

# Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

**Friday 29 July 2011**

**Volume 65, No WA4**



# Contents

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister .....403

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development .....417

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure .....425

Department of Education .....426

Department for Employment and Learning.....429

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment .....433

Department of the Environment.....437

Department of Finance and Personnel .....456

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.....459

Department of Justice .....459

Department for Regional Development.....460

Department for Social Development .....473

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission.....494

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

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Lo, Ms Anna (South Belfast)  
Lunn, Trevor (Lagan Valley)  
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Morrow, The Lord (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)  
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Nesbitt, Mike (Strangford)  
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Wells, Jim (South Down)  
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

# Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 29 July 2011

## Written Answers to Questions

### Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

#### Strategic Support Fund

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the groups that were successful in obtaining funding in the 18-month application window under the Strategic Support Fund; (ii) the amount of funding each group has been allocated; and (iii) for their assessment of whether there is an imbalance in favour of groups from a nationalist background.

**(AQW 95/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister):** The table below shows the groups that were successful in obtaining funding for an 18-month programme of activities under the Strategic Support Fund. It also shows how the funding has been allocated to each group over the 18-month period.

<b>Group</b>	<b>1 October 2010 to 31 March 2011 Award (£)</b>	<b>1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 allocation (£)</b>
Ashton Community Trust	235,809.00	438,169.20
Cunámh	65,194.00	176,558.00
WAVE Trauma Centre	608,423.00	1,168,951.50
Relatives for Justice	321,217.35	510,651.16
Lenadoon Counselling	55,111.54	69,975.07
Colin Community Counselling	37,900.14	72,272.71
Pat Finucane Centre	6,399.00	12,759.00
Corpus Christi Counselling Centre	62,244.69	160,188.12
Centre for Creative Energy (now Aurora)	38,598.00	79,616.00
New Life Counselling	85,758.19	165,690.42
Tara Centre	93,971.60	102,227.20
Victims and Survivors Trust (VAST)	79,019.04	131,378.88
Koram Centre	125,071.61	141,336.23
Holy Trinity Centre	19,030.89	27,915.14
Firinne	73,049.34	118,587.65
Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation (NICTT)	199,771.00	334,878.00

Groups had the opportunity to apply for either an 18 or 12-month programme of funding. Below is a table illustrating the groups and allocations for the 12-month period:

<b>Group</b>	<b>1 April 2011- 31 March 2012</b>
Aisling Centre	£ 60,208.27
South East Fermanagh Foundation	£160,202.48
Ely Centre	£200,687.62
Omagh Support & Self Help Group	£104,952.94
Families Moving On	£114,196.00
Calms	£139,743.08
Columba Community	£ 68,959.00
Derry Well Women	£ 82,723.22
West Tyrone Voice	£110,361.00
Peace Factory	£ 90,171.19
NOVA	£118,367.00
RAFT	£109,285.62
REACT	£ 40,390.50
HURT	£110,100.00
NI Association for Mental Health	£ 74,001.00
Springhill Community House	£ 80,847.22
Combat Stress Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society	£ 81,642.00
Contact Youth	£ 45,884.48
Families Beyond Conflict	£ 52,249.81
Haven	£ 66,068.00
Antrim Counselling Centre	£ 30,841.00
NI Music Therapy Trust	£ 78,925.88
Survivors of Trauma	£143,454.40
HELP NI	£ 56,457.73
Wider Circle	£ 90,904.21
MAST	£ 68,764.00
South Down Action for Healing Wounds	£ 84,157.46
Regimental Association of UDR - Coleraine Branch	£ 53,603.83

All applications to the Strategic Support Fund had to satisfy specified criteria and were assessed by the Community Relations Council. No formal assessment of the groups' perceived background was conducted.

## Social Investment Fund

**Mr Easton** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how funding under the Social Investment Fund will be delivered to local communities; and when the allocation of this funding will begin.

**(AQW 139/11-15)**

**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.

We hope to issue this paper for a period of public consultation in the next few weeks. Following an analysis of responses to the public consultation, we would hope to see funding being allocated during the autumn.

## Gratuity Scheme for the Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve GC

**Mr Hussey** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the issue of tax and National Insurance arose when the agreement was reached with HM Government to pay £20 million for a fund to establish a gratuity scheme for the Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve GC. [R]

**(AQW 273/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The £20m gratuity scheme for Part Time members of the RUC and the PSNI Reserve was not part of the formal agreement with the NI Executive, but was negotiated separately by the leader of the DUP

## Public Correspondence

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 112/11-15, (i) whether they will waive their privilege so that the legal advice, which was sought from the Attorney General on the role of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in dealing with public correspondence, invitations and meetings, can be published; (ii) why they sought this advice; (iii) whether any changes were subsequently made to the way correspondence was handled; and (iv) whether all correspondence to either Minister is seen by both and replies signed off by both or can either Minister in their official capacity accept an invitation, attend an event or meet with a third party without the knowledge or consent of the other.

**(AQW 510/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Privilege on the advice and why it was sought is not waived. Correspondence is dealt with on a case by case basis.

## Celebration of the Centenary of Northern Ireland

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline their vision for the celebration of the centenary of Northern Ireland; and what plans are being made to mark the occasion.

**(AQW 767/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** No plans have yet been made to mark this occasion.

## Joint Ministerial Committee Meeting

**Ms Ritchie** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the issues which were discussed at the Joint Ministerial Committee meeting in Downing Street on 8 June 2011.

**(AQW 837/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The issues which were discussed at the Joint Ministerial Committee plenary session on 8 June are set out in the formal Communiqué issued after the meeting. The Communiqué is as below:

### **Joint Ministerial Committee – 8 June 2011 - Communiqué**

A Plenary session of the Joint Ministerial Committee was held in 10 Downing Street today under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, Rt Hon David Cameron MP. The participants were the following:

- 1 from HM Government, the Deputy Prime Minister, Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, the Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon Michael Moore MP, the Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Cheryl Gillan MP, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Rt Hon Danny Alexander; from the Scottish Government the First Minister, Rt Hon Alex Salmond MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, John Swinney MSP, and the Cabinet Secretary for Parliamentary Business, Bruce Crawford MSP; from the Northern Ireland Executive, the First Minister, Rt Hon Peter Robinson MLA and the deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MP MLA; and from the Welsh Government the First Minister, Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM.
- 2 This was the first meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee since the formation of the new administrations after the elections to the devolved legislatures on 5 May.
- 3 The two principal agenda items were, firstly, the priorities of the new administrations and working together successfully across the four administrations; and, secondly, the state of the economy and the public finances.
- 4 On the first item, Ministers discussed their respective priorities, particularly those of the three recently elected administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In taking forward these priorities, Ministers agreed that the principles established in the Memorandum of Understanding between the four administrations in 1999 continue to provide an essential foundation for sound inter-administration relations. They also reaffirmed their commitment to work together on the basis of good communication, close co-operation and mutual respect, as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- 5 On the second item, Ministers discussed the current economic climate. They agreed on the importance of working together closely on issues of mutual interest in order to achieve their objectives of securing the recovery and sustaining economic growth. They agreed that it would be important to maintain regular and positive dialogue on these issues, including at a meeting of the Finance Ministers' Quadrilateral due to take place on 14 July.
- 6 The meeting agreed amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding providing for additions to the dispute-avoidance and resolution protocol. The amendments would allow the Joint Ministerial Committee to commission from an agreed, independent third party analysis of issues relating to unresolved disagreements and disputes. The meeting further discussed progress made so far towards the resolution of outstanding disputes. On the issue of the Olympics funding dispute, the meeting agreed to consider the matter further to examine ways in which progress can be made.
- 7 The meeting also agreed the attached Annual Report, summarising the activities of the Joint Ministerial Committee since the last meeting of the Plenary in June 2010. This will be published on each administration's website.

### **Sectarian and Racial Activity**

**Mr Craig** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what indicators they use to measure the scale of sectarian and racial activity; and what have these results shown over the last five years.  
**(AQW 921/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** In January 2007, OFMDFM published the 'Good Relations Indicators Baseline Report'. Four further updates have subsequently been published, the latest in January 2011.

The indicators monitor good relations over time and included within these are a number specific to sectarian and racial activity. These are as follows:

**RACIALLY MOTIVATED HATE INCIDENTS AND CRIMES**

	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Incidents	1,047	976	990	1,038	842
Crimes	861	757	771	712	531

Whilst there has been some fluctuation over the past five years, racially motivated hate incidents are down by a fifth from 1,047 incidents in 2006/07 to 842 in 2010/11.

Crimes with a racist motivation fell by a quarter between 2009/10 and 2010/11 (712 versus 531). Generally speaking, over the past five years there has been a downward trend in this type of crime. In fact, the 2010/11 figure is the lowest since 2004/05 when they were first presented in the Good Relations baseline report.

**SECTARIAN MOTIVATED HATE INCIDENTS AND CRIMES**

	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Incidents	1,695	1,584	1,595	1,840	1,437
Crimes	1,217	1,056	1,017	1,264	995

Despite there being a peak in the number of sectarian incidents in 2009/10 with 1,840 incidents recorded by the PSNI, the overall trend has been one of a slow reduction. In the past five years there has been a reduction of 15% in sectarian motivated incidents and at 1,437 the 2010/11 figure is the lowest since the series began in 2005/06.

Similarly, there has been a downward trend in sectarian motivated crimes and whilst the 2009/10 figure did see an increase, the latest figure of 995 indicates a further reduction in this crime type. Compared with 5 years ago there has been a decrease of 222 sectarian crimes (18%). The number of sectarian crimes has fallen below 1,000 for the first time since the data series began in 2005/06

Note: not all incidents will result in the recording of a crime whilst other incidents might constitute more than one crime.

**ATTACKS ON SYMBOLIC PREMISES**

	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Church or chapel	19	37	24	23
GAA or Ancient Order of Hibernians Hall	6	10	15	8
Orange or Apprentice Boys Hall	63	61	72	58
School	6	13	15	*

\* Cell suppression has been applied to ensure that the identity of individuals/organisations or any private information relating to them is not revealed

This indicator covers sectarian attacks on churches or chapels; GAA or Ancient Order of Hibernians Halls; Orange or Apprentice Boys Halls; and schools. The figures are a subset of sectarian motivated crimes and date back to 2007/08. Over the four year period of 2007/08 to 2010/11 attacks have tended to fluctuate, with no clear pattern being identified for any of the four categories of symbolic premises. However, it is worth noting that for each category the 2010/11 figures are lower than those recorded in the previous year. Over the four years, at least half of all sectarian attacks on symbolic premises have been targeted at Orange Halls or Apprentice Boys' Halls.

**Note:** changes were introduced in 2007/08 to improve the accuracy and reliability of these figures and consequently data collected prior to this may not be directly comparable.

## Motivation behind intimidation of those presenting as homeless

<b>Homeless due to:</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
Racial intimidation	41	32	45	96
Sectarian intimidation	67	53	61	75

Since 2006/07, NIHE have collected information on the motivation behind the intimidation of those presenting as homeless, recording reasons including sectarianism and racism. There has been some increase in the number of households presenting as homeless both as a result of sectarian and racial intimidation, the increase being more dramatic for those attributing their homelessness status to the latter and likely to be linked to the attacks on Roma families in June 2009. Collectively, there has been an increase of 63 such cases since recording began. The 2009/10 figures of 96 for those citing racial intimidation as the reason for their state of homelessness represents a rise for two consecutive years; the same trend is apparent for those citing sectarian intimidation with 75 such cases recorded in 2009/10.

A number of other related indicators, whilst less specific to the question asked, can be found at the following link:

<http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/equality/equalityresearch/research-publications/gr-pubs.htm>

### Special Advisers

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much their 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 965/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The following table sets out annual rates of pay to Special Advisers within the Office of the First and deputy First Minister in pay bands for the period May 2007 to March 2011 inclusive.

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Pay Band</b>		<b>Number of Special Advisers within Band</b>
	<b>From:</b>	<b>To:</b>	
2007-08	£35,120	£48,824	3
	£56,140	£78,540	5
	£81,600	£160,000	1
2008-09	£57,300	£79,740	8
2009-10	£57,300	£82,531	8
2010-11	£57,300	£82,531	8

Special Adviser appointments are pensionable under the Northern Ireland Civil Service pension arrangements. Full details on NICS pensions can be accessed on the NICS pensions website <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni>.

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. For Premium/ Nuvos members the employer's contributions range between 18-25% depending on salary band (see Table 1 below) and for Partnership members the contributions range between 3-12.5% with a matching employer contribution of up to 3% and 0.8% payable to the PCSPS(NI) for risk benefits (see Table 2 below).

**TABLE 1: ASLC RATES PAYABLE IN EPN 03/11 (EMPLOYER'S CONTRIBUTIONS)**

Salary Band	Annual Full Time Equivalent Pensionable Salary 2010/11	Employers' ASLC charge
	£ pa	% of salary
1	up to 23,099	18
2	23,100 to 46,899	20
3	46,900 to 100,999	23.5
4	101,000 and over	25

The Partnership pension account booklet is on the CSP website - link:

[http://www.dfpi.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni/partnership\\_pension\\_account\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_sep\\_2008\\_layout\\_1.pdf](http://www.dfpi.gov.uk/civilservicepensions-ni/partnership_pension_account_____sep_2008_layout_1.pdf)

**TABLE 2: PARTNERSHIP SCHEME EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION RATES**

Age at last 6 April	% Rate contribution - Percentage of pensionable earnings
Under 21	3
21 to 25	4.5
26 to 30	6.5
31 to 35	8
36 to 40	10
41 to 45	11.5
46 or over	12.5

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

Travel and subsistence costs amounted to £0.171m over the period from May 2007 to March 2011, while other costs amounted to £0.045m in the same period.

### Corporation Tax

**Ms Ritchie** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they have had, or intend to have, with the Office for Budget Responsibility regarding the rate of Corporation Tax and the implications for the block grant.

**(AQW 1067/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We have not had direct discussions with the Office for Budget Responsibility. However, we have access to its input to the Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy consultation exercise, as HM Treasury sought detailed tax advice from the Office for Budget Responsibility when drawing up its consultation paper.

### Victims' Groups

**Mr I McCrea** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the victims' groups which have received funding from their Department; and (ii) the amount of funding each group received, in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 1170/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Funding to victims' groups is delivered through the Department's intermediary funding provider the Community Relations Council. The funding received by each group until 2009/10 can be obtained from the Community Relations Council's published annual reports for the relevant years. These are available on the CRC website <http://www.community-relations.org.uk>. Figures for 2010/11 are not yet available but will be published on the CRC website when finalised.

The Department also directly funded a number of victims' groups in the last five years, most notably through the Interim Capacity Fund. The funding which has been directly administered by the Department is set out in the table below. This support was to provide continuity and capacity between Peace II and Peace III.

#### FUNDING TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS GROUPS DIRECTLY ADMINISTERED BY OFMDFM

Financial Year	Organisation	Amount £
2006/07	New Life Counselling	8,854.12
2007/08	New Life Counselling	71,330.00
2008/09	Journey Towards Healing	12,618.00
2008/09 (Interim Capacity Fund)	Trauma Recovery Network	38,774.40
	The Ely Centre	34,367.00
	Survivors of Trauma	25,555.00
	Saver/Naver	32,080.00
	Relatives for Justice	53,130.00
	Ashton Centre	16,239.00
	Holy Trinity Centre	10,888.00
	Best Cellars Music Collective	21,532.00
	Cunamh	23,283.00
	C.A.L.M.S	38,276.64
	Falls Women's Centre	26,992.00
	RAFT	45,600.25
	Conflict Trauma Resource Centre	70,769.20
	Trademark	22,007.00
	ICPD	10,322.00
	The Tara Centre	19,676.90
	FAIR (for 2 separate projects)	72,605.00
Peace Factory Project	40,991.77	
WAVE	351,595.00	
2009/10	Journey Towards Healing	100,942.00

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
2009/10 (Interim Capacity Fund)	West Tyrone Voice	34,273.50
	FAIR (for 2 separate projects)	72,605.00
	WAVE	428,611.00
	Peace Factory Project	40,991.77
2010/11	Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation	199,772.00
	Journey Towards Healing	121,409.00
2010/11 (Interim Capacity Fund)	WAVE	154,625.00

### **Senior Civil Servants: Protocols when responding to queries received from MLAs**

**Mr McGlone** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the protocols that apply to Senior Civil Servants when responding to queries received from MLAs by (i) letter; (ii) email; and (iii) phone.

**(AQW 1287/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We would anticipate that communication in any format from an MLA would normally be made directly to us or to our Private Offices for consideration and response. Any query raised directly by an MLA with an OFMDFM official should therefore be transferred by the official to our Private Office for handling in accordance with arrangements for Ministerial correspondence.

We would also refer you to our previous response to AQW 268/11 in relation to correspondence with the Head of the Civil Service.

### **Policies: Pensioners**

**Mr Ross** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail all the policies that have been implemented by their Department since 2007 which specifically help pensioners.

**(AQW 1291/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister have implemented or are developing a number of policies specifically aimed at helping older people.

These include establishing and supporting the Older People's Advocate, developing the legislation necessary to establish and recruit a Commissioner for Older People and development of a new overarching older people's strategy to replace "Ageing in an Inclusive Society".

Work to recruit an Older People's Commissioner is now nearing completion and we hope to make an announcement on the appointment over the summer period. The development of a new older people's strategy is also at an advanced stage and we anticipate launching the strategy for consultation in the autumn.

Given the cross cutting nature of the new strategy, OFMDFM will work with Departments to develop robust and effective Action Plans which will deliver the aims and objectives of the strategy. While OFMDFM will have an important role to play co-ordinating input from Departments, the content and delivery of the Action Plans will be a matter for individual Departments.

## Draft Child Poverty Strategy

**Mr Dickson** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the consultation on the draft Child Poverty Strategy.

**(AQO 186/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The period of formal consultation in respect of our Child Poverty Strategy proposals ended on 6 February 2011.

Following an analysis of the 49 formal consultation responses received and the subsequent Executive approval on 22 March 2011, the Child Poverty Strategy was published on 24 March 2011. The Strategy sets out the actions proposed by the Executive to address the issue of Child Poverty.

We are developing a delivery plan and monitoring framework which will detail key initiatives and signature projects to progress the strategic priorities and priority action areas identified in the strategy.

It is intended that a first draft of this plan and monitoring framework will be provided to the Ministerial-led Poverty and Social Inclusion Stakeholder Forum for their consideration and input. The plan and monitoring framework will allow us to measure progress towards eradicating child poverty here.

## Big Society Monies

**Ms Ritchie** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions have taken place with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Cabinet Office regarding the allocation of 'big society' monies to Northern Ireland.

**(AQW 1349/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** While we have had no direct discussions with the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the allocation of Big Society monies, the First Minister met recently with the Rt Hon Hugo Swire MP, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, to discuss the wider Big Society agenda.

Minister Swire also met separately with a number of Executive Ministers on the issue, in addition to hosting a seminar on 27 June for Ministers and representatives from the voluntary and community sector.

## Peace Funding

**Mr McGlone** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the discussions that they have had with the European Commission regarding the extension of Peace Funding.

**(AQW 1392/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The current PEACE III Programme will run until 2013. We began to investigate the possibility of a successor programme in 2010 and formally raised the possibility of a PEACE IV Programme with President Barroso when we met with him last December in Brussels.

The President acknowledged that EU peace funding had made a significant and positive impact in terms of supporting the wider peace process. He was not, however, in a position to confirm the likelihood of a further PEACE Programme as this was, and still remains, subject to the outcome of detailed negotiations on future European cohesion policy and the next multi-annual budget framework for Europe.

The European Parliament's Regional Policy Committee, chaired by Danuta Hübner, was supportive when it recently considered further PEACE and IFI funding for the region. We raised the matter of a PEACE IV Programme during our meeting with EU Regional Policy Commissioner, Johannes Hahn, when he joined with us to open the Peace Bridge on 25 June.

Commissioner Hahn was very favourably disposed, indicating that he would support Peace monies being made available in the future, but he stressed the need for the United Kingdom and Irish Governments to formally request this so that continued cross-border Peace funding could be factored into upcoming EU budget negotiations.

In response to a call from Junior Ministers Bell and Anderson for UK government support for further peace funding at the 13 June meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (Europe), HM Treasury agreed in principle to a successor for the Peace III Programme.

We understand that the Irish government is actively considering this issue in the context of its approach to overall negotiations on the European Multi-Annual Financial Framework.

It is hoped that both the United Kingdom and Irish Governments will be in a position to make a formal proposal to the European Commission in the near future.

## Legal Advice

**Mr McGlone** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much was spent on legal advice from (i) the departmental solicitor; and (ii) external solicitors in reaching the decision not to release any information on the disciplinary process for the former Permanent Secretary of the Department for Regional Development.

**(AQW 1393/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Legal advice was not sought in reaching the decision not to release any further documentation on the former Permanent Secretary of the Department for Regional Development disciplinary process. Maintaining the confidentiality of the documentation associated with disciplinary processes is a requirement on Departments arising from paragraph 12.1 of Section 6.03 of the NICS HR Handbook. This can be accessed on the DFP website via the following link: <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/publication-scheme-hr-policies>. We understand from the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service that in accordance with the normal employment policies of the NICS, it is not intended to release any further documentation about what is an internal disciplinary matter which has been managed in accordance with NICS HR policies.

## Social Investment and Protection Funds

**Mr McDevitt** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of recent press reports highlighting the lack of success in relation to job creation in West Belfast and other deprived areas, for an assessment of how the Social Investment and Protection Funds will deal with the legacies of long-term unemployment.

**(AQO 188/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Executive announced the creation of the Social Investment Fund and the Social Protection Fund in the draft budget for 2011-2015. The deployment of these Funds will address deprivation and poverty in a strategic way where the impact can be seen and felt by everyone in the community.

Historically, projects have been developed to meet the criteria of a particular funding stream and this funding is often strictly aligned to a single department's policy. The Social Investment Fund will develop a more integrated approach to enhance economic growth, employability and the sustainability of communities.

The Fund will help areas of economic disadvantage by redressing the imbalance in our society by building pathways to employment, ending dereliction, increasing community services and tackling the systemic issues linked to deprivation. The funds will link education, job provision and infrastructural investment in areas. Its strength will be in binding together existing schemes and having the capacity to fill gaps and enhance services where necessary.

Funding will be based on agreed strategic plans which are developed by communities themselves. The communities will be facilitated in developing strategies where necessary and intervention will focus on the joint support of community-based expertise and the strategic and financial input of government.

OFMDFM officials are developing a consultation paper on the Social Investment Fund.

## British Irish Council and North South Ministerial Council

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the anticipated cost of the British Irish Council for 2011/12; and the annual cost of the secretariat of the North South Ministerial Council in the last two available years.

**(AQW 1417/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Secretariat for the British-Irish Council (BIC) is currently provided jointly by the British and Irish Governments. No direct funding is given by the Northern Ireland Executive to the Council, although support is provided through the co-ordination function which OFMDFM staff exercises across all Northern Ireland Departments in respect of BIC activities, and through the participation of officials from other departments in its work streams.

The Northern Ireland Executive, together with the seven other member administrations, has agreed to fund a standing Secretariat which will be based in Edinburgh. The indicative running costs of the Secretariat are £170,000 per annum of which Northern Ireland's share will be £15,300. This figure does not however include accommodation costs which will also be shared but which have yet to be determined pending further decisions to be taken by the Council.

In addition, the cost of BIC meetings will continue to be met by each host administration and it has also been agreed that member administrations, where possible, will each contribute staff on a rotating secondment basis, with each bearing the related salary costs for their own staff.

It is not possible at this time to provide information on the Executive's actual total financial contribution in the 2011/12 financial year as this will depend on the achievement of the target commencement date for the Secretariat of 1 January 2012.

The North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) Joint Secretariat is jointly funded by the Northern Ireland Executive and Irish Government. The cost of running the NSMC Joint Secretariat is published each year in the NSMC Annual Report. The annual cost for each of the last two available calendar years is:

2009 - £1,686,380, of which the NI Executive's contribution was £685,233

2010 - £2,509,457, of which the NI Executive's contribution was £1,142,223

## Strategic Investment Board

**Mr Byrne** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline (i) the current operations and functions of the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) and how its programme of work is being achieved; and (ii) their intentions for the future of the SIB.

**(AQW 1438/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:**

- (i) The functions of the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) are:
- to advise Ministers on the Investment Strategy (ISNI);
  - to support Departments and public bodies in the development, procurement and delivery of strategic infrastructure projects;
  - to support the effective management of public sector assets.

