

# Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

**Friday 28 October 2011**

**Volume 68, No WA1**



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

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Wells, Jim (South Down)  
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

# Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 28 October 2011

## Written Answers to Questions

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

#### Social Investment Fund

**Mr McCallister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) for an update on the Social Investment Fund; and (ii) when the public consultation process will begin.

(AQW 2310/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister):** The First Minister and the Minister exercising the functions of the deputy First Minister launched the public consultation on 27 September in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings.

#### Executive Office in Brussels

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the annual cost of the Executive Office in Brussels; and (ii) how much the Office has spent on hospitality in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2964/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The tables below list both the annual cost (i) and the amount spent on hospitality (ii) for each of the last three financial years.

The increase in annual costs in 2009-2010 and the corresponding drop in expenditure on hospitality was due to the relocation of the office to new premises. These new premises provide a modern professional business environment to organisations conducting business in Brussels on behalf of Northern Ireland.

The annual expenditure includes the costs for OFMDFM staff in the office as well but does not include the contributions, in relation to rent and other charges, received from DARD and InvestNI in relation to the staff from the both organisations based in the Office. While the associated charges for the current premises are still being finalised, the contribution from DARD and INI is currently approximately £28k per annum.

The Office hosts a wide range of events that incur hospitality costs from seminars and receptions to working meetings over lunch. The vast majority of these events are operated on a cost recover basis where the organisation running the event reimburses the Office for hospitality costs. The Office contributes to the events by providing both the venue and the assistance of the staff of the Office. Prior approval and commitment to pay costs is secured by the Office before incurring any costs on behalf of third party organisations. The amounts listed below (ii) are the net amounts spent on hospitality by the office in Brussels.

(i)

| Annual cost of the Executive Office in Brussels | 2008-09<br>£'000 | 2009-10<br>£'000 | 2010-11<br>£'000 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Running costs                                   | 648.9            | 891.6            | 797.3            |
| Capital costs                                   | 23.7             | 881.5            | 11.1             |

| <b>Annual cost of the Executive Office in Brussels</b> | <b>2008-09<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2009-10<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2010-11<br/>£'000</b> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Depreciation/Impairment charges on Capital             | 7.6                      | 147.3                    | 92.5                     |

(ii)

| <b>Executive Office in Brussels - Hospitality Charges</b> | <b>2008-09<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2009-10<br/>£'000</b> | <b>2010-11<br/>£'000</b> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hospitality   | 14.8                     | 4.0                      | 18.4                     |

## October Monitoring Round

**Mr Weir** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail any emerging financial pressures that have been identified by their Department in the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3144/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister registered two small capital bids totalling £0.200m in its October Monitoring proposals. No emerging financial pressures have been identified in this exercise.

## Strategic Investment Board Members

**Mr Allister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the (i) date; and (ii) amount of any bonuses paid to members of the Strategic Investment Board since its creation.

(AQW 3182/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Members of the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) have never received bonuses; however the following amounts of performance related pay were awarded to SIB staff for the years since its creation on 1 April 2003 as set out below:

|   | <b>2003-04</b> | <b>2004-05</b> | <b>2005-06</b> | <b>2006-07</b> | <b>2007-08</b> | <b>2008-09</b> |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| £ | 9,027          | 132,074        | 154,357        | 250,668        | 312,266        | 305,606        |

In line with the Executive's policy on bonuses for senior officials in arm's length bodies, there have been no awards of performance related pay to staff in the SIB since 2008-09.

## Regeneration of Former Security Sites

**Mr McCallister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the regeneration of former security sites.

(AQO 499/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Six former Military sites were gifted to the Executive under the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative in 2002. Two of the sites, barracks at Malone Road and in Magherafelt, were sold for development in 2003 and 2010 respectively.

Three additional sites were gifted earlier this year under the Hillsborough Agreement. The Lisanelly site in Omagh was transferred to the Department of Education for development as a schools campus. The site at Shackleton, Ballykelly was transferred into the administrative control of OFMDFM on 7 October. We are currently considering options for the remaining two sites at Omagh (St Lucia) and Ballymena (St Patrick's Barracks).

## Budget Review Group

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many times the Budget Review Group has met in the last three months.

(AQO 649/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Budget Review Group has met on one occasion during this period, as no meetings were scheduled during the summer recess.

## Former Army Barracks Site at Ballykelly

**Mr Dallat** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what plans there are to develop a master plan for the development of the former army barracks site at Ballykelly; and who will be involved.

(AQW 3406/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** OFMDFM assumed responsibility for the former military site at Shackleton on 7 October 2011. Work is currently underway to examine the options for this site which will include a comprehensive assessment of its economic potential. Following receipt of this report we will decide on the next steps in determining its future.

## Social Investment Fund

**Ms P Bradley** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the potential benefits of the Social Investment Fund for the North Belfast constituency.

(AQO 611/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The outcome of the public consultation process, which we launched on 27 September, will inform how the Social Investment Fund will operate and how specific communities will benefit.

Communities, such as North Belfast, will benefit from a co-ordinated and strategic approach to issues of poverty and disadvantage which will see those communities determine the priority needs in their areas and develop responses in partnership with Government, the statutory sector and the voluntary and community sector.

## Links with the United States of America

**Mr T Clarke** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the importance of continued links with the United States of America.

(AQO 613/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The United States is one of the world's major economic and political powerhouses and has played an important role in the transformation here through its support for the peace process and in encouraging economic investment.

We have enjoyed unprecedented level of access and goodwill in the US through the support of the Clinton, Bush and Obama Administrations and we are focused on realising the benefits of this engagement from a political, business and tourism perspective. In particular, the Bureau, with offices in Washington and New York, is furthering these relationships working closely with other agencies, including InvestNI and Tourism Ireland.

On the business front, the US remains our single largest foreign investor and to date 140 companies have established a presence here, employing over 14,000 people. This underlines the importance of the US market and InvestNI's success in attracting new jobs from global companies such as NYSE, Liberty Mutual, Allstate and Citibank.

From a trade perspective, local companies exported over £1.6 billion to North America last year and it is also an important growth market for tourism with some 146,000 visiting here in 2009.

The importance of continued links with the US is also recognised by this Assembly in setting up an All-Party Group to further connections in North America.

## Review of Public Administration

**Mr Sheehan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Executive will be in a position to consider and agree the way forward on the Review of Public Administration.

(AQO 617/11-15)

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The First Minister and deputy First Minister agreed a way forward on the Review of Public Administration based on the paper that was considered in the Executive meeting of 18 November 2010. The Minister for the Department of the Environment has been asked by the Executive to bring forward a paper setting out the implementation of these arrangements.

## Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

### Timber Sales

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the tonnage of timber sold in each of the last five years; (ii) the income generated from the sales; (iii) the purchasers of the timber; and (iv) whether an approved procurement procedure was followed on each occasion.

(AQW 3080/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development):** Over the past five years the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has (i) sold the following tonnes of timber and (ii) generated the following revenue:

|  | Tonnage | Income generated |
|--|---------|------------------|
| 1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007<br>402,862 m3 sold  | 342,570 | £5.928 million   |
| 1 April 2007 – 31 March 2008<br>407, 104 m3 sold | 346,177 | £6.803 million   |
| 1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009<br>403,198 m3 sold  | 342,855 | £7.515 million   |
| 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010<br>401,360 m3 sold  | 341,293 | £7.243 million   |
| 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011<br>456,151 m3 sold  | 387,884 | £7.712 million   |

(iii) the following companies bought timber from Forest Service in the years detailed below.

| Company names          | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Balcas                 | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |
| A Diamond & Son        | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |
| Drenagh Sawmills       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |
| Ecowood Energy Systems |         | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |         |
| Eamon Flaherty Timber  |         |         |         |         | ✓       |
| Glennon Bros           | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |

| Company names               | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Haslett Timber Products     | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |         |
| JF Irvine Sawmills          | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |
| Leitrim Sawmills            | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |         | ✓       |
| John McHale Timber          | ✓       |         |         | ✓       |         |
| Murray Timber Products      | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |
| M&H Tree Services           |         | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |         |
| Mountbellew Timber Products | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |         | ✓       |
| PM Processing               | ✓       |         |         | ✓       |         |
| S & J Contracts             |         |         | ✓       |         |         |
| A&R Taggart                 | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       | ✓       |
| Rea Sawmills                |         |         |         | ✓       | ✓       |
| Farm Woodlands Ltd          |         |         |         | ✓       |         |
| West Timber                 |         | ✓       |         |         | ✓       |

A number of other individuals also bought timber. Their details, held by Forest Service, cannot be released in accordance with section 40 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- (iv) Forest Service entered into sales arrangements with customers using the following approved sales procedures, Long Term Contract (LTC), Tender Sale (TS) and Negotiated Sale. The sales procedures for timber volume sold over the period were allocated thus:

|  | 1 April 2006 –<br>31 March 2007 | 1 April 2007 –<br>31 March 2008 | 1 April 2008 –<br>31 March 2009 | 1 April 2009 –<br>31 March 2010 | 1 April 2010 –<br>31 March 2011 |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| LTC  | 97%                             | 96%                             | 97%                             | 98%                             | 98%                             |
| TS   | 3%                              | 4%                              | 3%                              | 2%                              | 2%                              |
| (Percentage of timber volume offered for sale) |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                 |

Less than 1% of timber per year was sold through the Negotiated Sale method.

## Promotion of Forests

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her Department's plans for the promotion of forests as a welcoming place to develop healthy lifestyles; and to outline the budget for such promotions over the next four years.

(AQW 3081/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** The 2009 publication A Strategy to Develop the Recreational and Social Use of Our Forests set specific targets for contributing to health and education. By 2013 we will have

- Explored opportunities for increasing cycling and horse riding in forests
- Encouraged increased use of forests close to towns and villages by local people
- Explored opportunities for children's play and leisure facilities and provision for young people within Forest Parks
- Developed arrangements for promoting the use of forests for new outdoor learning opportunities

The Strategy set a framework to achieve this through public participation in our forest planning process, through legislation, guidance and through partnership working. The implementation of this strategy has seen the development of close working relationships with District Councils, public sector organisations and groups like the National Trust to explore new opportunities.

An example of partnership working was our participation in National Trails Day on Sunday 2nd October. This gave us an opportunity to raise awareness of our wonderful variety of trails and provided a chance for everyone to enjoy some of our most beautiful countryside, forests, mountains and lakes. This was the fourth year running that Forest Service participated in National Trail's Day in co-operation with Coillte. Seventeen special events were hosted and facilitated in our forests, including red squirrel walks, woodland walks and horse-riding.

The budget for these activities is not identified separately within wider Forest Service activities and the strategy does not extend beyond 2013.

### **Assistance for People Living and Working in Rural Areas**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps are being taken to assist people living and working in rural areas to continue to do so.

(AQW 3125/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department has many diverse funding programmes which seek to assist farmers and other rural businesses improve performance in the market place, improve the quality of life of rural dwellers and develop a more sustainable business, work and leisure environment.

There are too many contributory funding programmes, grant schemes and subsidies to list individually in this answer, but I am happy to provide further details separately if required. I should however mention the Rural Development Programme which funds rural tourism initiatives and village renewal schemes as well as providing training for farmers and farm families.

In addition to current funding programmes, I am leading on the development of the Executive's Rural White Paper Action Plan aimed at improving the wellbeing of rural communities. It will contain commitments by all Departments across a wide range of rural issues and challenges, including matters relating to access to services, urban/ rural linkages, sustainable rural communities and economies and a sustainable countryside.

You will appreciate that my Department cannot single-handedly address all the challenges facing our rural communities and that the joined-up approach adopted in the Rural White Paper Action Plan shows that the future well-being, quality of life and sustainability of our farming and rural communities requires input right across government.

My Department will continue to work hard to achieve its ongoing vision of a thriving and sustainable rural community and environment.

### **Shooting Sports**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of shooting sports.

(AQW 3149/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department licences approximately 22,000 hectares of forest land for the provision of rough shooting. Forest Service also facilitates access to its forests for people who hold the relevant sporting rights.

CAFRE supports the development of a grouse moor on the Glenwherry Hill Farm in County Antrim to promote sustainable environmental practices and sustainable livestock production.

## Forest Service: Wildlife Wardens

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how does Forest Service meet the training and supervision requirements of its three Wildlife Wardens as contained in the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.

(AQW 3150/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Forest Service wildlife wardens have been trained to industry best practice standards and are supervised by professional forest managers.

Forest Service has produced and maintains a Health & Safety Manual that is made available to all members of staff. It is the operation of the procedures within this extensive manual that ensures the provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of all staff including our Wildlife Wardens.

## Deer Management Partnership

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether Forest Service has considered a Deer Management Partnership to promote access and equality as part of its Strategy to Develop the Recreational and Social Use of Our Forests.

(AQW 3151/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** Although deer stalking is a sport in its own right, it is usually conducted as part of an overall deer management strategy which seeks to create a balance between maintaining a healthy population and limiting the economic and ecological damage which deer inflict.

As a result, I am very interested in the development and subsequent engagement with deer management groups or partnerships which can consensually implement effective deer control across multiple land and sporting right ownership. This is an area we would like to see developed and integrated with our arrangements where we own the shooting rights.

We have suggested that representatives of shooting organisations could take an active role in developing such groups through the involvement of their members.

## Forest Service

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the total hectareage of land on which Forest Service has control of the sporting rights, either through ownership or legal agreement.

(AQW 3152/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** Forest Service controls through ownership or lease the Sporting Rights on 42,359 ha of land. Of this 22,200 ha is let for sporting activities.

## Alien Muntjac Deer, Chinese Water Deer and Roe Deer

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to what extent have alien Muntjac Deer, Chinese Water Deer and Roe Deer penetrated Forest Service owned or controlled woodland; and in what areas have these deer been found.

(AQW 3153/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** A single Muntjac deer was shot at Mount Stewart on the Ards peninsula. No Muntjac deer, Chinese water deer or Roe deer have been observed in other Forest Service woodlands.

## Sustainable Livestock Bill

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has considered introducing a Sustainable Livestock Bill which would require the production of a strategy to assess the impact that the livestock sector has on the environment, set out the policy changes needed to reduce

the impact, ensure problems are not simply moved overseas, and support a sustainable and thriving UK farming industry.

(AQW 3156/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** I have not considered introducing a Sustainable Livestock Bill. However my Department considers sustainability factors for the livestock sectors as it develops policies, advice and guidance. For example, the Focus on Food Strategy has established foundations to build a sustainable and thriving local industry to achieve economic and social benefits while providing protection of the environment.

Additionally within the developing Reduction Framework for agriculture greenhouse gases, better livestock management is a central theme alongside improved nutrient management, renewable energy and fuel efficiency.

This Framework, which will be published in the coming months, aims to set out a range of measures which will support sustainable livestock production here and promote a reduction in its environmental impacts.

### **October Monitoring Round**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any financial pressures that have been identified by her Department as part of the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3201/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department identified one pressure for submission to DFP for consideration by the Executive as part of the October Monitoring Round. The pressure submitted was for £0.5m, in respect of Hedging Foreign Exchange Transactions.

### **Assistance Towards Renewable Energy Projects**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farm owners in East Londonderry have (i) applied for; and (ii) received assistance towards renewable energy projects on their land in the last three years.

(AQW 3206/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Department has received 10 applications for assistance towards renewable energy projects from farm owners in your constituency area. A total of 3 farm owners from this area have received financial assistance within the last 3 years.

Under the Biomass Processing Challenge Fund one application was received and awarded financial assistance for a renewable energy project.

Under the NI Rural Development Plan, Axis 3 measures, nine projects from this area applied for financial assistance, two of these renewable energy projects have received assistance.

### **Disposal of Animals and Animal Bi-Products**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many successful cases have been taken in each of the last five years by her Department against people who have (i) dumped fallen farm animals; and (ii) wrongfully disposed of animal bi-products.

(AQW 3209/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:**

|                         | <b>Cases against people who have dumped fallen animals</b> | <b>Number of convictions for wrongful disposal of animal by-products</b> |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| 18/10/2006 – 17/10/2007 | 0  | 6 convictions for a total of 13 offences                                 |
| 18/10/2007 – 17/10/2008 | 0  | 4 convictions for a total of 5 offences                                  |
| 18/10/2008 – 17/10/2009 | 0  | 1 conviction for 1 offence   |
| 18/10/2009 – 17/10/2010 | 0  | 5 convictions for a total of 6 offences                                  |
| 18/10/2010 – 17/10/2011 | 1  | 1 conviction for 1 offence   |

**Deer Population on Forest Service Land**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the growth of the deer population on Forest Service land, with particular reference to Randalstown, which has seen the Fallow Deer population rise from 30 or 40 deer to an estimated 200 deer.

(AQW 3245/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** Monitoring of the presence of deer has indicated an increase in the size and range of deer populations across Forest Service land. It is often the case with deer present on Forest Service land that factors on land outside the Department's control have an effect on overall population numbers. Factors that influence the size of a given herd include the availability of suitable habitat, predation of young and deer management objectives including the overall level of culling and cull ratios between male and female.

It is for this reason that Forest Service is interested in the development of deer management groups which can consensually implement effective deer control across multiple land and sporting right ownerships. This is an area we would like to see developed and integrated with our arrangements where we own the shooting rights. Forest Service has suggested that representatives of shooting organisations could take an active role in developing such groups through the involvement of their members. A further meeting has been organised with BASC to explore opportunities.

