes the Housing Executive has planned for Carrickfergus in the next financial year.

(AQW 953/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the following schemes are programmed for Carrickfergus for the 2011/12 financial year.

Location	No. of dwellings	Cost
Carrickfergus External Cyclical Maintenance	162	£367,000
Castlemarra/Longfield/Ederny Kitchen	79	£399,000
Carrickfergus Town/Longfield Heating	68	£464,000

Community Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge over the River Mourne in Strabane

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the timeframe for the construction and completion of the community pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Mourne in Strabane.

(AQW 967/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The community pedestrian foot and cycle bridge over the River Mourne in Strabane is a Strabane District Council led and managed project which is being part funded by the Department for Social Development. Therefore, the timeframe is the responsibility of Strabane District Council.

However, Strabane District Council has recently appointed a detailed design team and advised the Department that construction is expected to commence in October/November 2011 and be completed by February 2013.

Community Based Projects in the Strabane District Council Area

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the amount of funding his Department has allocated to community based projects in the Strabane District Council area in each of the last three years.

(AQW 968/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details funding my Department has allocated for community based projects in the Strabane District Council for the last three years.

		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Revenue				
Strabane Ethnic Comm Assoc	Ethnic Community Development Worker Salary & Running Costs	£ 28,772.66	£ 27,737.13	£ 30,528.85
Lisnafin/Ardnalee CDA	Project Co-ord Salary & Running Costs	£ 23,897.54	£ 25,116.50	£ 25,772.66
Springhill Park CDA	Regeneration Project	£ 49,173.92	£ 47,597.30	£ 48,826.45
Strabane Sigerson's GAA	Project Co-ordinator, Running Costs and Programme Costs	£ 11,899.23	£ -	£ -
Strabane Sigerson's GAA	Project Co-ordinator (08/09 Allocation in respect of	£ 4,570.33	£ 28,582.80	£ 29,274.80
WELB	Youth Intervention & Graffiti Art Prog	£ -	£ 6,754.00	£ -
Strabane Community Project	Salaries Full-time Co-ord & Part-time Finance/Admin	£ -	£ 13,612.16	£ 28,720.80
Melmount EBE Comm Assoc Forum	M.E.B.E.C.A.F. Uniting Communities	£ -	£ 18,174.50	£ 46,565.44
HURT (Have Your Tomorrows)	Support, Treatment & Education Programmes	£ -	£ 5,344.95	£ 15,505.60
Strabane Chamber of Commerce	Christmas Star Campaign	£ -	£ 10,000.00	£ -
Strabane District Council	Sustaining Phys Activity & Improving Wellbeing	£ -	£ 32,768.98	£ -
Fountain St Community Development Association	Head of the Town Rejuvenation Project	£ -	£ 10,322.86	£ 43,261.37
Strabane 2000	Strabane Bridge	£ 97,031.50	£ 5,477.45	£ -
Strabane LGBT Group	Strabane LGBT Inclusion Project	£ -	£ 12,970.15	£ 41,171.79

		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Strabane & District CAB	Neighbourhood Renewal Benefit Uptake Project	£ -	£ 17,117.32	£ 41,315.36
DRD Roads Service	Environmental Improvement Scheme	£ -	£ 73,025.00	£ -
Foyle Women's Aid	Rapid Response	£ -	£ 1,797.02	£ 21,776.36
NW Play Resource Centre	Learning Through Arts	£ -	£ -	£ 36,463.02
Strabane LSP	Technical Assistance	£ 28,255.60	£ 38,607.99	£ 54,847.37
Strabane Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Formulation of Marketing Strategy for Strabane	£ -	£ -	£ 10,000.00
DSD Housing Division - NIHE	Supply & Installation of Play Equip	£ -	£ 5,609.00	£ -
DRD Roads Service	Environmental Improvement Scheme for Strabane in the Ballycolman & East Ward Neighbourhood Renewal Areas	£ -	£ 158,200.00	£ -
Western Health & Social Care Trust*	Neighbourhood Health Improvement Project (NHIP)	£ -	£ 14,280.80	£ 28,561.80
Cresco Trust **	Strive 2 Work	£ -	£ 8,463.08	£ 8,766.56
DRD Roads Service	Environmental Improvement Scheme (1) for Strabane in North, South & East Ward NR Areas	£ 500,000.00	£ -	£ -
DRD Roads Service	Environmental Improvement Scheme for Strabane in North and East Ward Neighbourhood Renewal Areas	£ 200,000.00	£ -	£ -
	Sub-total	£ 943,600.78	£ 561,558.99	£ 511,358.23
Capital				
Calverts Cross Community Association	Olympic Drive Environmental Improvement Scheme	£ 550.00	£ -	£ -