SIB has provided advice on the updating of the Investment Strategy which is currently under consideration.

SIB is currently directly managing, on behalf of departments, 11 major programmes and projects with a total estimated value of £1.6bn. This work includes the provision of Project Directors for the:

- Desertcreat Training College;
- Lisanelly Educational Campus;

- Downshire Site Redevelopment;
- Belfast Rapid Transit Programme;
- Titanic Signature Project;
- North West Regional Waste Management Procurement;
- Arc21 Waste management procurement; and
- The Maze Long Kesh (MLK) programme delivery unit (PDU).

SIB is also providing advice and other support to some 30 other programmes and projects that have a total estimated value of £2.7bn.

The central Asset Management Unit (AMU) is in the process of being established within SIB. The Executive agreed Budget 2010 set the AMU the task of realising £100m in capital receipts through the disposal of surplus assets within the next four years.

A full description of SIB's current operations and functions can be found in its corporate and business plans which are published on the organisation's website, ([www.sibni.org](http://www.sibni.org)).

- (ii) There are currently no plans to change the role and functions of SIB. However, any decisions on its future will be informed by the findings of the Executive's ongoing review of all Arms Length Bodies

### Social Investment Fund

**Mr Swann** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the process for determining the criteria used to select the areas entitled to apply to the Social Investment Fund.

**(AQW 1455/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Programmes will be targeted at those communities most in need. The Executive agreed a strategic paper on the Social Investment Fund which is available on the OFMDFM website at:

[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/strategic-paper-on-the-social-investment-fund.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/strategic-paper-on-the-social-investment-fund.pdf).

This outlines some proposed governance and administrative arrangements including criteria for funding and criteria for determining the localities to which funding will be allocated.

We are aiming to issue a more detailed paper for consultation over the summer. This will help inform the process.

### Social Investment Fund

**Mr Swann** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the outcome of discussions they have had with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in relation to making the Social Investment Fund accessible to deprived rural communities.

**(AQW 1456/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We have had no direct discussions with the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development regarding the Social Investment Fund. An outline strategic Social Investment Fund paper was discussed and agreed at an Executive meeting attended by the then Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development. The document is available on the OFMDFM website at:

[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/strategic-paper-on-the-social-investment-fund.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/strategic-paper-on-the-social-investment-fund.pdf).

Officials have been liaising with a range of stakeholders and all relevant departments as the policy develops.

## Funding for Lesbian, Gay and Bi-Sexual Groups

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 291/11-15, (i) to detail what contact their Department has had with representatives from the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) sector regarding the ending of the funding package which had been agreed by the then Secretary of State and administered by their Department and the outcome of any discussions; and (ii) whether any of their Department's arm's-length bodies have provided funding to LGBT groups since the initial funding ended; and (iii) if so, which groups received funding and how much funding they received. **(AQW 1479/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Our Department has contact with representatives of the LGBT sector as it does with all Section 75 sectors and maintained contact specifically with regard to the administration of the pre-devolution funding package.

OFMDFM Arms Length Bodies have stated that they have not provided any funding to any lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender (LGBT) group.

## Meeting with the Parades Commission

**Mr McKay** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on their recent meeting with the Parades Commission.

**(AQW 1487/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We met with the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Parades Commission on 28 June 2011. At the meeting we discussed the upcoming marching season and our hopes for a calm summer. We reiterated our commitment to a new and improved framework for dealing with parades, as outlined in the Hillsborough Castle Agreement.

## Social Investment Fund

**Mr Lyttle** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) when the public consultation on the Social Investment Fund will begin; (ii) how long the consultation process will last; (iii) on which Social Investment Fund document the public will be consulted and how they are to respond; (iv) how the financial year 2010/11 year 1 Social Investment Fund budgetary allocation of £8m has been spent; (v) how the Ministerial Committee to manage the Social Investment Fund will be appointed; (vi) which Departments will be represented on the Ministerial Committee; (vii) how the Ministerial Committee will operate and make decisions; and (ix) how and by whom the Social Investment Fund Investment Zone Steering Groups will be appointed.

**(AQW 1510/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:**

- (i) The Executive agreed a strategic paper on the Social Investment Fund which is available on the OFMDFM website at:  
[www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/strategic-paper-on-the-social-investment-fund.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/strategic-paper-on-the-social-investment-fund.pdf). A consultation paper on the Social Investment Fund will issue in the coming weeks.
- (ii) Although a final decision has still to be taken we would hope to consult on our proposals for a period in line with current Executive guidelines i.e up to 12 weeks.
- (iii) A specific consultation document is being developed. During the consultation period it is intended to hold a number of associated consultation workshops, at which members of the public will be given the opportunity to reply, in person, to our proposals. The public will also be able to respond formally in writing or by e-mail. Full details as to how people can respond will be included in the consultation document.
- (iv) To date there has been no spend in respect of this year's budgetary allocation of £8m. This is in line with our projections of spend up to this point in the financial year.
- (v, vi, vii, viii ix) The consultation document will outline all of the proposed governance and administrative arrangements associated with the Social Investment Fund.

## Funding for Childcare Services

**Mr D Bradley** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to explain the delay in the allocation of funding for childcare services which was included in the budget; and when this funding will be made available.

**(AQW 1522/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Decisions on the allocation of the additional £3m per annum for childcare secured in the 2010 Budget settlement are currently being discussed and finalised.

## Ethnic Minority Development Fund

**Mr Agnew** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline their plans for the Ethnic Minority Development Fund beyond September 2011; and whether the funding stream will be available for groups working with ethnic minority groups after this date.

**(AQW 1528/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We have recently commissioned an evaluation of the current Fund. Funding beyond September 2011 will depend on the outcome of that evaluation.

## Racial Equality Strategy

**Mr Agnew** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the new Racial Equality Strategy and the accompanying budget will be finalised and published by March 2012.

**(AQW 1529/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We hope to publish the new Racial Equality Strategy in March or April 2012.

## Social Investment Fund

**Mr Agnew** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether money from the Social Investment Fund will be made available to assist migrants who through no fault of their own find themselves destitute with no recourse to public funds.

**(AQW 1530/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Programmes will be targeted at those communities most in need. The Executive agreed a strategic paper on the Social Investment Fund which is available on the OFMDFM website at:

[www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/strategic-paper-on-the-social-investment-fund.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/strategic-paper-on-the-social-investment-fund.pdf).

This outlines some proposed governance and administrative arrangements including criteria for funding and criteria for determining the localities to which funding will be allocated.

We are aiming to issue a more detailed paper for consultation over the summer. This will help inform the process.

## Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

### Rural Development

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is her Department's definition of rural development; and what criteria is used to classify a (i) village; (ii) town; and (iii) townland as 'rural' and therefore eligible for rural development assistance.

**(AQW 1282/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): My Department does not have a formal definition of rural development and adopts a more flexible approach where rural development can improve the quality of life in rural areas but can also encompass the broad range of measures included in the current Rural Development Programme.

In the context of the Rural Development Programme, "rural" is defined as settlements with a population of 4,500 or less. This definition was developed and agreed by a cross departmental working group, working in conjunction with NISRA in 2005. There are occasions when projects in areas of greater than 4,500 can be supported where it is shown that, by supporting the project, the benefit will be largely rural.

Other than the restriction of 4,500 mentioned above, the Rural Development Programme does not distinguish between village, town and townland.

## Single Farm Payments

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when farmers whose land is being investigated for the likely causes of fires will have their Single Farm Payment files released and the payments made.

**(AQW 1330/11-15)**

Mrs O'Neill: 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 consider the likely cause of the fires.

In line with EU Regulations, 2011 Single Farm Payments (SFP) can start to issue from 1 December 2011 onwards. 2011 SFP applications are currently being validated and processed.

It is possible that, as result of the fires, some land that was previously eligible for SFP may not now be eligible or that the land may not now meet with the requirements for Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC).

To date my Department has received around 240 requests from farmers to set normal scheme rules aside under force majeure provisions because the fires have affected their land. My Department will carefully consider these requests alongside their 2011 SFP claim. Farmers will be notified of the outcome of these applications in due course.

## Export Certificates

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the rationale behind the plans to allow private companies to award export certificates instead of her Department; and for her assessment of the impact this will have on the credibility of the certificates.

**(AQW 1333/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Exports of live animals and all other products of animal origin from the north, with the exception of meat and dairy, are certified by authorised Private Veterinary Practitioners (PVPs). This has resulted in an inequality in the export industry with one sector bearing the cost of certification and another not.

I have not yet reached a decision on how best to address this inequality. I am presently weighing up all the options and will give due consideration to the industry's suggestions on how best to move forward.

I do not anticipate that any of the options under consideration will have a detrimental impact on the credibility of the certificates. Certification is already being carried out by authorised PVPs for animals and products, being exported all over the world, without issue. All veterinary certification is carried out under professional rules laid down in European law and regulated by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. In addition all PVPs carrying out this work will have to be fully trained and approved by my officials prior to carrying out certification duties. My officials will continue to undertake an audit role to support the transfer and to ensure that the integrity of certification is maintained.

Finally, DARD staff will also continue to provide a troubleshooting service to assist the industry if they have difficulties meeting importing Country's conditions. This combination of training and support will ensure the current credibility and standards of certification are maintained.

### **Food Labelling**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the claim that the Republic of Ireland's National Food Labelling Scheme is being used to prohibit imports of Northern Ireland produce and to pressurise retailers in the Republic of Ireland not to sell Northern Ireland produce. **(AQW 1334/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I am not aware of the specific scheme to which you refer. You will note however that food labelling in the north of Ireland is the responsibility of the Food Standards Agency via the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

I welcome the important trade in food products here and in the south which has developed over the years and consider that we should foster such developments for the benefit of producers both north and south. My own view is that a joint approach to marketing of products from the island of Ireland would benefit all farmers.

Commercial trading matters are not for Government but for the parties concerned, while issues affecting competition are reserved. Nonetheless, any scheme supported by state funds should not only meet EC State Aid rules, which place restraints on the use of Government funds to promote produce based on its origin, but should also be administered within the spirit of the single European market, where normal market forces are expected to function without restraint.

### **Rural Development Action Plan**

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQO 123/11-15, why the Rural Development Action Plan does not include any mention of forestry or delivering her Department's commitment to double woodland cover in the next 50 years. **(AQW 1381/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The good work of the Forest Service is adequately captured in my Department's Strategic and Business Plans and therefore my predecessor, Michelle Gildernew MP MLA, when launching the draft Rural White Paper Action Plan for consultation saw no need to duplicate commitments on forestry by referencing them in the draft paper.

You will be aware that the Rural White Paper Action Plan is an Executive document containing specific commitments by all Departments, not just DARD, across a wide range of rural issues.

### **Capital Projects for North Down**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what capital projects are planned for the North Down constituency in each of the next three years. **(AQW 1388/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Department will carry out a number of capital investment projects within the North Down constituency over the next three years. The current position in respect of planned capital projects is shown on Table 1, below.

Additional capital investments may be funded over the budget period; however, at this stage, commitments have not yet been confirmed.

**TABLE 1 - The Capital investment projects planned for the South Antrim constituency.**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
Capital Grants, Axis 1: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (NIRDP)	Farm Modernisation Programme: investment in new plant and machinery - 1 project in the 2011/12 financial year.
Capital Grants: Axis 3 NIRDP	Diversification of Farm Businesses – 2 projects both in the 2011/12 financial year. Tourism Activities – 1 project in the 2011/12 financial year.
Capital grants: Fisheries Division	European Fisheries Fund: Lobster V notching programme will fund projects in 2011/12 and 2012/13. Vessel Modernisation will fund projects in 2011/12.

### **Key Objective 2.1 of the River Agency's Business Plan**

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline Key Objective 2.1 of the River Agency's Business Plan; and for her assessment of whether this objective is on target to be met. **(AQW 1405/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Key Objective 2 of my Rivers Agency's Business Plan is to progress the implementation of the European Directive for the assessment and management of flood risks. Target 2.1 requires the completion of at least 40% of Flood Risk and Flood Hazard maps and the commencement of 2 Flood Risk Management Plans. These are the year 3 actions in a 6 year plan to implement the EU Floods Directive by 2015. The Flood Risk and Flood Hazard maps are to consider 3 scenarios, namely high, medium, and low probability flood events. They will also provide a clear indication of the likely impacts of flooding on inhabitants, economic activity and vulnerable pollution sources. The Flood Risk Management Plans will develop the mapped information to provide catchment-specific objectives and measures that will ensure that the risks are proactively managed. The plans will include input from central government Departments and Agencies, councils, local communities and other interest groups because flood risk can only be effectively managed by the collective and joined-up efforts of all involved.

I am confident of meeting this key objective and the overall implementation of the EU Floods Directive.

### **Woodland Creation Targets**

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the initial PSA target in the Forestry Service Business Plan of creating 1600 hectares of new woodland area between 2008 and 2011 was reduced to less than 800 hectares. **(AQW 1407/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The new PSA target of 800 hectares of new woodland creation is a realistic and achievable target which reflects the recent uptake of woodland creation grants by landowners and is affordable given capital budgetary constraints.

While our current Forestry Strategy (2006) has a long-term aim of doubling the area of woodland over the next 50 years, it also acknowledges the strong desire that farmers have to continuing farming. This means that woodland expansion is likely to be slow in the early years of the 50 year period.

During the 2008-11 PSA period, we continued to actively promote woodland creation. We increased grant rates significantly in November 2009 and announced that land converted to forestry under woodland schemes from January 2009 may be eligible for the Single Farm Payment Scheme. This resulted in 754 hectares of new woodland being created against the target from the period of 1650 hectares.

My Department will continue to actively promote woodland creation through its forestry grant schemes and develop new mechanisms to support higher levels of woodland creation compared to that achieved during the previous PSA period.

### **Experiments on Soil Types and Soil Fertility**

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether any of the research facilities which are funded by her Department are carrying out experiments on soil types and soil fertility. **(AQW 1450/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) is the main research provider for my department. AFBI carries out experimental work on both soil type classification and numerous aspects of soil fertility. For example, The AFBI Soil Survey systematically studied the soil types present throughout the north of Ireland. This work resulted in the production of a series of maps, books and extensive digital datasets. Further information on this work is available on the AFBI website at <http://www.afbini.gov.uk/index/services/services-specialist-advice/soils-environment.htm>

As regards soil fertility, AFBI carries out soil nutrient research work for DARD to investigate the effects of nutrient and fertiliser application on the soil types available within the north of Ireland and support improved management of crop nutrition in the local agri-food sector.

### **Hydroponics**

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has undertaken development proposals in the area of hydroponics in the last five years. **(AQW 1451/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My department has not undertaken any developmental proposals in the area of hydroponics in the last five years. However, prior to this period DARD funded research at the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) to investigate the use of hydroponics in potato propagation.

Additionally, the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) has, in the past, demonstrated the growing of peppers and tomatoes in hydroponics.

### **Development of Terra Preta Soils**

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, over the last five years, whether any research facilities which are funded by her Department have been involved in the development of terra preta soils similar to those found in the Amazon basin which are high in fertility, self-regenerating and can increase their own volume. **(AQW 1452/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My department has not funded any research facilities to undertake research into the development of terra preta soils in the last five years. However, Defra is currently co-funding research to assess the impacts of adding biochar to land. The results of this work will be available in late 2014 and we will monitor the outcome.

### **Agri-Food Business Opportunities**

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her Department's plans to generate agri-food business opportunities. **(AQW 1453/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I am grateful for this opportunity to outline my Department's plans to generate agri-food business opportunities. Since taking up office, I have consistently outlined my belief that the agri-food sector has a key role in the development of the wider economy.

As an economic Department, DARD, working in partnership with others, has a critical role in supporting the agri-food sector to become more market-led, to increase productivity and to move forward with confidence in playing an important part in building an export-led economic recovery.

My Department's main financial mechanism to support the sector in developing business opportunities is the Rural Development Programme, through the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme, which provides support towards capital investment. Along with the Supply Chain Development Programme, these schemes are together worth approximately £23m.

Further support is provided through the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) including dedicated food technologists and a food incubation centre at Loughry campus, to support agri-food businesses develop innovative products, while scientific research support is available through AFBI.

DETI, Invest NI and DEL also have a key role to play in the economic and skills development of the food industry. As a result of working collaboratively across Government with industry representatives, last year, my predecessor and Minister Foster launched the Focus on Food Strategy which set out a vision for a thriving and sustainable agri-food sector. The time is now right for us to work together to develop this good work into a longer term strategy for the sector. I, and my Department, am committed to playing a key role alongside our industry partners and other Government departments to support and develop the agri-food sector.

## Development of Rural Business Opportunities

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many staff in her Department are engaged in the development of rural business opportunities.

**(AQW 1454/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** A total of 8.1 full time equivalent (FTE) staff within my Department are directly engaged in the development of rural business opportunities. This includes 5.8 FTE Rural Enterprise staff, who provide farmers and others with advice on various DARD support services and programmes, and incorporates business advice and mentoring services for farmers and their families to facilitate farm diversification. In addition 2.3 FTE CAFRE staff provide, through the Diversification Challenge Programme, detailed training and guidance to assist farmers in devising and implementing diversification plans aimed at producing successful rural businesses.

For completeness, Axes 1 and 3 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-13 contain a number of funding measures to support rural businesses, but development work associated with these measures is undertaken by outside delivery bodies rather than by DARD staff.

## Single Farm Payment Scheme

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the complaint by the European Court of Auditors that deficiencies in the Single Farm Payment (SFP) Scheme allows subsidies to be awarded to people who do little or no farming; and how her Department monitors Single Farm Payments.

**(AQW 1463/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I am aware of the recently published report from the European Court of Auditors and the criticism it makes in terms of the payment of Single Farm Payment to certain recipients. The report refers to the current definition of a farmer in EU legislation which includes a person who maintains land in good agricultural and environmental condition and recommends that the legislation be amended to ensure that SFP is directed to active farmers only.

At present, my Department has to apply the existing definition of a farmer as set out in EU legislation but the Commission has made clear that this issue will be under consideration in the forthcoming CAP Reform negotiations.

As required by the EU legislation, my Department monitors Single Farm Payment through both administrative and on-the-spot checks to ensure compliance with the scheme requirements. The

administrative checks are carried out on all applications received while the on-the-spot checks are carried out on a minimum of 5% of claimants each year. These on-farm inspections verify that eligibility requirements have been met, for example, that land is accessible and in agricultural use.

### **All-Ireland Unit**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the costs associated with her Department's All-Ireland Unit in each year since its establishment.

**(AQW 1480/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Central Management Branch within the department carries out a wide range of activities in support of the machinery of government including North South matters. Within this Branch a number of staff were designated to form a North South unit in May 2009. Involvement in North South matters forms only part of the overall duties and responsibilities of those designated staff.

The nature and extent of staff engagement on North South matters varies throughout the year (reflecting the volume of work associated with cross-border issues). Staff within Central Management Branch do not operate a time & task recording system and it is therefore not possible to disaggregate the specific costs associated solely with North South matters from those of other Departmental activities.

### **Surveys on Soil Types**

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department or its arm's-length bodies have carried out any surveys on soil types in the last twelve months.

**(AQW 1514/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Neither my department nor its arm's-length bodies have carried out soil type survey work in the last twelve months.

However an extensive survey of the soil types present in the north of Ireland was carried out by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) approximately twelve years ago, resulting in the publication of a number of maps, books and digital datasets. Further information on this work is available on the AFBI website at: <http://www.afbini.gov.uk/index/services/services-specialist-advice/soils-environment.htm>

### **Soil Improvement Programmes**

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department or its arm's-length bodies have carried out any soil improvement programmes in the last twelve months.

**(AQW 1515/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** No specific soil improvement programmes have been carried out by my department or its arm's-length bodies in the past twelve months. However, DARD funds soil nutrient research work at the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) to investigate the effects of nutrient and fertiliser application on the soil types available within the north of Ireland and support improved management of crop nutrition in the local agri-food sector.

In addition, the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) continues to emphasise the importance of maintaining and improving soil structure, drainage and fertility to students through education programmes and to other agri-food-sector stakeholders through press articles, management notes and industry training programmes. For example, over the 2010/11 winter period, CAFRE delivered a series of over 40 Nutrient Management Planning workshops across the north of Ireland. These were designed to update farmers on how to reduce fertiliser costs by making full use of the nutrients in soil and in slurry and manure. Further Nutrient Management Planning Workshops will be delivered over the 2011/12 winter period.

Furthermore, online Farm Nutrient Management Calculators developed by CAFRE and AFBI, are available at <http://eservices.ruralni.gov.uk/onlineservices/FarmNutrient/FarmNutrient.asp>. These allow farmers to maximise the use of soil nutrients for crop growth, minimise the use of fertiliser and protect the environment.

## Land Use

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the amount of (i) arable land; (ii) pasture; and (iii) upland currently in agricultural use.

**(AQW 1516/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The results of the 2010 June Agricultural and Horticultural Survey indicate that there were 55,600 ha of arable crops that year (comprising cereals, other field crops and horticultural crops). There were 780,000 ha of pasture (comprising permanent and temporary grassland) and a further 140,500 ha of rough grazing, plus 36,800 ha of common land.

The Agricultural and Horticultural Survey does not define, or collect information on, an Upland category.

The area of crops, grass, rough grazing and other land (excluding common grazing) in the Severely Disadvantaged Area in 2010 was 453,500 ha.

## Market Garden Enterprises

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how many market garden enterprises currently operate in Northern Ireland; (ii) how much land is dedicated to market gardening; and (iii) how much land was dedicated to market gardening ten years ago.

**(AQW 1517/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department does not collect statistics under the term 'market garden enterprises', but does collect statistics on horticultural enterprises. Results from DARD's 2010 June Agricultural and Horticultural survey, indicated that there were 289 horticultural businesses in the north of Ireland. This was comprised of vegetables, top fruit (predominantly Bramley apple) and other horticultural crops but excluded specialist mushroom units.

Results from DARD's 2010 Agricultural and Horticultural survey indicate that 2,900ha of horticultural crops were grown in the north. Of this there were approximately 1,300ha of vegetables, 1,500ha of top fruit and 100ha of ornamentals.

The DARD Agricultural and Horticultural survey for 2001 indicated that approximately 3,100ha of land was associated with horticulture businesses in the north ten years ago. Some 1,500ha of vegetables, 1,500ha of top fruit and 100ha in ornamentals.

## Farmers' Markets

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers' markets are currently operational in Northern Ireland; and what plans her Department has to expand this sector.

**(AQW 1518/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department has no oversight or regulatory role with regard to Farmers' Markets and therefore holds no statistics on their number or location. The regulation of farmers' markets is primarily the responsibility of local government. I am therefore unable to provide the breakdown sought.

The majority of existing markets are run by Councils or other private bodies /organisations, and each market has its own criteria and eligibility requirements. My Department has provided financial support to a number of farmers' markets in the past under previous funding programmes, most notably in Derry, Ballymoney and Strabane. Opportunities for current support to farmers' markets exist under the Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013, although this is dependent upon the priorities set within the local development strategies carried forward by the Local Action Groups and Council clusters.

DARD's Regional Food Programme also offers financial support to local councils, regional food groups and agri-food representatives for, amongst other things, the staging of speciality food markets to promote quality, local produce. As well as these funding possibilities DARD has a role to develop the capability of farmer/producers to add value to their produce and to assist them to access routes to market through technical advice and support.

## Childcare Pilots

**Mr D Bradley** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps she has taken to ensure that her Department's childcare pilots can continue.

**(AQW 1521/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Rural Childcare Programme was launched in 2009 by my predecessor, Michelle Gildernew, in response to the recommendations of the Rural Childcare Stakeholder Group and as a result of rural childcare having been highlighted as a key priority in the Rural Anti-Poverty and Social Exclusion Framework 2008/09-2010/11. A key requirement for applicants was that their pilot or demonstration project could be completed by March 2011 so as to inform the programme evaluation which was the key programme output. The programme evaluation is underway and when complete will be provided to the relevant government departments with responsibility for childcare to influence the development of future policy, priorities and in particular the new Childcare Strategy for the north.

As you know my predecessor wrote to the First and deputy First Ministers earlier this year outlining the need to urgently identify a lead department to work on the new childcare strategy and to look at ways to support groups providing a valuable childcare service whilst the strategy is under development. I will continue to press the importance of this matter and also for the need for the strategy to take account of the very specific circumstances of rural areas.