The population estimate of 200 animals for Randalstown includes deer using land adjacent to Randalstown forest. The estimate of approximately 40 animals was an estimate of animals on Forest Service land only. The larger estimate is a more useful indication of herd size for control purposes within the wider Randalstown area.

**Muntjac Deer**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the damage that Muntjac deer cause to the woodland floor.

(AQW 3246/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** Muntjac, as with other deer species, browse herbs and shrubs found in woodlands. Depending on grazing pressure, this may lead to changes in woodland structure and ecology, ultimately inhibiting woodland regeneration by removing seedlings and coppice re-growth, the structure of the shrub and ground layers and the fauna that depend on them for food or shelter, such as birds and butterflies.

**Forest Service: Wildlife Wardens**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Forest Service's three Wildlife Wardens are solely responsible for the culling of deer or are any other bodies involved.

(AQW 3247/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Forest Service wildlife wardens are solely responsible for the culling of deer on Forest Service land where DARD owns the sporting rights, as part of their wider wildlife management duties.

### **Carcasses of Deer Culled by the Forest Service**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is done with the carcasses of deer culled by the Forest Service.

(AQW 3248/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** The vast majority of carcasses of culled wild deer are removed by Forest Service from woodlands for disposal, although this is not a requirement where the risk to people or the environment is minimal. These carcasses are transported to a central deer larder for onward sale to an Approved Game Handling Establishment via an open tender process.

### **Waterways Running through Crawfordsburn Village**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans the Rivers Agency has to un-silt the waterways running through Crawfordsburn village.

(AQW 3258/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** There are a number of designated watercourses in the vicinity of Crawfordstown Village for which my Rivers Agency have an annual maintenance responsibility, they are regularly inspected. The short reach of the Ballymullan Stream associated with a grille is inspected on a weekly basis and both the Clandeboye and Crawfordsburn Drains were inspected in October 2011, no desilting was required as part of the maintenance works completed. The Ballysallagh Burn has recently been inspected and maintenance work will be carried out before the end of March 2012, desilting will be conducted if it is required. If significant accumulations of silt are encountered in watercourses during routine maintenance inspections, consideration is given to their removal in order that a free flow of water in the watercourses can be preserved. Such removal of silt must be carried out in an environmentally friendly manner and in accordance with any relevant environmental legislation. However, an undesignated open watercourse known as the Lower Burn is located to the north and west of the village. The maintenance responsibility for undesignated watercourses rests with the riparian occupiers of the land through which it flows or forms boundaries to.

### **Department's Independent Panel**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the appointments made to her Department's Independent Panel.

(AQW 3270/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** The process to appoint new members to the Department's Independent Panel is ongoing at present. It is anticipated that the appointments will commence on 1 February 2012.

### **Deer Poaching**

**Mr Frew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any evidence of deer poaching uncovered by her Department and the Forest Service.

(AQW 3274/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** Forest Service reported six cases of suspected poaching activity to PSNI during 2010. Poaching activity is suspected when animals are found with gunshot wounds, or meat has been recovered from carcasses left in forests.

## Equality Impact Assessments

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what the cost to her Department was in the 2010/11 financial year for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.

(AQW 3318/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Section 75 statutory duties make equality and good relations central to the whole range of public policy decision-making. Therefore the cost of carrying out Equality Impact Assessments are not maintained separately and cannot readily be disaggregated.

## Arm's-Length Bodies

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department has (a) carried out any value for money audits on its arm's-length bodies it funds; and (b) identified any savings that could be made by these bodies.

(AQW 3330/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department has not carried out any value for money audits on its arm's length bodies. The internal audit arrangements in place for the Department's arm's length bodies are in accordance with the guidance issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

The arm's length bodies sponsored by my Department participated in the Budget 2010 review process and contributed, as appropriate, to the savings required under that exercise.

My Department is participating in the arm's length body review being conducted centrally by the Budget Review Group to establish the scope for abolition, merger or absorption into departmental structures of each body. The Budget Review Group is expected to convey its recommendations to the Executive in due course.

## Floodbank Adjacent to The Meadows in Ballymoney

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on (i) the progress; and (ii) the expected effectiveness of the minor works to landscape the floodbank adjacent to The Meadows in Ballymoney.

(AQW 3342/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** I am advised that minor landscaping to the floodbank adjacent to the Meadows in Ballymoney have been completed. This work intends to reinstate the area and it involved some localised top-soiling and sowing of grass seed. It is expected that when mature, these measures will be effective.

## Mourne Herring Fishery Quota

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Mourne Herring Fishery Quota is a percentage of the Irish Sea Herring Quota and why it is fixed at 30 tonnes.

(AQW 3345/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** There is no fixed methodology for establishing the Mourne Herring Quota. Prior to 2002 the Department liaised with the Mourne Small Boats Association and an amount of quota was agreed based on what the Association believed it could catch. The Association appears to have dissolved after 2002. This may have been related to lack of interest in the fishery, as between 2000 and 2004 no Mourne herring was landed. In 2000 the starting allocation was 40 tonnes and thereafter it has been set at 30 tonnes. There was renewed interest in the fishery in 2005 with landings of 109.9 tonnes but landings in 2006 and 2007 were only 19.1 and 32.6 tonnes. Since 2008 the fishery has been prosecuted on a more regular basis with landings in excess of 128 tonnes each year. In each of these years the starting quota of 30 tonnes has been supplemented by a combination of "banking" of unused quota from the previous season, international quota swaps with the south of Ireland, and donations from the Producer Organisations. If the starting quota is to be set at higher level than 30

tonnes it would require the Producer Organisations (Pos) to give up some of their expected share of the Irish Sea herring quota since the Mourne Herring quota is part of the overall Irish Sea quota for which the POs hold shares called Fixed Quota Allocation units.

### Herring Stocks in the Mourne Fishery Area

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the current assessment of herring stocks in the Mourne Fishery area; (ii) what research is undertaken to keep assessments up-to-date; and (iii) whether she intends to secure a quota which reflects the healthy nature of the stock.

(AQW 3348/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** The herring stock that supports the Mourne herring fishery is part of the Irish Sea north (Area VIIa north of 52°30'N) herring stock and it is the Irish Sea north stock that is assessed. The International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) stock advice of June 2011 advises that a full assessment providing absolute values for the size of the stock is not available. On this basis ICES advised, on a precautionary basis, that landings of herring from Area VIIa north should not increase in 2012. Data for traditional stock assessments has been supplemented in recent years by additional acoustic survey data carried out under the supervision of the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute in collaboration with the local pelagic fishing fleet and funded by my Department. This data clearly shows trends indicating that the spawning stock biomass is increasing. This data was used to successfully argue for a 10% increase in the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for 2011. However under the policy for setting TACs adopted by the European Commission for 2012 this data has not been fully utilised by the Commission and it has even proposed a precautionary reduction in the TAC. It will be one of my main priorities at this years December Fisheries Council to present a strong case to the Commission to argue strongly for an increase in the Irish Sea north TAC. I plan to continue the acoustic survey programme to further strengthen our case for increased herring TAC in future.

### Mourne Herring Fishery

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the Mourne Herring Fishery is closed when the quota has not been reached.

(AQW 3349/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** Thirty two point one tonnes were allocated for the Mourne herring fishery for 2011 and this was supplemented by producer organisation quota. As of 17 October 2011 83.7 tonnes had been landed. We understand that producer organisations can donate a further 18 tonnes but this amount is insufficient to cover a days fishing by all vessels holding a Mourne Herring fishery permit. However a quota swap for a further 100 tonnes of Mourne Herring was concluded on 21 October and further fishing will be permitted to allow this quota to be taken.

### Farmers

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many successful cases the Department has taken against farmers for (i) failing to allow inspectors access; and (ii) failing to notify the Department of the death of an animal in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3350/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:**

|                         | <b>Failing to Allow Inspectors Access</b> | <b>Failing to notify the Dept of death of an animal</b>                 |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 17/10/2006 - 16/10/2007 | 0   | 4 convictions (against 3 farmers) for a total of 18 failures to notify. |

|                         | <b>Failing to Allow Inspectors Access</b> | <b>Failing to notify the Dept of death of an animal</b> |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 17/10/2007- 16/10/2008  | 0   | 4 convictions for a total of 16 charges.                |
| 17/10/2008 - 16/10/2009 | 0   | 4 convictions for total of 4 charges                    |
| 17/10/2009 - 16/10/2010 | 0   | 1 conviction for 1 charge                               |
| 17/10/2010 - 17/10/2011 | 1 conviction of obstruction               | 1 conviction for 1 charge                               |

## Area VII under the Western Waters

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why Area VII under the Western Waters scallops effort regime is closed; and when it is due to re-open.

(AQW 3351/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** At the end of September 2011 the British and north of Ireland uptake of Area VII scallop effort was 3.14m kilowatt days out of a maximum allowable effort of 3.31m kilowatt days. Since no additional scallop effort had been secured through international effort swaps, there has been no alternative but to close the fishery in Area VII from 1st October.

The Marine Management Organisation is continuing to negotiate with other Member States that have spare scallop effort in order to secure sufficient effort to permit the fishery to open until the end of the year. The fishery will remain closed until additional effort is secured.

## Scallops

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given that queen and king scallops are separate fisheries, why, in quota and management terms, are they treated as one; and for her assessment of whether unnecessary pressure is put on the queen scallop stock in Area VI when the dredging boats, normally used to fish king scallops, are allowed in without restraint.

(AQW 3352/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** The British and north of Ireland Fisheries Administrations hold the view that under the "Western Waters" Council Regulation EC No. 1415/2004 the term "scallop" includes both King and Queen Scallops. However the Administrations are now aware that other Member States have interpreted "scallop" differently and we intend to clarify this ambiguous definition with the Commission in the New Year. It has been agreed with British and north of Ireland scallop industry representatives not to seek clarification sooner as a ruling to exclude queen scallop from the definition would have the effect of making the King Scallop effort overshoot in 2011 even worse.

My officials met our Scallop Association on 30th September to discuss the Area VII scallop closure and the effect of displacement of effort into Area VI. It was agreed that the displacement was undesirable but that there was nothing that could be implemented in time during 2011 to control this expansion. However it was decided that the Department should work with the Scallop Association to develop a sustainable management regime for the North Coast queen scallop fishery for 2012 that would limit exploitation to those vessels that historically fished in the area.

## October Monitoring Round

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any easements that have been identified by her Department in the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3361/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** My department did not declare any easements in the October Monitoring Round.

## Woodland Cover

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what grants or incentives are available to increase woodland cover.

(AQW 3374/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department's Forest Service provides grant aid and advice to encourage more farmers and landowners to create woodland, through the Woodland Grant Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme. Grant rates were increased by up to 30 per cent in November 2009. In addition, woodland creation has been encouraged through:

- Implementing beneficial changes to the Single Farm Payment (SFP) Scheme allowing farmers to continue to receive SFP, as well as forestry grant payments, on land converted to woodland;
- Extending the funding of the Short Rotation Coppice Scheme until the end of the current Rural Development Programme in 2013;
- Engaging with a wide range of landowning bodies, such as local councils, and other central Government Departments, encouraging them to consider woodland as a viable economic alternative to their current land use;
- Engaging with afforestation stakeholders to identify barriers to woodland creation and assist in the development of proposals for future mechanisms to support woodland creation;

In addition to the Woodland Grant Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme, participants in agri-environment schemes may avail of funding for planting small areas of native trees on farmland and managing existing woodland. These schemes include the Countryside Management Scheme and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme.

## Implanted Microchips

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an estimate of the percentage of animals that will develop cancer around implanted microchips.

(AQW 3422/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** Concern that there may be a causal link between microchipping and cancer in dogs was raised by a small number of consultees during consultation on the proposals for new dogs control legislation in 2009. My officials considered these concerns during the drafting of the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011.

There is evidence that any invasive foreign body very slightly increases the risk of the formation of benign or malignant tumours. There are a small number of studies that have seen growths around chips implanted in laboratory animals, including rodents genetically modified to be prone to cancer, as well as the sites of vaccination injections. However, it is clear from the Small Animal Veterinary Association's records that any such risk from microchipping is very low. Since 1996, of more than 5 million microchipped animals, only 429 cases of chip failure or adverse reactions to a microchip were reported.

Of these 429 failures, and adverse reactions, all but 68 involved the migration, loss or failure of the chip, rather than a health issue and only 3 cases involved a tumour in the area of the implantation site but with no further evidence of any causal link. The risks involved are considered to be very low.

In comparison, more than 1,100 stray dogs were put down here last year because they could not be identified and so were not reclaimed and were unable to be re-homed.

The Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011 provides for an exemption where a Veterinarian in his professional capacity confirms that microchipping could cause health problems for an individual dog.

## Stray Animals

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) what percentage of stray animals have been reunited with their owners in each of the last three years; (ii) what percentage of stray animals, which have an implanted microchip, have been reunited with their owners in each of the last three years; and (iii) for an estimate of the number of stray animals which will be reunited with their owners annually following the introduction of compulsory microchipping.

(AQW 3423/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department has legislative responsibility for stray dogs. Local Councils are responsible for enforcing all aspects of the Dogs Order 1983, as amended, and are required to provide statistical information to my Department on the operational aspects of the legislation. Based on the information provided by the Councils, I can only provide information on stray dogs rather than stray animals in general.

- (i) In 2010, 34% of stray dogs impounded were reclaimed by their owners. In 2009 and 2008 this figure was 31%.
- (ii) The Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011 amends the Dogs Order 1983 to make it a requirement that a dog is microchipped before a Council can issue a dog licence. I intend to commence this provision of the Act in April 2012. As microchipping is not yet a condition for obtaining a dog licence my Department does not hold any information on the number of microchipped stray dogs that have been re-united with their owners.
- (iii) While it is impossible to estimate the number of stray dogs that will be reunited annually with their owners following the introduction of the new microchipping powers under the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011, the expectation is that the figure will be considerably higher than at present. Widespread micro-chipping will improve the traceability of dogs therefore making it easier for dogs to be re-united with their owners in the event of straying or theft.

## Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

**Mr Cree** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the average cost to her Department of answering (i) an Oral Assembly Question; and (ii) a Written Assembly Question during this mandate compared to two years ago.

(AQW 3442/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and comparative information between mandates is therefore not available.

## Rural White Paper Action Plan

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has secured any financial commitment from her Executive colleagues to implement any of the the actions contained in her Department's Rural White Paper Action Plan.

(AQW 3459/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** All Departments have contributed to the development of the draft Rural White Paper Action Plan and each action contained in the Action Plan has been allocated to a lead Department. The lead Department will be responsible for meeting the financial costs associated with implementing each of its actions. It is anticipated that the final Rural White Paper Action Plan will be published in early 2012 following approval by the Executive.

## Appointment of Special Advisers

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the status within her Department of the Department of Finance and Personnel's review of the appointment of Special Advisers.

(AQW 3687/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** Responsibility for the appointment of Special Advisers remains with individual Ministers and should comply with the Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers and the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999.

## Flooding Caused by Rivers Bursting Their Banks

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans she has to provide compensation and support to people who have had their property damaged as a result of the flooding caused by rivers bursting their banks during the recent heavy rainfall.

(AQW 3810/11-15)

**Mrs O'Neill:** As a direct response to this latest flood event I have committed an additional £1m to Rivers Agency to assist with flood alleviation measures. In addition my executive colleague Alex Attwood, Minister for the Environment has announced the provision of emergency funds to assist local councils in providing assistance and support to householders affected by the recent flooding event. If further funding is required I would anticipate it will be an issue to be discussed by the Executive.

# Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

## Cultural Tourism

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans she has to promote cultural tourism between Northern Ireland and Scotland.

(AQW 3154/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure):** The Arts Council is currently working to coordinate a Literature Tourism Trail covering the north of Ireland and Scotland's Western region. There are strong links between literature development organisations here and their counterparts in Scotland. Similarly, other organisations supported by the Arts Council are active in developing such links. The NI Piping and Drumming School and the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association NI branch both have links into the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association and play a role in promoting tourism-led activities. Armagh Pipers Club has delivered an exchange programme with Piping Live in Scotland and Feis an Earraigh on the Isle of Skye.

Foras na Gaeilge along with Bòrd na Gàidhlig are responsible for the Colmcille project which has developed with HLF funding a Heritage and Tourism trail – Slí Cholmcille – from Glencolmcille in SW Donegal through Derry City, Limavady and the Mid Sperrins to Argyll and the Western Isles. This site will be launched on 10 November in Derry.

I recently launched a mobile app competition to promote cultural tourism by showcasing aspects of Ulster-Scots and Irish culture in time for the 2012 tourism season.

Content for the Ulster-Scots app is from a range of publications developed by the Ulster Historical Foundation and the Ulster-Scots Agency. Profiles have been developed on approximately 200 locations across the region with Ulster-Scots significance. These include villages, landmarks, castles and graveyards. The app will also allow users to explore thematic trails based on the Plantation and emigration and also hold information on Ulster-Scots family names.

The app will also provide information on local accommodation, restaurants and other attractions relevant to the sites and activities profiled by the apps. This aims to encourage tourists and visitors to travel and stay at locations across the north.

## Association Football

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how she will assist in the promotion of Association Football, from youth through to international level, over the next four years.