		2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Strabane District Council	Youth Multi-use Games Area	£ 64,688.10	£ -	£ -
Strabane District Council	Playpark at Springhill Estate	£ -	£ 55,752.00	£ -
Strabane District Council	Melvin Sports Hall Design Development Plan	£ -	£ 54,000.00	£ -
	Sub-total	£ 65,238.10	£109,752.00	£ -
	Total	£ 1,008,838.88	£ 671,310.99	£ 511,358.23

In addition, the Voluntary and Community Unit has provided the funding allocations detailed below, administered through Strabane District Council, for the Strabane Council Area.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Community Support Programme ¹	£214,268	£382,652	£240,987
Local Community Fund	£239,805		
Volunteer Bureau Initiative and Small Grants ²	£148,870	£149,548	£149,548
Total	£602,943	£532,200	£390,535

*&** are both Citywide projects which roll out across the 6 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in the North West. The funding indicated in the table is allocated specifically to the Strabane NRA.

1. Community Support Funding for 2009/10 included £118,405 final year funding to the Local Community Fund. NWDO Neighbourhood Renewal Advice Worker Salaries for 2010/11 and 2011/12 are not included in figures provided.
2. For the Volunteer Bureau Initiative, North West Volunteer Centre which covers the Londonderry and Strabane Area received grant funding during this period. It should be noted that these figures cannot be split with any accuracy between Londonderry and Strabane. Additionally funding through VBI in 2011/12 does not include approximately £40,000 for Small Grants which is pending.

Heating and Maintenance Contracts Awarded by the Housing Executive

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the (i) heating; and (ii) maintenance contracts awarded by the Housing Executive in the last three years; and to detail the process for awarding these contracts.

(AQW 969/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that there have been no heating contracts awarded in the last three years. The following maintenance contracts have been awarded within the last three years:

- Response maintenance repairs – Ballymena, Carrick and Larne
- Response maintenance repairs – Bangor and Newtownards
- Response maintenance repairs – Londonderry 1, 2 & 3
- Response maintenance repairs – Antrim
- Tree maintenance – West area
- Tree maintenance – South East area

- Tree maintenance – Belfast
- Tree maintenance – South area
- Void property maintenance – all areas – single contract
- Powered vertical lifts – all areas – single contract
- Major adaptations framework – Belfast
- Major adaptations framework - South
- Major adaptations framework – South East
- Major adaptations framework – West
- Major adaptations framework – North East

The contracts were awarded in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006. The contracts were let by way of the Restricted Procedure commencing with a contract notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). The notice was also available on the NIHE website. The notice sought applications from interested parties to be selected to tender for these contracts. Tenders were then issued to successful applicants who in turn submitted tenders.

Co-ownership Tenants

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Social Development why co-ownership tenants have to pay 100 per cent of maintenance costs when they own only 50 per cent of the property and are paying rent on the remaining 50 per cent.

(AQW 1017/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Purchasing a home through Co-Ownership is a form of home ownership, rather than a tenancy. Clients purchasing homes through the Scheme assume full responsibility for the properties. While the term rent is applicable to Co-Ownership purchasers, it is used in a different context to that of a tenancy, properties purchased are legally transferred to the purchaser for use as a private residence, by means of an equity sharing lease. This lease lasts for a period of up to 99 years subject to covenants, including keeping the property in good and substantial repair. It is important to note that the purchaser is the sole beneficiary of any improvements they make to the property.

Capital Investment Projects

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

(AQW 1026/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Over the course of the next four years my Department has included capital investment projects in its urban regeneration programme for public realm schemes and the ReStore programme for Antrim, Randalstown, Ballyclare and Glengormley. In addition the Housing Executive has plans for a capital improvement project in Randalstown. Funding for all the projects will be subject to a satisfactory business case and Departmental budget constraints.

Pension Credit

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in each constituency are currently in receipt of Pension Credit.

(AQW 1048/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below shows the number of people (and their partners) in each constituency who are in receipt of State Pension Credit at June 2011.