## Ministerial Special Adviser

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how many candidates were considered for the post of Ministerial Special Adviser; (ii) what account was taken of any potential imbalance in religious background or gender in the pool from which she selected her Special Adviser; (iii) how wide was the trawl for candidates and how did she ensure that it was 'broadly based' as required by the Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers; and (iv) to publish the job description and person specification drawn up before the Special Adviser was appointed.

**(AQW 1549/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I am aware of the process to appoint Special Advisers. I can assure the Member that the appointment was carried out in line with established procedures and the Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers.

## Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

### Departmental Special Adviser

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she or her Party selected Mary McArdle as her Special Adviser.

**(AQW 1420/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure):** I appointed Mary McArdle as my Special Adviser.

### Ministerial Special Adviser

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) how many candidates were considered for the post of Ministerial Special Adviser; (ii) what account was taken of any potential imbalance in religious background or gender in the pool from which she selected her Special Adviser; (iii) how wide was the trawl for candidates and how did she ensure that it was 'broadly based' as required by the Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers; and (iv) to publish the job description and person specification drawn up before the Special Adviser was appointed.

**(AQW 1476/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The DCAL Special Adviser was appointed in accordance with the Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers and the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 as amended.

## Department of Education

### Relocation of WELB Posts to Belfast

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment's plans to relocate posts from the Western Education and Library Board offices in Derry and Omagh to offices in Belfast, to detail (i) the estimated annual savings as a result of the centralisation of these posts; (ii) how the centralisation of these posts correlates with his Department's and the Executive's commitment to decentralisation; and (iii) the financial package offered to employees in the posts which are to be centralised, including relocation costs and travel expenses.

**(AQW 1158/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):** Whilst there is no agreed Executive policy on decentralisation, I fully support equality in distribution of, and access to, public sector jobs.

In relation to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment's plans to relocate posts from the Western Board area, CCEA's interim Chief Executive has confirmed that the process of reviewing working arrangements is currently under consultation with the affected staff and all costs and savings will be determined by the outcome of this review.

### Pre-School and P1 Places

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Education (i) to outline the admissions criteria and procedures used by primary schools to determine applications for a (a) pre-school place; and (b) P1 place; and (ii) whether principals have a degree of flexibility in accepting such applications.

**(AQW 1413/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:**

- (i) The admissions criteria and procedures used by primary schools to determine applications for a (a) pre-school place; and (b) Year 1 place are outlined below.

#### Pre-school Places

In determining the admissions criteria to all Department of Education (DE) funded pre-school places, DE specifies two priorities i.e.

- social disadvantage – because research has shown that those children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds tend to experience more difficulty at school than other children; and
- 4-year-olds with July and August birthdays – because these children do not enter compulsory education until after their 5th birthday.

This targeting process, which is part of DE's wider strategy to reduce levels of educational underachievement in the long-term, has been in operation since the 1999/2000 school year.

Pre-school settings must then set their own criteria to select children down to the last available place when too many children apply to a provider. These include a range of factors such as proximity to the school, chronological age, or being the eldest or the only child in a family. These criteria are entirely at the discretion of the individual school and are not determined by DE.

#### Year 1 Places

Article 16(1) for the Education (NI) Order 1997 requires the Board of Governors of each grant-aided school to draw up criteria to be applied in selecting children for admission to their school.

Consequently each school's admissions criteria are unique and reflect the Governors' priority for admission to their school. . However, the Primary Schools (Admissions Criteria) Regulations (NI) 1997 require that the admissions criteria include the order of priority in which pupils shall be admitted to the school, priority for children who will have attained compulsory school age and priority for children who are resident in the north of Ireland. The regulations also require that the admissions criteria shall not include provision for the selection of pupils by reference to ability or aptitude.

- (ii) Primary schools must consider all applications for admissions and admit pupils up to their approved enrolment number (pre-school) and admissions number (Year 1). In schools which are oversubscribed, application forms for children who have not been accepted for admission at their first preference school are made available to the parents' second preference school via the education and library boards. This process is repeated for third preference schools etc. until all pupils are placed.

While the admissions process is running schools must reassess the rank order established at first preference stage, when second preferences are received, in order to take account of whether any of these second preference candidates meet a higher criterion than the first preference candidates already considered. This process must happen regardless of whether or not the school has places available within the admissions number at that stage in the admissions process. The school must repeat this process with every subsequent set of applications through third, fourth, fifth preference stages. A school cannot consider itself to have reached a final and conclusive rank order until all applications, regardless of preference, have been received, the school's criteria have been applied to those candidates and the admissions process has closed.

### Capital Projects for North Down

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education what capital projects are planned for the North Down constituency in each of the next three years.

**(AQW 1441/11-15)**

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

Construction of a new school for Bangor Grammar, representing an investment of almost £19.5 million, commenced in February 2011 and is due for completion in February 2013.

The Holywood Schools and St Columbanus' College projects are currently listed on the Department's Investment Delivery Plan. The Holywood scheme includes a new nursery school, a new primary school to replace Redburn and Holywood Primary Schools and a replacement school for Priory College. In addition, Bangor Central Integrated Primary School is one of a large number of projects at the early stages of planning but for which have not been announced for funding.

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

### Free Transport For Pupils

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education why there is a distinction made between free transport for pupils at post-primary schools and further education colleges.

**(AQW 1474/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Legislation (Schedule 13 paragraph 3(2)(b) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, as substituted by Article 23 of The Education (NI) Order 1997) governing school transport makes it clear that the basis of the service is to ensure that parents will always have a school that is accessible

to their child – given the broadly compulsory nature of school attendance. DE policy then ensures that the same transport-assistance provision supports pre and post-16 study in schools as they broadly require the same pattern of attendance.

The Department for Employment and Learning is responsible for transport provision for pupils in attendance at colleges of further education and for determining those college pupils who qualify for this provision. Unlike schools, FE provision does not always require a specific pattern of attendance, which may obviously impact on transport requirements. Students following a full-time course at a Further Education College who are under 19 years of age on the day they commence their course of study and whose home is located over the statutory qualifying distance of three miles from any college are eligible for travel assistance to attend a course in their local Further Education College.

The main distinction, with schools transport policy however is that in terms of FE provision, students may also choose a course of study, which is not available locally. In these circumstances eligible students may elect to attend another FE College and they will qualify for a travel pass or travel allowance, of equivalent value. One of the qualifying conditions is that their local college must provide written confirmation that they cannot be accommodated.

Students aged 19 and over attending Further Education Colleges may also be eligible for assistance with travel costs through a hardship fund, which is means tested.

### **Teachers' Education**

**Mr McNarry** asked the Minister of Education (i) how many; and (ii) what percentage of teachers are educated to at least second class degree level.

**(AQW 1542/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Department contacted the General Teaching Council (GTCNI) to obtain the information.

The GTCNI has advised that in order to register with the Council an applicant is required to hold a Degree and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education or a Bachelor of Education, or equivalent.

All teachers registered with the GTCNI are graduates. The current data held by the GTCNI on degree classification is incomplete and the Council is currently working to update and obtain complete data on teachers' initial teaching qualification and degree classification however this exercise will take some considerable time to complete.

### **Ministerial Special Adviser**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Education (i) how many candidates were considered for the post of Ministerial Special Adviser; (ii) what account was taken of any potential imbalance in religious background or gender in the pool from which he selected his Special Adviser; (iii) how wide was the trawl for candidates and how did he ensure that it was 'broadly based' as required by the Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers; and (iv) to publish the job description and person specification drawn up before the Special Adviser was appointed.

**(AQW 1548/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The DE Special Adviser was appointed in accordance with the Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers and the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 as amended.

## Department for Employment and Learning

### South Eastern Regional College: Timetabling

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he is aware that PricewaterhouseCoopers has conducted an investigation into irregular contracts and the timetabling of classes at the South Eastern Regional College; and if so, when does he intend to publish the report.  
(AQW 1272/11-15)

**Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):** The Governing Body of the South Eastern Regional College has commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), as the internal audit service for the college, to independently validate an internal review by the college into a recent whistleblowing episode. My Department expects to receive a copy of the PWC investigation report in due course, the findings of which will determine the way forward. In terms of publication, that would be a matter for the Governing Body of the college.

### South Eastern Regional College: Allegations of Falsifying Contracts

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he is aware of a person or persons at the South Eastern Regional College falsifying contracts for part-time lecturers and the completion of electronic registers; and if so, when he intends to refer this matter to the Public Accounts Committee for investigation.  
(AQW 1273/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** The Governing Body of the South Eastern Regional College has commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), as the internal audit service for the college, to independently validate an internal review by the college into a recent whistleblowing episode. My Department expects to receive a copy of the PWC investigation report in due course, the findings of which will determine the way forward. In terms of publication, that would be a matter for the Governing Body of the college.

### Full-time Equivalent Student Count in Further Education Colleges

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how each further education college determines its full-time equivalent student count.  
(AQW 1292/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** Each Further Education College uses the formula detailed below to determine the Full-Time Equivalent student (FTE) count.

$$\text{FTE student} = \frac{\text{Number of Full-time students} + \text{Total number of student hours}}{\text{Divisor for respective Course Group}}$$

### Further Education Colleges: Reform of Governing Bodies

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) what plans he has to reform the governing bodies of further education colleges; (ii) when these plans will be made public; and (iii) the timescale for the implementation of any such plans.  
(AQW 1294/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** In November 2010, my Department completed a review of Further Education governance and issued its recommendations to the Further Education sector, for consideration. The review took account of developments in FE governance in other jurisdictions and, importantly, reflected the findings of a report by the Northern Ireland Assembly's Public Accounts Committee that was published in July 2009.

The Department is working with the sector to take forward the review's recommendations. A number of these, principally relating to the composition of Governing Bodies, will require amendment to the Further Education (NI) Order 1997. Proposals for any such amendments would require public consultation.

Wherever possible, recommendations will be implemented in the course of the 2011/12 academic year, beginning with a code of governance to clarify roles and responsibilities. Any proposals that are subject to a process of legislative amendment will also be identified during 2011/12.

### **North West Regional College: Industrial Relations**

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he is aware of the industrial relations situation at the North West Regional College; and whether he is considering carrying out an investigation into events at the college.

**(AQW 1295/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** I am fully aware of the industrial relations situation at the North West Regional College. As an incorporated statutory body, the college is responsible for all employment related matters including determining staffing complements, managing performance and staff discipline.

However, I can confirm that I have asked the College's Governing Body to instigate, as a matter of urgency, an independent review of the disciplinary and redundancy procedures at the college.

### **Apprenticeship Placements**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what measures are in place to safeguard apprenticeship places during the economic downturn.

**(AQW 1321/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The number of apprenticeship places in Northern Ireland is determined by employers based on the needs of their business and of the industry. To encourage employers to continue to recruit and retain apprentices, my Department has ensured that the financial incentive for employers has remained unchanged. The apprenticeship training package on offer to employers is attractive, in that the apprentices' directed training costs are met by my Department. This can range between £2,600 and £10,800 depending on the level and occupational area of study and, on completion, an incentive bonus of up to £1,500 is paid to the employer.

As a direct response to the economic downturn contingency arrangements were introduced in November 2008 to allow apprentices who were made redundant in the construction, engineering and motor vehicle sectors to continue with training.

Furthermore, Departmental officials are engaged proactively with Central Procurement Directorate and other Departments to encourage the use of social clauses requiring the employment of apprentices in the delivery of public sector contracts.

### **New College Campus in Coleraine**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) any plans he has for a new college campus in the Coleraine area; and (ii) when he expects work on any new campus to commence.

**(AQW 1331/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The renewal of the Northern Regional College's Coleraine campus is a priority for my Department and was included in the Investment Strategy Northern Ireland 2008 to 2018. A bid for capital to fund renewal of the Coleraine campus was made in Budget 2010 but this bid was not met. I will continue to keep Coleraine amongst my priorities and will be including the need for funding for the Coleraine campus in the Investment Strategy Northern Ireland 2011 to 2021, due later this year. As such, there is no date planned for the work to commence.

## Links with Further and Higher Education Colleges and Universities in Israel

**Mr Newton** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consideration his Department has given to (i) the potential of research and development and innovation links with further and higher education colleges and universities in Israel; and (ii) the potential for relationships between local further and higher education colleges and universities and their Israeli counterparts.

**(AQW 1351/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:**

- (i) My Department is responsible for funding research and knowledge transfer activities within Northern Ireland's higher education institutions and further education colleges. The universities, in particular, use this funding, among other things, to form and develop many strong international research collaborations. However, it is a matter for them, rather than my Department, to determine the potential for such collaborations with Israel.
- (ii) Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland are responsible for developing their own international partnerships and links with countries around the world, including Israel. Such links are focused on promoting academic partnerships for mutual learning and ensuring that Northern Ireland is to the fore in benefiting from higher education international linkages. The Department recognises the value and worth of such initiatives and encourages our institutions to maximise their potential.

Both Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster have for many years engaged in educational partnerships with institutions in both Israel and Palestine.

St. Mary's University College has links with the University of Haifa and both St. Mary's and Stranmillis University Colleges have recently undertaken a study visit to the David Yellin College of Education in Jerusalem to explore conflict resolution.

The six Further Education Colleges do not currently have any links.

with further and higher education colleges and universities in Israel.

However, South West College has indicated that it may have the potential to collaborate with Israeli institutions in the future through the College's Innotech Centre.

## STEM Subject Degrees

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he intends to take to ensure the provision of STEM subject degrees at further and higher education colleges in rural areas.

**(AQW 1419/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** My Department promotes the provision of higher education courses in STEM subjects in the Further Education Regional Colleges in a number of ways. Through the Higher Education in Further Education funding mechanisms, additional funding "weighting" is applied to subjects related to key economic priority areas, including courses in STEM subjects.

In addition, my officials monitor the curriculum offer in each Regional College as part of the annual College Development Plan (CDP) process. Where appropriate, my Department may re-allocate full-time higher education places across the colleges to support key strategic priorities such as STEM. A college's maximum allocation of student numbers, (MaSN), is based on established current and future demand for higher education in each of the college areas; the college's alignment with the Department's strategic priority areas as demonstrated in the College Development Plan; and support for the Department's Widening Participation goals in the geographical distribution of higher education places across Northern Ireland.

It is the responsibility of each individual college to manage its Higher Education funding allocations in line with local priorities, as well as the priorities set by my Department. However, decisions relating to the management of courses and the allocation of student places across the college's campuses are matters for the senior management of the regional college and not for my Department.

My Department is fully committed to the delivery of the inter-Departmental strategy for the promotion of STEM. You will be aware that the strategy was brought to the Executive in March 2011 and agreement was gained to publish it. An associated STEM Implementation Plan is being produced and both documents are expected to be published in autumn 2011. In addition, and subject to funding considerations, I would propose that any increases in student numbers at our universities would only be in areas of economic relevance, including STEM.

### **Education Groups in the North Down Area**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to list the education groups in the North Down area which are currently funded by his Department.

**(AQW 1448/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** There are no education groups in the North Down area funded by this Department. However, there are two organisations located in the North Down area, which are currently contracted by the Department to deliver Training for Success and/or ApprenticeshipsNI programmes:

Conservation Volunteers NI  
Dendron Lodge  
Clandeboyne Estate  
BANGOR  
Co Down  
BT19 1RN; and

Rutledge Recruitment and Training  
46-48 High Street  
BANGOR  
Co Down  
BT20 5AJ

### **Further and Higher Education in the Mid-Ulster Area**

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans there are for investment in further and higher education in the Mid-Ulster area.

**(AQW 1500/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** My Department funds Further and Higher Education in the Mid Ulster area which is delivered at the Magherafelt campus of the Northern Regional College and the Cookstown campus of the South West College. In 2011/2012, the Northern Regional College will receive £21m in Block Grant and the South West College will receive £16m. This funding is across all of the colleges' campuses and cannot be broken down by individual campus. No applications for capital funding were received for the 2010 Spending Review and my Department has no plans for Capital Investment in the area in the period to 2014/15.

### **Policy on Travel Payments to Students**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the policy on travel payments to students who study at a Further Education College (FEC) outside their geographical area because the course they are studying is not available at an FEC within their geographical area.

**(AQW 1532/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The Home to College Transport budget, administered by the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) on behalf of the Department for Employment and Learning, is used to facilitate the attendance of eligible students at Further Education Colleges. Home to College Transport is implemented on the basis of Article 52 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, as substituted by Article 23 of The Education (NI) Order 1997 as detailed in the Department of Education's policy (DE Circular 1996/41 amended September 2009).

Students following a full-time course at a Further Education College who are under 19 years of age on the day they commence their course of study and whose home is located over the statutory qualifying distance of three miles from any college are eligible for travel assistance to attend course in their local Further Education College.

Where a student's home address is less than the statutory qualifying distance from their nearest college they may still qualify for assistance to travel to another college. This assistance is provided where the proposed course of study is not available locally and confirmation of this is provided by that college. The travel assistance provided to all students will either be in the form of a travel pass or a travel allowance which is normally equivalent to the travel pass rate.

Students aged 19 and over attending Further Education Colleges may also be eligible for assistance with travel costs through a hardship fund. This is means tested assistance, aimed at providing financial help to students including those with a disability, who are inhibited by financial considerations from accessing and participating in Further Education. The Hardship Fund is a discretionary budget which provides assistance with a range of living costs and as such has no specific budget for transport.

## Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

### Milk Cup Funding

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's figures showing that as a result of the Milk Cup 2010 accommodation providers gained £426,000, visitor spend amounted to £395,000 and participant spend accumulated to £312,000, for her assessment of whether the Milk Cup makes a vital contribution to the local tourism industry; and what steps she intends to take to ensure the long-term sustainability of this event through appropriate funding.

**(AQW 882/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment):** The Milk Cup organisers applied to the NITB Tourism Events Fund for 2011/12. The application did not score highly enough across all the objective criteria to warrant an award of funding this year. However recognising the importance of this event to the North Coast area I undertook to consider alternative sources of funding. To this end I raised the issue with my Executive colleagues who, recognising the event's impact on sports development, tourism, international relations, children and young people, decided that funding of £40,000 should be awarded to the Milk Cup in 2011.

The Executive also recognised that the long term sustainability of the Milk Cup must be considered as public funds cannot be permanently guaranteed for any particular event. Funding for 2011 is therefore conditional on the organisers taking part in an independent research survey on visitor numbers and economic impact and also acting upon a commerciality strategy to ensure an appropriate and sustainable funding mix across the public and private sector in the future.

### InterTrade Ireland Workforce

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of staff employed by InterTradeIreland; and (ii) the religious background of staff employed by InterTradeIreland in (a) Northern Ireland; and (b) the Republic of Ireland.

**(AQW 1261/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:**

- (i) InterTradeIreland employ 43 staff (42.3 on a full time basis);
- (ii) Of the 43 staff employed by InterTradeIreland 9 are Protestant, 33 are Roman Catholic and 1 Other.
- (iii) All staff are employed in Northern Ireland. InterTradeIreland does not employ staff in the Republic of Ireland.

## Welcome Signs and Demarcation Signs

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Minister for Regional Development, she will introduce a policy requiring welcome signs and demarcation signs to be erected where the territory of Northern Ireland begins on all main routes.

**(AQW 1302/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Welcome to Northern Ireland signs are classified as tourist signs. DRD Roads Service has an agreed tourist signing policy in place with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and local councils.

Under the Northern Ireland Tourist Signing Policy the provision of tourist signs is Council-led with all enquiries directed to Councils and subsequently considered by Roads Service in conjunction with NITB.

I believe there should be a change to the current policy on tourist signing.

## Single Electricity Market

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) for her assessment of whether there was a trend of convergence in domestic prices between Northern Ireland and Great Britain prior to the introduction of the single electricity market on the island of Ireland; (ii) whether the single electricity market divergence has been to the detriment of Northern Ireland customers; and (iii) to detail local electricity prices compared to Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland in each of the last ten years.

**(AQW 1305/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Electricity prices in Northern Ireland have always tended to be higher than those in Great Britain. After many years of significant difference, there was a trend towards convergence in the period immediately prior to the introduction of the Single Electricity Market (SEM). However, in the post-SEM period, there has been a divergence once again. In comparing electricity prices between Northern Ireland and Great Britain it is necessary to take into account the different nature and size of the respective markets along with the different operating costs involved.

The Single Electricity Market (SEM) continues to run the cheapest generators available to meet demand across the whole island, hence minimising overall electricity costs and affording protection to consumers. An independent cost benefit analysis has estimated a net benefit of £45million for Northern Ireland from the SEM, most of which will benefit consumers. The SEM has also delivered greater security of supply for Northern Ireland, and has encouraged new investment in efficient generation on the island. Additionally, the Utility Regulator has been able to cancel unfavourable legacy generation contracts in Northern Ireland, and it is estimated that this will save consumers in excess of £80million over the next 5 years alone. The SEM has also provided greater transparency and therefore encouraged increased electricity supply competition, evidenced by Airtricity entering the retail domestic electricity market in Northern Ireland in June 2010.

In almost all of the last 10 years, domestic electricity prices in Northern Ireland have been higher than domestic electricity prices in Great Britain. Between 2004 and 2007 electricity prices in Northern Ireland were higher than in the Irish Republic. However since 2008, domestic electricity prices have generally been lower in Northern Ireland than in the Republic.

My Department will continue to work with the Utility Regulator and the energy industry to support initiatives aimed at putting downward pressure on retail electricity costs, which along with new electricity interconnection between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, and between Great Britain and the Republic, should see greater convergence between electricity prices as, in line with EU policy, greater market integration takes place.

## NI Events Company

**Mr McNarry** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when the report on the NI Events Company carried out by the Company Inspectors will be made public.

**(AQW 1345/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Department appointed inspectors to the Northern Ireland Events Company Limited on 17 November 2008 under Article 452(2) and Article 425(2)(a) of the Companies (NI) Order 1986. Under Article 425(2)(a), any report the inspectors may make is not for publication. It is not the Department's policy, where it concerns a private company, to make available the inspectors findings.

## Capital Projects: North Down

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what capital projects are planned for the North Down constituency in each of the next three years.

**(AQW 1385/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Invest NI Property Solutions Unit has invested in the development of its North and South Balloo Business Parks to support the economic infrastructure of the North Down constituency. As a result of the work that has been completed, there are no capital projects planned over the next three years.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has not received any applications for capital projects within the North Down Constituency. The Signature Projects Programme 2011 – 2013 is currently open until 31 August 2011 for applications from projects to complete the tourism Signature Projects.

## Milk Cup and Foyle Cup Tournaments

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to confirm the date (i) when the decision was taken to fund this year's Milk Cup and Foyle Cup tournaments; and (ii) when funding approval was communicated to the tournament organisers by her Department, or its agencies.

**(AQW 1409/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Funding for the Milk and Foyle Cups was discussed at the Executive meeting on 30 June 2011. Recognising the impact of these events on sports development, tourism, international relations, children and young people, the Executive decided that funding should be made available for both events in 2011.

I have identified £80,000 to fund both events in 2011 from my Department's budget, and event organisers were informed verbally on Friday 1 July 2011 that funding would be made available. A formal letter setting out the terms of the funding issued on 5 July 2011.

## Economic Strategy

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she will publish the Economic Strategy.

**(AQW 1412/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The new Northern Ireland Economic Strategy continues to be developed by the Executive Sub-committee on the Economy. It is anticipated that a draft Strategy will be published for full public consultation later in the year.

## Fuel Regulator

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she intends to consider a fuel regulator for Northern Ireland.

**(AQW 1447/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** I have no current plans to extend the powers of the independent regulator. I will consider the outcome of the Office of Fair Trading review, due to be published in the autumn into the

competitiveness of the United Kingdom's home heating fuel sector for customers not connected to the natural gas network.

## Renewable Sources

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, based on current projections, what percentage of electricity needs will be met from renewable sources in (i) 2012; (ii) 2013; (iii) 2014; (iv) 2015; and (v) 2016.

**(AQW 1498/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Programme for Government has a target of 12% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2012, of which 15% should be from non-wind sources.

In the year 2011/12 to date, renewable electricity generation (as a percentage of total consumption) has averaged 10% with May alone being above 18%, due to the exceptionally windy conditions during that month. DETI believes that Northern Ireland remains on target to meet the 12% renewable energy target by 2012.