(AQW 3202/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Sport NI is responsible for providing direct assistance towards the promotion of individual sports in the north of Ireland from youth through to international level, including Association Football. Sport NI has currently approved the following exchequer investment in Association Football over the next 4 financial years, and beginning in 2011/12, under its Sport Matters Community Capital programme:-

| Organisation                  | Project  | Award           |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Burnside Ulster Scots Society | 3G football pitch with floodlights and changing facilities   | £245,000        |
| Moneyslane FC                 | Sand carpet grass football pitch; 3G and grass multi-use games areas with floodlights, pitch furniture, services etc | £245,000        |
| Trustees of Kilcluney LOL 132 | Construction of 3G football pitch (60m x 40m) with floodlights   | £198,276        |
|                               | <b>Total</b>   | <b>£688,276</b> |

As well as this assistance, Sport NI has awarded £400,000 of exchequer funding over the next 2 financial years to Association Football, under the Investing in Performance Sport Programme, to assist the development of talented players aged 12-16. In addition, Sport NI has agreed to provide, via its Athlete Support Programme, £25,000 of exchequer funding in this financial year towards the training and competition costs of Association Football's senior international women's team. Sport NI will also, over the next 4 years, be providing on-going advice and guidance to Association Football in a range of areas including governance, community relations, coach education, club development, facility development and spectator safety.

Furthermore, the development of an operationally viable and commercially sustainable stadium to help meet the needs of international Association Football remains a major priority for my Department. Approximately £25m of exchequer monies has been set aside over the next 4 financial years for this purpose.

## Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the (i) successful; and (ii) unsuccessful applications to the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund; and how the budget has been allocated since the commencement of the Fund.

(AQW 3294/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The funding for the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund (USBF) comes from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport via the British Film Institute and is administered by Northern Ireland Screen. I am informed by Northern Ireland Screen that, since the commencement of the USBF, there have been 12 successful and 39 unsuccessful applications and 2 applications have been deferred. £1,497,062 has been allocated since the commencement of the fund.

## Irish Language Broadcast Fund

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the (i) successful; and (ii) unsuccessful applications to the Irish Language Broadcast Fund; and how the budget has been allocated since the commencement of the Fund.

(AQW 3295/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The funding for the Irish Language Broadcast Fund (ILBF) comes from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport via the British Film Institute and is administered by Northern Ireland Screen. I am informed by Northern Ireland Screen that, since the commencement of ILBF, there have been 183 successful and 124 unsuccessful applications. I am also informed that, until this year, the fund was broken down as follows - £2.5m per annum on projects and £250k on training.

## Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she intends to provide additional funding to the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund so that it can fund a range of training initiatives for Ulster-Scots speakers, in the same way that the Irish Language Broadcast Fund funds training initiatives for Irish speakers working in the sector.

(AQW 3296/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Funding for the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund (USBF) comes from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport via the British Film Institute and is administered by Northern Ireland Screen.

I have been advised that there are currently no plans to widen the scope of the USBF to fund a range of training initiatives.

## Film Tax Credits

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she intends to discuss extending Film Tax Credits for Children's television and television dramas with the relevant Departments.

(AQW 3313/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** I understand that my predecessor wrote to the Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries on this issue last year. The response stated that the Government does not believe there is a case for offering tax breaks, particularly in the current economic climate.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) and Invest NI fund this activity and therefore this is primarily an issue for them. However I am content to support any future discussions with the Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries to help to boost local television production here.

## Equality Impact Assessments

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what the cost to her Department was in the 2010/11 financial year for carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.

(AQW 3317/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** There were no Equality Impact Assessments undertaken by my Department in the 2010/11 financial year.

## Arm's-Length Bodies

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department has (a) carried out any value for money audits on its arm's-length bodies its funds; and (b) identified any savings that could be made by these bodies.

(AQW 3331/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:**

- (a) My Department has carried out no value for money audits on its arm's-length bodies (ALBs). Value for money audits are normally carried out by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

However, my Department is participating in the ALB review being conducted centrally by the Budget Review Group to establish the scope for abolition, merger or absorption into departmental structures of each body. The Budget Review Group is expected to convey its recommendations to the Executive in due course.

My Department has also begun a more detailed review of its own ALBs. An initial exercise was completed in March 2011 which recommended a full review of a number of these; this will commence shortly.

- (b) As part of the Budget 2010 exercise my Department and its ALBs were allocated budget reductions and savings have had to be found in order to live within these. My Department has already published details on its website of the savings required by the Draft Budget and will be updating these in line with the Final Budget in due course.

**Ballymoney Library**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW1830/11-15, 1831/11-15, 1832/11-15 and 1833/11-15, why the answers did not detail (i) the reasons for the proposed reduction in the opening hours of Ballymoney Library; (ii) the steps she has taken to safeguard the long-term future of Ballymoney Library; (iii) what weight she will attach to the responses to the public consultation on the proposed reduction in the opening hours of Ballymoney Library; (iv) what equality proofing has been carried out in relation to the proposed reduction in the opening hours of Ballymoney Library; and (v) if she will provide the information requested.

(AQW 3343/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The Review of Library Opening Hours is the operational responsibility of Libraries NI. Ballymoney library is part of this overall review and it is not being treated in isolation.

The Board of Libraries NI determined, reluctantly, that in light of the budget settlement and the level of savings required, that it was preferable to reduce opening hours rather than close a substantial number of libraries

More detailed information regarding the consultation process is available on the Libraries NI website.

I would again emphasise that nothing has been finalised by the Libraries NI Board at this stage. I would encourage people to take part in the consultation which ends on 2 December 2011.

**Department Spend**

**Dr McDonnell** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail her Department's (i) direct; and (ii) indirect spend in each of the last ten years in the Belfast City Council area.

(AQW 3363/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Details of spending in the Belfast City Council area for the financial years 2001/02 to 2010/11 are not readily available from the Department's financial systems.

The extraction of this information would require extensive manual analysis of financial records from this period and would result in disproportionate costs.

## Board of the Ulster-Scots Agency

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many members of the current Board of the Ulster-Scots Agency are from (i) Northern Ireland; and (ii) the Republic of Ireland; and whether this reflects the fact that Northern Ireland provides 75 per cent of the Agency's budget.

(AQW 3378/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The North/South Language Body board comprises 24 members appointed by NSMC, of those members, 16 are members of the Foras na Gaeilge Board and 8 are members of the Ulster-Scots Agency Board.

Both the Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency Boards have 50% of their membership nominated and appointed by the NI Executive and 50% by the Irish Government.

## Appointment of Special Advisers

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the status, within her Department, of the Department of Finance and Personnel's review of the appointment of Special Advisers.

(AQW 3379/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Responsibility for the appointment of Special Advisers remains with individual Ministers and should comply with the Code of Practice on the Appointment of Special Advisers and the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 as amended

## Fish Poaching in Inland Waterways

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 2252/11-15, what steps she is taking to (i) identify; and (ii) tackle the level of fish poaching in inland waterways in the Upper Bann constituency.

(AQW 3404/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** DCAL is concerned with any illegal fishing activity, which includes fish poaching, taking place throughout its operational area.

- (i) It is difficult to identify the actual level of fish poaching in any constituency without precise and detailed information on the numbers and activities of poachers involved. My Department can only monitor trends on the level of poaching from the number of detections made and the number and length of illegal nets and long lines seized.
- (ii) The Upper Bann constituency spans two DCAL operational areas with enforcement teams consisting of 3 and 2 Fisheries Protection Officers, each directed by a Senior Fisheries Officer. Additional resources from other teams may be brought in to assist in operations in the Upper Bann Constituency as and when required.

DCAL Fisheries Protection staff undertake regular patrols, including evenings and weekends, on land and water, throughout the Upper Bann constituency. They also carry out intelligence led operations to detect, disrupt and deter those involved in illegal fishing activities.

In addition Fisheries Protection Officers undertake inspections of fish dealers' premises and businesses selling fish such as hotels, restaurants and commercial outlets, to ensure that those engaged comply fully with the 1966 Fisheries Act and Fisheries Regulations.

DCAL Fisheries Protection staff also build relationships with local angling clubs, many of which have Private Water Bailiffs, who have similar enforcement powers and play an important role in supporting my Department in combating illegal fishing activities.

## Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

**Mr Cree** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the average cost to her Department of answering (i) an Oral Assembly Question; and (ii) a Written Assembly Question during this mandate compared to two years ago.

(AQW 3443/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and comparative information between mandates is therefore not available.

The rationale for this position has been previously set out by OFMDFM, as part of its written submission to the Procedures Committee on the cost of answering AQs, during the Committee's AQ Inquiry -

*"The preparation of responses to Assembly Questions is an intrinsic part of the responsibilities of civil servants and has therefore not traditionally been separated out from other duties for a separate estimate of cost. Such costs, which would reflect only the departmental phase of processing the questions, would also vary in line with, for example, the nature of the question, the number of individual members of staff involved in preparing the reply and the involvement of other Departments in providing information."*

## Library Fines

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the process by which a person is banned from borrowing books from a library through having fines in excess of £10.

(AQW 3451/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The amount of stock not returned is of ongoing concern for Libraries NI who continue to undertake a number of measures to try and reduce the impact on the library service of stock loss. These can include for example contacting the borrower via text, e-mail or letter before and after the stock item is due for return.

In the course of accruing a fine in excess of £10 a borrower will have received at least one overdue notice.

Libraries NI have informed me that they have set the parameters on their automated library management system to automatically identify when a borrower has accrued a fine of £10 or more. As a result of this the borrower would be unable to borrow any further books or other items.

## Public Library Standards

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail any changes she proposes to make to the existing Public Library Standards.

(AQW 3452/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The Public Library Standards form part of DCAL's policy framework for the public library service (entitled 'Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries') which was published in July 2006.

It is my intention to review the library policy framework in the near future to assess the extent that it has been successful in bringing about the desired improvement in the public library service.

I would then be in a position to consider if the Public Library Standards need to be updated.

## Lisnaskea Library

**Mr Lynch** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i), given that Libraries NI has already purchased the site for the Lisnaskea Library new build, when it proposes to begin the development; (ii) why the existing library at Lisnaskea is having its opening hours reduced; and (iii) whether the reduction

in hours of the existing library at Lisnaskea is an indication that the commencement of the new build is at risk.

(AQW 3501/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:**

- (i) The Project to provide a replacement library in Lisnaskea was already underway when it was suspended due to the 2011 budget settlement. The Project remains a priority for Libraries NI if funding were to become available.
- (ii) The Review of Library Opening Hours is the operational responsibility of Libraries NI. Lisnaskea library is part of this overall review and it is not being treated in isolation.

The Board of Libraries NI determined, reluctantly, that in light of the budget settlement and the level of savings required, that it was preferable to reduce opening hours rather than close a substantial number of libraries

- (iii) The Review of Opening Hours is unrelated to the Libraries NI capital programme.

### Equality Schemes

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the cost to her Department of equality schemes since the publication of 'Reviewing the Effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998' by the Equality Commission in May 2007.

(AQW 3503/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Implementation of the Departmental Equality Scheme is mainstreamed within the Department as part of the policy development process. The cost of equality duties are not maintained and cannot readily be disaggregated.

I trust you will find this information useful.

### Funding for Sports

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 2961/11-15, to detail the funding allocated to clubs affiliated to the (i) Gaelic Athletic Association; (ii) Irish Football Association; and (iii) Irish Rugby Football Union in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3639/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Sport NI is the lead development agency for sport in the north of Ireland with responsibility for the distribution of Exchequer and Lottery funding. In the last five financial years, Sport NI has allocated a total of £29,227,994 to clubs affiliated to the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Irish Football Association and the Irish Rugby Football Union. A breakdown of this funding is provided in the table below:

| Date             | GAA                |         | IFA                |                   | IRFU            |         |
|------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------|
|                  | Exchequer          | Lottery | Exchequer          | Lottery           | Exchequer       | Lottery |
| 2006/07          | £1,848,283         | -       | £214,366           | -                 | -               | -       |
| 2007/08          | £2,786,466         | -       | £807,163           | -                 | -               | -       |
| 2008/09          | £3,999,228         | -       | £1,364,372         | £1,880,017        | £410,403        | -       |
| 2009/10          | £8,689,681         | -       | £3,925,414         | £245,000          | £208,680        | -       |
| 2010/11          | 586,283            | -       | £2,173,534         | -                 | £89,104         | -       |
| <b>Sub total</b> | <b>£17,909,941</b> | -       | <b>£8,484,849</b>  | <b>£2,125,017</b> | <b>£708,187</b> | -       |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>£17,909,941</b> |         | <b>£10,609,866</b> |                   | <b>£708,187</b> |         |

## Olympic Sized Swimming Pool in Bangor

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans there are to use the olympic sized swimming pool in Bangor as part of 2013 World Police and Fire Games.

(AQW 3678/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Between 2 July 2010 and 29 July 2010 Sport NI completed an ‘expression of interest’ exercise (on behalf of the Stakeholder Group - the lead body prior to the formal establishment of 2013 World Police and Fire Games Limited on 28 February 2011) to identify potential venues to host the sports events for the 2013 Games.

The Company has concluded its stage two assessments of the venue selection process (previously managed by Sport NI) and is now engaging in pre-contract negotiations with the shortlisted venues prior to the Board making final decisions. The negotiations are without prejudice.

The 50m pool in Bangor has been identified as the provisional venue for; ‘swimming’, ‘water polo’, and ‘toughest competitor alive’ events in the 2013 World Police and Fire Games. The final list of venues will be confirmed in summer 2012.

## Odyssey Trust Company Limited

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department’s consent was sought and obtained by the Odyssey Trust Company for expenditure on the refurbishment of the corporate hospitality suites at the Odyssey Arena; and, if so, what level of expenditure was approved.

(AQW 3754/11-15)

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The Odyssey Complex has now passed its tenth anniversary and many items of fixtures, plant and equipment require updating.

The maintenance and/or refurbishment of areas within the complex is the full responsibility of the Trustees of the Odyssey Trust Company (OTC).

These Trustees seek to maintain the complex to an appropriate, fit for purpose, standard.

In the light of their charitable obligations, which are primarily funded from commercial activities, the Trustees must also consider how the Odyssey can provide a quality offering to meet the requirements of paying customers’ and events organisers.

My Department does not direct, or intervene in, the OTC’s schedule of planned maintenance and/or refurbishment.

## Department of Education

### Special Advisers

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 1980/11-15, whether his Special Adviser is in receipt of a salary and under which salary band his Special Adviser is being paid.

(AQW 2636/11-15)

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The salary of DE’s Special Adviser has yet to be finalised.

### Enhanced Redundancy Package for Teachers

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Education to detail the level of funding allocated for the enhanced redundancy package for teachers in the (i) 2011/12; (ii) 2012/13; and (iii) 2013/14 financial years.

(AQW 3205/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** In order to deliver the efficiencies identified in my Savings Delivery Plan, £49.9 million has been set aside to support the Voluntary Severance Programme in 2011-12. This will facilitate a further streamlining of staff employed in central management and administration in the Arm's Length Bodies, as well as any proposals regarding teaching and non teaching staff based in schools. Further resources have been set aside for future years – the indicative allocations over the years 2012-13 to 2014-15 are £55.4/£50.6/£61.3 million; however, these may be subject to change.

These sums have not as yet been broken down between teachers, support staff and central management/administration. It will be a matter for employing authorities to agree the terms of any enhanced redundancy for teachers in light of the available resources. No funding has been allocated to date to the employing authorities for this process.

### Private Sector Bus Companies

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Education what sanctions are available if private sector bus companies are in breach of regulations while having a contract to transport children to and from school. (AQW 3286/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** The sanctions available to Education and Library Boards are used according to the nature, severity and/or frequency of the offence.

In instances where the breach of the regulations, or the terms of a contract are relatively minor, for example, poor timekeeping, contractors may receive a formal warning and be given a set period during which they are required to improve.

Where a breach is more serious, bus-runs may be removed from the contractor. For example, where a vehicle breaks down and the contractor has no contingency in place - Boards will take immediate action where the health and safety of pupils is involved.

In the most severe cases Boards may terminate a contract entirely and/or remove them completely from the tender-select list. For example, this may occur where a contractor fails to meet the legal obligations with respect to their vehicle(s) or health and safety requirements.

### Children: Statemented

**Mrs Hale** asked the Minister of Education how many children were statemented in each sector, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 3290/11-15)

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

Pupils in schools with a statement of SEN by school management type, 2008/09 – 2010/11

| School management type      | 2008/09       | 2009/10       | 2010/11       |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Controlled                  | 7,689         | 7,682         | 7,785         |
| Voluntary                   | 347           | 417           | 466           |
| RC Maintained               | 4,263         | 4,363         | 4,441         |
| Other Maintained            | 90            | 91            | 95            |
| Controlled Integrated       | 172           | 238           | 252           |
| Grant Maintained Integrated | 692           | 767           | 851           |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>13,253</b> | <b>13,558</b> | <b>13,890</b> |

**Source:** NI school census.

**Note:**

1. Figures relate to pupils in nursery, primary post-primary and special schools.

In addition to the numbers in schools listed above, there were: 18 statemented children in funded places in voluntary and private preschool centres in 2008/09; 16 statemented children in funded places in voluntary and private preschool centres in 2009/10; and, 8 statemented children in funded places in voluntary and private preschool centres in 2010/11.