Westminster Parliamentary Constituency	Claimants	Partners	Total Beneficiaries
Belfast East	4,909	949	5,858
Belfast North	7,562	1,523	9,085
Belfast South	4,180	703	4,883
Belfast West	7,183	1,612	8,795
East Antrim	4,115	995	5,110
East Londonderry	5,517	1,510	7,027
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	5,522	1,322	6,844
Foyle	6,067	1,576	7,643
Lagan Valley	4,056	880	4,936
Mid Ulster	5,635	1,619	7,254
Newry and Armagh	6,491	1,692	8,183
North Antrim	5,794	1,407	7,201
North Down	3,609	753	4,362
South Antrim	3,859	986	4,845
South Down	5,382	1,492	6,874
Strangford	4,181	1,112	5,293
Upper Bann	6,301	1,697	7,998
West Tyrone	5,842	1,554	7,396
Unknown	1,006	187	1,093
Total	97,211	23,569	120,780

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his Department's strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in the Upper Bann constituency.

(AQW 1082/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are three neighbourhood renewal areas in the Upper Bann constituency: Brownlow, North Lurgan and North West Portadown. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in these areas is being progressed in line with the Vision Frameworks and rolling three year rolling action plans which have been drawn up by the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships, which include members drawn from the local communities and the key statutory bodies which have an input to the regeneration of the areas.

Window Replacement Schemes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the window replacement schemes that are planned for the North Down area over the next twelve months.

(AQW 1114/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has programmed one scheme for 2011/12 covering Kilcooley, Bloomfield, Rathgill and Loughview in Bangor. This scheme incorporates External Cyclical Maintenance

and window replacement numbering 284 dwellings at an estimated cost of £450,000. However, a survey of the dwellings has yet to be carried out by the Housing Executive and windows will only be replaced if the frames are in poor condition and warrant replacement. The cost of replacing the windows will not be known until the survey is completed and the scheme will only proceed if funding is available.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding his Department has allocated to Neighbourhood Renewal in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1115/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the last 3 years; 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11 my Department has allocated £23.5 million, £25.3 million and £25.6 million respectively to the 36 Neighbourhood Renewal areas.

Home Improvement Schemes for the Clandeboye Area of Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail any Housing Executive home improvement schemes planned for the Clandeboye area of Bangor over the next three years.

(AQW 1168/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that they have not programmed any home improvement schemes for the Clandeboye area of Bangor over the next three years.

Community Benefit Office in Moyle

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has any plans to introduce a Community Benefit Office in Moyle.

(AQW 1194/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Security Agency has recently commenced the roll-out of its Customer First initiative across Northern Ireland with the North District, which includes the Moyle area, being the first District to introduce the new arrangements. Customer First puts in place viable and sustainable service delivery arrangements whilst modernising and improving accessibility of local services without changing the customer journey. Improvements to services have included dedicated "Freephone" telephony services for customers. In this context I can confirm that there are no plans to introduce a Community Benefit Office in Moyle. The Social Security Agency continues to keep its service delivery arrangements under review to ensure that all customers receive a high quality service.

Parkview Road, Castleberg

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development what steps he will take to ensure the proper clean up of the land owned by his Department on Parkview Road, Castleberg following the eleventh night bonfire.

(AQW 1239/11-15)

Mr McCausland: While the Department owns an area of open space at Parkview Road, Castleberg, it has not, and has never in the past, authorised its use for a bonfire. However, it is acknowledged that its unauthorised use for this purpose in the past has resulted in an unsightly detritus being left behind, and my Department, working with Strabane District Council and others, has endeavoured to have this removed. Should the situation arise in the future through a recurrence of the unauthorised use of the land, my Department will again arrange for the land to be cleaned up.

It should be noted that the land is currently advertised for sale, and should it be sold prior to the 11th July, its condition will become the responsibility of the purchaser.

Recent Interface Violence in East Belfast

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the allocation of alternative permanent housing to the Housing Executive tenants who were affected by the recent interface violence in East Belfast.

(AQW 1290/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that three people presented as homeless whose circumstances now need to be carefully considered before a homeless decision is made shortly. In the case of a 3-4 bed property being required, Housing Executive staff are trying to identify a suitable property. In the case of a 2 bed property being required, this is more readily available.

Postal Signing for Benefits on Rathlin Island

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will carry out a review of the policy on postal signing for benefits for people who live on Rathlin Island.

(AQW 1307/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are no plans to review the postal signing policy for Jobseekers who live on Rathlin Island. Earlier this year, some administrative changes were introduced that circumvent issues for Jobseekers when postal services from Rathlin Island are disrupted and impact on their benefit payments.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Warm Homes Scheme including how many households have benefited from the Scheme in the last twelve months.