The Executive has agreed, through the Strategic Energy Framework, a target of 40% of electricity consumption to be from renewable sources by 2020. This is a technology neutral and market led target and the renewable energy mix by year cannot be determined at this point. The percentage of electricity generated from renewable sources in the period 2012-2016 will depend on the type of renewable technologies deployed, the weather conditions and the ability of the grid to absorb an increased amount of renewable generation.

## Planning Applications for Renewable Energy Facilities

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps her Department is taking, in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, to ensure that planning applications for renewable energy facilities are processed quickly and effectively.

**(AQW 1499/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Sustainable Energy Inter-departmental Working Group (SEIDWG) has agreed the terms of reference and broad work plan for the planning and renewable energy sub-group which will be chaired by DETI and include representatives from DOE, DOE planning service, NIEA, and DARD. The group has a remit "to work together to ensure that renewable energy projects and installations are delivered, within the planning system, in time to meet Executive targets" and will also ensure implementation of the recommendations in the planning arena made by the Enterprise, Trade and Investment Committee.

## Job Creation in the Mid-Ulster area

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps have been taken to encourage job creation through business start-up and expansion in the Mid-Ulster area.

**(AQW 1502/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** In the last two years, Invest NI has offered almost £11 million of assistance for the development of new and expansion projects in the Mid-Ulster constituency. This will generate total investment in the area of £101 million, creating over 750 new jobs and safeguarding a further 340 posts.

Assistance has been offered to a range of foreign owned and indigenous companies and includes support for key businesses in the constituency such as New Terex, Dale Farm, SDC Trailers and Delwyn Enterprises.

Going forward, over the next four years, Invest NI will support the promotion of over 21,000 new jobs across Northern Ireland and will also implement a new Short Term Employment Scheme in direct response to the continued upward trend in unemployment. The measures contained within the Short Term Employment Scheme, which has a total budget of £18.8 million, will promote a further 5,000 new jobs by March 2015.

These measures will be implemented in conjunction with a range of other support from Invest NI including a continued focus on encouraging investment in research and development and innovation, business improvement, sustainable development and trade initiatives. Please be assured that we will continue to work with new and existing businesses in the Mid-Ulster constituency to create new jobs, enhance their international competitiveness and create more sustainable job opportunities.

### **Car Insurance for Young People**

**Mr McCartney** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what representations she has made to the Financial Services Authority on the high cost of car insurance for young people.

**(AQW 1513/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** None. Insurance is a reserved matter, outside the remit of my Department and, therefore, it would be inappropriate for me to make representations to the Financial Services Authority

### **Investigation into the NI Events Company**

**Mr D Bradley** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) when her Department's Inspectorate began to investigate the NI Events Company; (ii) what the terms of reference for the investigation are; (iii) when the investigation will be completed; (iv) what the total cost has been to date; and (v) for her estimate of the final cost.

**(AQW 1538/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:**

- i) The Department appointed company inspectors to investigate the Northern Ireland Events Company Limited on 17 November 2008.
- ii) It is not the Department's policy to release the terms of reference for the appointment of inspectors as they largely consist of the complaints / allegations made to it.
- iii) The target date for completion is 30 June 2012.
- iv) The cost incurred to date by DETI is £474,000.
- v) Due to the complexity of the investigation it is difficult to forecast what the final cost is likely to be. All costs are however being tightly managed and controlled.

## **Department of the Environment**

### **Listed Buildings in Carrickfergus**

**Mr Hilditch** asked the Minister of the Environment what action he intends to take in relation to the preservation of (i) the former Kelly's Coal Office building, Governors Place, Carrickfergus; and (ii) Prospect House, Carrickfergus, both of which are listed buildings.

**(AQW 1252/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment):** The Department has worked for many years to ensure the preservation of both of these buildings, which are on the Built Heritage at Risk in Northern Ireland (BHARNI) register. Unfortunately, in both cases, previously agreed schemes to ensure a sustainable future have halted, because of difficulties encountered by their owners, due to the current economic climate.

As a result, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's (NIEA) Area Conservation Architect has been in contact with those currently responsible for both buildings, to ensure ongoing security and to encourage the development of new plans for a sustainable future.

In relation to solving the problems faced by both of these buildings, the long term solution is, of course, to find a new, sustainable, use for them. My Department, through the NIEA, funds the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society to employ an officer to encourage owners and groups to arrive at imaginative solutions to the issues faced by Buildings at Risk. He and officers from NIEA would be

happy to meet you to discuss and explore any ideas you may have to arrive at a solution to the issues faced by these buildings.

I understand that NIEA staff have already been in contact with the Carrickfergus Historical Society on a similar theme, as well as working along with Carrickfergus Building Control to encourage the current owner to improve the security of Prospect House in particular.

The long term solution of difficult cases, such as this, requires a partnership approach and the Department is willing to play its part in arriving at a long term solution. In this regard, NIEA organised a conference recently, with the voluntary sector, to address the issue of buildings at risk, and highlight how partnership with those in the voluntary/NGO sector is so often vital in order to make substantial progress on this important issue.

## Committee on Climate Change

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will request a report from the Committee on Climate Change on the progress that Northern Ireland has made in meeting its climate change targets. **(AQW 1281/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** In February 2011 the Executive endorsed the Northern Ireland Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Action Plan.

([http://www.doeni.gov.uk/northern\\_ireland\\_action\\_plan\\_on\\_greenhouse\\_gas\\_emissions\\_reductions.pdf](http://www.doeni.gov.uk/northern_ireland_action_plan_on_greenhouse_gas_emissions_reductions.pdf))

The Action Plan sets out those activities to be undertaken by each NICS Department which will help lower emissions and contribute to the Programme for Government target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% below 1990 level by 2025. It also reports on progress and based on the latest available data it is estimated that there will be a reduction in emissions of around 33% in 2025.

The Action Plan has been shared with the Committee on Climate Change for its consideration and it has been used to inform the Northern Ireland section of the 3rd Progress Report to Parliament

[ <http://www.theccc.org.uk/reports/3rd-progress-report> ] – this is the Committee's annual report to UK Parliament on the progress made in reducing emissions as required under the Climate Change Act (2008).

In the light of the progress made I have asked the Committee to consider if Northern Ireland should have specific target based legislation. I believe that Northern Ireland should have such legislation and that we should be setting more ambitious targets and strategies than currently the case.

## Maine River System

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the Maine River system, to detail for each of the last five years (i) the number of illegal discharges; (ii) the number of successful prosecutions for illegal discharge and pollution offences; (iii) the total fines imposed and the total compensation orders; (iv) the number of consents under the Water Act 2003; and (v) the estimated cost of fish kills and pollution damage.

**(AQW 1301/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:**

- (i) During the last five calendar years, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has recorded 118 polluting discharges in the Maine River Catchment.

Year	Severity			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
2006	0	9	17	26
2007	0	4	29	33

Year	Severity			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
2008	0	4	14	18
2009	0	3	21	24
2010	0	4	13	17
				<b>118</b>

- (ii) During this period three pollution incidents within the Maine River catchment have resulted in successful prosecutions. One of these incidents occurred in 2008 and the other two in 2009. A further four prosecution cases are pending but have not yet been progressed to court.
- (iii) For the 3 incidents which have resulted in prosecutions, the courts imposed fines totalling £3,000.

With regard to compensation orders, NIEA does not recover costs through compensation orders. The Agency issues formal requests for cost recovery in the form of an invoice to the polluter. During this period for the Maine River catchment, NIEA has successfully recovered costs from polluters in 3 instances totalling £706.99. Cost recovery is ongoing, but not yet complete, in a further 7 cases.

- (iv) The Water Act 2003 relates to England and Wales. The relevant Northern Ireland legislation under which consents are issued is the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999.

The Table below sets out the number of discharge consents issued under the Water Order since 2006 in the Maine River catchment.

Year	Number of Consents Issued
2006	4
2007	14
2008	15
2009	0
2010	1

- (v) The Department does not hold a record of the costs for habitat improvement or restocking costs following a fish kill, as these costs are normally recovered by the fishery owner. It is more common for work to be undertaken to improve the habitat for fish rather than restock with farmed fish which will dilute the genetic integrity of the native fish population. However, some fishery owners will farm wild fish for restocking purposes.

The figures confirm a large number of discharges, few prosecutions, limited recovery of costs and limited evidence of consequential costs and impact. I am to meet officials to interrogate the evidence and consider how to move forward.

### Taxi Enforcement Division

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister of the Environment how many inspections the Taxi Enforcement Division has carried out in the North West region in each of the last four years; and whether his Department intends to establish a Taxi Enforcement office in the North West Region.

**(AQW 1354/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The number of inspections and operations undertaken in the North West region in the past four years is as follows:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Number of Inspections</b>	<b>Number of Operations</b>
1 April 2007 – 31 March 2008	163	25
1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009	139	14
1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010	252	24
1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011	383	67

The North West has the second highest volume of licensed taxis in Northern Ireland, and for that reason the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) intends to establish an enforcement team in the North West region. I have made it clear that this is a matter of urgency.

I am advised that the Agency has endeavoured to identify suitable premises in the North West region, taking into account business needs, logistics, and the security of its staff but to date it has not been successful. I have instructed my officials to pursue accommodation options in the area more vigorously and to report back to me quickly.

### **Illegal Discharges in Rivers**

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of illegal discharges in (a) the Upper Bann River; and (b) Lough Neagh in each of the last five years; (ii) where and when each discharge occurred; (iii) whether any prosecutions ensued; (iv) the estimated cost in each instance of pollution and fish kills; and (v) the fines imposed and compensation awarded as a result of each discharge.

**(AQW 1357/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:**

#### **(a) Upper Bann River**

(ii) From the January 2006 to December 2010 Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) recorded 212 polluting discharges in the Upper Bann River. A breakdown of these incidents is provided in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: POLLUTION INCIDENTS IN UPPER BANN RIVER 2006 - 2010**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Severity</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	
2006	0	13	22	35
2007	1	2	43	46
2008	1	11	34	46
2009	0	10	19	29
2010	0	16	40	56
				<b>212</b>

- (iii) The dates and locations of the water pollution incidents on the Upper Bann River, summarised above, are listed at Appendix 1.
- (iv) From January 2006 to December 2010, 54 high or medium severity pollution incidents occurred in the Upper Bann. 17 incidents have resulted in prosecution files being forwarded to the Public Prosecution Service. Of these cases, 12 have been heard in court, resulting in 11 convictions and 1 case was dismissed. A further 5 prosecution cases are pending. In other cases warning letters were issued to the polluter, no polluter was identified or farmers have been penalised through cross-compliance financial penalties.

- (iv) NIEA does not hold a record of the costs for habitat improvement or restocking costs following a fish kill, as these costs are normally recovered by the fishery owner. It is more common for work to be undertaken to improve the habitat for fish rather than restock with farmed fish which will dilute the genetic integrity of the native fish population. However, some fishery owners will farm wild fish for restocking purposes.
- (v) The courts have imposed fines totalling £16,500 for 12 incidents in the Upper Bann River. Details of the 12 incidents and the penalties imposed are listed in Table 2.

**TABLE 2: PENALTIES FOR POLLUTERS IN THE UPPER BANN RIVER 2006-2010**

Year of incident	Incident details	Court outcome	Penalty
2006	Industrial discharge at Seagoe, Portadown	Conviction	£500
2006	Industrial discharge	Conviction	£3,000
2006	Farm effluent, Tandragee	Conviction	£2,000
2006	Farm effluent, Tangragee	Conviction	£600
2006	Industrial discharge, Banbridge	Conviction	£7,000
2007	Farm effluent, Portadown	Conviction	Bound over for 2 years
2008	Farm effluent	Conviction	Conditional discharge
2008	Silt, Banbridge	Case dismissed	N/A
2009	Sewage discharge, Ballynacor	Conviction	£750
2009	Domestic sewage	Conviction	£750
2009	Farm effluent, Portadown	Conviction	£700
2009	Industrial discharge, Tandragee	Conviction	£750

NIEA does not recover costs through compensation orders. Since April 2008, in the case of high and medium severity water pollution incidents, where the polluter can be identified, NIEA issues invoices to polluters to recover costs incurred as a result of the pollution incident.

Of the 35 high and medium severity pollution instances since April 2008, in the Upper Bann River, NIEA recovered costs from polluters in 15 instances, totalling £3,702.10. Cost recovery is still pending for the 5 outstanding prosecution cases.

### **(b) Lough Neagh**

Lough Neagh drains approximately half of the land area of Northern Ireland and part of the Republic of Ireland. A distance of 500m from Lough Neagh was used to provide information on Lough Neagh and its immediate surrounding area.

- (i) From the January 2006 to December 2010 NIEA recorded 28 polluting discharges in or within 500 metres of Lough Neagh.

A breakdown of pollution incidents is provided in Table 3.

**TABLE 3: POLLUTION INCIDENTS - LOUGH NEAGH 2006 - 2010**

Year	Severity			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
2006	0	0	7	7
2007	4	0	4	8
2008	0	0	3	3
2009	0	2	3	5
2010	0	0	5	5
				<b>28</b>

- (ii) The dates and locations of the water pollution incidents in Lough Neagh, summarised above, are listed at Appendix 2.
- (iii) In the period January 2006 to December 2010, a prosecution case was taken for one pollution incident in Lough Neagh. In other cases warning letters were issued, no polluter was identified or farmers have been penalised through cross-compliance financial penalties.
- (iv) As stated in (a) (iv) above, NIEA does not hold a record of the costs for habitat improvement or restocking costs following a fish kill, as these costs are normally recovered by the fishery owner. It is more common for work to be undertaken to improve the habitat for fish rather than restock with farmed fish which will dilute the genetic integrity of the native fish population. However, some fishery owners will farm wild fish for restocking purposes.
- (v) Table 4 gives details of the prosecution case referred to above. NIEA has not recovered any other costs in the Lough Neagh area in this period.

**TABLE 4: PENALTIES FOR POLLUTERS IN LOUGH NEAGH 2006-2010**

Year of incident	Incident details	Court outcome	Penalty
2007	Industrial oil discharge near Toome	Conviction	£5,000

**APPENDIX 1****DETAILS OF WATER POLLUTION INCIDENTS IN THE UPPER BANN RIVER CATCHMENT 2006 - 2010:**

Location	Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA	Severity
Lisbane Road Scarva	2006-01-10 09:15	Low
Carncourt Portadown	2006-01-11 15:00	Low
Scarva	2006-01-23 14:33	Low
Bocombre Avenue, Portadown	2006-01-25 10:45	Low
Tarsan Lane Portadown	2006-01-27 15:00	Medium
Portadown	2006-02-06 11:12	Low
Banbridge	2006-02-10 12:00	Low
Scarva	2006-03-02 15:30	Low
Clanbrassil Drive	2006-03-04 09:22	Medium
Northway, Portadown	2006-03-14 15:39	Low

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Portadown	2006-03-30 14:55	Low
Kilcoo	2006-04-01 22:30	Low
Carncourt Road Portadown	2006-04-04 11:30	Medium
Clanbrassil Drive Portadown	2006-04-21 15:00	Medium
Garvaghy Road Portadown	2006-04-24 06:32	Medium
Derryvore Lane Seagoe Portadown	2006-05-04 11:00	Medium
Mullalelish Road	2006-05-05 12:00	Medium
Kilcoo	2006-05-06 13:40	Low
Clanbrassil Drive, Portadown	2006-05-10 14:05	Medium
Weavers Meadow, Banbridge	2006-06-01 19:02	Low
Mullavilly Road, Laurelvilla	2006-06-07 09:41	Medium
Barrack Hill Lawrencetown	2006-07-27 14:00	Low
Portadown	2006-09-01 14:30	Low
Kilcoo	2006-09-11 16:30	Low
Muddock River Kilcoo	2006-09-12 14:05	Low
Tandragee	2006-09-14 14:26	Medium
Hilltown	2006-10-27 14:10	Low
Leode Rd Hilltown	2006-11-04 12:55	Low
Banbridge	2006-11-15 14:45	Medium
Corbet Lake	2006-11-28 10:45	Medium
Hunters Hill Road, Gilford	2006-12-04 17:00	Low
Portadown	2006-12-07 09:30	Low
Laundered Waste Dumped	2006-12-23 09:40	Medium
Shillingingtons Quay Portadown	2006-12-27 09:30	Low
Portadown	2006-12-29 14:15	Low
Scarva	2007-01-05 09:30	Low
Levaghery Portadown	2007-01-08 10:00	Low
Killicomaine Portadown	2007-01-30 10:00	Low
Richill	2007-02-02 12:00	Low
Portadown	2007-02-09 10:00	Low
Ballyrone Road Rathfriland	2007-02-16 17:00	Low
Annagh	2007-02-21 12:00	Low
Hilltown	2007-02-23 10:45	Low

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Gilford/Tandragee	2007-02-23 11:45	Low
Ballygorian Road Hilltown	2007-02-23 12:30	Low
Tandragee Road Scarva	2007-02-27 11:30	Low
Hilton Park Portadown	2007-03-05 09:15	Low
New Bridge Portadown	2007-03-12 09:00	Low
Lurgan Road Banbridge	2007-03-22 09:50	Low
Tandragee	2007-03-27 12:15	Low
Aughlish Rd, Tandragee	2007-03-27 12:20	Low
Portadown	2007-03-28 10:30	Low
Ballybreagh Road, Portadown	2007-05-02 16:00	Low
Lawrencetown Banbridge	2007-05-18 11:00	Low
Seagoe	2007-05-18 13:34	Low
Banbridge	2007-05-20 10:45	Low
Portadown	2007-05-27 16:06	Low
Hilton Park Portadown	2007-06-11 09:15	Low
Hunters Hill Road Gilford	2007-06-11 21:02	Low
Cavan Road Rathfriland	2007-06-28 14:25	Low
Ballynacarrick Road, Portadown	2007-08-06 13:00	Low
Gilford	2007-08-10 17:00	Low
Tandragee	2007-08-16 11:30	Low
Portadown	2007-08-28 18:48	Low
Portadown	2007-09-03 18:45	Low
Seagoe Wwtw	2007-09-07 10:00	Low
Banbridge	2007-09-20 14:00	Low
Portadown	2007-09-21 11:00	Medium
Castlevern Road Katesbridge	2007-09-24 12:15	Low
Marlaco Road Portadown	2007-09-24 12:45	Low
Portadown	2007-09-26 09:45	High
Gilford	2007-09-26 11:50	Low
Crowhill Road	2007-09-29 13:52	Low
Portadown	2007-10-03 09:05	Low
Bleary Portadown	2007-10-03 14:00	Low
Tandragee Road	2007-10-22 16:00	Medium

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Marlaco Road,Portadown	2007-10-25 13:50	Low
Bleary Portadown	2007-10-30 11:00	Low
Hamiltownsawn	2007-11-08 10:30	Low
Moss Road Gilford	2007-11-15 10:00	Low
Brackagh Drain,Portadown	2007-11-21 16:00	Low
Drumnascamph Road Rathfriland	2008-01-03 11:45	Medium
Bridge Street,Banbridge	2008-01-17 10:45	Low
Banbridge	2008-01-17 11:00	Low
Banbridge	2008-01-17 13:00	Low
Banbridge	2008-01-17 14:00	Low
Banbridge	2008-01-18 11:00	Low
Banbridge	2008-01-18 14:00	Low
Banbridge	2008-01-18 15:00	Low
Pinley Crescent, Banbridge	2008-02-06 10:00	Low
Drain Laws Lane Banbridge	2008-02-07 10:00	Low
Hamiltonsbawn	2008-02-22 11:00	Low
Ballybreagh Road Aghorey	2008-02-22 13:00	Medium
Portadown	2008-02-29 13:00	Low
Bannview Rd Banbridge	2008-03-13 13:00	Medium
Banbridge	2008-03-14 11:00	Low
Greenhill Road Katesbridge	2008-04-10 10:00	Low
Banbridge	2008-04-11 13:30	Low
Stramore Road, Gilford	2008-04-15 12:00	Low
Hilltown	2008-05-08 13:35	Low
Laws Lane Banbridge	2008-05-09 15:00	Low
Derryvore Lane, Portadown	2008-05-14 12:45	Low
Drumnacany Road	2008-05-19 15:30	Low
Portadown	2008-05-22 15:00	Low
Hilltown Wwtw	2008-05-24 12:55	Medium
Hilltown Wwtw	2008-05-25 10:15	Low
Portadown	2008-05-29 12:00	Medium
Loughgall Road Portadown	2008-05-30 15:00	Low
Mayobridge	2008-07-08 16:15	Low

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Wwtw Banbridge	2008-08-07 11:00	Low
Hilltown	2008-08-07 14:00	Low
Derryvore Lane, Portadown	2008-08-13 09:12	Medium
Banbridge	2008-09-03 17:50	Low
Garvaghy Road, Portadown	2008-09-10 12:40	High
Portadown	2008-09-10 16:00	Low
Banbridge	2008-09-18 14:15	Low
Bryansford Road Hilltown	2008-09-23 14:00	Medium
Shanrod Road Katesbridge	2008-10-02 10:00	Low
Portadown	2008-10-07 11:20	Low
Lawrencetown Banbridge	2008-10-13 14:30	Low
Banbridge	2008-10-16 11:55	Medium
Annaclone	2008-10-31 16:00	Low
Katesbridge	2008-11-11 15:00	Medium
Drumnascamph Road Rathfriland	2008-11-18 16:15	Low
Tamary Road Mayobridge	2008-11-19 11:30	Medium
Greenhill Rd, Katesbridge	2008-11-20 10:50	Medium
Ballyrone Road Rathfriland	2008-12-03 12:00	Low
Katesbridge Road, Banbridge	2009-01-05 16:18	Low
Seagoe	2009-01-07 12:40	Medium
Tandragee	2009-01-14 14:00	Low
Ballyward	2009-02-27 16:22	Low
Banbridge	2009-03-02 11:50	Low
Eden Avenue, Portadown	2009-03-10 09:53	Medium
Portadown	2009-03-10 11:00	Low
Shillingtons Bridge, Portadown	2009-03-13 13:30	Medium
Old Bleach Green Banbridge	2009-03-19 14:00	Low
Portadown	2009-03-31 08:55	Medium
Portadown	2009-03-31 11:30	Low
Portadown	2009-03-31 12:00	Low
Sewage Discharge Orchard Mews Portadown	2009-04-01 10:30	Low
Portadown	2009-04-22 12:15	Medium

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Hilltown	2009-05-01 18:35	Medium
Kilcoo	2009-05-12 11:20	Low
Gilford	2009-05-30 13:00	Low
Portadown	2009-06-26 14:05	Low
Portadown	2009-07-02 12:30	Low
Ballydrumman Rd Ballyward	2009-07-23 15:30	Low
Portadown	2009-07-29 12:00	Medium
Lawrencetown	2009-08-19 14:30	Low
Tandragee	2009-08-20 10:05	Low
Portadown	2009-08-20 17:50	Low
Lisnaree Rd Banbridge	2009-09-18 16:00	Medium
Portadown	2009-09-25 13:00	Low
Birches Portadown	2009-09-30 11:00	Low
Lawrencetown	2009-10-02 18:30	Medium
Tandragee	2009-11-17 11:40	Medium
Lough Rd Katesbridge	2010-01-26 11:00	Medium
Shanrod Road Katesbridge	2010-01-26 12:10	Medium
Eelwire Rd Moneyslane	2010-02-04 09:30	Low
Rathfriland	2010-02-10 11:25	Medium
Portadown	2010-02-11 10:00	Low
Thomas Street Portadown	2010-02-11 15:00	Low
Portadown	2010-02-12 09:00	Low
Banbridge	2010-02-12 12:30	Medium
Banbridge	2010-02-15 09:25	Medium
Dunbar Footbridge Banbridge	2010-02-16 15:00	Low
Banbridge	2010-02-16 16:30	Low
Portadown	2010-02-20 16:30	Low
Dromore Street, Banbridge	2010-03-02 17:48	Low
, Banbridge	2010-03-04 09:29	Low
Portadown	2010-03-09 14:00	Medium
Craigavon	2010-03-12 12:00	Medium
Hilltown	2010-03-23 16:10	Low
Banbridge	2010-03-24 11:00	Low