**Computer Science**

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Education whether he will consider including a distinction in the curriculum between Information Communication Technology for using computers and Computer Science which examines how computers function.

(AQW 3306/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays a central role in the revised curriculum. Using ICT is a cross-curricular skill in the curriculum. It is not a specified subject. The Using ICT cross-curricular skill, places emphasis on developing in young people a range of ICT competences and their use in practical applications across all areas of the curriculum ie it is embedded. These skills are important in everyday life.

Computer Science is distinct and is a specific and more specialised subject. The flexibility already in place within the revised curriculum enables schools to teach Computer Science in any Key Stage if they feel it appropriate.

**Computer Science**

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Education whether he has any plans to include Computer Science in the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

(AQW 3310/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** The revised curriculum has been designed to provide flexibility for schools to develop experiences that suit the needs of their pupils. Embedding mandatory, cross curricular skills and keeping prescribed content to a minimum, allows schools to choose the most appropriate approach to take with their pupils to ensure they are engaged and challenged to reach their full potential.

Computer Science typically includes the study of algorithms to solve computational problems, how computers process and store information and binary logic. It may also cover the study of programming languages. However, for the majority of young people at Key Stage 3 this is much more specialised than the skills they need as everyday users of ICT.

Using ICT, is a cross-curricular skill which is embedded in the curriculum and which places emphasis on developing in young people a range of ICT competences and their use in practical situations.

Although Computer Science is more specialised and likely to appeal to a smaller population, the flexibility in the revised curriculum does not preclude schools from teaching computer science at Key Stage 3 if they felt it appropriate.

**Contract Lease iPads**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Education whether he can offer an assurance that secondary school pupils whose parents do not enter into the three year contract lease for an iPad will not be disadvantaged or discriminated against.

(AQW 3341/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** Schools have flexibility to determine how they deliver the revised curriculum in the classroom, and in doing so will use a variety of resources including ICT. The flexibility permitted will therefore result in different offerings of curriculum provision across schools.

Through the investment in C2k, schools are equipped with ICT services to meet the educational needs of all pupils. Where a school puts in place enhancements to the core provision, which may not be available to all pupils, I expect it to ensure that no pupil is thereby disadvantaged.

### **Contract Lease iPads**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Education whether the use of iPads, contract leased by parents over three years, will lead to savings on books for (i) schools; and (ii) the Education and Library Boards.

(AQW 3400/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** Schools are best placed to assess the needs of their pupils and it is a matter for schools themselves to reach a judgement on the resources, including books and ICT provision, they wish to use in their delivery of the curriculum. If they wish to enhance their ICT provision through an iPad lease scheme they may do so.

Whether a saving on books is made by a school or its area Education and Library Board as a consequence of the introduction of iPads, will depend upon how the school utilises the functions the iPads provided in the classroom.

### **Teachers: Sick Leave**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 1857/11-15, how many of the 113 teachers who were on sick leave for a period of over three months during the 2010/11 school year are currently on sick leave again.

(AQW 3414/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** Based on the latest data held 6 of the 113 teachers are currently on sick leave.

### **Draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Education why he did not consult the Minister of Justice or his Department on the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy.

(AQW 3425/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** The draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy was launched for consultation on 25 June 2010 by my predecessor as Minister of Education. The Minister extended the consultation period, which was originally to end in November 2010, to 31 January 2011 due to the high level of interest.

Unfortunately, the Department of Justice was not included in the consultation for the draft Strategy as the Department of Education used a distribution list that had been prepared prior to the establishment of the Department of Justice. This is to be regretted.

It was the case however, that the consultation, and subsequent extension, was advertised in the general press and all MLAs, political parties, and the Assembly Business Office, were notified of the consultation process.

One of the key objectives of the draft Strategy is to encourage greater collaboration among key partners to promote greater integration in service delivery for young children. I will ensure, therefore, that my Department will work with other departments and agencies in the development and implementation of relevant policies and strategies.

### **Equality Schemes**

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost to his Department of equality schemes since the publication of 'Reviewing the Effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998' by the Equality Commission in May 2007.

(AQW 3427/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** My Department's original Equality Scheme was published in February 2001. A revised Scheme was issued for consultation in July 2011 and reflects the Equality Commission's revised Guide for Public Authorities (April 2010). The revised guidance arose from the recommendations of the Commission's Review of Effectiveness of the Duties in May 2007.

As Section 75 statutory duties are mainstreamed in policy making, the Department does not hold information on the cost of equality duties and could not readily disaggregate them.

### **Viability Audit**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Education how the financial viability aspect of the current viability audit can be satisfactorily and fairly concluded in advance of the completion of the review of how schools should be funded; and when the review is due to be completed.

(AQW 3472/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** The purpose of the viability audit is to make an assessment of all schools looking initially at enrolments, the quality of education provided and the financial viability projected over a number of years. The focus is therefore wider than a school's financial position. A key outcome of the viability audit is for early appropriate intervention in those schools that are evidencing significant stress, thereby protecting the interests of the pupils directly affected.

With regard to your specific question in relation to the review of school funding, as I outlined in my Statement to the Assembly on 26 September, I have asked that a review of the current Common Funding Scheme is undertaken, to ensure that funding arrangements are fit for purpose in our drive for a sustainable schools estate. I am not satisfied that the scheme adequately supports and is consistent with our policy objectives, nor that the current system is sensitive enough in targeting funding for TSN. This is a major piece of work and I have asked that this is completed to allow for consultation and implementation of eventual decisions from 2013-14.

### **School Bus Routes in the South Antrim Area**

**Mr Girvan** asked the Minister of Education what changes have been made to the school bus routes in the South Antrim area since the end of the 2010/11 academic year.

(AQW 3477/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** In the South Antrim area the only major changes have been to accommodate the merger of St Killian's, St Comgall's High School (Larne) and St Aloysius High School (Cushendall), and the removal of a Board bus from the run serving Templepatrick and Mallusk Primary Schools due to a decline in the number of pupils using the service.

Minor adjustments, such as the addition, removal, or relocation of pick-up/set-down points, may have been made to routes travelled by designated buses. These minor adjustments will have been required by the changing demography of pupils eligible for assistance with transport.

### **Bangor Grammar School**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of the new build for Bangor Grammar School.

(AQW 3485/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** Construction work on the new school for Bangor Grammar started on site in March 2011 and is estimated to be completed in February 2013. The current target cost is £15.123m which includes an element of non-grant aidable work which will be funded by the school authorities.

## **Belfast City Council: Spend**

**Dr McDonnell** asked the Minister of Education to detail his Department's (i) direct; and (ii) indirect spend in each of the last ten years in the Belfast City Council area.

(AQW 3496/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** My Department does not hold the information in the format requested.

## **Framework for Language Teaching and Learning in Schools**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Education whether he intends to introduce a framework for language teaching and learning in schools; and if so, whether the framework would ensure that all primary school pupils learn a foreign language.

(AQW 3512/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** Schools are encouraged to offer a wider range of modern languages, and the recently introduced revised curriculum provides them with greater flexibility to do so. This includes scope for schools wishing to offer language learning at primary level, before it becomes a statutory requirement at Key Stage 3, and a qualification choice at Key Stage 4 and sixth form.

The revised curriculum has broadened the range of modern languages that schools can offer so that, instead of being limited to choosing from 5 languages as previously, schools are now able to choose any of the languages of the 27 EU member states to meet the minimum requirement, as well as any other additional languages they wish.

Modern languages are not a compulsory part of the statutory curriculum at primary level. The Department is however aware that there is a range of existing good practice in language learning. To help support primary schools wishing to offer modern language learning the Primary Language Programme was introduced in 2007 to give our youngest pupils the opportunity to learn an additional language in school. As at 30 June 2011, 416 schools were participating in the programme, with over 27,000 pupils each week benefiting from learning an additional language. Additional support and resources is also provided by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) for primary schools that wish to introduce an additional language.

## **Draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Education to detail the work his Department has undertaken with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership in relation to the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy.

(AQW 3521/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership was established in January 2011 and has recently published the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 for consultation. The Department of Education is currently considering the Plan.

The consultation on the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy ended on 31 January 2011 and the Department is currently considering the large volume of responses to that consultation. The focus of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership is on ensuring the implementation of an integrated approach to the planning and delivery of services for children, which is one of the key objectives of the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy. As such, the Department, in considering the way forward for the Strategy, will wish to consider how it might align with the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14.

## **Bangor Grammar School Sport Pitches**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education whether there are any plans for the community to use the new Bangor Grammar School sport pitches.

(AQW 3540/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Department has been advised by the School Principal that from the beginning of the design phase of the new Bangor Grammar School, community access was one of the most important underlying design principles and has greatly influenced the final configuration of its facilities.

The facilities of the school are used every night and at most weekends by community groups and the school intends to continue and develop this access not only in its new building, but also, where practicable, on the exterior pitches and courts.

### Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

**Mr Cree** asked the Minister of Education to detail the average cost to his Department of answering (i) an Oral Assembly Question; and (ii) a Written Assembly Question during this mandate compared to two years ago.

(AQW 3547/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Department of Education does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and comparative information between mandates is therefore not available.

The preparation of responses to Assembly Questions is an intrinsic part of the responsibilities of civil servants and has therefore not traditionally been singled out from other duties for a separate estimate of cost. Such costs, which would reflect only the departmental phase of processing the questions, would also vary in line with, for example, the nature of the question, the number of individual members of staff involved in preparing the reply and the involvement of other Departments in providing information.

### Modern Languages

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister of Education how many pupils have gained a grade A-C in a modern language at (i) GCSE; and (ii) A Level in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 3578/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:**

| Number of GCSE entries in modern languages, 2000/01 - 2009/10 |                      |               |                           |
|---|----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Year  | Total achieving A*-C | Total entries | Percentage achieving A*-C |
| 2000/01   | 11,950               | 17,472        | 68.4                      |
| 2001/02   | 12,190               | 17,463        | 69.8                      |
| 2002/03   | 11,536               | 17,030        | 67.7                      |
| 2003/04   | 11,356               | 16,829        | 67.5                      |
| 2004/05   | 11,344               | 15,852        | 71.6                      |
| 2005/06   | 10,557               | 14,913        | 70.8                      |
| 2006/07   | 10,322               | 14,805        | 69.7                      |
| 2007/08   | 10,011               | 13,563        | 73.8                      |
| 2008/09   | 9,378                | 12,009        | 78.1                      |
| 2009/10   | 9,305                | 11,574        | 80.4                      |

| <b>Number of A level entries in modern languages, 2000/01 - 2009/10</b> |                            |                      |                                 |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>Total achieving A-C</b> | <b>Total entries</b> | <b>Percentage achieving A-C</b> |
| 2000/01   | 1,169                      | 1,626                | 71.9                            |
| 2001/02   | 1,364                      | 1,648                | 82.8                            |
| 2002/03   | 1,162                      | 1,444                | 80.5                            |
| 2003/04   | 1,215                      | 1,440                | 84.4                            |
| 2004/05   | 1,124                      | 1,309                | 85.9                            |
| 2005/06   | 1,099                      | 1,292                | 85.1                            |
| 2006/07   | 1,141                      | 1,294                | 88.2                            |
| 2007/08   | 1,152                      | 1,305                | 88.3                            |
| 2008/09   | 1,117                      | 1,254                | 89.1                            |
| 2009/10   | 1,179                      | 1,345                | 87.7                            |

The data is sourced from the RM Data Solutions database of examination entries.

Within the years covered, GCSE and A level entries were made in the following subjects:-

Irish (excluding Gaelige) French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Polish, Russian, Urdu, Modern Greek, Hindi, Japanese, Turkish or Persian.

### **A Level: Modern Language**

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister of Education what action his Department has taken to encourage pupils to study a modern language at A Level.

(AQW 3579/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Currently modern languages are a statutory requirement at KS3 and a qualification choice at KS4 and Sixth form. Schools are encouraged to offer a wider range of modern languages, and the recently introduced revised curriculum offers schools more flexibility in the choices of subjects they can offer to meet the needs of their pupils.

The revised curriculum has broadened the range of modern languages that schools can offer so that, instead of being limited to choosing from 5 languages as previously, schools are now able to choose any of the languages of the 27 EU member states to meet the minimum requirement, as well as any other additional languages they wish.

Additionally the Entitlement Framework will guarantee all pupils equality of access to a broad and balanced range of courses with clear progression pathways at Key Stage 4 and post-16. Schools work in Area Learning Communities to best meet the needs of all the pupils in their area and are therefore able to provide access to a wider range of courses, including modern languages, at A Level.

### **Proposed New Builds for Schools**

**Mr Hussey** asked the Minister of Education to list the proposed new builds for schools which are at the feasibility and economic appraisal stage, including how long each new build has been at this stage.

(AQW 3591/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** At this point I am not in a position to provide a list of proposed new builds for schools. I have indicated that no school capital building project will be looked at in isolation but within the context of the wider area plan.

I have made it clear that we need to move to a more strategic approach to planning and I have commissioned the Education and Library Boards, working in close conjunction with CCMS and other sector, to undertake this work.

The focus of area planning will be to determine the future needs of an area across all sectors and then to compare what is needed with what already exists to identify gaps and over provision.

Once the need is determined the school managing authorities will consider how best to meet that need. The emphasis must be on a network of larger sustainable schools and maximise the use of the existing estate.

Future capital investment will be targeted at supporting area plans. Until this work is completed I cannot comment on individual schools or on specific areas

### **Irish-Medium Education Report**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Education for an update on how recommendation 21 (i) of the Irish-Medium Education Report is being implemented.

(AQW 3618/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** A Monitoring Group, chaired at Deputy Secretary level and including representatives from Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta and Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta, has been established to oversee all matters on Irish medium education. This Group ensures that considerations relating to Irish medium education are embedded in the policy development process from the outset.

### **Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Education to detail the areas of residence of pupils attending Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney.

(AQW 3620/11-15)

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

#### **WARDS RESIDED IN BY PUPILS ENROLLED IN OUR LADY OF LOURDES – 2010/11**

| <b>Ward name</b>                               | <b>Total pupils</b> |
|--|---------------------|
| Postcode unknown/ not provided/ not recognised | *                   |
| Agivey   | *                   |
| Ballyhoe and Corkey                            | 9                   |
| Benvardin                                      | *                   |
| Bonamargy and Rathlin                          | *                   |
| Carnary  | 13                  |
| Central (Coleraine)                            | *                   |
| Clogh Mills                                    | 11                  |
| Cross Glebe                                    | *                   |
| Dervock  | *                   |
| Dundooan                                       | *                   |
| Dunloy   | 47                  |
| Dunluce  | *                   |

| <b>Ward name</b>       | <b>Total pupils</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Dunminning             | 5                   |
| Fairhill               | 11                  |
| Glebe (Ballymoney)     | 5                   |
| Glemaan                | *                   |
| Hopefield              | *                   |
| Killoquin Lower        | 17                  |
| Killoquin Upper        | 11                  |
| Kilrea                 | *                   |
| Knockaholet            | 8                   |
| Knocklayd              | *                   |
| Knocklynn              | *                   |
| Moss-Side and Moyarget | *                   |
| Newhill                | 13                  |
| Portglenone            | *                   |
| Ringsend               | 5                   |
| Route                  | 8                   |
| Royal Portrush         | *                   |
| Seacon                 | 15                  |
| Stranocum              | *                   |
| The Cuts               | *                   |
| The Vow                | 13                  |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>191</b>          |

**Source:** NI school census

'\*' denotes fewer than 5 pupils

### **Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Education to detail the areas of residence of pupils attending Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle.

(AQW 3621/11-15)

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

#### **WARDS RESIDED IN BY PUPILS ENROLLED IN CROSS AND PASSION COLLEGE – 2010/11**

| <b>Ward Name</b> | <b>Total pupils</b> |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Armoy            | 42                  |
| Atlantic         | *                   |

| <b>Ward Name</b>       | <b>Total pupils</b> |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Ballyhoe and Corkey    | 99                  |
| Bonamargy and Rathlin  | 30                  |
| Carnmoon               | *                   |
| Clogh Mills            | 14                  |
| Dalriada               | 129                 |
| Dervock                | *                   |
| Dunloy                 | *                   |
| Glenaan                | 26                  |
| Glenariff              | 42                  |
| Glendun                | 39                  |
| Glenravel              | *                   |
| Glenshesk              | 76                  |
| Glentaisie             | 79                  |
| Hopefield              | *                   |
| Kinbane                | 31                  |
| Knockaholet            | 20                  |
| Knocklayd              | 109                 |
| Moss-Side and Moyarget | 5                   |
| Route                  | *                   |
| Stranocum              | 15                  |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>770</b>          |

**Source:** NI school census

\*' denotes fewer than 5 pupils

### **Castle Tower Special School, Ballymena**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Education for an update on his recent visit to Castle Tower Special School, Ballymena

(AQW 3675/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** I visited Castle Tower Special School on Thursday 6 October 2011. During my visit I toured several classrooms across two of the three campuses and met with some of those involved in the life of the school, including staff, parents, and pupils. I was very impressed with the hard work of everyone in ensuring the school makes a real difference to the lives of the young people who attend.

I recognise the challenges facing the staff at Castle Tower Special School, like many other schools, in providing a quality education in the school's current facilities. I have said in my statement to the Assembly on 26 September that we cannot rely solely on new build solutions to address the situation in many schools and I highlighted the need to move to more innovative and creative solutions to address current problems. While I will be working with my officials and the school managing authorities

to examine possible solutions to address accommodation issues, the challenging financial environment at present means I cannot say at this stage what the outcome of this work might be.