(AQO 200/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Warm Homes Scheme is my Department's main programme in tackling fuel poverty. The Warm Homes Scheme continues to be a very successful and popular scheme. In the year ended 31 March 2011 the scheme improved the energy efficiency of 10,381 fuel poor households. I want to ensure that we continue to address fuel poverty effectively and I am prepared to look at other ways of tackling fuel poverty to ensure that targeting of resources is right and that help is getting to those people who need it most.

Town Centre Regeneration: Antrim

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Antrim Town Centre Masterplan.

(AQO 201/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Antrim Town Centre masterplan was launched in June 2010. It identifies a range of projects which will regenerate the town centre over the next fifteen years.

A masterplan implementation team made up of the main public and private sector stakeholders in the town and my own Department is working effectively to deliver a number of projects. These include the delivery of an environmental improvement scheme in Railway Street, which was completed in early 2010, and the development of plans for public realm improvements to Market Square, High Street and Church Street which, subject to necessary approval, should start in the first half of 2012. The redevelopment of the large vacant sites in the town centre has also been moved forward. My Department bought the derelict site at the corner of Railway Street and Church Street in May 2010 and is preparing a Development Brief for both that site and the Central Car Park which I hope to issue later this year.

Larne: Riverdale Flats

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development when the work on the partially demolished multi-story flats at Riverdale, Larne will be completed.

(AQO 202/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that works on demolishing the flats at Riverdale, Larne is currently being re-tendered subsequent to the previous contractor going into administration.. A list of contractors has been established and subject to an acceptable tender being returned, works to complete the demolition will begin in September 2011. The contract period is 36 weeks with a May 2012 completion date. The Housing Executive is hopeful of an earlier completion date.

Housing: Monkstown

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Social Development what plans he has for new housing schemes in the Monkstown area.

(AQO 203/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Housing Development Programme is still being finalised and will be published on the Housing Executive website within the coming weeks. (www.nihe.gov.uk)

Town Centre Regeneration: Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development to outline any difficulties which are preventing the full implementation of the Ballymena Town Centre Masterplan.

(AQO 204/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Ballymena Town Centre masterplan, which was published in April 2009, includes 46 actions to be delivered over a 15 to 20 year timescale. . In the first two years, some difficulties in fully implementing the masterplan were encountered, although I am glad to say that these have now been addressed. The difficulties included reluctance on the part of some stakeholders to commit effort and resources to taking forward actions until the Budget 2010 process was completed and there was certainty around the ability of the DSD regeneration budget to fund projects. The town also lacked strategic direction and an effective partnership between the public and private sectors while the Town Centre Partnership was being reformed.

I am happy to say that in the past few months the situation has improved significantly. My Department's budget allocation for urban regeneration for the next four years has reduced the level of uncertainty around funding and we are now moving forward on some key projects. Also, the recent formation of Ballymena Town Centre Development Ltd as a private-public partnership and the appointment of a Town Centre Development Manager will give renewed strategic direction to the implementation of the masterplan.

Child Maintenance

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development why the new system of statutory child maintenance will only be available to new clients.

(AQO 205/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The new statutory child maintenance scheme will be available to existing clients once the new system has been running effectively with new cases for at least a six-month period, thus minimising the risks of implementation and giving existing clients confidence that the new system works well and provides a better service. Only then will cases on existing systems begin to be closed and clients will be given the opportunity and support to make private arrangements or an application to the new statutory maintenance scheme.

Former Girdwood Barracks Site

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development whether he intends to proceed with the proposed development of social housing at the former Girdwood Barracks site.

(AQO 206/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I recently visited the Girdwood site and saw for myself the potential it has for this part of North Belfast. However if we are to take forward the development of this site and realise its full potential, this must be done on the basis of a shared and better future and will require cross-community engagement and agreement.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

North South Parliamentary Forum

Ms Ritchie asked the Assembly Commission what progress has been made in establishing the North South Parliamentary Forum.

(AQW 880/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): Following the North South Parliamentary Forum Conference held at the Slieve Donard Hotel in Newcastle, Co Down a further joint meeting of the North South Parliamentary Forum Working Groups was held in the Oireachtas on 23 June 2011. At this meeting it was agreed that a further three joint meetings of the two Working Groups would be convened to take forward the ideas and actions generated at the North South Parliamentary Forum Conference in the Slieve Donard Hotel in October 2010.

The meetings are planned for the autumn of 2011 and the areas for consideration include:

- Parliamentary Relationships in Europe;
- European Agriculture and Rural Development Reform; and
- The Role and Arrangements for the North South Parliamentary Forum.

It was also agreed that the Report from the Slieve Donard Conference would issue to all Members from both legislatures.

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