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Kilcoo	2010-03-24 13:54	Low
Banbridge	2010-03-27 12:32	Low
Lurgan Road, Banbridge	2010-04-08 15:45	Low
At Hunters Hill Road	2010-04-09 11:30	Medium
Banbridge	2010-04-15 17:03	Low
Scarva	2010-05-05 12:00	Low
Hilltown	2010-05-06 16:38	Low
Portadown	2010-05-10 11:30	Low
Banbridge	2010-05-20 18:40	Low
Banbridge	2010-05-29 18:20	Medium
Banbridge	2010-06-08 11:00	Low
Craigavon Lake	2010-06-28 12:25	Low
Tierkelly Road,Rathfriland	2010-06-30 14:38	Low
Banbridge	2010-07-08 09:23	Medium
Clanbrassil Drive Portadown	2010-07-09 14:30	Medium
Ballydown Meadows Banbridge	2010-07-26 14:00	Low
Craigavon	2010-08-02 15:10	Medium
Banbridge	2010-09-03 13:00	Low
Banbridge	2010-09-14 12:00	Low
Ballynagarrick	2010-09-29 12:00	Low
Banbridge.	2010-09-29 15:00	Low
Banbridge	2010-10-01 09:00	Low
Portadown	2010-10-04 20:22	Low
Shanrod Road Katersbridge	2010-10-11 15:45	Low
Ballela Rd Katesbridge	2010-10-12 11:00	Medium
Ballyroney Banbridge	2010-10-12 14:00	Low
Kinallen Road, Ballyward	2010-10-12 15:40	Medium
Portadown	2010-10-18 17:00	Low
Portadown	2010-10-25 12:25	Low
Gilford Road Portadown	2010-11-03 13:00	Low
Seagoe	2010-11-10 10:00	Low
Gilford	2010-11-15 10:00	Low
Portadown	2010-11-19 12:00	Low

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Katesbridge	2010-12-10 11:00	Low
Katesbridge	2010-12-10 12:30	Low
Lough Rd Katesbridge	2010-12-14 12:00	Medium
Katesbridge	2010-12-14 13:00	Low
Katesbridge	2010-12-14 14:00	Medium

**APPENDIX 2****DETAILS OF WATER POLLUTION INCIDENTS IN THE LOUGH NEAGH CATCHMENT:**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Crumlin	2006-02-15 10:30	Low
Deerpark Road, Toomebridge	2006-03-08 13:54	Low
Lough Beg	2006-04-15 12:22	Low
Loughview Road, Crumlin	2006-05-09 15:00	Low
Oxford Island	2006-08-25 14:20	Low
Randalstown Road Antrim	2006-10-10 14:20	Low
Main Street Ballyronan	2006-12-24 12:32	Low
Woodville River/Kinnegoe Bay	2007-01-12 10:33	High
Kinnegoe Bay	2007-01-12 11:15	High
Dublin Road Antrim	2007-03-13 11:35	Low
Loughview Road, Antrim	2007-03-16 09:30	Low
Derryclone Road Gawleys Gate	2007-04-20 16:00	Low
Lough Beg Toomebridge	2007-04-21 14:54	High
Deerpark Road , Toome	2007-04-22 18:00	High
Church Road Ardmore	2007-06-11 10:00	Low
Waterfoot Road	2008-01-17 15:45	Low
Loughview Road, Aldergrove	2008-03-10 10:20	Low
Castledawson	2008-05-24 21:36	Low
The Steeple Burn, Antrim	2009-06-13 13:24	Low
Annaghmore Road, Coagh	2009-06-14 11:48	Medium
Bay Road Crumlin	2009-07-07 14:40	Medium
Antrim	2009-08-11 16:50	Low
Ardboe Road, Mooretown	2009-10-15 15:15	Low

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date and time incident was reported to or discovered by NIEA</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Shanes Castle Estate, Antrim	2010-02-19 15:09	Low
Castledawson	2010-06-17 13:42	Low
Loughview Road, Crumlin	2010-08-16 15:00	Low
Lurgan	2010-11-10 11:35	Low
Loughview Road, Crumlin	2010-11-17 14:00	Low

### **Closet River in Lurgan**

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of illegal discharges; and (ii) the number of dead animal carcasses in the Closet River in Lurgan in each of the last five years; (iii) where and when each discharge or dumping occurred; (iv) whether any prosecutions ensued; (v) the estimated cost in each instance of pollution and fish kills; and (vi) the fines imposed and compensation awarded as a result of each discharge or dumping.

**(AQW 1358/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:**

- (i) From the January 2006 to December 2010 NIEA recorded 31 polluting discharges in the Closet River.

**TABLE 1: POLLUTION INCIDENTS IN THE CLOSET RIVER IN 2006-2010**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Severity</b>			<b>Total</b>
	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	
2006	0	2	2	4
2007	0	4	7	11
2008	0	1	5	6
2009	0	1	4	5
2010	0	3	2	5
				<b>31</b>

- (ii) Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is only responsible for removing fallen animals if they are causing pollution. During the period January 2006 to December 2010 Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has no record of any reports of fallen animals in the Closet River catchment.
- (iii) The dates and locations of the water pollution incidents are summarised in Appendix 1.
- (iv) Within the period January 2006 to December 2010, two cases relating to pollution incidents in the Closet River were passed to Public Prosecution Service for consideration as to whether or not an offence has been committed. These have not been heard in court yet.
- (v) NIEA does not hold a record of the costs for habitat improvement or restocking costs following a fish kill, as these costs are normally recovered by the fishery owner. It is more common for work to be undertaken to improve the habitat for fish rather than restock with farmed fish which will dilute the genetic integrity of the native fish population. However, some fishery owners will farm wild fish for restocking purposes.

- (vi) NIEA does not recover costs through compensation orders. Since April 2008, NIEA policy is that for high and medium severity pollution incidents, where the polluter can be identified, costs incurred by NIEA are recovered from the polluter.

There have been no fines to date. NIEA has, to date, successfully recovered costs totalling £731.43 from polluters in two cases. In the two cases where prosecution is still pending, cost recovery will be completed upon a successful conviction.

The figures confirm a large number of discharges, few prosecutions, limited recovery of costs and limited evidence of consequential costs and impact. I am to meet officials to interrogate the evidence and consider how to move forward.

#### **DETAILS OF LOCATION AND TIME OF POLLUTION INCIDENTS IN CLOSET RIVER**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident Severity</b>
Bleary Road, Portadown	25 April 2006	Low
Tandragee Road	21 June 2006	Low
Ballynacor	22 September 2006	Medium
Ballynacor	28 December 2006	Medium
Cranny Road	01 January 2007	Low
Tandragee Road	14 March 2007	Low
Sugar Island Road	02 April 2007	Medium
Sugarisland Road	03 May 2007	Low
Sugar Island Road	03 May 2007	Medium
Glenavon Lane	26 June 2007	Low
Kilvergan Road	24 July 2007	Low
Dukestown Lane	29 August 2007	Low
Craigavon Golf Course	29 October 2007	Medium
Ballynacor Road	30 October 2007	Low
Ballynacor Road	07 November 2007	Medium
Ballynacor Road	11 January 2008	Low
Silverwood	06 March 2008	Low
Carn Industrial Estate Portadown	20 June 2008	Low
Craigavon	18 July 2008	Low
Closet River	12 August 2008	Medium
Lurgan	16 August 2008	Low
O'Connell Lane	05 February 2009	Low
Kilvergan Road	04 June 2009	Medium
Silverwood	25 June 2009	Low
Silverwood	27 November 2009	Low
Silverwood	04 December 2009	Low

Location	Date	Incident Severity
Wenlock Road	22 April 2010	Medium
Drumnagoon Road	12 June 2010	Low
Ballydugan	24 June 2010	Medium
Closet Tributary	18 August 2010	Low
Brownlow	10 December 2010	Medium

### Capital Projects for North Down

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of the Environment what capital projects are planned for the North Down constituency in each of the next three years.

**(AQW 1383/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** In the North Down constituency area there are currently no specific capital projects planned by my Department over the next three years. The entire DOE capital budget 2012-13-14-15 is £5.9, £4.0 and £7.6 million respectively. However, there will be opportunities for projects to be funded under the Rethink Waste Fund.

### Planning Applications for Wind Turbines

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of planning applications for wind turbines in each constituency, in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 1394/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Due to the way in which applications for wind turbines are recorded, the figures provided below also include other renewable energy applications such as solar panels and hydroelectric schemes. In order to identify single wind turbines only a manual search of the large number of records returned would be required.

The number of planning applications for wind turbines or other renewable applications in each constituency in each of the last five years is as follows:

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Belfast East	0	2	0	0	0
Belfast North	1	0	1	0	0
Belfast South	1	2	2	2	0
Belfast West	0	1	3	2	2
East Antrim	5	5	14	11	27
East Londonderry	10	16	19	14	57
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	9	10	25	12	24
Foyle	3	1	5	6	24
Lagan Valley	11	8	20	8	16
Mid Ulster	16	12	13	24	48
Newry and Armagh	18	22	36	13	45
North Antrim	14	14	24	23	78

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
North Down	2	2	1	6	5
South Antrim	9	13	15	13	18
South Down	25	31	48	19	31
Strangford	7	9	18	6	6
Upper Bann	0	8	9	7	8
West Tyrone	13	19	27	38	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>437</b>

**Source:** Planning NI, DOE

### Planning Applications for a Wind Turbine

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister of the Environment what is the average length of time it takes to reach a final decision on a planning application for a wind turbine.

**(AQW 1395/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** A total of 51 planning applications for single wind turbines were decided upon in the 2010 / 2011 business year. The median length of time it took to reach a decision on planning applications for wind turbines in the 2010/2011 business year was 120 working days or 24 weeks. The median is a measure of central tendency, with the processing time on planning applications determined in this business year ranging from 37 days to 437 days.

### Re-Gen Waste

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for an update on Re-Gen Waste's plans for a material recovery facility in Portadown; and (ii) for his assessment of the concerns raised by Almac Pharmaceuticals in relation to this matter.

**(AQW 1406/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:**

- (i) ReGen Waste Ltd. submitted a planning application on 24 August 2007 to develop a waste management facility at Unit 14 Seagoe Industrial Estate Craigavon. Following consideration of the application and the objection issues, the Department refused planning permission on 16 January 2009 on the basis that it the proposal would be incompatible with the surrounding/ adjacent pharmaceutical use and therefore contrary to Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) General Principles and Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4) Planning and Economic Development. The grounds of refusal also included the failure of ReGen Waste Ltd to demonstrate compliance with Policy WM1 of Planning Policy Statement 11 (PPS11) Planning and Waste Management and Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) Access, Movement and Parking.

ReGen Waste Ltd has appealed the refusal of permission to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). The appeal commenced on 10 May 2011 but was subsequently adjourned. The reconvened appeal hearing is scheduled to take place on 20 and 21 July 2011.

- (ii) Given the Department's decision in this case and the existence of an on-going appeal process it is not appropriate for me to make further comment on the concerns raised by Almac Pharmaceuticals.

### Planning Permission

**Mr Craig** asked the Minister of the Environment how many homes have been built in the South Armagh area without planning permission; and what action his Department is taking to address this matter.

**(AQW 1414/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I have been advised that the Department is currently investigating in the order of 40 cases of alleged breaches of planning control related to the unauthorised construction of homes throughout Armagh City and District and that portion of County Armagh that falls within the Newry and Mourne Council Area. It may be that a number of other cases exist which have not been brought to the attention of the Department.

I am unable to provide specific details on individual cases to avoid prejudice to ongoing investigations. However, I have had sight of and considered the schedule of cases. I can say, however, that these cases include the alleged unauthorised storage of mobile homes and their use for residential purposes, the alleged unauthorised change of use of single dwellings to apartments, the alleged construction of unauthorised dwellings not in accordance with previous approved plans and the construction of dwellings without the benefit of planning permission.

The Department has an enforcement procedure in place and will investigate any reports of such alleged breach of planning control. Where appropriate, formal enforcement action will be initiated. I am to meet with officials to assess if all that should be done is being done and in good time.

### Planning Service: Neighbour Notification

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister of the Environment, for each of the last five years, to detail on how many occasions the Planning Service did not issue a neighbour notification when it should have, broken down by each divisional planning office.

**(AQW 1486/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Neighbour Notification scheme is not a statutory requirement but has become established practice and custom for decades. In the last 5 years, some 729,481 neighbour notification letters issued in respect of 92,378 planning applications.

The Department has no formal method of recording where neighbour notification letters have not issued, however, where such a failing is drawn to our attention by the Ombudsman, a record is kept. From this source, in the last 5 years, failure to issue such letters has been recorded on 8 occasions though none has been recorded in the last 3. Five of these were in the Downpatrick Office, 2 in the Northern Office and one in Craigavon. The attached table at Annex 1 details for each of the last 5 years the number of neighbour notification letters issued by each Area Planning Office on receipt of planning applications.

Planning Division	10/11		09/10	
	No. of Apps	No. of Notifications	No. of Apps	No. of Notifications
Belfast Area	3576	33777	4146	34741
Northern Area - Coleraine	1230	7472	1545	9318
Northern Area - Londonderry	815	6504	979	5588
South Antrim Area	1881	14707	2258	17903
Southern Area - Craigavon	2673	17812	3266	23539
Southern Area - Downpatrick	771	5025	874	6351
Strategic Planning Division	243	4588	217	5646
Western Area - Enniskillen	532	2106	752	2959
Western Area - Omagh	1892	9476	2379	12361
<b>Total</b>	<b>13613</b>	<b>101467</b>	<b>16416</b>	<b>118406</b>

Planning Division	10/11		07/08		06/07	
	No. of Apps	No. of Notifications	No. of Apps	No. of Notifications	No. of Apps	No. of Notifications
Belfast Area	3576	33777	6326	59668	6053	56076
Northern Area - Coleraine	1230	7472	2168	13902	1963	11832
Northern Area - Londonderry	815	6504	1480	12021	1575	13707
South Antrim Area	1881	14707	3253	33142	3002	28236
Southern Area - Craigavon	2673	17812	3792	31008	4237	33585
Southern Area - Downpatrick	771	5025	1053	10267	1037	7914
Strategic Planning Division	243	4588	151	3019	187	2967
Western Area - Enniskillen	532	2106	1019	4765	951	4184
Western Area - Omagh	1892	9476	3704	22726	3484	21029
<b>Total</b>	<b>13613</b>	<b>101467</b>	<b>22946</b>	<b>190518</b>	<b>22489</b>	<b>179530</b>

### Green Belt Area in the Towerview Area of North Down

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on safeguarding the green belt area in the Towerview area of North Down.

**(AQW 1506/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside', published on 1 June 2010 sets out planning policies for development in the countryside. Countryside is defined as land lying outside of settlement limits as defined in development plans.

The area of countryside adjacent to the Towerview area of Bangor was proposed as green belt under Designation COU 1 of the draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP). However, the policy provisions of PPS21 now take precedence over any green belt designations contained in existing and published draft development plans, and as a consequence the Department has withdrawn the proposed BMA Green Belt contained in Draft BMAP.

Draft BMAP was published in November 2004, and it covers 6 District Council areas including North Down. Nearly 4,000 objections were received in respect of the Draft Plan and a public inquiry was convened by the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) to consider these objections. This inquiry commenced in April 2007 and finished in May 2008.

A number of representations were received that related to the settlement limit for Bangor, including the part of the limit adjacent to the Towerview area. These objections relate to the non-inclusion of land within the settlement limit.

The Department is still awaiting the substantive part of the PAC Report on the objections heard at the BMAP Public Inquiry, and when this report is received in its entirety, it will be possible to further progress the work that will lead to the adoption of BMAP. At that stage the final position regarding the objections to the Bangor settlement limit will be made public. It is anticipated that the Plan will be adopted in 2012.

## Reducing Car Insurance Premiums for Young Drivers

**Mr McCartney** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has considered introducing a policy to encourage young people to participate in yearly road safety workshops or the Pass Plus course with the aim of reducing car insurance premiums for young drivers.

**(AQW 1512/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Department, with its road safety partners, makes provision for young people to participate in road safety education in schools and attend Road Safe Road shows involving PSNI and NIFRS. It also works closely with the GAA and Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster to help design and deliver road safety campaigns to their members.

Pass Plus has never been made available in Northern Ireland but the Department is now working with the Department for Transport and the Driving Standards Agency to develop a successor initiative over the next two years. This is expected to take the form of a new post test qualification designed to ensure insurance market confidence by providing candidates with an improved way of developing their driving skills after passing the driving test.

## Department of Finance and Personnel

### Civil Servants Suspended from Work

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of civil servants currently suspended from work, broken down by grade; (ii) how long they have been suspended; and (iii) the total cost in salaries, pension contributions and National Insurance since their suspensions began.

**(AQW 522/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel):** The information requested is provided in the table below. Some figures have been amalgamated rather than broken down by grade to protect the identity of individuals.

Numbers and Grades	2 Admin Assistants	3 Admin Officers	3 Technical Grade 1s	2 Staff Officers	14 Various Grades
Number of weeks suspended in total	112 weeks	71 weeks	23 weeks	19 weeks	630 weeks

<b>Total Salary paid</b>	<b>£489,630*</b>
Total National Insurance paid	£38,148*
Total Pensions Contributions paid	£97,846*

\* This includes compensation paid as a result of the equal pay review.

### Special EU Programmes Body

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many staff are employed by the Special EU Programmes Body in (i) Northern Ireland; and (ii) the Republic of Ireland.

**(AQW 1356/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Special EU Programmes Body currently employs 56 staff: 49 Staff in Northern Ireland and 7 in the Republic of Ireland.

Finance Ministers, North and South, have agreed SEUPB can proceed on the basis of 65 staff, the complement as agreed in 2007 for the years 2011 and 2012 but that this complement will fall to a number in the 50s in 2013; and to a number in the 40s in 2014.

## Special EU Programmes Body

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department has contributed to the Special EU Programmes Body in each year since 1998.

**(AQW 1416/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is one of six North/South Implementation Bodies established on 2 December 1999. Since its establishment DFP has paid SEUPB the following amounts of administrative grant:

Financial Year	Total Payments
2000-2001	£550,129
2001-2002	£1,262,030
2002-2003	£750,278
2003-2004	£864,690
2004-2005	£1,077,915
2005-2006	£1,098,251
2006-2007	£1,069,250
2007-2008	£1,126,500
2008-2009	£1,129,750
2009-2010	£1,376,947
2010-2011	£1,102,000
2011-2012	£265,375 (Apr–Jun '11)

Minimum cash releasing efficiency savings of 3% per year are required of all north/south Bodies for the period 2011 to 2013. This will apply to SEUPB.

## Special EU Programmes Body: Bureaucracy

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what his Department is doing to reduce the bureaucracy associated with the Special EU Programmes Body.

**(AQW 1446/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is a cross border body which aims to maximise the drawdown of EU funds under the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes.

The allocation and administration of these and all other EU programmes are strictly controlled by the European Commission through a series of regulations and guidance notes, which establish a wide range of implementation and audit requirements. These have a direct bearing on the processes and procedures that have to be undertaken to ensure compliance and avoid interruptions or suspension or the imposition of financial penalties. This is not always understood by project partners who may feel dissatisfied with the time taken to process claims and reimburse payments and wrongly regard the procedures as mere box ticking.

My Department and the Republic's Department of Finance, act as sponsor Departments for the Body and, in partnership with SEUPB, strive to deliver value for money and continuous improvement in programme delivery, applying the minimum amount of resources required to support the core business, commensurate with maximising the drawdown of funding for the benefit Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland.

The previous PEACE and INTERREG programmes were delivered by more than sixty intermediary bodies. However, delivery of the current programmes is largely carried out by SEUPB itself. An independent staffing review estimated that the introduction of this centralised delivery system would simplify implementation and save approximately £9 million in administration costs. It was on this basis that DFP approved the centralised delivery arrangements.

A new round of EU funding is due to begin in 2014. In preparation for this round, DFP will critically review the administration of the current programmes with a view to identifying ways in which this might be improved going forward. Furthermore, it has been agreed that DFP's Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU) and DPE&R's (ROI) Central Expenditure Evaluation Unit will shortly be supporting SEUPB to identify any potential efficiencies in the current SEUPB administrative processes. This will also support SEUPB in reducing their staffing complement from its current peak of 65 staff to a figure in the forties by 2014.

### **Civil Service Employees**

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 6743/10, for an update on the progress made in monitoring the political opinion, marital status, sexual orientation and dependants status of Civil Service employees.

**(AQW 1465/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Progress has been made in developing the new monitoring systems to collect data on all equality groups identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Data is currently being collected from applicants for posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Work is still on-going to finalise the system that will be used to collect and hold monitoring data for current employees.

### **Devolution of Corporation Tax Rating Powers**

**Mr D Bradley** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what work his Department is doing in conjunction with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on the devolution of corporation tax rating powers.

**(AQW 1473/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Ministers and officials from my Department, the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment and the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister have been working closely on this issue for some time now.

In particular, this work involved scrutinising and liaising with Treasury counterparts on the analysis contained within the Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy consultation document prior to its publication in March 2011. More recently, Northern Ireland Ministers also participated in two consultation events, one in London on 8th June 2011, and one in Belfast on 7th July 2011, where they sought the views of key stakeholders on the devolution of corporation tax.

The consultation closed on 8th July 2011 and Northern Ireland Ministers and officials will need to carefully examine any proposal to devolve corporation tax following an analysis of responses. Detailed discussions will also have to take place with Treasury in relation to costs and implementation issues in particular.

### **Green New Deal**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what plans he has for the £4m allocated in the budget for the Green New Deal; and which Department will lead in taking the programme forward.

**(AQW 1531/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Department for Social Development is the lead department in taking forward the Green New Deal proposals, and I understand a business case is currently being prepared to inform the future direction of the initiative. The business case has not yet been received by my Department.

## Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

### Family Planning Association

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how much money his Department, either directly or indirectly has provided to the Family Planning Association in each of the last five years; and (ii) to detail all pro-life groups which have received funding from his Department in each of the last five years and the amount they received.

**(AQW 1547/11-15)**

#### **Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety):**

- (i) My Department has provided funding to the Family Planning Association (NI) in each of the last five years as follows:

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
£89,188	£91,418	£136,667	£153,723	£137,630

In addition, I am advised that funding provided from the HSC sector to the Family Planning Association (NI) for the same period is as follows:

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10 <sup>1</sup>	2010/11
£16,506	£29,208	£25,859	£317,886	£384,320

<sup>1</sup> Note: Funding provided by the Public Health Agency to FPA(NI) is included from 09/10 onwards; funding to the FPA(NI) from the Health Promotion Agency prior to April 2009 is not included in the above table as this is not available.

- (ii) My Department has provided funding to one pro-life group, Life(NI), in each of the last five years as follows:

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
£25,644	£26,285	£30,442	£27,615	£27,615

## Department of Justice

### Wrongly Released Prisoners

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of Justice to detail the lessons learned and the changes implemented as a result of the incidents of wrongly released prisoners prior to the erroneous release of George Damien MacFerran.

**(AQW 1376/11-15)**

**Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice):** Prior to the erroneous release of George Damien Patrick McFerran three other prisoners, Devidas Paliutis, Connelly James Cummins and Sean Gerard Cahill were released in error. The circumstances of these releases differed from each other and from that of Mr. McFerran. None of the recommendations in the Paliutis and Cummins cases would have prevented the release of Mr. Cahill.

The lessons learned from each incident were covered in the recommendations of the respective investigation reports.

## Legal Aid for Riot Related Convictions

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 795/11-15 (i) how many people prosecuted and convicted for offences which occurred in Belfast during the 12th July period 2010 have been granted Legal Aid and the cost to date; and (ii) what are the circumstances of the summonses being issued/re-issued for six people.

**(AQW 1404/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** 38 of the 39 people prosecuted and convicted have been granted Legal Aid.

The total Legal Aid cost to date is £53,053.62.

In relation to the six summonses, they are being re-issued as they could not be served for several reasons including difficulties in locating the subject and the subject not responding to the door at the correct address.

## Department for Regional Development

### Pay and Display Machines

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister for Regional Development, for each constituency, to detail (i) the number of pay and display parking machines; (ii) how many machines have been out of order during the last 12 months; (iii) for how long, on average, the machines have been out of order; and (iv) the cost of (a) repairs to the out of order machines; and (b) maintenance of the machines during the last 12 months.