### Appointment of Special Advisers

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Education to outline the status within his Department of the Department of Finance and Personnel's review of the appointment of Special Advisers.

(AQW 3691/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** Responsibility for the appointment of Special Advisers remains with individual Ministers and should comply with the Code of Practice in the Appointment of Special Advisers and the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order 1999 as amended.

### St Paul's College, Kilrea

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Education to detail the areas of residence of pupils attending St Paul's College, Kilrea.

(AQW 3699/11-15)

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

#### WARDS RESIDED IN BY PUPILS ENROLLED IN ST PAUL'S COLLEGE, KILREA – 2010/11

| Ward Name                                      | Total pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Postcode unknown/ not provided/ not recognised | 8            |
| Agivey   | 16           |
| Clogh Mills                                    | *            |
| Dunloy   | 18           |
| Dunminning                                     | 7            |
| Garvagh  | 34           |
| Gulladuff                                      | *            |
| Killoquin Lower                                | 14           |
| Killoquin Upper                                | 36           |
| Kilrea   | 76           |
| Maghera  | *            |
| Ringsend                                       | 46           |
| Roeside  | *            |
| Seacon   | *            |
| Swatragh                                       | 31           |
| The Vow  | 17           |
| Upperlands                                     | 13           |
| Valley (Magherafelt)                           | 5            |

| Ward Name    | Total pupils |
|--------------|--------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>328</b>   |

**Source:** NI school census

'\*' denotes fewer than 5 pupils

## Free School Meals

**Ms Ruane** asked the Minister of Education how many families are now eligible for Free School Meals since the scheme was extended in September of this year.

(AQO 641/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** I have been informed by the Education and Library Boards that 4,105 additional children in 3,511 families are now eligible for free school meals since the scheme was extended to Key Stage 2 pupils in primary schools in September 2011. This figure is broken down as follows:

| BELB                            | NEELB                           | SEELB                           | SELB                              | WELB                            |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 803 children in<br>747 families | 680 children in<br>607 families | 668 children in<br>629 families | 1,159 children in<br>805 families | 795 children in<br>723 families |

The Boards are continuing to process applications.

I am keen to ensure that those children who are entitled to free school meals have the chance to avail of a nutritionally balanced meal during the school day and I would therefore encourage all parents to claim their full entitlement to free meals and to the other associated benefits such as the school uniform grant.

## Schools: Viability

**Mr Molloy** asked the Minister of Education if he can give an assurance that the viability of small schools, particularly those in rural areas, will not be assessed solely on enrolment numbers.

(AQO 638/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** In the recent Adjournment Debate "Safeguarding Rural Schools" I highlighted that my focus is firmly on the quality of education that we provide for pupils in every school. I believe that pupils living in rural areas deserve quality education just in the same way as pupils in urban areas.

I appreciate the central place a school has for many communities – both rural and urban. But I believe that where there is a school, that school must be a good school. However any school, regardless of location, must be educationally viable, it must deliver a quality education to today's generation of young people.

**As you are aware I have commissioned a viability audit of all schools to be completed by December 2011. The criteria to be used are enrolments, quality of education and financial stability. The focus is therefore not just numbers.**

The Sustainable Schools policy, which provides the basis for this work, does take account of the particular needs of rural schools. The policy specifies six criteria to be used in assessing a school's educational viability. These are:-

- Quality Educational Experience;
- Stable Enrolment Trends;
- Sound Financial Position;
- Strong Leadership and Management;
- Accessibility; and

- Strong Links with the Community.

Prior to the publication of the Sustainable Schools policy in January 2009, my Department consulted with officials from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

It was also assessed against the Rural Development Council's rural proofing checklist set out in its report, Striking the Balance.

## Education and Skills Authority

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQO 639/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** I remain committed to the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority, for which the case remains as strong as ever.

I have raised the need for reform with political parties; Education and Library Boards; the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; and stakeholders including the Commission for Catholic Education, the Transferor Representatives' Council, Trade Unions and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta. Political agreement is required to allow me to bring proposals to the Executive as soon as possible.

## Lifelong Learning: People with Learning Disabilities

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister of Education if he would consider working with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Minister for Employment and Learning to develop a strategy to expand the opportunities for lifelong learning for young people with severe learning disabilities when they leave school at 19 years of age.

(AQO 640/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** A good deal of collaborative work is already going on to progress this issue. The Department of Education chairs a sub-group of the Ministerial Sub Committee on Children and Young People which has been addressing the provision for children with special educational needs when they make their transition from school or college to employment, training or social care settings. The membership of the sub-group includes representatives from the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety and the Department for Employment and Learning as well as the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Department for Social Development, the Department of Justice and the Youth Justice Agency.

The sub-group has produced an action plan which has been approved by the Ministerial Sub Committee on Children and Young People. The work of the sub-group builds on actions previously developed through the publication of an Inter-departmental Report and Action Plan published in 2006 where a framework was developed that included a range of effective strategies and activities for implementation.

Continuous collaborative workings between DEL, DHSSPS and DE have enhanced life skills opportunities through:

- the employment of Health Trust and Education Transition Officers to ensure a person centred approach to alleviate the difficulties encountered by young people in relation to the healthcare aspect of the process;
- improved provision of advice and guidance on local employment opportunities, training opportunities or referral for special occupational assessment;
- an enhanced range of further education and training provision available by providing a suite of 'pre-vocational' education and training programmes for young people for whom current provision is not sufficiently tailored nor flexible in order to deal with the difficult transition from school to other provision;

- the development of a range of programmes aimed at assisting people leaving Special Schools to find suitable employment such as “Access to Work”, “Employment Support”, “Job Introduction Scheme” and “New Deal for Disabled People”;
- the continuation of life skill courses with support available for those attending further education classes;
- an increase in social and personal development opportunities with community access officers.

Through partnership arrangements the Department for Employment and Learning career advisers, along with the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety transition officers are invited by Education transition officers to attend transition planning meetings of year 10 pupils and subsequent annual reviews to agree a range of programmes aimed at assisting pupils leaving Special Schools to find suitable employment.

Since this report was published, DE has provided the education and library boards with approximately £3.8m to improve the transition planning process through the appointment of education transitions co-ordinators and for appropriate life skills training for independent living.

In summary, this is an important issue and I will continue to work with Ministerial colleagues to enhance opportunities for these young people as they make their transition from school or college to adult life.

## Rural Schools

**Mr Byrne** asked the Minister of Education whether he can give any guarantee to rural communities that they will continue to have a school in their locality.

(AQO 642/11-15)

**Mr O’Dowd:** In the recent Adjournment Debate “Safeguarding Rural Schools” I highlighted that my focus is firmly on the quality of education that we provide for pupils in every school. I believe that pupils living in rural areas deserve quality education just in the same way as pupils in urban areas.

I appreciate the central place a school has for many communities – both rural and urban. But I believe that where there is a school, that school must be a good school. However any school, regardless of location, must be educationally viable, it must deliver a quality education to today’s generation of young people.

**As you are aware I have commissioned a viability audit of all schools to be completed by December 2011. The criteria to be used are enrolments, quality of education and financial stability. The focus is therefore not just numbers.**

The Sustainable Schools policy, which provides the basis for this work, does take account of the particular needs of rural schools. The policy specifies six criteria to be used in assessing a school’s educational viability. These are:-

- Quality Educational Experience;
- Stable Enrolment Trends;
- Sound Financial Position;
- Strong Leadership and Management;
- Accessibility; and
- Strong Links with the Community.

Prior to the publication of the Sustainable Schools policy in January 2009, my Department consulted with officials from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

It was also assessed against the Rural Development Council’s rural proofing checklist set out in its report, Striking the Balance.

## Cross-border Schools

**Mr G Kelly** asked the Minister of Education when his Department will begin work on the joint North-South survey into the demand for cross-border schools, as outlined in his recent North-South Ministerial Council statement.

(AQO 644/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** My aim is to bring those proposals to the next education sectoral meeting of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) which is likely to be in November or December. Subject to NSMC agreement, the survey will begin as soon as possible thereafter.

## Belfast Education and Library Board: Educational Psychology Service

**Ms P Bradley** asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of current Educational Psychology Service provision for primary schools in the Belfast Education and Library Board area.

(AQO 645/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Belfast Education and Library Board is responsible for the delivery of the Educational Psychology Service within its area and, as in all other Board areas, now employs a common time allocation model of service delivery. Using this system, each school has its own waiting list of referrals to the Board's Educational Psychology Service. It is, therefore, the schools which prioritise the pupils whom they deem to be most in need of assessment, usually through discussion with the Board's Educational Psychology Service. This model allows schools to appraise the needs of pupils on their waiting lists on an ongoing basis.

The Belfast Education and Library Board informs me the model they use also facilitates early intervention as more time is given to primary schools than to post primary schools and sufficient time is allocated to allow all children under compulsory school age to be assessed in a timely manner. It also takes account of school size with schools with more pupils receiving more time.

Whenever possible, flexibility is exercised and schools may get more time than the minimum allocated.

## Pre-School Education

**Mr Lynch** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Review of Pre-School Education and when he expects to detail its findings to the Assembly.

(AQO 646/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** I announced a review of the pre-school admissions process in June 2011.

A draft report is now ready for my consideration. Once I have studied the Report in detail I will set out the way forward.

## Department for Employment and Learning

### St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College, Belfast

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the annual running costs of (i) St Mary's University College, Belfast; and (ii) Stranmillis University College, Belfast for the last available financial year; and how much funding his Department provided to each college.

(AQW 3127/11-15)

**Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):** For both university colleges the last published financial statements were for the academic year 2009/10. The annual running costs declared in these accounts (excluding depreciation and interest payable), and the funding provided by the Department is shown overleaf:

|                             | <b>Stranmillis</b> | <b>St. Mary's</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Expenditure 2009/10</b>  | <b>£m</b>          | <b>£m</b>         |
| Staff Costs                 | 5.656              | 6.174             |
| Other Operating Expenditure | 3.902              | 2.563             |
| Total Expenditure           | 9.558              | 8.737             |

| <b>DEL Funding 2009/10- £M</b> | <b>Stranmillis</b> | <b>St. Mary's</b> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Total Funding (£m)             | 5.967              | 5.813             |

### **Shuttle Bus Service Between Belfast and the University of Ulster, Jordanstown**

**Mr McElduff** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he will discuss, with the Minister for Regional Development, the possibility of introducing a free shuttle bus service between Belfast and the University of Ulster, Jordanstown.

(AQW 3135/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** My Department has no plans to discuss the introduction of a free shuttle bus service between Belfast and the University of Ulster's Jordanstown campus. The University has stated that it and the Students' Union maintain ongoing communications with the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC), and Translink, regarding public transport issues related to all campuses. Translink attends all campuses at the beginning of each academic year to provide information on public transport to students, staff and other campus users.

In addition to the Belfast – Larne railway line, bus routes include the regular services that operate along the Shore Road and the Uni-Link service, which operates through stops between Botanic and the University of Ulster at Jordanstown during term time. Translink offers a Student Discount Card which provides discounted fares on these services.

My Department provides financial support for eligible Northern Ireland domiciled students which can be used to assist students with their day-to-day living costs, including travel. These consist of Maintenance Loans, Maintenance Grants and Special Support Grants.

In addition, University Support Funds can meet particular course and living costs which are not already being met by other grants. The support can assist students who are in financial hardship or who are contemplating leaving their course because of financial problems.

### **October Monitoring Round**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any financial pressures that have been identified by his Department as part of the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3214/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** The Employment Service is the area of Departmental spend that is most under pressure and reflects the economic conditions that prevail currently. The numbers presenting to the Employment Service have increased significantly and the Department has a statutory responsibility to provide a service to them. The Steps to Work Programme is the main vehicle to service delivery. The numbers mandated onto the programme rose from just under 13,000 in 2009/10 to nearly 21,000 in 2010/11 – and in addition to this there were 6,000 voluntary entrants. This is resulting in a sharp increase in the number of participants on the programme at any one time – up from 13,000 at the start of the current calendar year to over 16,000 in June. Given the continuing rise in unemployment it is unlikely that these pressures will abate – indeed they would be expected to grow. These rises are leading to a forecast year end pressure of £9.2m. The Department has bid for assistance to address this in October monitoring.

Given the overall impact of the economic downturn DEL has also bid for two further initiatives:

- £3m for Step Ahead 4-2, targeted at young people aged 18 to 24; lone parents; and those moving to JSA as part of the welfare reform agenda. This programme would provide up to 500 people with up to 6 month work experience in the community and voluntary, public and private sectors.
- £1m for Individual Place and Train, aimed at those people moving off Incapacity Benefit due to welfare reform. This programme would be aimed at helping those who need the most support to get back to work.

## **Integrating Colleges**

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the reasons (i) for fully integrating Stranmillis University College with Queen's University, Belfast; and (ii) that there are no plans to fully integrate St Mary's University College, Belfast.

(AQW 3266/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** The decision to seek a merger with Queen's University was taken by the Governing Body of Stranmillis University College. The Governing Body believed that the best way to ensure the continuation of teacher education on the Stranmillis site was to seek a merger with Queen's University and to create a world class School of Education on the Stranmillis campus. I would point out that Stranmillis and Queen's are already academically integrated and Stranmillis is a College of Queen's University. The reasons behind the merger decision are laid out in the Business Case which the Governing Body commissioned. The Business Case is a public document and a copy can be obtained from the College's web site.

While St. Mary's University College is also a College of Queen's University, its Governing Body is responsible for its strategic direction and has not proposed a merger with Queen's University.

## **Department Spend**

**Dr McDonnell** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail his Department's (i) direct; and (ii) indirect spend in each of the last ten years in the Belfast City Council area.

(AQW 3365/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** Information relating to spend in the Belfast City Council area is not readily available for either the Department or its Non Departmental Public Bodies. To extract this information would require individual business areas to review their records and to do so would result in disproportionate costs.

## **October Monitoring Round**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail any easements that have been identified by his Department in the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3373/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** As part of the monitoring round process, Departments are to declare easements of resources that are no longer required for the purposes for which they were granted. During the October monitoring round the Department for Employment and Learning did not identify any easements.

## **Cost of Answering Assembly Questions**

**Mr Cree** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the average cost to his Department of answering (i) an Oral Assembly Question; and (ii) a Written Assembly Question during this mandate compared to two years ago.

(AQW 3445/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** The Department for Employment and Learning does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and comparative information between mandates is therefore not available.

The rationale for this position has been previously set out by OFMDFM, as part of its written submission to the Procedures Committee on the cost of answering AQs, during the Committee's AQ Inquiry:

*"The preparation of responses to Assembly Questions is an intrinsic part of the responsibilities of civil servants and has therefore not traditionally been separated out from other duties for a separate estimate of cost. Such costs, which would reflect only the departmental phase of processing questions, would also vary in line with, for example, the nature of the question, the number of individual members of staff involved in preparing the reply and the involvement of other Departments in providing the information."*

### Adult Apprenticeship Funding

**Mr Girvan** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of the changes to his Department's Adult Apprenticeship funding, whether he would consider granting discretionary payments to people who have already begun an apprenticeship course to allow them complete the course on the terms they were originally granted, including the employer incentive.

(AQW 3449/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** On 1 September 2011, I announced my intention to retain a 50% funding model for apprentices (aged 25 or over) in all skill areas. This funding model applies to all starts on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme from 30 September 2011.

In recognition of the significant number of adults already following an apprenticeship prior to the 30 September 2011, I made it clear that they would be transitionally protected in terms of funding. My Department will honour the funding commitment already made to these apprentices and will meet the cost of their directed training and employer incentive payments in full.

### University of Ulster

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 2917/11-15, to detail the number of students from (i) Great Britain; (ii) the Republic of Ireland; (iii) other EU member states; and (iv) the rest of the world studying at each campus of the University of Ulster.

(AQW 3464/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** The number of students from, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland, other EU member states and the rest of the world who have enrolled in the University of Ulster at (a) Belfast; (b) Coleraine; (c) Jordanstown; and (d) Magee campuses in each of the last five years is detailed below:

#### (A) BELFAST CAMPUS

| Academic Year | Great Britain | Republic of Ireland | Other EU | Rest of World |
|---------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|
| 2005/06       | 10            | 110                 | 0        | 5             |
| 2006/07       | 5             | 100                 | 5        | 0             |
| 2007/08       | 5             | 115                 | 0        | 0             |
| 2008/09       | 10            | 135                 | 5        | 10            |
| 2009/10       | 15            | 130                 | 5        | 30            |

**(B) COLERAINE CAMPUS**

| Academic Year | Great Britain | Republic of Ireland | Other EU | Rest of World |
|---------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|
| 2005/06       | 400           | 855                 | 100      | 225           |
| 2006/07       | 325           | 720                 | 75       | 190           |
| 2007/08       | 325           | 725                 | 55       | 175           |
| 2008/09       | 335           | 655                 | 65       | 225           |
| 2009/10       | 355           | 675                 | 50       | 205           |

**(C) JORDANSTOWN CAMPUS**

| Academic Year | Great Britain | Republic of Ireland | Other EU | Rest of World |
|---------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|
| 2005/06       | 130           | 915                 | 65       | 260           |
| 2006/07       | 90            | 720                 | 105      | 285           |
| 2007/08       | 140           | 850                 | 100      | 180           |
| 2008/09       | 255           | 910                 | 90       | 265           |
| 2009/10       | 210           | 1,420               | 90       | 325           |

**(D) MAGEE CAMPUS**

| Academic Year | Great Britain | Republic of Ireland | Other EU | Rest of World |
|---------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|---------------|
| 2005/06       | 30            | 770                 | 25       | 50            |
| 2006/07       | 35            | 665                 | 20       | 75            |
| 2007/08       | 45            | 650                 | 10       | 55            |
| 2008/09       | 50            | 545                 | 10       | 80            |
| 2009/10       | 50            | 585                 | 5        | 85            |

**Source:** HESA

**Notes:**

- (1) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2009/10.
- (3) The figures in the table above are for all years and levels of study.

**English for Speakers of Other Languages**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to bring Northern Ireland in line with the rest of the United Kingdom in offering English for Speakers of Other Languages as an essential skill.

(AQW 3493/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** My Department is currently reviewing the policy for the provision of ESOL classes in Further Education colleges. In doing so, the policies operating in other parts of the United Kingdom will be examined and considered, along with recommendations which have been received from the OFMdFM Racial Equality Immigration Sub-Group. A decision as to how ESOL provision will be offered will be taken when this review is completed.

My Department continues to provide weighted funding for ESOL provision in Further Education colleges at the highest level in recognition of its importance to the local economy and in promoting social cohesion.

There is no cap on provision and the funding incentive has led to increased uptake and delivery in recent years. Mid-year data for the academic year

2010/11 shows that over £2.4m worth of ESOL provision for 4,146 enrolments was drawn down by the FE Colleges. This is an increase on the previous academic year.

### University of Ulster Staff

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 2963/11-15, to provide a breakdown of the number of (i) Protestant; and (ii) Roman Catholic (a) teaching; and (b) non-teaching staff at each campus of the University of Ulster.

(AQW 3637/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** The University of Ulster has provided the information attached at Annex A.

### ANNEX A

#### UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

##### ACADEMIC\* STAFF EMPLOYED AT UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

| Campus       | Protestant       | Catholic         | Not Determined   | Total       |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Belfast      | 42 37.8%         | 43 38.7%         | 26 23.4%         | <b>111</b>  |
| Coleraine    | 126 41.4%        | 110 36.2%        | 68 22.4%         | <b>304</b>  |
| Jordanstown  | 226 45.8%        | 196 39.8%        | 71 14.4%         | <b>493</b>  |
| Magee        | 36 20.2%         | 110 61.8%        | 32 18.0%         | <b>178</b>  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>430 39.6%</b> | <b>459 42.3%</b> | <b>197 18.1%</b> | <b>1086</b> |

\* Academic staff includes all teaching staff and Part-time Lecturers, Heads of School, Deans, PVCs and VC.

##### NON-ACADEMIC STAFF EMPLOYED AT UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

| Campus       | Protestant        | Catholic         | Not Determined <sup>1</sup> | Total       |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Belfast      | 66 48.5%          | 54 39.7%         | 16 11.8%                    | <b>136</b>  |
| Coleraine    | 463 62.2%         | 228 30.7%        | 53 7.1%                     | <b>744</b>  |
| Jordanstown  | 549 66.5%         | 203 24.6%        | 74 8.9%                     | <b>826</b>  |
| Magee        | 47 15.7%          | 218 72.7%        | 35 11.7%                    | <b>300</b>  |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1125 56.1%</b> | <b>703 35.0%</b> | <b>178 8.9%</b>             | <b>2006</b> |

##### OVERALL WORKFORCE AT UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

| Campus      | Protestant | Catholic  | Not Determined <sup>1</sup> | Total       |
|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Belfast     | 108 43.7%  | 97 39.3%  | 42 17.0%                    | <b>247</b>  |
| Coleraine   | 589 56.2%  | 338 32.3% | 121 11.5%                   | <b>1048</b> |
| Jordanstown | 775 58.8%  | 399 30.2% | 145 11.0%                   | <b>1319</b> |
| Magee       | 83 17.4%   | 328 68.6% | 67 14.0%                    | <b>478</b>  |

| Campus       | Protestant        | Catholic          | Not Determined <sup>1</sup> | Total       |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1555 50.3%</b> | <b>1162 37.6%</b> | <b>375 12.1%</b>            | <b>3092</b> |

**“Not Determined” includes those individuals whose religious belief is Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Buddhist, Other or no religious belief. Those who have declared no religious belief or have declared themselves to be neither Protestant nor Roman Catholic (and for whom we cannot make a determination using the Residuary Method) are also in this category. It also includes those employees for whom the data are missing.**

### Young People’s Learning Agency

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why Belfast Metropolitan College has not registered with the Young People’s Learning Agency so that students can access the professional development loans offered by a number of banks.

(AQW 3680/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** In order for a Learning Provider to register with the Young People’s Learning Agency for the Professional and Career Development Loan scheme, it must have a prospective learner who wishes to study with the support of a Professional and Career Development Loan.

Belfast Metropolitan College has advised my officials that it has no record of any of its students wishing to apply for a Professional and Career Development Loan and for this reason it has not registered with the Young People’s Learning Agency.

### Campus Sporting Clubs

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether (i) the University of Ulster; and (ii) Queen’s University funds or contributes to any sporting clubs which are active on campus; and if so, how much they have paid to each club in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3688/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** As these activities are not specifically funded by my Department, it does not hold the requested information. Therefore, you may wish to contact the universities directly for this information.

### Universities: Research Funding

**Mr B McCrea** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he is taking to increase the share of research funding, particularly from within the European Seventh Framework Programme.

(AQO 624/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** I am totally committed to maintaining research funding at an appropriate level to enable our universities to fulfil their central role to develop and sustain a world-class research base in Northern Ireland. In the current academic year, my Department is providing £50.7 million in recurrent research funding to Queen’s University Belfast and the University of Ulster.

The universities have a responsibility, particularly in the current fiscal climate, to use this investment to maximise the income they lever from external bodies such as the UK Research Councils and the European Commission.

With respect to the Commission’s European Framework Programme, which supports industrially-relevant research and is open to businesses as well as to the universities, the policy lead in Northern Ireland is the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI). However, in the context of the Barroso Taskforce, my Department is working very closely with DETI and other Northern Ireland Departments to achieve an increase of 20% in European funding over the next four years.

As the universities play a key role in drawing down these monies to Northern Ireland, my Department has established an “EU Framework Support Fund” of £80,000 to further stimulate these activities and

to complement the practical support DETI already provides through its dedicated Collaborative R&D Support Service based in Invest NI.

### **Workforce Development Forums**

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the development of Workforce Development Forums.

(AQO 625/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** Workforce Development Forums were established initially as a result of the FE Strategy, "FE Means Business", to provide information on local skills needs and to ensure that provision in the colleges meets these needs.

I want to have a streamlined and accessible advisory infrastructure which articulates effectively the needs of employers. I will build on the recommendations in the report "Improving the Effectiveness of the Employment and Skills Advisory Infrastructure" from my Employment and Skills Adviser. Workforce Development Forums are a key part and they will

be considered in the review of this infrastructure.

### **Steps to Work: North Belfast**

**Ms P Bradley** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the success of the Steps to Work programme in the North Belfast constituency.

(AQO 626/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** My assessment of the success of the Steps to Work programme in the North Belfast constituency is that the programme has indeed been successful in helping those out of work in this area to find employment. Since its introduction in September 2008 the programme has assisted over 900 people in North Belfast to move into work. Given the current economic backdrop against which the Programme has operated, job outcomes in North Belfast have been encouraging, despite the toughest recession in modern times.

### **DEL: Community Divisions**

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline how community divisions impact on the work of his Department.

(AQO 627/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** The communal divisions in Northern Ireland impact upon many walks of life, including the provision of goods, facilities and services by both the public and private sector. These impacts include significant economic, financial and social costs. My Department and its agencies are affected like all others.

I anticipate that the deployment of shared future policy proofing will identify these issues in future policy making, allowing us to focus on potential mitigating actions.

### **ApprenticeshipsNI**

**Mr Dunne** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

(AQO 628/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** Apprenticeships play a vital role in ensuring that we have a better skilled, modern and dynamic workforce to drive our economy forward.

By providing people with the right skills and qualifications, apprenticeships improve business performance and increase the skill levels of the workforce.

The success of ApprenticeshipsNI is reflected in the current record occupancy figure of over 12,300 apprentices, which is an excellent achievement in these challenging economic times.

I remain committed to the delivery of Apprenticeships and this is evidenced further by retaining 50% funding for adult apprentices from October 2011, despite budgetary pressures.

### **Queen's University and Stranmillis University College: Merger**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the proposed merger between Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQO 629/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** This is a question that has been asked recently. As the member will know, a public consultation was carried out on the proposal earlier this year and the responses received were discussed with the Committee for Employment and Learning. However, I have reserved my position as several key stakeholder groups have subsequently requested meetings with me to discuss the proposal. I have met with some groups but there are some key discussions that remain to be held. I expect to be able to make a decision and an

announcement on the way forward following these discussions.

### **DEL: Equality Training**

**Ms Gildernew** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the equality training his Department regularly provides for its staff.

(AQO 630/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** Equality training is a key learning and development priority for staff in my Department, particularly for those involved in policy development and staff management. All staff complete:

- Diversity Now which is mandatory for all staff.
- DEL's on line Induction programme for all new staff which includes Equality.

In addition, according to their role, staff avail of a range of equality training courses provided by the Centre for Applied Learning, the generic course provider for the NICS. These courses include:

- An Introduction to Section 75.
- Equality Impact Assessment Workshop
- Public Consultation and Engagement in the Northern Ireland Context.
- Regulatory Impact Assessment
- Thinking Rural – training for Policy makers
- The Effective Manager - where equality is one of the topics covered.

### **North West Regional College: Strabane Campus**

**Ms Boyle** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he will honour his commitment, in the short to medium-term, in relation to investment for the North West Regional College, Strabane Campus.

(AQO 631/11-15)

**Dr Farry:** There is no change from the position notified to the Member in June 2011 (AQW 1251/11-15):

- that a bid had been made for Strabane in Budget 2010;
- that the bid had been unsuccessful; and
- that I would continue to include Strabane in my priorities.

To address the issue in the short to medium term, the College has secured temporary accommodation, from its own reserves, which currently satisfies the demand for teaching space in the Strabane area. I will continue to bid for resources for this project.

## Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

### **InvestNI: Unspent Funding**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to the £17.5 Million which InvestNI is returning to the Department of Finance and Personnel (i) for her assessment of whether this is as a result of falling business confidence, as stated by InvestNI, or the banks' unwillingness to lend, as stated by the First Minister; (ii) whether local banks have been unwilling to lend, and if so, which banks have refused lending to projects supported by InvestNI; and (iii) what pressure she and the Minister of Finance and Personnel have put on these banks.

(AQW 2974/11-15)

### **Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment):**

- (i). The increased global economic uncertainty has given rise to a number of factors which have combined to suppress demand for Invest NI's support and resulted in the agency signalling the need to return £17.5 million.

Since the beginning of the current financial year uncertainty across global financial markets, caused by sovereign debt issues and a lack of confidence in national fiscal policies, has given rise to further global economic uncertainty. The effect for businesses across Northern Ireland has been a significant deterioration in market conditions and a subsequent weakening of demand. As a result, Invest NI has seen a number of its clients scaling back or postponing their investment plans, leading to a lower uptake of the agency's financial assistance than had originally been anticipated by Invest NI when budgets were allocated to it as part of the Budget 2010 process.

An unwillingness by banks to lend to businesses has been a further factor in the decrease in demand for Invest NI's support.

- (ii). It would be inappropriate for me to single out any of the banks in particular. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that banks, both in Northern Ireland and across the UK, have shown an increasing reluctance to provide new lending to businesses as well as restricting existing loan and overdraft facilities.

A stable and competitive banking sector that meets the needs of businesses and individuals is vital for economic recovery in Northern Ireland. Indeed, access to finance is recognised as a key issue which cuts across a number of areas in the emerging Economic Strategy. This is being developed by an Executive sub-committee on the economy, which I chair, and is scheduled for full consultation later in 2011.

- (iii). Banking is a reserved matter and, as such, my Department has no statutory control of the banking sector. However, I and my officials have met with the main banks in Northern Ireland to emphasise the importance of supporting business development and growth. These discussions have included encouraging banks to promote, where appropriate, the Enterprise Finance Guarantee Scheme and also stressing the importance of communicating clearly to business customers in relation to lending decisions.

The DFP Minister has also met local banks on a number of occasions in recent months mainly focusing on the current economic context, the state of the financial sector and the property market, bank lending and the implementing of the business finance task force recommendations to improve the services that banks provide to their customers. He is due to meet the governor of the Bank of England, Sir Mervyn King, in November to discuss banking issues as they relate to Northern Ireland.'

## **Infastrata PLC and eCORP Oil and Gas UK Ltd**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 2459/11-15, to detail the practical implications of the work programme of (i) Infastrata PLC; (ii) eCORP Oil; and (iii) Gas UK Ltd in years (a) one; and (b) two.

(AQW 2990/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** The practical implications of the work programme on Petroleum Licence PL1/10 in Years One and Two, listed in the answer to AQW 2459/11-15, are that items i), iii), iv) and v) consist of desk analyses. Item ii) comprises a seismic reflection survey where data is acquired using Vibroseis trucks along roads, and the subsequent processing and interpretation of this data. The aim of the work programme is to assess the hydrocarbon potential of the licence area and to identify a viable drilling target for conventional oil or gas within the Permo-Triassic sandstone reservoir rocks.

## **Corporate Bonds**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans her Department has to ensure that local businesses benefit from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's plans to supply a credit line to small and medium sized enterprises through the use of corporate bonds.

(AQW 2993/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** Full details of the "Credit Easing" scheme announced by the Chancellor, George Osborne MP, at the recent Conservative Party Conference are unlikely to be available until the Chancellor's autumn statement in November.

It is however understood that the intention is to provide support for lending into parts of the economy that need it most such as small businesses. The Finance Minister has continuously highlighted the need to make credit available to SMEs and he will also press the Government and the Bank of England to make sure that the Credit Easing measure announced by the Chancellor is applied in Northern Ireland.

I and my officials have met with the main banks in Northern Ireland to emphasise the importance of supporting business development and growth. Furthermore, my Department, through Invest NI, continues to develop and implement an Access to Capital Strategy which seeks to support the availability of capital within the local SME market.

Access to finance is recognised as a key issue which cuts across a number of areas in the emerging Economic Strategy. This is being developed by an Executive sub-committee on the economy, which I chair, and is scheduled for full consultation later in 2011.

## **InvestNI: Unspent Funding**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the amount of unspent funding that InvestNI has returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel, to detail the (i) number; (ii) scale; (iii) location; (iv) business sector; and (v) projected number of employees of the projects for which this funding was intended.

(AQW 3002/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** Over the last few months, Invest NI has witnessed a number of projects being delayed as companies seek to minimise the impact of the economic downturn on their core business. Around 20 – 25 large value projects have had the most significant impact on the funding that has been returned. The projects were located across Northern Ireland and covered a wide range of sectors including Business Services, ICT, Financial Services, Food and Print and Packaging. Given that these projects are at varying stages of implementation, initial estimates suggest that the creation of approximately 900 new jobs may have been delayed.

## NI Screen

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much funding her Department has allocated to NI Screen in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3047/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** My Department through Invest NI is the largest single funder of NI Screen and over the past five years has committed £25.7m to the development of the screen industries in Northern Ireland; this includes funding of £6.3m for the current year 2011 – 2012.

### INVEST NI SUPPORT TO NI SCREEN 2007 – 2011

| Financial Year       | 2007 - 2008 | 2008 - 2010 | 2010 - 2011 | 2011 - 2012 | Total      |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Total Investment (£) | 3,235,985   | 12,070,114  | 4,104,229   | 6,300,000   | 25,710,328 |

## Directive 200/35/EC

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the date (i) when Directive 200/35/EC was fully transposed into legislation; and (ii) by which Directive 2011/7/EU will be fully transposed into legislation.

(AQW 3071/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** Directive 2000/35/EC was fully transposed into legislation extending to England, Wales and Northern Ireland by the Department of Trade and Industry on 7 August 2002.

This Directive is scheduled to be replaced by Directive 2011/7/EU which is required to be transposed into legislation by 16 March 2013 at the latest. Any required revision to legislation currently in force will also be extended to Northern Ireland.

## McIldoon Report on Energy Prices

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans her Department has to re-examine the McIldoon report on energy prices.

(AQW 3094/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** The Department has no plans to re-examine the McIldoon Report.

The report conclusions in relation to wider energy policy, where relevant, were considered in the development of the Strategic Energy Framework.

## McIldoon Report on Energy Prices

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what progress has been made on the implementation of the recommendations contained within the McIldoon report on energy prices.

(AQW 3095/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** The McIldoon Report was commissioned by the Utility Regulator, and I understand that the Report recommendations have been considered and actioned where appropriate.

The McIldoon Report also included some comments on aspects of wider energy policy, and where relevant, these were considered in the development of the Strategic Energy Framework.