**(AQW 824/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development):** My Department's Roads Service has advised that information in relation to Pay and Display machines is held on a town rather than constituency basis. Details of the number of machines in each town and the number of machines with faults recorded from May 2010 to April 2011 are detailed in the table below:

Location	No. of Pay & Display Machines	No. of machines having faults - May 2010 to April 2011 (inclusive)
Antrim	3	3
Armagh	3	2
Ballyclare	5	5
Ballymena	10	10
Ballymoney	6	6
Ballynahinch	5	5
Banbridge	6	6
Bangor	12	10
Belfast	181	35
Carrickfergus	11	11
Coleraine	9	9
Downpatrick	2	2
Dungannon	8	8
Enniskillen	18	18

<b>Location</b>	<b>No. of Pay &amp; Display Machines</b>	<b>No. of machines having faults - May 2010 to April 2011 (inclusive)</b>
Hillsborough	1	1
Holywood	6	6
Larne	9	8
Limavady	6	6
Lisburn	51	31
Londonderry	13	12
Magherafelt	7	7
Newry	73	38
Newtownards	11	7
Omagh	14	14
Portadown	6	6
Strabane	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>272</b>

Roads Service's has contracted NSL, its contractor for parking and enforcement arrangements, to manage Pay and Display machines on its behalf. Performance in this area is measured against a specific contractual Key Performance Indicator (KPI) which focuses on response times to reported faults rather than average repair times or the length of time machines are out of order.

The stipulated response time for Pay and Display machines is 24 hours. To meet the required standard, NSL must respond to 98% of reported faults within the stipulated response time. In the period May 2010 to April 2011, NSL failed to meet this KPI on two occasions, recording a 97% response on each occasion. In accordance with the conditions of contract, performance payments were reduced on each occasion by Roads Service.

The costs of repairs to out of order machines and maintenance of machines are contained within the overall contract with NSL, and is calculated on the basis of a monthly charge of £61.15 for each machine. This fixed charge includes the routine maintenance of the machine, cleaning, including the removal of any graffiti, and the replacement of any broken or worn parts.

I am concerned at the high number of machines having faults and have instructed my officials to address this issue as a matter of priority.

### **Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives**

**Mr Lyttle** asked the Minister for Regional 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 984/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The tables below record my Department's main schemes, projects and initiatives which have, since May 2007, received, or are planned to receive, co-operation from Government Departments, agencies and/or organisations from the Republic of Ireland.

These schemes and projects may have featured in discussions of the North South Ministerial Council in Transport Sector or Plenary formats. Following each NSMC meeting an agreed Joint Communiqué is issued and this is posted on the NSMC website [www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org](http://www.northsouthministerialcouncil.org). After each 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.

#### CURRENT SCHEMES – MAY 2007 - DATE

<b>Scheme/Project or Initiative</b>	<b>(a) ROI Gov't Dept or Agency</b>	<b>(b) ROI Non Gov't Agency</b>
Spatial planning issues including preparation of a Framework for Collaboration	Dept of the Environment, Community and Local Government	International Centre for Local and Regional Development Irish Cross Border Area Network
All Island Freight Forum	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Central Statistics Office	Other partners are Road Safety Agency, Irish Maritime Development Office, Irish Exporters Association, CBI/IBEC, Freight Transport Association Ireland.
Plugged in Places Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Pilot Project		ESB, Intel Ireland.
Carshare NW car share website	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	Donegal County Council, Letterkenny Chamber
Walk to School Week 2009, 2010 and 2011	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	An Taisce
Bike Week 2009, 2010 and 2011	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	Multi- agency Bike Week events group
Promotion of sustainable transport and active travel	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	
Provision of Wi-Fi on Cross Border Rail Services	Capital and running costs will be shared between Translink and Iarnród Éireann.	
Installation of Safety Systems on 3 no. class 201 locomotives	Capital costs shared between Translink and Iarnród Éireann.	
Enterprise Generator Van modifications (Head End Power mod)	Cooperation between Translink and Iarnród Éireann on planned/agreed activities and cost share.	
Enterprise Phase 2 Overhaul	Cooperation between Translink and Iarnród Éireann on planned/ agreed activities and cost share.	

<b>Scheme/Project or Initiative</b>	<b>(a) ROI Gov't Dept or Agency</b>	<b>(b) ROI Non Gov't Agency</b>
Smaller capital projects including Ride Comfort Modifications, Toilet and Vestibule Doors Control Unit	Cooperation between Translink and Iarnród Éireann on planned/agreed activities and cost share.	
Funding for Runway Improvements at City of Derry Airport	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	
Small Ferries Project	Department of Arts Heritage and Gaeltacht	
Continuation of Magilligan to Greencastle Ferry Service	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport; Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	Donegal County Council
Enhancing the work of the Carlingford Lough Commissioners	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport; Maritime Safety Directorate	
Ports policy and operational issues	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	Irish Maritime Development Office Irish Ports Association ( Dun Laoghaire; Dundalk, Drogheda; Shannon-Foyne ports) Commissioner for Irish Lights
Cross Border Rural Community Transport Exercise	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	Pobal
Golden Trekker Scheme		Irish Rail Tourism Ireland
All Ireland Concessionary Fares Scheme	Department of Social Protection	
Railway Safety Policy and operational development	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. Irish Rail Safety Commission	Iarnrod Eireann
Railway Regulation policy and operational development	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. Irish Rail Safety Commission	Iarnrod Eireann
EU Cross Acceptance policy and operational development	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. Irish Rail Safety Commission	Iarnrod Eireann
Public Transport Reform Policy Development	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and National Transport Authority	

<b>Scheme/Project or Initiative</b>	<b>(a) ROI Gov't Dept or Agency</b>	<b>(b) ROI Non Gov't Agency</b>
EASYWAY – European wide transport project involving Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) on the Trans European Network (TENS) Part funded EU (27 member states involved).	National Roads Authority	
5 Nations meeting on Intelligent transport Systems (ITS). Home Nations and ROI.	National Roads Authority	
A1 N1 Newry to Dundalk dual carriageway.	National Roads Authority	Louth County Council
Narrow Water Bridge – Co-operation only, no direct involvement and funded entirely by Louth County Council		Louth County Council
Cross Border Steering Group	Comprises senior representatives of Roads Service, the National Roads Authority and The Irish Department of Transport which meets biannually to discuss roads related issues.	
Roads Service is the lead partner, in a Cross Border Roads and Infrastructure Development (CBRIDs) project to avail of funding through the Interreg IVa programme.		This CBRIDs project is a joint venture between Roads Service and Monaghan County Council, to benefit from grant aid for Capital projects in the border region. Monaghan have re-constructed two cross border bridges that were demolished in the 1970's and Roads Service has invested in the Culmore Road / Madams Bank Road junction improvement in Londonderry.
N13 Stranorlar – Derry Transport studies shared with consultants working for the NRA	National Roads Authority	
Belcoo Bridge	National Roads Authority	Cavan County Council
A5 and A8 Dual Carriageway projects	National Roads Authority and The Irish Department of Transport	
Footway link at Killea (B193)		Donegal County Council
Information gathering and liaison regarding air crash at Cork Airport	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	

Scheme/Project or Initiative	(a) ROI Gov't Dept or Agency	(b) ROI Non Gov't Agency
There are regular meetings between Donegal County Council and Roads Service officials in relation to road safety issues and future highway upgrades.	National Roads Authority	Donegal County Council

## Departmental Procurement

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Regional Development, 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 1154/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** In November 2009, my Department, following consultation with the Central Procurement Directorate, issued Procurement Guidelines to all non industrial staff. The Guidelines included a requirement that single tender action (STA) contracts for supplies and services with a value greater than £10,000 be approved by the Accounting Officer (AO). The Accounting Officer authorised two of his deputies, namely the Chief Executive of Roads Service and the Senior Finance Director, to approve STA contracts with a value of £10,000 or below in Roads Service and DRD Core business areas respectively.

In June 2010, the Central Procurement Directorate issued a Procurement Guidance Note which formalised the requirement for AO approval and additionally advised that, in certain instances, contract extensions may be deemed to be STAs.

Prior to November 2009, it was not a requirement within my Department for the Accounting Officer to approve STA contracts, except where the contract was for the procurement of external consultants. Business areas were, however, required to comply with procurement control limits in order to achieve competitiveness and value for money in procurement contracts.

From June 2008, it has been a requirement for all external consultancy STA contracts to be approved by the Accounting Officer.

From the dates when it became a Departmental requirement to obtain Accounting Officer approval for STA contracts (including relevant contract extensions) four contracts, with a total value of £254,000 were awarded without the advance approval of the Accounting Officer.

The table at Annex A provides the requested detail on the following:

- (a) External consultancy contracts awarded by STA from June 2008;
- (b) Contracts awarded by STA from November 2009;
- (c) External consultancy contract extensions deemed to be STAs from June 2010; and
- (d) Contracts extensions deemed to be STA from June 2010.

**Single Tender Action Contracts awarded without advance authorisation by the Accounting Officer for:-**

- (a) External Consultancy Contracts awarded by STA from June 2008;  
 (b) Contracts awarded by STA from November 2009;  
 (c) External Consultancy contract extensions (deemed to be STA) from June 2010; and  
 (d) Contract extensions (deemed to be STA) from June 2010.

(i) Category of STA and reason for no advance authorisation by the Accounting Officer	(ii) Expenditure £'000	(iii) Supplier Name	(iv) Date of retrospective approval by AO
(a) Transfer of the 2007 E Way version of Belfast Transportation Model to DRD.  The STA award was approved in advance of the contract award by the Senior Finance Director. Subsequent monitoring highlighted that the award of the contract required AO approval. Retrospective approval has been received.	3	Atkins Ltd	01/07/2011
(a) Review of NIW procurement processes.  Perm Sec commissioned this work personally due to the urgency required, however the formal business case was not signed until after the work had started.	49	Deloitte and G Thompson	10/02/2011
(b) Nil	-	-	-
(c) Critical Friend for the Regional Transportation Strategy Review.  The STA arose because of an extension to the above contract. The extension was initially approved by the Director of Finance as it was not initially appreciated that the contract extension was in the category deemed to be a STA contract. Subsequent monitoring highlighted that the award of the contract required AO approval which was subsequently sought and received.	6	Prof. George Hazel of MRC Mclean Hazel	23/03/2011

<b>(i)</b> <b>Category of STA and reason for no advance authorisation by the Accounting Officer</b>	<b>(ii)</b> <b>Expenditure £'000</b>	<b>(iii)</b> <b>Supplier Name</b>	<b>(iv)</b> <b>Date of retrospective approval by AO</b>
(d) Support and Maintenance of Roads Maintenance Client System, Road Traffic Collision System and Street Lighting System  This contract extension was required to enable Roads Service to provide continuity of key safety services to the public relating to traffic management and street lighting. Officials had over a number of months been in discussions with CPD regarding the position and recently received confirmation that a Direct Award Contract (DAC) was required for the extension of these services from 2011/12 onwards. These arrangements have now been formalised, however payment was made in advance of formal AO approval due to the threat of legal action by the contractor.	196	Bentley Systems (UK) Ltd	8/07/2011
<b>Total</b>	<b>254</b>		

### Unauthorised Commemorations to Terrorists

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of unauthorised commemorations to terrorists which exist on property owned by his Department, or its arm's-length bodies, and (ii) what steps he intends to take to remove them.

**(AQW 1303/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's officials have advised that there are 34 commemorations on property owned by my Department, or its arm's length bodies.

My officials are acutely aware of the local and political sensitivities surrounding such commemorations.

### Sale of Departmental Land

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to sell land in the North Down area that is owned by his Department.

**(AQW 1370/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service does not collate details of land for sale on a constituency area basis. However, I am able to provide you with details of land declared surplus by my Department in the North Down Borough Council area. This land is currently in the process of being disposed of in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Land and Property Services.

The locations of the surplus lands are listed in the following table:

Location	Town
Area of Land at A2 Dual Carriageway	Hollywood
31a Ashdale Crescent	Bangor
Balloo Road	Bangor
208 Bangor Road	Craigavad
2 Green Lane	Conlig
Hamilton Road	Bangor
Hamilton Road / Park Drive	Bangor
81 High Street	Hollywood
41 Marlo Heights	Bangor
Redburn Square	Hollywood
1a Robinson Road	Bangor
17 Seahill Drive	Hollywood
Old Belfast Road	Bangor

In addition, I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that properties at the following locations in the North Down area, are currently considered surplus to requirements and consequently are deemed suitable for disposal in the future:

Location
Conlig Depot
Seaside Tavern, Hollywood (old pumping station)
Portavo Impounding Reservoir
Conlig Upper Impounding Reservoir
Conlig Lower Impounding Reservoir
Ballysallagh Upper Impounding Reservoir
Ballysallagh Lower Impounding Reservoir
Creightons Green Impounding Reservoir
Whinney Hill Service Reservoir
Ballyminetragh Old Service Reservoir, Groomsport
Church Road Impounding Reservoir, Hollywood

## Fuel Costs

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of (i) the additional fuel for Roads Service vehicles that are now based in the Magherafelt depot since the closure of the Cookstown depot, broken down by vehicle type; and (ii) additional staff travel allowance since the closure of the Cookstown depot.

**(AQW 1426/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that, since the closure of the Cookstown depot on 1 October 2010 until 31 May 2011, the cost of overtime paid to staff at the Magherafelt depot was £46,335.

### **Roads Service: Overtime**

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of overtime paid to Roads Service staff at the Magherafelt depot since the closure of the Cookstown depot.

**(AQW 1428/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is not possible to provide the information requested by the Member on the cost of additional fuel for Roads Service vehicles now based at Magherafelt depot since the closure of Cookstown depot.

The additional staff travel allowance paid since the closure of Cookstown depot on 1 October 2011 until 31 May 2011 was £3935.

### **Roads Service: Meetings with the National Housing Bidding Council**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 773/11-15, to detail (i) the outcome of meetings between Roads Service and the Regional Director of the National Housing-Building Council; and (ii) what action he intends to take in relation to developers who have been unable to complete roads in private housing estates.

**(AQW 1431/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that the main outcome that emerged from the meeting between officials and the Regional Director of the National Housing-Building Council was an improved mutual understanding of current issues and pressures relating to bonds and the completion of roads in housing developments.

With regard to those developers who have been unable to complete roads in private housing estates, I can advise that my Department will take the appropriate action to have such roads completed, including the use of road bond monies, as appropriate.

### **Capital Projects: North Down**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development what capital projects are planned for the North Down constituency in each of the next three years.

**(AQW 1443/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service develops its work programmes by Council area rather than on a constituency basis.

I would remind the Member that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year 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.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom\\_of\\_information/customer\\_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils](http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils)

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of the works programme at this time.

Details of capital projects planned by Translink in the North Down constituency, in each of the next three years, are provided in the table below.

<b>Capital Projects In North Down</b>	<b>Financial Year 2011/12</b>	<b>Financial Year 2012/13</b>	<b>Financial Year 2013/14</b>
Bangor Integrated – Refurbishment of Public Toilets	£10,000	0	0
Vegetation Management Programme - Bangor Line	£164,000	0	0
Bangor Bus/Rail Installation of Barriers	£10,000	0	0
Bangor – Improvements to Rear Path and Fencing	£30,000	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£214,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Those projects which will have an impact on the entire Translink network, including North Down, are provided in the table below.

<b>Capital Projects Impacting On North Down</b>	<b>Financial Year 2011/12</b>	<b>Financial Year 2012/13</b>	<b>Financial Year 2013/14</b>
Class 4000 Rolling Stock	£51,907,000	£1,812,000	£73,000
Class 3000 Overhaul	£1,907,000	£1,613,000	£2,779,000
Class 3000 Wi-Fi Equipment	£600,000	0	0
Long Line Public Address Renewal & Expansion Programme	£192,000	£288,000	0
Bridge Examination & Assessment Programme	£263,000	£106,000	0
Embankments & Cuttings	0	£144,000	£251,000
CCTV Programme (NIR)	£49,000	£67,000	£67,000
Building Services Upgrade Programme	£448,000	£1,150,000	£58,000
CCTV Programme (Ulsterbus)	£61,000	£50,000	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£5,5427,000</b>	<b>£5,230,000</b>	<b>£3,228,000</b>

My Department will also be investing over these financial years in the purchase of new modern buses, some of which will be deployed in the North Down constituency.

### Service 64 Journeys

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of journeys of the Service 64 in each of the last three financial years.

**(AQW 1468/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Translink have provided me with the following information:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Passenger journeys</b>
2008/2009	2109
2009/2010	2230

Year	Passenger journeys
2010/2011	2307
<b>Total</b>	<b>6646</b>

### Removal of Weeds from Pavements

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline any changes, in the last 12 months, to the policy on the removal of weeds from pavements.

**(AQW 1475/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has confirmed that there have been no changes to the policy in relation to the removal of weeds from pavements in the last 12 months.

### Removal of Weeds from Pavements

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether it is the responsibility of Roads Service to remove weeds from pavements.

**(AQW 1477/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has confirmed that it has no specific statutory obligation to remove weeds, other than in relation to the control of noxious weeds. Roads Service's policy and procedures, in relation to weed control, are aimed at ensuring the safety of road users and to prevent the deterioration of the footway.

### Weedkiller Used by Roads Service to Treat Footpaths

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what type of weedkiller is used by Roads Service to treat footpaths.

**(AQW 1489/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that the majority of weed spraying on footpaths is carried out by external contractors. A general survey of products used by them shows the use of Glyphosate based weed killers to treat footpaths. Trade names of this product include "Reaper" and "Route One Rosate 36".

Roads Service's direct labour force presently uses a non-selective systemic herbicide that is currently approved for professional use on hard surfaces. The product name is "Frontsweep".

### Proposed Bridge for Carlingford Lough

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed bridge for Carlingford Lough.

**(AQW 1503/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have assumed that your question refers to the proposal for a bridge at Narrow Water across the Newry River, which flows into Carlingford Lough.

I would advise the Member that the Narrow Water Bridge proposal is being taken forward by Louth County Council and my Department has no direct involvement in this project, nor has it made any commitment to contribute funds to it.

### Redevelopment of Culmore Roundabout

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of whether the increase in traffic flow, the enlargement of traffic lanes and the removal of hedge barriers resulting from the redevelopment of the Culmore Roundabout has caused an increase in noise disruption and invasion

of privacy for residents in the Mount Pleasant area; and what actions his Department is taking to limit this disruption.

**(AQW 1527/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that, prior to work commencing at Culmore Road Roundabout, it commissioned a non-statutory Environmental Assessment to assess the potential effects of the scheme. This report concluded that there would be no significant increase in noise levels for any of the neighbouring properties attributable to the scheme.

Roads Service does acknowledge that there has been some loss of privacy for some neighbouring properties due to the necessary removal of trees within the road boundary. However, it has already replanted the side slopes with suitable trees and shrubs to help redress this loss. In addition, Roads Service also intends to erect a 1.8 metre high wooden boarded fence, to help provide some privacy to adjacent properties, until the planting has become established.

### **Flags and Advertisements on Street Light Posts**

**Mr McCarthy** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 539/11-15, whether Roads Service removed any unauthorised advertising material from lamp posts during May 2011 or June on Main Road, Cloughy.

**(AQW 1537/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that officials removed 16 unauthorised advertising signs, including those on lamp posts, from Main Road, Cloughy during June 2011. No such signs were removed during May 2011.

### **Roads Service's Car Parks**

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will consider the provision of car parking spaces for parents with children in Roads Service's car parks.

**(AQW 1552/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it operates off-street car parks under the Off-Street Parking Order NI (2000) and that there are no powers, within the Order, to permit the provision of specific spaces in car parks for parents with children. A legislative change would therefore be necessary to allow such spaces to be provided.

Roads Service considers that to make such a system creditable, it would have to be similar to that currently used for blue badge holders. Given the lack of precedent elsewhere, such a system would be difficult to devise. It would also be expensive both to develop and to run, and it is debateable whether the resultant benefit would justify the resource input required to put it in place. This would be an important factor as without such a system, proper enforcement would be impracticable.

I am further advised that the results of the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) annual 'Baywatch' surveys, indicates that the level of abuse of accessible/disabled bays in private car parks, where there is limited or no control, to be consistently in the region of 20 percent. This would indicate that rigorous enforcement is needed to ensure that such facilities are kept free for those for whom they are intended.

It should be remembered that accessible bays are provided for blue badge holders in recognition of their reduced mobility. These wider parking bays are located in positions closest to the driver's intended destination, not only to enable the driver to use the facility but to also minimise the distance they have to walk. It also has to be taken into account that these people generally do not have any alternative but to park as close to services as is possible. However, parents with children typically do not face the same mobility issues as people with disabilities, and also have the choice to park elsewhere if they feel that the parking space is not suitable.

I would therefore confirm that I have no proposals to provide specific parking spaces for parents with children

## Parking Spaces for People with a Disability

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what legislation governs the requirement to provide parking spaces in car parks for people with a disability; (ii) what is the ratio for the required number of parking spaces for people with a disability compared to the size of a car park; and (iii) what is the required minimum size of (a) a car parking space; and (b) a car parking space for people with a disability.

**(AQW 1555/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it provides parking bays for disabled persons' vehicles through the powers granted by Article 13 of the Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.

Regarding the proportion of parking spaces allocated to people with a disability, I can advise that my Department aims to reserve at least two percent of spaces in its car parks for blue badge holders.

With regard to the size of car parking spaces, I am advised that in general the minimum sizes are:

- (a) 2.0m wide by 4.2m long for general parking provision; and
- (b) 3.6m wide by 4.2m long for accessible bays.

## Department for Social Development

### Multi-Element Improvement Schemes

**Mr Craig** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the housing units which the Housing Executive has listed for Multi-Element Improvement schemes since May 2007; and to list these schemes according to (i) scheduled start date; and (ii) the priority identified by his Department.

**(AQW 982/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development):** The Multi Element Improvement (MEI) programme has been suspended since 2007/08 when the collapse of the land and property market reduced the housing budget that had been so heavily dependant on capital receipts to fund many programmes such as MEI's. Since then the Housing Executive has been looking at alternative methods of providing improvement works, for example through kitchen replacements. I have also visited the pilot scheme at Rinmore in Londonderry that saw tenants overwhelmingly support a stock transfer proposal that will see 55 unimproved homes transfer from the Housing Executive to a local Housing Association who will inject £2.5m of their own resources into upgrading the homes that had initially been scheduled for MEI.

The attached table outlines the range of MEI schemes that had been scheduled to commence. I understand that the Housing Executive Board plan to consider the specific issue of how best to carry forward improvement works at a meeting later this month.