## InvestNI

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much money InvestNI has used to assist businesses (i) in the Greater Belfast area; and (ii) outside Belfast in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3099/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** During the last five financial years, Invest NI offered (i) £250 million of assistance to businesses located within the Greater Belfast Area and (ii) £363m to business outside that area. Table 1 shows the amount of Invest NI assistance offered to businesses in these areas in each of the last five years.

**TABLE 1: INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED IN GREATER BELFAST AND OUTSIDE GREATER BELFAST (2006-07 TO 2010-11)**

| Fin Year     | Assistance Offered (£m) |                         |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|              | Greater Belfast         | Outside Greater Belfast |
| 2006-07      | 38.36                   | 53.02                   |
| 2007-08      | 40.61                   | 65.63                   |
| 2008-09      | 56.58                   | 78.15                   |
| 2009-10      | 68.59                   | 110.80                  |
| 2010-11      | 45.85                   | 55.70                   |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>249.98</b>           | <b>363.31</b>           |

### NOTES:

- 1 Figures do not include £19.8m of assistance offered to projects for which this level of detail is not available.
- 2 Greater Belfast has been defined as the four Belfast Parliamentary Constituency Areas - North, East, South and West.
- 3 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.
- 4 Table totals may not add exactly due to rounding.

It should be noted that Invest NI grant support is offered at the start of a project based on a company commitment to deliver a specific set of project based targets. In certain instances the company may not be able to fully deliver on these targets; therefore, not all of the assistance offered by Invest NI will be paid to the company.

## Energy Framework

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has given any consideration to modifying the Energy Framework to militate against energy companies making exorbitant profits.

(AQW 3110/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** I assume that the Member is referring to the regulatory framework, and in respect of this, I have no plans to modify the current regulatory framework for energy.

Effective regulation does not mean preventing energy companies from making profits but, where energy companies have a monopoly or near-monopoly, there is a need for regulation to ensure that electricity and gas tariffs are fair to consumers. Companies must be able to recoup their costs and make an acceptable profit to ensure ongoing investment and maintain our security of energy supply.

## Government Sponsored Investment Bank

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she would consider establishing a Government sponsored investment bank which would support local small and medium sized enterprises and mitigate the reluctance of commercial banks to engage in lending.

(AQW 3111/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** Responsibility for banking is not a devolved matter and establishing a Government sponsored investment bank represents a form of state aid, and may not be considered the most appropriate or practical mechanism for improving access to finance for local businesses.

I and my officials have met with the main banks in Northern Ireland to emphasise the importance of supporting business development and growth. Furthermore, my Department, through Invest NI, continues to develop and implement an Access to Capital Strategy which supports the availability of capital within the local SME market.

The Finance Minister has also been liaising with the UK and Irish Governments, the regulatory authorities, the local banks and the British Bankers Association (BBA) to stress the strategic importance of a competitive local banking sector here that meets the needs of both consumers and businesses, and the need for availability of bank lending on a competitive basis to local SMEs.

## Peak Oil

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the comments made by the International Energy Agency's chief economist, who stated that peak oil was reached in 2006; and to outline what plans her Department has put in place to deal with this issue.

(AQW 3114/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** While oil continues as an important part our energy mix, we all recognise it is not a finite resource. My Department's energy policy, as defined in the 2010 Strategy Energy Framework, is to shift the balance in the NI energy mix away from dependence on fossil fuels to increased levels of renewable energy, and the new infrastructure needed to achieve the goal of 40% of electricity generation from renewable sources by 2020. This is consistent with UK Government and European Union aims for diversifying energy sources.

## InvestNI's Offices

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the annual running costs of each of InvestNI's fourteen offices worldwide in each financial year since 2006/07.

(AQW 3122/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** Invest NI operates a network of overseas offices which are responsible for inward investment, trade development and technology development activities. In addition, a number of offices have operated within the timeframe of this question but have since been closed.

The table below represents that annual cost of each office that Invest NI has operated in the five year period from 2006-07 to 2010-11:

|          | 2006-07         | 2007-08         | 2008-09         | 2009-10         | 2010-11         |
|----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Office   | Annual cost (£) |
| London   | 894,609         | 1,086,782       | 1,133,074       | 1,149,186       | 930,101         |
| Brussels | 222,829         | 251,375         | 330,444         | 394,123         | 231,171         |
| Dublin   | 154,744         | 133,178         | 188,249         | 228,298         | 219,129         |

| Office       | 2006-07          | 2007-08          | 2008-09          | 2009-10          | 2010-11          |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|              | Annual cost (£)  |
| Boston       | 1,255,349        | 1,165,671        | 1,570,747        | 1,617,168        | 1,546,215        |
| New York     | 220,077          | 218,802          | 331,092          | 336,383          | 349,618          |
| San Jose     | 186,916          | 205,914          | 292,219          | 318,431          | 453,171          |
| Denver       | 98,100           | 102,986          | 137,174          | 24,695           | 0                |
| Dusseldorf   | 572,018          | 356,764          | 463,726          | 199,658          | 226,028          |
| Dubai        | 152,329          | 156,544          | 200,687          | 274,385          | 225,759          |
| Mumbai       | 0                | 65,103           | 118,581          | 170,467          | 127,776          |
| Tokyo        | 115,182          | 46,591           | 27,297           | 31,323           | 38,313           |
| Seoul        | 197,703          | 107,496          | 80,220           | 76,635           | 73,500           |
| Shanghai     | 0                | 141,691          | 231,338          | 210,342          | 193,538          |
| Taipei       | 175,144          | 44,348           | 0                | 0                | 0                |
| Singapore    | 73,000           | 65,000           | 0                | 0                | 0                |
| Atlanta      | 6741             | 0                | 0                | 0                | 0                |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>4,324,741</b> | <b>4,148,245</b> | <b>5,104,848</b> | <b>5,031,094</b> | <b>4,614,319</b> |

**Notes:**

1. Annual cost comprises staff costs, office running costs and in-market activities attributed to that office across inward investment, trade development and technology development activities.
2. Table totals may not add due to rounding.
3. Trade costs in China and Taiwan have been charged to the Shanghai office only and cannot be disaggregated.
4. Inward investment marketing costs for the US market have been charged to the Boston office only and cannot be disaggregated.
5. Inward investment marketing costs for the London and Brussels offices have been charged to the London office only and cannot be disaggregated.
6. The above figures do not include the cost of marketing activities undertaken by the HQ based International Marketing team. These activities benefit all overseas offices and cannot be split by office or region.
7. Two offices, Toronto and Jeddah, have opened in the current (2011-12) financial year and as a result no figures are included.

**InvestNI: Unspent Funding**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department is taking to ensure that further funds are not surrendered to the Department of Finance and Personnel in future Monitoring Rounds in this financial year, given that InvestNI has identified additional reduced requirements of £14m.

(AQW 3131/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** DETI and Invest NI have been taking a number of proactive steps to specifically look at how companies can be supported in the short-term given the extent of the current economic uncertainty. This includes a comprehensive range of measures within the Boosting Business Initiative.

A number of themes have been identified against which potential actions can be implemented quickly to help boost business through jobs, exporting, research and development, new technology and skills. The full range of associated activities will be launched in the coming weeks.

Invest NI has not identified additional reduced requirements of £14m. It did however specifically highlight in its October Monitoring return that there were risks around the level of expenditure in a number of Capital projects which taken together have been forecast to spend £14m.

## **Waste Water Heat Streams from Factories and Power Plants**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration has been given to harvesting the waste water heat streams from factories and power plants as a heat source.

(AQW 3155/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** Businesses should capture waste heat where it is cost effective to do so, and Invest NI provides a wide range of resource efficiency advice and support to help business across the areas of energy, waste, water and raw materials - including help to identify opportunities to capture heat from waste streams.

The recovery and re-use of heat available from waste streams, either liquid or gas, is an energy efficiency measure that would be highlighted in surveys and audits of individual businesses by the Carbon Trust - and by Invest NI's technical experts who, if appropriate, can provide advice to those companies with energy bills of less than £30k per annum.

As well as the energy and resource efficiency advice that is open to all businesses through nibusinessinfo.com, Invest NI can also provide appropriate businesses with free, resource efficiency audits of water, waste and raw materials to highlight cost reduction opportunities. It also can offer five days of (free) consultancy support to help appropriate businesses move from awareness of efficiency opportunities to the point where they are in a better position to implement projects.

In addition, Invest NI funds the Carbon Trust to manage an Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme that can provide businesses with 0% interest, and unsecured loans of between £3,000 and £100,000 to help businesses finance and invest in appropriate energy saving projects.

Power stations can also produce large quantities of waste water, but this can be at low temperatures, hence harvesting waste heat from this resource would have to be economically viable.

## **Quality Hotels on the Causeway Coast**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how she plans to promote the establishment of quality hotels on the Causeway Coast to assist in attracting major golf tournaments to the area.

(AQW 3203/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** The Giant's Causeway, Antrim and Causeway Coast have been identified as one of the five signature projects capable of delivering international standout for Northern Ireland. The new world class visitor centre will give another major reason to visit the area.

It is recognised that the great potential offered by golf on the north coast in parallel with the development of the new Causeway Centre bodes well for the future of tourism in the area.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has commissioned Oxford Economics to model future need for tourist accommodation, aligned to future demand and the Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020. This work is underway. It is expected however that this will confirm a need for development along the Causeway Coast.

NITB is working with key stakeholders to explore the possibility of holding a major golf event in line with the draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020. NITB has been investigating the feasibility of securing the Irish Open in 2013 or 2014.

While acknowledging the opportunity that a major golf tournament would offer to the area it is important to recognise that scale of such events has a major impact on accommodation demand well beyond the immediate area.

The construction of a 21 bedroom boutique hotel in Portstewart is underway and is due to be completed end of 2011/early 2012. Invest NI is also currently in discussions with a number of promoters who are looking at the opportunity to develop hotel projects on the north coast.

I have also met with the representatives of the Runkerry project, a 5 Star hotel development for the North Coast and have been supportive of this project.

## Fracking

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many letters have been received by her Department regarding the potential use of fracking in Fermanagh; and for her assessment of the correspondents' perception of fracking.

(AQW 3211/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** My Department has received 16 letters concerning fracking.

I understand the genuine concern that people feel regarding the potential use of Hydraulic Fracturing and my Department will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

## Fracking

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how she has informed herself of the potential dangers to the environment and the economy should fracking take place in Fermanagh.

(AQW 3212/11-15)

**Mrs Foster:** As with all matters I am advised by my officials, in this case in particular by those from Minerals and Petroleum Branch, who administer the petroleum licensing system, and the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, who have considerable professional knowledge of shale gas exploration and production.

# Department of the Environment

## Article 21 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) how many Public Rights of Way have been asserted by each local council, following Article 1 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983; and (ii) the total length of these Rights of Way.

(AQW 2692/11-15)

**Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment):** While the question refers to Article 1 it is Article 3 that places each district council under a duty to assert public rights of way and to compile and preserve maps of public rights of way in its district. Councils do not have any requirement to report to the Department on delivery. This question has however been referred to the councils, all of whom have replied. It has not been possible to verify that each council has interpreted the question in the same way nor to confirm the accuracy of the figures supplied.

Under Article 3 of the Access Order 22 councils report that they have asserted 240 Public Rights of Way, with a total length of 245.2km. A breakdown of the responses by council follows.

| <b>Council</b>   | <b>Number PROWs (asserted) - Article 3</b> | <b>Length (km)</b> |
|------------------|--|--------------------|
| Antrim           | 5  | 5.1                |
| Ards             | 19   | 13.5               |
| Ballymena        | 7  | 18.6               |
| Ballymoney       | 1  | 0.1                |
| Banbridge        | 23   | 24.1               |
| Belfast          | 2  | 0.3                |
| Carrickfergus    | 3  | 1.2                |
| Castlereagh      | 9  | 6.4                |
| Coleraine        | 7  | 1.5                |
| Craigavon        | 4  | 3.2                |
| Derry            | 8  | 11.7               |
| Down             | 67   | 71.4               |
| Larne            | 2  | 0.5                |
| Limavady         | 1  | 0.3                |
| Lisburn          | 2  | 2.0                |
| Magherafelt      | 9  | 18.9               |
| Moyle            | 5  | 4.9                |
| Newry and Mourne | 45   | 36.0               |
| Newtownabbey     | 7  | 2.5                |
| North Down       | 6  | 4.9                |
| Omagh            | 5  | 16.6               |
| Strabane         | 3  | 1.4                |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>240</b>                                 | <b>245.2</b>       |

### **Article 21 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) how many Public Path Creation Agreements have been entered into by each local council, following Article 11 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983; and (ii) the total length of these public paths.

(AQW 2693/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** Article 11 applies to councils and they do not have any requirement to report to the Department on delivery. This question has however been referred to the councils, all of whom have replied. It has not been possible to verify that each council has interpreted the question in the same way nor to confirm the accuracy of the figures supplied.

Under Article 11 of the Access Order twelve councils report that they have entered into 24 Public Path Creation Agreements with a total length of 59km. A breakdown of the responses by council follows.

| <b>Council</b> | <b>Number Paths created by agreement - Article 11</b> | <b>Length (km)</b> |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| Ards           | 1   | 0.05               |
| Ballymena      | 1   | 0.50               |
| Ballymoney     | 1   | 8.85               |
| Banbridge      | 1   | 0.16               |
| Belfast        | 1   | 0.25               |
| Coleraine      | 2   | 1.70               |
| Cookstown      | 4   | 12.80              |
| Down           | 2   | 2.35               |
| Dungannon      | 1   | 0.02               |
| Lisburn        | 2   | 10.00              |
| North Down     | 6   | 11.65              |
| Omagh          | 2   | 10.65              |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>24</b>   | <b>58.98</b>       |

### **Article 21 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many Public Path Creation Orders have been made by each local council, following Article 12 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983; and (ii) the total length of these public paths.

(AQW 2694/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** Article 12 applies to councils and they do not have any requirement to report to the Department on delivery. This question has however been referred to the councils, all of whom have replied. It has not been possible to verify that each council has interpreted the question in the same way nor to confirm the accuracy of the figures supplied.

Under Article 12 of the Access Order five councils report that they have made 16 Public Path Creation Orders with a total length of 8.7km. A breakdown of the responses by council follows.

| <b>Council</b> | <b>Number Paths created by Order - Article 12</b> | <b>Length (km)</b> |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| Belfast        | 5   | 0.3                |
| Carrickfergus  | 0   | 0.0                |
| Castlereagh    | 9   | 6.4                |
| Moyle          | 1   | 1.0                |
| North Down     | 1   | 1.0                |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>16</b>   | <b>8.7</b>         |

### Article 21 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many proposals for long distance routes have been considered by his Department, under Article 21 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983; and (ii) the number and total length of the long distance routes created.

(AQW 2695/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** In the last ten years one proposal for a long distance route was submitted to and approved by the Department under Article 21 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983. There are alternative non-statutory approaches to recognising long distance routes. Currently there are 452 km of long distance walking routes incorporating nine Waymarked Ways, the Ulster Way, the North Down Coastal Path and the Lagan Towpath.

### Article 27 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether each local council has carried out consultation on the extent of the open countryside in its area, following Article 27 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983; and (ii) to detail the areas of open country identified.

(AQW 2696/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** Article 27 applies to councils and they do not have any requirement to report to the Department on delivery. This question has however been referred to the councils, all of whom have replied. It has not been possible to verify that each council has interpreted the question in the same way.

Six councils responded that they have formally consulted on the extent of open countryside in their area under Article 27. They have provided varied information about the areas of open countryside identified as follows.

| Council   | Carried out consultation on the extent of Open Countryside Article 27? Yes/No | Details provided of the areas of open country identified  |
|-----------|---|---|
| Antrim    | YES   | Consultation was carried out during the development of ABC's Countryside Recreation Strategy in 1998. This has now been superseded by a more holistic approach to recreation (including countryside) as defined within the present Recreation Strategy. |
| Ballymena | YES   | In relation to long distance routes in the countryside, Ballymena area includes Antrim coast & Glens AONB   |

| <b>Council</b> | <b>Carried out consultation on the extent of Open Countryside Article 27? Yes/No</b> | <b>Details provided of the areas of open country identified</b>  |
|----------------|--|--|
| Ballymoney     | YES  | Potential open country has been identified at; Slieveanorra, Garry Wood/Bog and Craigs Wood under the ownership of Forest Service. Long Mountain, Dunloy under private ownership. Lower Bann Valley under private ownership, and Black Hill/ Croaghan and Antrim Coast & Glens AONB area under private ownership.  |
| Derry          | YES  | Council has published the Derry-Londonderry Access Plan 2009 – 2014 ( <a href="http://www.derrycity.gov.uk/access">www.derrycity.gov.uk/access</a> ) which examines the extent of access opportunity in the open countryside. Consultations with DARD, Forest Service, Woodland Trust etc identified areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Forest Service properties esp. Learmount Forest</li> <li>b. Woodland Trust properties incl. Killaloo, Oaks, Prehen and Burntollet</li> <li>c. NIEA (Natural Heritage section) properties incl. Ness and Ervey Woods</li> <li>d. NIEA (Built Heritage section) properties incl. Ballygroll</li> <li>e. Historical monuments in private ownership throughout the district</li> <li>f. Sperrin Mountains from Sawel to Park village</li> <li>g. River Faughan from Park Village to Lough Foyle</li> </ul> |

| <b>Council</b> | <b>Carried out consultation on the extent of Open Countryside Article 27? Yes/No</b> | <b>Details provided of the areas of open country identified</b>  |
|----------------|--|--|
| Larne          | YES  | In 1997, the Council compiled an access strategy Consultation was carried out at that time to ascertain the public's need and how land in this area would meet that demand. A long distance walking route (Ulster Way and Antrim Hills Way) going in a north/south direction across hills on the eastern side of the borough and west/east towards Slemish in Ballymena Council and south towards Newtownabbey Council area, has been in place for over 20 years.  |
| Moyle          | YES  | Knocklayd Mountain Ulster Way/Moyle Way – 20 mile pathway from Ballycastle to Waterfoot over forest, farmland, mountains and river valleys. Ulster Way/Causeway Coast Way – Coastal pathway from Runkerry Beach to Carrick a rede Rope Bridge. Glenariff River Walk. Cushendall River Walk. Tow River Walk. Millennium Riverside Park. Armoy Riverside Park. Tramway Walk – Bushmills to Giant's Causeway – Runkerry Hinterland Ballycastle to Fairhead (de facto access) Ballycastle to Carrick a rede coastal route (not achieved) Ballycastle to Cushendun Old Coach Roads (de facto access) Tievebulliagh/Trostan Mountains (de facto access) Lurigethan Mountain (de facto access) Ballycastle to Armoy Old Railway Line (not achieved) Garron Plateau (de facto access) Glenariff Forest to Waterfoot disused mineral Railway (not achieved) Ballycastle Forest Ballypatrick Forest Glenariff Forest |

## Number of Local Councils

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) how; and (ii) when he will progress work on reducing the number of local councils from twenty-six to eleven,

(AQW 2703/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** I have been carefully considering the way forward with the reform of local government including the reduction in the number of councils. In doing so I have taken account of the views expressed by local government representatives and other key stakeholders.