**TABLE: MEI SCHEMES THAT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO COMMENCE**

Scheme Name/Location	No. of Dwellings	Start Date
<b>Belfast Area</b>		
Annadale Flats 1	54	19.11.07
Torr Way Bungalows	20	01.03.08
Hazeldene/ Strathroy/ Northwick	33	18.07.08
Northbrook Street	18	01.09.08
Woodvale Phase 10	13	16.10.08

<b>Scheme Name/Location</b>	<b>No. of Dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Cregagh/ Woodstock	28	15.01.09
Suffolk Road Flats	24	16.01.09
Lendrick/ Parker	63	01.04.09
Finaghy Phase 3	46	02.04.09
Annadale Phase 2	48	01.08.09
Roden Street	13	22.09.09
Kinnegar Road, Finaghy	30	04.02.10
Annadale Phase 3	58	01.02.11
Locksley, Finaghy	80	01.02.11
Lower Skegoneill Flats	78	01.04.11
Tigers Bay (Long Terrace)	12	01.06.11
Lenadoon/ Dungloe	24	01.04.13
Garron, Finaghy	80	01.04.20
Greenland/ Boundary Way	23	01.04.20
Annadale Phase 4	42	01.04.20
<b>North East Area</b>		
Sallagh Park, Larne	26	26.01.08
Castlemara Phase 3, Carrickfergus	45	26.01.08
Coleraine Bungalows	53	24.02.08
Antrim Rural Cottages	10	26.02.08
Longfield Gardens, Greenisland	16	19.03.08
Enterprise Parade, Portstewart	49	03.04.08
Rathcoole Phase 5A, Newtownabbey	70	10.04.08
New Mossley Upper, Newtownabbey	63	13.08.08
Dublin Road Phase 2,	62	07.08.08
Ballykeel 2 Phase 1, Ballymena	53	15.08.08
Ballykeel 2 Phase 2, Ballymena	73	15.08.08
Ballee Phase 1, Ballymena	34	15.08.08
Millburn, Coleraine	78	04.09.08
Drumhoy/ Ederny, Carrickfergus	34	15.09.08
Glenarm	17	15.09.08
Ederny Walk 1 beds, Carrickfergus	9	26.09.08
Rushpark Multis, Newtownabbey	112	19.10.08
Kintyre Park/ Shops, Ballymena	7	01.03.09

<b>Scheme Name/Location</b>	<b>No. of Dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Ballygallin, Coleraine	8	17.03.09
Dhu Varren, Portrush	55	01.04.09

<b>Scheme Name/Location</b>	<b>No. of Dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Devenagh Way Flats, Ballymena	18	01.04.09
Townpark North Flats, Antrim	54	03.04.09
Monkscoole House, Newtownabbey	72	04.04.09
Curraghmore/ Glebeview, Garvagh	32	10.04.09
Riverdale Maisonettes, Larne	12	11.04.09
Drumtara Phase 1, Ballymena	53	17.04.09
Drumhoy/ Ederny Flats, Carrickfergus	10	10.06.09
Chichester Park East, Ballymena	24	15.06.09
Wellington Green, Larne	25	15.08.09
Granville Drive, Ballymena	19	07.09.09
Newpark Phase 1, Antrim	75	09.09.09
Whitehead one bed bungalows	47	15.09.09
Drumtara Phase 2, Ballymena	22	01.10.09
Ferris Park Phase 2, Dromore	67	10.10.09
Moat Road, Ballymena	20	04.11.09
Kelburn Park, Newtownabbey	22	02.02.10
Rathcoole Phase 5B, Newtownabbey	33	03.03.10
Loughview Curran Road, Larne	14	04.04.10
Doury Road Phase 2, Ballymena	40	04.04.10
Antrim Rurals	19	15.06.10
Hazelbank, Coleraine	44	10.08.10
Abbotscoole House, Newtownabbey	48	15.08.10
Upper Glebe Maisonettes, Moira	24	15.08.10
Seacourt/ Glenvale, Larne	30	01.09.10
Killane Park, Ahoghill	34	03.09.10
Neillsbrook 2, Antrim	30	15.09.10
Benvore Park, Cargan, Ballymena	8	10.10.10
Kincora/ Shancoole, Ballymena	54	11.11.10
Ballykeel 2 Phase 3, Ballymena	84	05.01.11
Latharna House, Larne	90	20.03.11

<b>Scheme Name/Location</b>	<b>No. of Dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Larne Rural 1 bed bungalows	32	04.04.11
Ballykeel 2 one beds, Ballymena	19	15.04.11
Drumtara Phase 3, Ballymena	55	01.06.11
Caulside/ Newpark, Antrim	38	15.06.11
Doury Road Phase 3, Ballymena	44	15.08.11
Ballykeel 2 Phase 4, Ballymena	62	20.09.11
Carncoole House, Newtownabbey	54	03.10.11
Drumtara Phase 4, Ballymena	24	01.01.12
Toomebridge	35	02.08.13
Monkstown Phase 8	30	11.09.13
Moneydig/ Leardon, Garvagh	12	21.10.14
Thornhill Parade, Ballyclare	0	10.11.14

<b>Scheme Name/Location</b>	<b>No. of Dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
<b>South Area</b>		
Rural Cottages Lurgan	17	31.03.08
Drumlin Drive/ Monbrief, Lurgan	22	31.03.08
Warrenpoint 1 beds	33	08.05.08
Castlehill Park Ballygawley	18	17.06.08
Wellington Street, Lurgan	32	05.09.08
Alexander Estate, Armagh	39	03.09.08
Parkview/ Moody Park, Loughbrickland	22	16.10.08
Clonmeen/ Enniskeen, Brownlow	26	12.12.08
Chestnut Place/ Castleview Banbridge	41	29.12.08
Ackinduff/ Drumreagh	27	19.01.09
Crossmore/ Lir Gardens, Keady	30	21.01.09
Mourne Crescent, Knockmoy, Coalisland	18	05.02.09
Ulsterville Park/ Gardens, Portadown	34	09.02.09
Clanrye/ Raymond Kelly Park, Newry	42	15.04.09
Granville Road/ Princess Way, Portadown	30	17.04.09
South Armagh 1 bed bungalows	44	01.05.09
Avenue Road, Lurgan	37	01.05.09
Hillhead/ Moorefield, Banbridge	41	01.05.09
Mossfield/ Ballymore, Glenane/ Tandragee	64	20.05.09

<b>Scheme Name/Location</b>	<b>No. of Dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Elm Park/ Bellevue Terrace, Richill	19	18.07.09
Drumhillary/ Rural 1 Armagh	29	31.08.09
Mourneview Park Flats, Newry	23	01.09.09
South Down – 1 bed bungalows	48	25.10.09
Culdee Flats, Armagh	44	01.01.10
Newry/ Mullaghbawn 1	50	01.05.10
Cleary Crescent Flats, Newry	42	01.10.10
<b>South East Area</b>		
Jubilee Court, Bangor	35	04.02.08
Hillhall Bungalows, Lisburn	35	04.02.08
Bloomfield Bungalows Phase 2 Ballyree	44	03.03.08
Glenmore Walk Flats, Lisburn	18	17.03.08
West Winds Phase 4A, Newtownards	37	17.03.08
Moyle Walk/ Kilwarlin, Lisburn	32	17.03.08
Kilcooley 1A, Bangor	24	24.03.08
Victoria Bungalows, Newtownards	10	24.03.08
Kilcooley 1B Bungalows, Bangor	20	01.04.08
Bloomfield Bungalows Phase 3, Bangor	27	01.04.08
West Winds Phase 5, Newtownards	24	01.04.08
Rathgill Zone 5, Bangor	16	08.04.08
West Winds Phase 4B, Newtownards	22	01.09.08
Craig Garden Bungalows, Lisburn	8	08.09.08

<b>Scheme Name/Location</b>	<b>No. of Dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Tonagh Phase 3, Lisburn	40	14.09.08
Belvoir Bedsit Flats, Castlereagh	34	01.10.08
Glen Bungalows, Newtownards	16	10.08.09
West Winds Phase 6, Newtownards	66	01.09.09
West Winds Phase 7, Newtownards	46	01.09.10
Castlereagh Rurals	3	01.04.11
Kilcooley Zone 1, Bangor	54	01.04.11
Hillhall Park, Lisburn	24	03.08.11
<b>West Area</b>		
Main Street/ 39 Alexander Pk, Magherafelt	4	11.02.08

<b>Scheme Name/Location</b>	<b>No. of Dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Castleberg/ Sion Mills	40	03.03.08
High Park, Derry	16	31.03.08
Sperrin Road/ Rathbeg, Limavady	50	07.04.08
Benbradagh Avenue/ Event, Limavady	59	07.04.08
Balbane/ Linsfort, Creggan, Derry	55	01.09.08
Beechwood Crescent/ Eastway, Creggan	40	06.04.09
Central Drive/ Dunree, Creggan, Derry	36	06.04.09
Melmore Gardens, Creggan, Derry	22	07.09.09
Benevenagh Drive/ Grange, Limavady	53	07.09.09
Columbia Park/ Church Street, Limavady	30	05.10.09
Cookstown Flats/ Bungalows	33	30.01.10
Magherafelt Flats/ Bungalows	32	05.04.10
Omagh Flats/ Bungalows	35	04.04.11
Ext 53 Parkview, Pomeroy	1	07.05.12

### **Housing Renovation Schemes**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development to list in order of priority the major renovation schemes planned for housing estates over the next twelve months.

**(AQW 1124/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has confirmed that there are no major renovation schemes planned for housing estates over the next twelve months due to a reduction in capital funding. However, the table below details the heating, kitchen and external cyclical maintenance schemes in their programme for 2011/12 by start date.

**TABLE: HEATING, KITCHEN AND EXTERNAL CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE SCHEMES IN THE PROGRAMME FOR 2011/12**

<b>Scheme name</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
<b>Belfast</b>		
<b>1st Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Belfast One-Off's - Heating	100	01/04/11
Erskine St/Chamberlain St - Heating	64	30/05/11
Summerhill/Ardcarn – External Cyclical Maintenance	153	21/06/11
<b>2nd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Glencairn - Windows & Insulation	150	06/06/11

<b>Scheme name</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Albertbridge Road/Tower Street – External Cyclical Maintenance	188	27/06/11
Bruslee/Pinkerton - Kitchens	135	27/06/11
White City Phase 2 - Windows	225	01/08/11
Huss/Ashmore, Belfast - Kitchens	77	01/08/11
<b>3rd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Highfield - Windows	203	27/06/11
Suffolk - Windows	216	01/08/11
East Belfast - Economy 7	41	01/08/11
Mid Springfield - Kitchens	99	01/09/11
Greencastle Close - Heating	26	01/10/11
South Belfast - Economy 7	47	01/10/11
North Belfast - Economy 7	51	01/10/11
Willowfield/Upper Castlereagh - Kitchens	56	01/10/11
St Leonards Street - Kitchens	68	01/11/11
Carnet House - Windows	71	01/02/12
<b>4th Tranche 2011/2012*</b>		
West Belfast - Economy 7	38	01/09/11
Shankill Belfast - Economy 7	105	01/09/11
<b>Reserve 2011/12***</b>		
Shankill & South Thermal Comfort to include heating & insulation	55	01/06/11
West Belfast Thermal Comfort to include heating & insulation	25	01/06/11
North Belfast Thermal Comfort to include heating & insulation	49	01/06/11
Roden Street Area (West) Part 1 - Kitchens	102	01/11/11
Lower Ormeau - Windows	130	01/01/12
Queen Victoria Garden Flats – External Cyclical Maintenance	36	01/02/12
The Village Improvement to Kitchens Ph 1	120	01/02/12
Mid Shankill Phase 1 (Part 1) - Kitchens	71	01/02/12
Lower Ormeau – Improvement of acquired stock	101	01/02/12
Silverstream/Ballysillan – Kitchens	196	01/02/12
Village Area - Window Ph 1	120	01/03/12
Lower Beersbridge/Mount - Windows	270	01/03/12

<b>Scheme name</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Rinalea/Lower Lenadoon – External Cyclical Maintenance	224	01/03/12
Lower Shankill Phase 1 – Kitchens	145	01/03/12
The Village Improvement Area Phase 2	119	01/03/12
Island Street – Kitchens	37	01/03/12
Tyndale/Silverstream – Kitchens	184	01/03/12
Springmadden/Ballymurphy - Kitchens	40	01/03/12
<b>North East</b>		
<b>1st Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Springfarm/Stiles – Heating	44	04/04/11
Area One Off Heating Scheme 2011/12	55	04/04/11
West Rathcoole Ph 1 - Kitchens	94	04/04/11
Dervock,Clintyfinnan,Rasharkin – External Cyclical Maintenance	388	16/05/11
Newtownabbey 2 - Heating	129	20/06/11
New Mossley Upper - Kitchens	54	20/06/11
<b>2nd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Cushendall/Cushendun – Heating	37	15/06/11
Milburn – Heating	76	25/07/11
1A-F Grange Drive, Ballyclare - Heating	5	30/07/11
Ballee – External Cyclical Maintenance	363	02/08/11
Monkstown/Kelburn – Kitchens	91	07/08/11
Carrickfergus - External Cyclical Maintenance	162	15/08/11
Lantarra/Lettercreeve – Heating	101	25/09/11
Glenarm/Carnlough - Windows/Painting	94	24/10/11
Killane Pk/Chichester East - Kitchens	121	03/01/12
Antrim Town - External Cyclical Maintenance	357	06/01/12
<b>3rd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Harpurs Hill - Heating	47	05/09/11
Ballintoy/Liscolman - External Cyclical Maintenance	18	15/09/11
Ballyclare/Doagh - Heating	92	04/10/11
Toome/Cooltsythe - Kitchens	75	06/10/11
Glenarm/Sallagh - Kitchens	68	15/10/11
Carnanny - Heating	66	07/11/11

<b>Scheme name</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Balintoy/Liscolman - Windows/ Painting	18	02/03/12
<b>4th Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Dublin Road/Townparks - Heating	108	05/01/12
<b>Retrofit Schemes 2011/12**</b>		
Ferris Park - Heating	62	23/05/11
Longfield/Carrick Town - Heating	68	13/06/11
Ballymena Town - Heating	182	11/11/11
<b>Reserve 2011/12***</b>		
Ballysally Area 1 Ph2 – Kitchens	128	01/01/12
Ballymena South – Heating	79	09/01/12
Monkscoole House - Windows	71	30/01/12
Rathcoole Zone - - External Cyclical Maintenance	99	01/02/12
Ballymena North – Heating	87	04/02/12
Glebeside Ph1 (Paint/Repairs)	168	05/02/12
Castlemara/Longfield/Ederney - Kitchens	79	07/02/12
Springfarm Ph3 - Kitchens	123	07/02/12
Abbotscoole House - Windows	57	20/02/12
Ballykeel 2 Ph1 - Kitchens	87	03/03/12
Carncoole House - Windows	57	30/03/12
<b>South</b>		
<b>1st Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Gather Up 11 – One off heating schemes	50	04/04/11
Armagh Road Newry - Kitchens	103	02/05/11
Redmanville – Heating	112	27/06/11
Drumgullion/Meadows/Violet Hill – External Cyclical Maintenance	371	08/08/11
<b>2nd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Armagh District - Windows	85	20/06/11
Cornagrade - Kitchens	105	01/08/11
Enniskeen - Kitchens	115	23/08/11
Hospital Estate - External Cyclical Maintenance	192	19/09/11
<b>3rd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		

<b>Scheme name</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Lawrencetown/Loughbrickland - External Cyclical Maintenance	245	19/09/11
Annaghmore/Keady/Armagh - Kitchens	75	19/09/11
Irvinestown/Lisbellaw - Kitchens	96	23/09/11
Corcraun - Heating	97	25/09/11
Dobbins Grove/Killuney/Lisanal - Heating	66	03/10/11
Lisnahull/Milltown/Carland Rd - External Cyclical Maintenance	303	24/10/11
Hillview/Kilmacormick - Heating	45	14/11/11
<b>4th Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Callan St/Drumarg – Heating	101	01/01/12
Dungannon/Donaghmore - Heating	115	04/01/12
Gilford/Scarva/Loughbrickland - Heating	51	20/01/12
<b>Retrofit Schemes 2011/12**</b>		
Kenlis/Mountview/Meganlis - Heating	42	17/10/11
<b>Reserve 2011/12***</b>		
Brownstown/Clounagh - External Cyclical Maintenance	209	07/11/11
Carrowshee/Hudson Heights - External Cyclical Maintenance	116	21/11/11
Newry - Windows	94	26/11/11
Banbridge - Windows	137	12/12/11
Drumbawn/Derrin Pk/Ferney - External Cyclical Maintenance	219	02/01/12
Springdale/Fairfield - Kitchens	107	16/01/12
Cornagrade - Heating	94	30/01/12
Longstone/Markethill/Richhill - Kitchens	76	01/02/12
Coalisland - External Cyclical Maintenance	190	06/02/12
Avenue Road/ Bleary - Kitchens	71	20/02/12
<b>South East</b>		
<b>1st Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
South East Area One Off Heating	30	01/04/11
Rushmore/Knockburn – External Cyclical Maintenance	132	04/04/11
Crawfordsburn/Groomsport/Lisnabreen - Heating	80	04/04/11

<b>Scheme name</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Castlerobin,Belvoir - External Cyclical Maintenance	331	11/04/11
Scrabo – Kitchens	161	11/04/11
Hollywood - Room heaters/Open Fire	101	04/07/11
148a-158a Longstone St. - Kitchens/Heating	6	25/07/11
Belvoir - Kitchens	29	02/08/11
<b>2nd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Milltown Ave – Kitchens	86	01/07/11
Local Area Priority Lisburn - Windows/Insulation	296	01/08/11
Milltown Derriaghy & Areema - Heating	84	01/11/11
Tullycarnet - Room heater Replacement	54	07/11/11
<b>3rd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Doon Pk,Carryduff/N'ewtownbreda - Kitchens (86/9/90)	80	01/08/11
Local Area Priority Glenbawn Estate - Windows/Insulation	193	05/09/11
Hilden/Low Road - Kitchens Ph 1	86	01/11/11
Portaferry/Portavogie/Kircubbin - Kitchens	105	01/12/11
Low Road – Heating & Insulation	80	01/03/12
Comber - Heating	27	25/03/12
<b>4th Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Coronation Pk/Moatview/Banff - Heating	59	02/01/12
Portaferryferry/Portavogie/Cotton - Heating	81	20/03/12
<b>Retrofit Schemes 2011/12**</b>		
Ballynahinch – Heating & Insulation	66	02/08/11
Belvoir/Grays Pk/Carryduff - Room heater	27	05/09/11
Millisle - Room heaters	31	02/01/12
Ballywalter/Kircubbin - Heating	95	09/01/12
<b>Reserve 2011/12***</b>		
Killyleagh/Crossgar – Heating & Insulation	113	05/09/11
Greenwood/Moira - Kitchens	47	05/09/11
Bangor Dist - Windows/Insulation	285	01/11/11
Castlereagh District - Windows/Insulation	271	01/01/12
Glen Estate Roofs Spec Revenue	120	03/01/12

<b>Scheme name</b>	<b>Number of dwellings</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
Cappagh Gdns Flats – External Cyclical Maintenance	48	03/01/12
Downpatrick District - Windows/Insulation	369	01/02/12
Ballybeen Enler/Kilberry/Kilmuir - External Cyclical Maintenance	60	01/02/12
Ardkeel/Ballybeg/Mourne	55	01/02/12
Glen/Comber - Windows/Insulation	316	01/03/12
Ardcaoin - Kitchens	119	01/03/12
Churchill/Groomsport/Redburn - Kitchens	99	05/03/12
Burrendale - Kitchens	93	10/03/12
Bowtown – Heating & Insulation	109	15/03/12
Downpatrick/Strangford - Heating	91	31/03/12
<b>West</b>		
<b>1st Tranche 2011 12*</b>		
Emergency One off heating Scheme 2011/12	40	01/04/11
Glenfada - Remainder of Electric Heating	34	04/04/11
Cashelhill/Brookdale Cr – Remainder of Electric heating	27	04/04/11
Sandy Braes/Hunters - Windows	89	09/05/11
Sunnyside/Park View - Remainder of Electric Heating	13	09/05/11
Brown Dr/Edmund Ct/O'Hara Rd - Kitchens	76	23/05/11
Beechway - Heating	29	13/06/11
Glenvale Rd,Glenbank Rd,Glenside - Heating	112	15/08/11
<b>2nd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Virginia/Campion/Mimosa Court - Kitchens	117	30/05/11
The Fountain – Electric Heating	33	20/06/11
Ardnabrocky/Gobnascale/Primity - Heating	113	04/07/11
Beechway/Ratheen Ave – External Cyclical Maintenance	211	18/08/11
Castleberg/Sion - Windows	56	22/08/11
Coolessan/Woodland - External Cyclical Maintenance	104	05/09/11
<b>3rd Tranche 2011/12*</b>		
Lilac Av/Ballyboigh/Rushie Park - Heating	49	03/10/11
Drumleck Drive /Gardens - Kitchens	129	17/10/11

Scheme name	Number of dwellings	Start Date
Earhart/Amelia/Capall Ct - Heating	89	07/11/11
Meadow/Denamona/Duncan - External Cyclical Maintenance	118	05/12/11
Beechwood/Dunaff/Central Drive - External Cyclical Maintenance	70	05/12/11
<b>Retrofit Schemes 2011/12**</b>		
Culmore/Duncan/Denamona – Heating & Insulation	66	14/11/11
Crawfordsburn/Mcmasters Crescent - Heating	67	05/12/11
<b>Reserve 2011/12***</b>		
Alexander Rd/Church St/Connell St, Limavady - External Cyclical Maintenance	109	12/12/11
Blackhill/Riverside Drive - Windows	55	12/12/11
Westway/Iniscarn - Windows	117	12/12/11
Altcar Park - External Cyclical Maintenance	71	12/12/11
Glebe Gdns/Glebe Ulster Sion - Kitchens	58	12/12/11
Greystone Pk/Anderson – Kitchens	60	12/12/11
Bishop Street Kitchens - Kitchens	138	12/12/11

\* Tranche = a means of splitting the programme over the year so that contractors have an even workload against available funding

\*\* Retrofit Scheme = Heating & Insulation

\*\*\* Reserve = reserve scheme if another scheme slips

## Policies: Pensioners

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail all the policies that have been implemented by his Department since 2007 which specifically help pensioners.

**(AQW 1362/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** I attach great importance to the role older people play in society and am pleased that my Department has been to the fore in improving the lives of our pensioners. Since 2007 the following policies across the wide spectrum of my Department's responsibilities have been implemented which help current and future pensioners:

### Social Security

- a reduction in the number of qualifying years needed to get a full basic State Pension to 30 and the abolition of the 25% de minimis rule below which pension was not payable;
- the introduction of a single contribution condition for entitlement to a basic State Pension;
- introduction of credits for parents, carers and certain wider family members which count for State Pension purposes;
- the removal of the requirement for a spouse to have to wait for her husband to claim his pension before claiming one based on his contributions;

- rights to a State Pension based on their partner's contribution record extended to married men, widowers, civil partners and surviving civil partners;
- uprating of the basic State Pension by the highest of earnings, prices or 2.5%;
- uprating of the guarantee credit in State Pension Credit by earnings;
- simplification of the additional State Pension;
- temporary increase in the Winter Fuel Payment for years 2008/09 and 2009/10;
- permanent increase in Cold Weather Payments from £8.50 to £25;
- temporary increase in the Christmas Bonus from £10 to £70 for the winter 2008;
- removal of the requirement for certain people to make a claim for State Pension where the Department already holds sufficient information to make a decision on entitlement;
- introduction of a part-week payment to pensioners who experience a gap in payments when moving from a working age benefit to State Pension or Pension Credit;
- extension of the Assessed Income Period in Pension Credit for people aged 75 or over which reduces the duty to provide information on an annual basis;
- introduction of graduated retirement benefit inheritance rights for widowers and surviving civil partners;
- credits awarded to people entitled to Employment and Support Allowance will count towards entitlement to State Second Pension;
- increase in awards of basic State Pension for eligible people reaching State Pension age between 6 April 2008 and 5 April 2015 who chose to pay up to 6 years voluntary National Insurance contributions to improve their national insurance record;
- since 6 October 2008 Pension Credit customers retain their entitlement for up to 13 weeks whilst on a temporary absence from Northern Ireland;
- from 5 January 2009 the capital limit on which eligible mortgage interest can be paid to Pension Credit customers increased to £200,000 where the person had previously been in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance and claims Pension Credit within 12 weeks of entitlement to that benefit ending;
- in November 2009 the capital threshold in Pension Credit increased from £6,000 to £10,000.

### **Private Pensions**

automatic enrolment of eligible employees into a low-cost workplace pension scheme on a phased basis from 2012. This will result in more people saving for their own retirement and boost pensioner incomes in the future;

sharing of Pension Protection Fund compensation on divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership

### **Fuel Poverty**

- In April 2009 the Household Fuel Payment of £150 was paid to householders who were in receipt of pension credit.
- The Boiler Replacement Scheme was launched in June 2011 and is aimed at owner occupiers or private tenants who:
  - are aged 60 years or over; and
  - receive a state pension with rates relief; and
  - have an older (at least 15 years old), inefficient boiler.

## Neighbourhood Renewal

The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy is the Executive's main programme for addressing spatial deprivation. It aims to bring together the work of all Government Departments in partnership with local people to tackle disadvantage and deprivation in all aspects of everyday life.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund has been used to support a range of projects/groups that support elderly people within Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. Examples of services supported include:

- Meals on Wheels
- Transport Service
- Care of Older People Service
- Advice and Information Service
- Community Safety Initiative
- Community Allotment Project
- Older People North West
- Good Morning projects
- North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
- Over 50s club
- Podiatry services
- Training programmes for the over 50s
- Safe and Well Older Peoples project and
- Health and Well-Being projects.

While the Social Security Agency hasn't introduced any specific policies for pensioners, it has introduced services aimed at improving access to benefits and increasing uptake.

In 2007 the Agency began a programme of transformation around the processing of State Pension and State Pension Credit aimed at reducing the time spent making and processing claims for these benefits. Its purpose also included the provision of support for pensioners through the process so helping reduce errors and aiding the compilation of relevant information.

Through a new approach using telephony, times for processing claims have reduced from 20 days to 8 for State Pension and from 15 days to 11 for State Pension Credit. It has also meant that pensioners can now make their State Pension claims through a supported 10 minute telephone conversation rather than completing a 10 page form. In terms of State Pension Credit this has resulted in pensioners having a choice between a 20 minute telephone call and a 15 page form.

95% of the 12,000 State Pension claims and 75% of State Pension Credit's 11,500 claims received every year are now handled by telephone.

Revised processes to increase the uptake of Housing Benefit were implemented as part of the changes introduced by the Pensions Transformation Programme. Since November 2008, State Pension Credit staff use an electronic script to identify potential Housing Benefit entitlement. When making a claim to State Pension Credit customers can also claim Housing Benefit. Staff take the information over the phone, populate the Housing Benefit form and forward it to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and/or Land and Property Services without the need for a customer signature. This new approach promotes Housing Benefit uptake among pensioners, reduces processing times for Housing Benefit applications and simplifies the system for both customers and staff.

In February of this year the Agency introduced the State Pension On-Line service which gives pensioners the option of completing their State Pension claims via the internet.

The Agency delivers an annual Benefit Uptake Programme designed specifically to target people who may not be claiming their full benefit entitlement. This area remains one of Agency's key priorities. To date the Programmes have consisted of a targeted exercise where customers are selected by cross-matching data on the Agency's benefit systems and then offered a benefit assessment carried out by a contracted third party provider. In 2009 the targeted exercises were supplemented with an Outreach strand, which circulated leaflets and posters to groups not typically associated with social security benefits that are attended by older people.

The 2011/2012 Programme will continue with the targeted exercises, involving 25,000 people, the majority of whom will be older people. The Outreach Strand of the Programme will also continue to raise awareness of potential entitlement among older people in the remaining 10 council areas not covered in the previous 2 years campaigns. There are an estimated 130,000 older people in these areas.

In addition the Agency will pursue an advertising campaign to raise awareness of benefits for older people and an Innovation Fund (worth £250,000) will be initiated to explore new ways to increase the uptake of social security benefits.

Since 2005 a total of 90,000 invitations have been issued to older people offering a benefit assessment through the Advice Sector and 250,000 mail shots have been sent out to raise awareness of State Pension Credit. By 2011 these exercises had generated an additional £27.1m of annual benefit and arrears to people over 60.

### Heating Conversion Programme

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to provide funding to the Housing Executive for a future Heating Conversion Programme, given the success of similar programmes in previous years.

**(AQW 1380/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised me that the total funding in 2011/12 for new schemes for both the Thermal Comfort Programme and planned maintenance Heating Replacement Programme is £16,852,000. This does not include any allowance for prior year commitments for which there is a separate budget and also does not include any adaptation heating costs.

### Disability Living Allowance

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have been subject to the routine review of Disability Living Allowance cases, broken down by constituency.

**(AQW 1424/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The table below shows the number of people in each constituency who have been subject to a routine review of Disability Living Allowance in each year between April 2007 and March 2011. Figures broken down by constituency prior to 2007 are not available. The total number of routine reviews carried since this process started in 1999 to the end of June 2011 is 34,348 which includes the figures in the table below.

Constituency	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Belfast East	200	267	176	145
Belfast North	307	442	274	212
Belfast South	176	228	164	176
Belfast West	372	476	299	315
East Antrim	152	223	134	101
East Londonderry	156	270	165	135

Constituency	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	172	252	192	155
Foyle	304	419	276	254
Lagan Valley	160	264	140	147
Mid Ulster	203	265	179	136
Newry And Armagh	236	335	228	210
North Antrim	211	243	145	130
North Down	129	181	139	125
South Antrim	151	243	159	127
South Down	248	307	213	210
Strangford	162	259	153	152
Upper Bann	243	357	234	214
West Tyrone	241	350	221	205
Unallocated Postcode*	25	32	21	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,848</b>	<b>5,413</b>	<b>3,512</b>	<b>3,176</b>

\* In producing this analysis, individual records were attributed to a Parliamentary Constituency on the basis of their postcode. Not all records can be correctly allocated to a constituency using this method and some cannot be allocated at all.

## Disability Living Allowance

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in each constituency are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

**(AQW 1425/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information requested is set out in the table below. The figures show the number of claims where Disability Living Allowance was in payment at the date of extract. The date of extract was 11 June 2011.

### DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE RECIPIENTS BY CONSTITUENCY

Constituency	Numbers of Recipients
Belfast East	8,864
Belfast North	14,751
Belfast South	8,279
Belfast West	17,400
East Antrim	7,247
East Londonderry	8,307
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	9,170

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Numbers of Recipients</b>
Foyle	13,638
Lagan Valley	7,740
Mid Ulster	10,164
Newry And Armagh	12,076
North Antrim	8,400
North Down	6,188
South Antrim	7,920
South Down	10,979
Strangford	7,414
Upper Bann	12,713
West Tyrone	12,762
Unallocated	1,780
<b>Total</b>	<b>185,792</b>

\* In producing this analysis, individual records were attributed to a constituency on the basis of their postcode. Not all records can be correctly allocated using this method, and some cannot be allocated at all.

### **Capital Projects for North Down**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development what capital projects are planned for the North Down constituency in each of the next three years.

**(AQW 1437/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Detailed below are the capital projects planned for the North Down constituency in each of the next three financial years, subject to funding being available and the necessary approvals.

2012/13 None

2013/14 A Public Realm Scheme for Bangor Town Centre will commence in 2013

Housing Executive Environmental Schemes are planned for:

- Clanmorris
- Lisnabreen
- Rathgill zone 6
- Rathgill zone 4 & 5
- Breezemount
- Bloomfield
- Clandeboye Road
- Kilcooley zone 3

2014/15 The Bangor Town Centre Public Realm Scheme will continue into 2014/15

## Town Centre Regeneration Initiatives

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the town centre regeneration initiatives which have been identified to receive funding in this financial year.

**(AQW 1457/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Initiatives within the umbrella of town centre regeneration identified to receive funding in this financial year from DSD's Urban Regeneration and Community Development Group include Comprehensive Development schemes, Urban Development Grants, Public Realm schemes and other capital and capital grant programmes. Projects are currently being taken forward in Belfast, Londonderry and a number of regional towns with other projects in the pipeline at appraisal and planning stage. Town centre regeneration funding is also provided for the maintenance of DSD property held for regeneration purposes, promotion and marketing of towns and city centres and costs of Ilex Urban Regeneration Company.

## Town Centre Regeneration

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding will be allocated to town centre regeneration in each year of this mandate.

**(AQW 1458/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The figures requested are as follows:

**TABLE 1 TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION FUNDING 2011/12 TO 2014/15**

	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Amount (k)	£19,301	£36,144	£28,729	£23,659

Figures include expenditure on Comprehensive Development Schemes, Urban Development Grants, Public Realm, Fort George Improvements, United Kingdom City of Culture, Promotions, Maintenance, and Ilex Regeneration Company.

The figures shown for years 2012/13 to 2014/15 reflect the total budget for each of the above programmes which includes funding for activities other than town centre regeneration in the wider urban area. Each year funding for town centre regeneration will be allocated from the total budget according to priorities however it is not possible, at this point in time, to determine figures for funding specifically relating to Town Centre Regeneration over this period.

## Disability Living Allowance Appeal Tribunals

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many Disability Living Allowance appeal tribunals in each of the last five years were not attended by the appellant.

**(AQW 1484/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The table below outlines the total number of Disability Living Allowance appeal tribunals not attended by an appellant from June 2007 to March 2011. The figures include both oral and paper-based appeals. In the case of the latter, the appellant has requested that the appeal be determined in their absence; the Tribunal will determine the appeal using evidence papers only.

Information on the number of Disability Living Allowance appeal tribunals not attended by an appellant prior to June 2007 is not readily available.

### DLA APPEAL HEARINGS NOT ATTENDED BY APPELLANT

<b>June 2007- March 2008</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
2428	3622	3418	3087

## Disability Living Allowance Appeal Tribunals

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many Disability Living Allowance appeal tribunals in each of the last five years have been adjourned because the relevant medical records were unavailable.

**(AQW 1485/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Where the appellant has provided their consent, the Appeals Service will request General Practitioner records for Disability Living Allowance appeals. The table below outlines the total number of Disability Living Allowance appeal tribunals adjourned because General Practitioner records were unavailable at the hearing in each of the last five years.

### DLA Appeal Hearings Adjourned Due To Unavailability of GP Notes

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
542	808	1123	848	754

## Housing Executive Properties in Ballymena

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister for Social Development when Housing Executive properties in Ballymena, which have been boarded up for more than six months, will be available for occupation.

**(AQW 1490/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has advised that boarded up properties in Ballymena are located in pockets of low demand. However, the Housing Executive works in partnership with the local community to try to identify prospective tenants prior to ordering costly repairs. Once a tenant is identified who is prepared to accept the tenancy, the property will generally be available for occupation within four to six weeks.

However, it is my priority to address the issue of empty homes including boarded up properties in both the private and social sectors throughout Northern Ireland. My Department is currently awaiting the Housing Executive's action plan to address the issue of empty homes in Northern Ireland.

## Housing Executive Stock

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to make any of the current Housing Executive stock available for purchase by tenants.

**(AQW 1491/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive has had a house sales scheme in operation since 1979 and over 100,000 eligible tenants have purchased their Housing Executive home. The current House Sales Scheme provides sitting Housing Executive tenants with a minimum of five years tenancy in the public sector the right to purchase their home. Under the Scheme any dwelling may be sold except the following:-

- Sheltered dwelling units
- Any single storey or ground floor dwelling, other than a flat, with two bedrooms except in the following circumstances:-
  - i) Where the relevant tenancy commenced between 1 November 2000 and 31 August 2002 and the tenant or a member of their household was at least aged 60 at the Commencement of Tenancy date.
  - ii) Where the relevant tenancy commenced prior to 31 August 2002 and
- The current tenant and members of their household were under the age of 60 at the Commencement of Tenancy date.
- The tenancy resulted from a compulsory transfer from another Housing Executive property where the tenant had the right to buy.

## Disability Living Allowance

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development what medical conditions automatically qualify a person for receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

**(AQW 1492/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Entitlement to disability living allowance depends on the effects that severe disability has on a person's life and not on a particular disability or diagnosis. This ensures that severely disabled people have equal access to the benefit irrespective of the cause of their disabilities. Entitlement is based on the extent of a disabled person's need for personal care and their ability to walk. However, there are special provisions for people with certain specific conditions and impairments leading to awards of particular rates of disability living allowance. These provisions apply to people who are terminally ill, both deaf and blind, double amputee, severely mentally impaired, severely visually impaired or undergoing haemodialysis.

## Anti-Social Behaviour in Housing Executive Properties

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to reduce anti-social behaviour in Housing Executive properties.

**(AQW 1505/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** My Department has issued guidance to the Housing Executive on dealing with anti-social behaviour in its properties and on publishing its policies and procedures for dealing with such behaviour. My Department also supports the Housing Executive through the introduction of new legislation where necessary. Section 12 of the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 which comes into operation on 1 September 2011 will allow the Housing Executive to withhold consent to tenancy exchanges where any of the parties have been involved in anti-social behaviour. Section 13 of the Act, which also comes into operation on 1 September, will allow any person to disclose information to the Housing Executive for the purposes of enabling it to take action to deal with anti-social behaviour. Section 14, which came into operation on 30 June 2011, requires the courts, when considering an application for an order for possession on grounds relating to anti-social behaviour, to take account of all relevant circumstances, including the impact of the anti-social behaviour on the tenant's neighbours.

The Housing Executive has carried out a number of policy reviews including the review of the neighbourhood warden service, the development and introduction of a Community Safety Communication Plan and the introduction of tenant led inspections of Anti Social Behaviour Services. The Housing Executive has also built on the success of community based partnership working with Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA) and Community Restorative Justice Ireland (CRJI). Both organisations now undertake mediation case referrals and community support work. CRJI are delivering such services in the Greater West Belfast area with NIA delivering in the Greater Shankill/ Ballysillan areas, North Down and Rathcoole.

In November 2010 the Housing Executive hosted an inter agency restorative justice seminar to consider the future use and funding of a community based restorative justice scheme. The seminar was attended by representatives from all the main statutory agencies working in the field of community safety and chaired by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate. A steering group was established in December 2010 to take forward the main themes discussed and agreed at the November seminar. This steering group is now in the process of drafting proposals to support an inter agency model for the future funding of restorative justice practices.

Preventative measures to address anti-social behaviour continue to be used widely, with over 70% of all such complaints being resolved through the use of visits, interviews and warning letters. The use of mediation as a means of resolving anti-social behaviour rose significantly this year with 248 cases actioned through meditative interventions. The Housing Executive will continue to promote an early interventionist approach to resolving anti-social behaviour and thus ensure that legal action to repossess properties remains the last resort which will only be used when all other remedies have been tested or deemed as inappropriate.

## Foreign Nationals Registered as Unemployed and in Receipt of Benefits

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Social Development how many foreign nationals are currently registered as unemployed and are in receipt of benefits; and how this figure compares to five years ago.

**(AQW 1554/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information requested is not available as the Department for Work and Pensions Information Technology systems which are used in Northern Ireland do not record a claimants nationality as the requirement to be of a particular nationality is not a condition of benefit entitlement.

## Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

### Consultants

**Mr McNarry** asked the Assembly Commission what steps it has taken to reduce the use of consultants.

**(AQO 241/11-15)**

**Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** In line with all other entities funded from the Northern Ireland Block, the Assembly Commission has recently agreed its budget for the next four years as part of the Budget 2011-15 exercise. The nature of the Assembly Commission's business does not lend itself to the large-scale use of consultants apart from the specific circumstances where appropriate skills are not otherwise available. In this regard, the Assembly Commission would generally seek to utilise the Parliamentary skills and knowledge held in other legislatures before seeking to engage external consultants.

The Commission will maintain this approach over the Comprehensive Spending Review period and takes a conservative stance to the use of consultants, requiring officials to consult with the Commission before entering into a consultant contract greater than £50,000.

# Written Answers Index

<b>Department for Regional Development</b>	460	Disability Living Allowance	493
Capital Projects: North Down	469	Disability Living Allowance Appeal Tribunals	491
Departmental Procurement	465	Disability Living Allowance Appeal Tribunals	492
Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives	461	Foreign Nationals Registered as Unemployed and in Receipt of Benefits	494
Flags and Advertisements on Street Light Posts	472	Heating Conversion Programme	488
Fuel Costs	468	Housing Executive Properties in Ballymena	492
Parking Spaces for People with a Disability	473	Housing Executive Stock	492
Pay and Display Machines	460	Housing Renovation Schemes	478
Proposed Bridge for Carlingford Lough	471	Multi-Element Improvement Schemes	473
Redevelopment of Culmore Roundabout	471	Policies: Pensioners	485
Removal of Weeds from Pavements	471	Town Centre Regeneration	491
Removal of Weeds from Pavements	471	Town Centre Regeneration Initiatives	491
Roads Service: Meetings with the National Housing Bidding Council	469		
Roads Service: Overtime	469	<b>Department of Agriculture and Rural Development</b>	417
Roads Service's Car Parks	472	Agri-Food Business Opportunities	421
Sale of Departmental Land	467	All-Ireland Unit	423
Service 64 Journeys	470	Capital Projects for North Down	419
Unauthorised Commemorations to Terrorists	467	Childcare Pilots	425
Weedkiller Used by Roads Service to Treat Footpaths	471	Development of Rural Business Opportunities	422
		Development of Terra Preta Soils	421
<b>Department for Employment and Learning</b>	429	Experiments on Soil Types and Soil Fertility	421
Apprenticeship Placements	430	Export Certificates	418
Education Groups in the North Down Area	432	Farmers' Markets	424
Full-time Equivalent Student Count in Further Education Colleges	429	Food Labelling	419
Further and Higher Education in the Mid-Ulster Area	432	Hydroponics	421
Further Education Colleges: Reform of Governing Bodies	429	Key Objective 2.1 of the River Agency's Business Plan	420
Links with Further and Higher Education Colleges and Universities in Israel	431	Land Use	424
New College Campus in Coleraine	430	Market Garden Enterprises	424
North West Regional College: Industrial Relations	430	Ministerial Special Adviser	425
Policy on Travel Payments to Students	432	Rural Development	417
South Eastern Regional College: Allegations of Falsifying Contracts	429	Rural Development Action Plan	419
South Eastern Regional College: Timetabling	429	Single Farm Payments	418
STEM Subject Degrees	431	Single Farm Payment Scheme	422
		Soil Improvement Programmes	423
<b>Department for Social Development</b>	473	Surveys on Soil Types	423
Anti-Social Behaviour in Housing Executive Properties	493	Woodland Creation Targets	420
Capital Projects for North Down	490		
Disability Living Allowance	488	<b>Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure</b>	425
Disability Living Allowance	489	Departmental Special Adviser	425
		Ministerial Special Adviser	425
		<b>Department of Education</b>	426
		Capital Projects for North Down	427
		Free Transport For Pupils	427
		Ministerial Special Adviser	428

Pre-School and P1 Places	426	Maine River System	438
Relocation of WELB Posts to Belfast	426	Planning Applications for a Wind Turbine	453
Teachers' Education	428	Planning Applications for Wind Turbines	452
<b>Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment</b>	433	Planning Permission	453
Capital Projects: North Down	435	Planning Service: Neighbour Notification	454
Car Insurance for Young People	437	Reducing Car Insurance Premiums for Young Drivers	456
Economic Strategy	435	Re-Gen Waste	453
Fuel Regulator	435	Taxi Enforcement Division	439
InterTrade Ireland Workforce	433	<b>Northern Ireland Assembly Commission</b>	494
Investigation into the NI Events Company	437	Consultants	494
Job Creation in the Mid-Ulster area	436	<b>Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister</b>	403
Milk Cup and Foyle Cup Tournaments	435	Big Society Monies	412
Milk Cup Funding	433	British Irish Council and North South Ministerial Council	414
NI Events Company	435	Celebration of the Centenary of Northern Ireland	405
Planning Applications for Renewable Energy Facilities	436	Corporation Tax	409
Renewable Sources	436	Draft Child Poverty Strategy	412
Single Electricity Market	434	Ethnic Minority Development Fund	417
Welcome Signs and Demarcation Signs	434	Funding for Childcare Services	417
<b>Department of Finance and Personnel</b>	456	Funding for Lesbian, Gay and Bi-Sexual Groups	416
Civil Servants Suspended from Work	456	Gratuity Scheme for the Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve GC	405
Civil Service Employees	458	Joint Ministerial Committee Meeting	405
Devolution of Corporation Tax Rating Powers	458	Legal Advice	413
Green New Deal	458	Meeting with the Parades Commission	416
Special EU Programmes Body	456	Peace Funding	412
Special EU Programmes Body	457	Policies: Pensioners	411
Special EU Programmes Body: Bureaucracy	457	Public Correspondence	405
<b>Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety</b>	459	Racial Equality Strategy	417
Family Planning Association	459	Sectarian and Racial Activity	406
<b>Department of Justice</b>	459	Senior Civil Servants: Protocols when responding to queries received from MLAs	411
Legal Aid for Riot Related Convictions	460	Social Investment and Protection Funds	413
Wrongly Released Prisoners	459	Social Investment Fund	405
<b>Department of the Environment</b>	437	Social Investment Fund	415
Capital Projects for North Down	452	Social Investment Fund	415
Closet River in Lurgan	450	Social Investment Fund	416
Committee on Climate Change	438	Social Investment Fund	417
Green Belt Area in the Towerview Area of North Down	455	Special Advisers	408
Illegal Discharges in Rivers	440	Strategic Investment Board	414
Listed Buildings in Carrickfergus	437	Strategic Support Fund	403
		Victims' Groups	409

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# Revised Written Answers

Friday 29 July 2011

(AQW 44/11-15)

We are writing to correct an error contained in our answer of 21 June to AQW 44/11-15.

It has come to our attention that the figures we provided you with were incorrect for two of the years. Please accept our apologies for this error.

The table below details the funding for victims' groups over the past 5 years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>OFMDFM Funding (£)</b>	<b>OFMDFM Interim Capacity Fund * (£)</b>
2006/07	2,986,638	N/A
2007/08	2,791,080	N/A
2008/09	3,857,189	954,684
2009/10	4,557,800	576,481
2010/11	6,283,847	154,625

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

(AQW 906/11-15)

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.

## ANNEX 1

<b>Title of DCAL/Associated ALB Scheme/Project/Initiative</b>	<b>Department/Agency/NGO * in South of Ireland</b>	<b>Date</b>
National Museums NI - Treasures from the North: Irish Paintings from the Ulster Museum 1700-1960	National Gallery of Ireland	2007
Arts Council NI - Books Ireland Ltd/Books Review Ireland Ltd	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007
Sport NI - Rally Ireland	Failte Ireland	Nov 2007
NI Screen - Cinemobile	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon Irish Film Board RTE	Every year since its inception in 2000 until 31st March 2011

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<b>Title of DCAL/Associated ALB Scheme/ Project/Initiative</b>	<b>Department/Agency/ NGO * in South of Ireland</b>	<b>Date</b>
Arts Council NI – Irish Pages	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2011
Arts Council NI – Tyrone Guthrie Centre	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2011
Arts Council NI – Irish Traditional Music Archive	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2011
Arts Council NI – Poetry Ireland	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2011
Arts Council NI – Camerata Ireland	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2008 2010 - 2011
Arts Council NI – National Chamber Choir	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2008
Arts Council NI – Visual Artists Ireland	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2008
Arts Council NI – Opera Theatre Company	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2009
Arts Council NI – Contemporary Music Centre	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2009
Arts Council NI – Photoworks North/Source Magazine	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2007 - 2010
Museum Awards	Heritage Council	2007, 2009 & 2011
Arts Council NI – Circa Art Magazine	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2008 - 2011
Arts Council NI – Kid's Own Publishing	The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon	2008
Sport NI - Rally Ireland	Failte Ireland	Jan 2009
Examination of museum sector training needs and sector standards	Heritage Council	2010 & 2011
National Museums NI - 'Experience Northern Ireland: Titanic and More' exhibition in New York	Tourism Ireland	24-29 Sept 2010
Libraries NI - "Kids Own Travelling Library"	Sligo Library Services	Sept 2010
National Museums NI - Iarnród Éireann donated a Diesel locomotive	Iarnród Éireann	May 2011
National Museums NI – sharing of collections/ loans and meetings on matters of shared interest	Museums in the South of Ireland	Ongoing
National Museums NI - exhibiting on Tourism Ireland stands at exhibitions, facilitating press and tour operator familiarisation visits	Tourism Ireland	Ongoing

<b>Title of DCAL/Associated ALB Scheme/Project/Initiative</b>	<b>Department/Agency/NGO * in South of Ireland</b>	<b>Date</b>
National Museums NI - Ulster American Folk Park Learning programmes	Schools in the South of Ireland	Ongoing
Cross border mobile library serving rural areas on the Donegal/Derry border	Donegal Library Service	Ongoing
Libraries NI – Partnership & sharing of expertise	Dublin City Libraries	Ongoing
Libraries NI – The Irish Joint Fiction Reserve	Library Services in South of Ireland	Ongoing
Music PAL scheme	14 public, 9 higher education, 3 conservatoire and 7 special libraries throughout the island of Ireland	Ongoing
Sport NI - Anti Doping Education initiatives	Irish Sports Council	Ongoing
Sport NI - North West Coaching and Club Development Project	Coaching Ireland	Ongoing
Sport NI - All Ireland high performance plans for 6 governing bodies	Irish Sports Council & Irish Institute of Sport	Ongoing
Sport NI - Development of the SNI Coaching Plan	Coaching Ireland	Ongoing

\* NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

**(AQW 1423/11-15)**

The Department of Education does not collect information about assaults on pupils by pupils or by members of school staff.

Statistics on the reasons for suspensions and expulsions of pupils are gathered each school year from Education and Library Boards. The table below shows the number of occasions in each of the last four school years where the main reason for a suspension or expulsion has been classified by the school as a physical attack on another pupil:-

	<b>Primary Pupils</b>		<b>Post-primary Pupils</b>	
	<b>Number of suspensions for physical attack on a pupil</b>	<b>Number of expulsions for physical attack on a pupil</b>	<b>Number of suspensions for physical attack on a pupil</b>	<b>Number of expulsions for physical attack on a pupil</b>
2006/07	83	0	1,624	8
2007/08	100	0	1,545	5
2008/09	83	0	1,511	6
2009/10	105	0	1,495	5

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**Notes**

- 1 These figures relate to all pupils undertaking Key Stage 1-4 in primary and post-primary schools. The figures exclude pupils in special schools and education other than at school.
- 2 The information reflects the number of individual suspensions, as opposed to the number of pupils suspended. Pupils may be suspended more than once.

**(AQW 855/11-15)**

The Justice Act, passed by the Assembly in May 2011, 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.

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