I now intend bringing a comprehensive and integrated package of proposals to the Executive on all the key issues. These include the number of councils, boundaries, the implementation timetable, the integration of reform with the sector's improvement, collaboration and efficiency programme and the provisions for inclusion in the Local Government Reorganisation Bill which will impact on every aspect of the operation of councils. I am committed to doing so, soon, in order to provide the certainty that is required across local government and government Departments that propose to transfer functions to it.

I believe that this inclusive and integrated approach to local government reform is necessary to ensure that it is successful and that high quality, effective and efficient services are provided to ratepayers. As this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to reorganise local councils, it is important that time is taken to ensure that the right and best choices are made.

## Capital Resources

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment what capital resources are surplus to requirements in his Department.

(AQW 2715/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** In the current financial year the Department has surplus capital resources of £0.4 million arising from the slippage in the delivery of Roe Valley Hydro Electric Scheme project. As the funding for this project arises from the Executive's ring-fenced Invest to Save Initiative, these resources have been returned to DFP in the October Monitoring Round.

## Resource Grants

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the level of the resource grants for each District Council in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2736/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** The level of the resources element of the general grant allocated to each District Council in each of the last five years is set out in the table below.

| District Council | General Grant Resources |                |                |                |                |
|------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                  | 2007/2008<br>£          | 2008/2009<br>£ | 2009/2010<br>£ | 2010/2011<br>£ | 2011/2012<br>£ |
| Antrim           | 0                       | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Ards             | 1,435,528               | 1,193,565      | 886,455        | 835,126        | 833,877        |
| Armagh           | 1,616,643               | 1,617,037      | 1,615,563      | 1,567,840      | 1,529,979      |
| Ballymena        | 0                       | 1,939          | 0              | 0              | 11,646         |
| Ballymoney       | 1,069,768               | 1,118,710      | 1,087,188      | 1,032,567      | 1,054,727      |
| Banbridge        | 1,231,275               | 1,104,630      | 1,072,464      | 1,037,637      | 1,066,844      |
| Belfast          | 0                       | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |

| District Council         | General Grant Resources |                |                |                |                |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                          | 2007/2008<br>£          | 2008/2009<br>£ | 2009/2010<br>£ | 2010/2011<br>£ | 2011/2012<br>£ |
| Carrickfergus            | 511,880                 | 608,586        | 653,040        | 581,566        | 580,088        |
| Castlereagh              | 0                       | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Coleraine                | 0                       | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Cookstown                | 987,971                 | 851,627        | 665,130        | 618,262        | 521,029        |
| Craigavon                | 903,470                 | 645,762        | 970,527        | 968,275        | 1,032,306      |
| Derry                    | 1,402,830               | 1,299,086      | 1,371,381      | 1,370,642      | 1,316,270      |
| Down                     | 1,847,118               | 1,757,243      | 1,528,437      | 1,445,679      | 1,335,200      |
| Dungannon & South Tyrone | 1,096,781               | 972,805        | 948,033        | 951,896        | 802,572        |
| Fermanagh                | 1,604,221               | 1,480,862      | 1,258,804      | 1,125,316      | 885,858        |
| Larne                    | 201,431                 | 237,244        | 212,217        | 111,789        | 79,432         |
| Limavady                 | 1,493,009               | 1,444,168      | 1,341,942      | 1,318,671      | 1,261,120      |
| Lisburn                  | 0                       | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Magherafelt              | 1,391,643               | 1,213,322      | 1,174,811      | 1,109,458      | 1,064,479      |
| Moyle                    | 624,107                 | 602,314        | 581,278        | 510,448        | 468,250        |
| Newry & Mourne           | 2,079,148               | 1,983,190      | 1,664,227      | 1,660,626      | 1,503,192      |
| Newtownabbey             | 0                       | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| North Down               | 0                       | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Omagh                    | 1,534,039               | 1,445,936      | 1,452,552      | 1,377,870      | 1,216,020      |
| Strabane                 | 2,121,019               | 2,001,032      | 2,012,951      | 1,873,332      | 1,764,111      |

## Proposed Capital Spend Projects

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail his Department's proposed capital spend projects for this financial year, including the projected timescales and the costs for each project.

(AQW 2756/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** Table 1 below outlines the various departmental capital projects, including projected costs and timescales, to be undertaken by the Department in this financial year.

For some of these projects, such as the Roe Valley Hydro Electric Scheme and the EU 3rd Directive for driver licensing, the capital funding will continue into 2012-13 in line with the project timescales.

The Department will also provide £1.6 million funding in 2011-12 via the Rethink Waste Fund, with residual funding of £0.4 million in 2012-13 in relation to the new civic amenity site in Ballymena. In 2011-12 the Department plans to disburse £1.4 million from the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund (SWIF) to the three waste management groups to support them in achieving the key milestones necessary to bring their waste infrastructure procurements to financial close.

Table 2 below provides details of the various Rethink Waste projects and the split of the SWIF funding over the three waste management groups.

| <b>Table 1: Departmental Capital Projects (£000s)</b>                    |                       |                                  |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
|  | <b>Proposed Costs</b> | <b>Projected Timescale</b>       |
| Restoration of Thompson Dock Gate, Titanic Quarter                       | 1,500                 | October 2011 to March 2012       |
| Roe Valley Hydro Electric Scheme (£0.6m in 2011-12 and £0.5m in 2012-13) | 1,100                 | September 2007 to September 2012 |
| Dunluce Castle Village Field – Land Purchase                             | 205                   | January 2011 to December 2011    |
| EU 3RD Directive Implementation in respect of driver licensing           | 2,010                 | April 2011 to January 2013       |
| Boiler replacement at Lisburn Test Centre                                | 440                   | June 2011 to October 2011        |
| Boiler replacement at Downpatrick Test Centre                            | 420                   | June 2011 to October 2011        |
| Planning Portal System   | 500                   | October 2011 to March 2012       |
| <b>Total Departmental projects</b>                                       | <b>6,175</b>          |                                  |

| <b>Table 2: Rethink Waste and Strategic Waste Infrastructure Projects (£000s)</b>       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Rethink Waste Fund Projects</b>  | <b>Proposed Costs</b> |
| Antrim Borough Council – Reuse and refurbishment of householder items.                  | 15                    |
| Antrim Borough Council – Rollpacker/compactor   | 89                    |
| Banbridge District Council – new signage at all bring bank sites                        | 10                    |
| Ballymena Borough Council - new civic amenity site                                      | 680                   |
| Ballymena and Newtownabbey Borough Councils – expanded recycling collection service     | 270                   |
| Coleraine Borough Council - 2 mobile recycling units                                    | 19                    |
| Cookstown District Council – purchase of a wheeled excavator and additional containers. | 152                   |
| Down District Council - new civic amenity site.   | 200                   |
| Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough – increasing capacity for green waste.               | 154                   |
| Newry and Mourne District Council – Civils containers and signage.                      | 70                    |
| Newry and Mourne District Council – Sealed green waste compactors/containers            | 74                    |
| North Down Borough Council – 2 mobile recycling units                                   | 17                    |
| Omagh District Council – 3 rollpackers  | 225                   |
| Total Rethink Waste Fund  | 1,974                 |

| <b>Rethink Waste Fund Projects</b>               | <b>Proposed Costs</b> |
|--|-----------------------|
| Strategic Waste Infrastructure Projects          |                       |
| NWRWMG   | 600                   |
| SWaMP  | 550                   |
| Arc21  | 250                   |
| <b>Total Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund</b> | <b>1,400</b>          |

### **Article 28 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment how many access agreements have been entered into by each District Council pursuant to Article 28 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983; and what is the total area of access land created as a result.

(AQW 2760/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** Article 28 applies to councils and they do not have any requirement to report to the Department on delivery. This question has however been referred to the councils, all of whom have replied. It has not been possible to verify that each council has interpreted the question in the same way nor to confirm the accuracy of the figures supplied.

Under Article 28 of the Access Order, two councils report that they have entered into 73 Access Agreements for Open Country, with a total area of 2.3ha. It seems likely that there is an error in the figure for Magherafelt. A breakdown of the responses by council follows.

| <b>Council</b> | <b>Number Open Country Access Agreements -Article 28</b> | <b>Area (Hectares)</b> |
|----------------|--|------------------------|
| Derry          | 1  | 2.1                    |
| Magherafelt    | 72   | 0.2                    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>73</b>  | <b>2.3</b>             |

### **Article 29 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment how many access agreements have been entered into by each District Council pursuant to Article 29 of the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983; and what is the total area of access land created as a result.

(AQW 2761/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** Article 29 applies to councils and they do not have any requirement to report to the Department on delivery. This question has however been referred to the councils, all of whom have replied. It has not been possible to verify that each council has interpreted the question in the same way nor to confirm the accuracy of the figures supplied.

Under Article 29 of the Access Order one council, Castlereagh Borough Council, reported that it has entered into nine Access Orders for Open Country, with a total area of 0.64ha.

### **Article 10 of the Recreation and Youth Service (NI) Order 1986**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment how many permissive path agreements have been entered into by each District Council pursuant to Article 10 of the Recreation and Youth Service

(NI) Order 1986; and to detail the number and total length of permissive paths for which a current permissive path agreement exists.

(AQW 2762/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** The lead department for the Recreation and Youth Service (NI) Order 1986 is the Department of Education. Article 10 applies to councils and they do not have any requirement to report to the Department of the Environment on delivery. This question has however been referred to the councils, all of whom have replied. It has not been possible to verify that each council has interpreted the question in the same way nor to confirm the accuracy of the figures supplied.

Under article 10 of the Recreation and Youth Service Order, eight councils report that they have entered into 83 Permissive Path Agreements, with a total length of 82.4km. A breakdown of the responses by council follows.

| <b>Council</b>   | <b>Number Permissive path arrangements - Article 10 of Recreation and Youth Service (NI) Order</b> | <b>Length (km)</b> |
|------------------|--|--------------------|
| Ballymena        | 6  | 17.80              |
| Banbridge        | 5  | 9.79               |
| Coleraine        | 2  | 6.00               |
| Fermanagh        | 19   | 16.38              |
| Larne            | 7  | 12.87              |
| Limavady         | 10   | 5.50               |
| Moyle            | 31   | 11.26              |
| Newry and Mourne | 3  | 2.80               |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>83</b>  | <b>82.40</b>       |

### **Article 3 of the Occupiers' Liability (NI) Order 1987**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment how many successful actions under Article 3 of the Occupiers' Liability (NI) Order 1987 have been brought in each District Council area in respect of land on which a public right of way, public path or permissive path exists or which is designated access land.

(AQW 2763/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** The Occupiers' Liability (NI) Order 1987 is not the specific responsibility of the Department of the Environment and councils do not have any requirement to report to the Department on actions taken under this order. This question has however been referred to the councils, all of whom have replied. Two councils have reported that 12 successful actions have been taken under Article 3 of the Order, a breakdown of responses follow. It has not been possible to verify that these relate specifically to land on which a public right of way, public path or permissive path exists or which is designated access land. Nor does it account for claims under Article 3 on other land which the council may not be aware of or have control over. A breakdown of the responses by council follows.

| <b>Council</b>   | <b>Antrim</b> | <b>Down</b> | <b>Totals</b> |
|--|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Number reported successful actions under Article 3 Occupiers' Liability in council area. | 11            | 1           | 12            |

In the case of the Department of the Environment six claims were received between 2008 and 2010 relating to injuries sustained by visitors to NIEA properties, two of which were pursued. However these did not relate specifically to informal outdoor recreation.

A study to examine the actual court cases and out of court settlements in relation to Occupiers' Liability and informal outdoor recreation was commissioned by Sport Northern Ireland in 2011 and provides further detail on these cases and those on other publicly accessible land.

### Applications for Single Wind Turbines and Wind Farms

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of applications for (i) single wind turbines; and (ii) wind farms which were approved in (a) 2010; and (b) 2011 to date.

(AQW 2801/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:**

- (i) During the period 2010 – 2011, 121 applications for single wind turbines were approved. The Department is unable at this stage to separate out the figures for 2010 and 2011 due to constraints imposed by the existing computer system. Time constraints have prevented a manual count of the numbers of approvals over the two time periods.
- (ii) (a) In 2010, 10 wind farm applications were approved.  
(b) In 2011 to date, 5 wind farm applications have been approved.

### Election Posters

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of the Environment what action he intends to take once the political parties have responded to his Department's proposed changes to the legislation on the display of election posters.

(AQW 2819/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** On receiving the parties' responses I will carefully consider all their views before deciding the way forward. However, I would anticipate further progress by mid November.

### Pollution Inspections

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment how many pollution inspections have been carried out in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2847/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is responsible for investigating reports of pollution affecting ground or surface waters and for instigating enforcement action, where necessary, under the terms of the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999.

Table A below indicates the number of water pollution inspections carried out by NIEA under the Water (NI) Order 1999 in each of the last 5 years.

**TABLE A**

| Year              | Water Pollution Inspections |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2011 – 2012 (YTD) | 1023                        |
| 2010 - 2011       | 2080                        |
| 2009 – 2010       | 2152                        |
| 2008 – 2009       | 2244                        |
| 2007 – 2008       | 2291                        |

| Year        | Water Pollution Inspections |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 2006 - 2007 | 2081                        |

NIEA is also responsible for regulating Part A and B activities prescribed for control under the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (NI) 2003 ('the PPC Regulations').

Table B below summarises the number of inspections carried out by the Agency under the PPC Regulations in each of the last 5 years.

**TABLE B**

| Year              | PPC Pollution Inspections |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 2011 – 2012 (YTD) | 628                       |
| 2010 - 2011       | 1428                      |
| 2009 – 2010       | 1334*                     |
| 2008 – 2009       | 858                       |
| 2007 – 2008       | 870                       |
| 2006 - 2007       | 841                       |

\* Start of data recording in Land and Resource Management.

### Units in the Rowan Tree Centre, Pomeroy

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of the Environment whether any businesses are currently using the units in the Rowan Tree Centre, Pomeroy, as office space, in contravention of the planning permission granted for the Centre which prohibits the units from being used for office space.

(AQW 2920/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** The Department is currently investigating the exact nature of all uses within the Rowan Tree Centre, Pomeroy, to establish if there is any breach of planning approvals I/2005/0359/O and I/2007/0435/RM which conditioned that the uses on site be restricted to Light Industrial Use, Business Use and/or Storage or Distribution Use as indicated in Class B1 (b & c), Class B2 and Class B4 of the Planning (Use Classes) Order (NI) 2004.

There is also a planning application under consideration for change of use of rooms.

### Road Safety Grants

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 2106/11-15, to detail how the grant allocations were divided between the 26 local councils.

(AQW 2934/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** The 2010/11 contract to deliver funding to the voluntary and community sector in respect of road safety projects was managed by UnLtd. The funding was distributed direct to projects by UnLtd during 2010/11 on project merit basis. A total of 17 road safety projects throughout the province in both urban and rural areas were supported.

No funding was allocated to local councils.

## Seal Population

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to protect the seal population.

(AQW 2946/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** The two species of seal found in Northern Irish waters are the harbour (common) and the grey seal. Both species are fully protected under local and European legislation.

Seals are included on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 as 'animals that are protected at all times.' They are also listed on Schedule 6 as animals 'which may not be killed or taken by certain methods' and on Schedule 7 as 'animals which may not be sold alive or dead at any time'.

Additionally, both species are listed under Annex 2 of the EC Habitats Directive as species whose conservation requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

The Department has designated two SACs where harbour seals are qualifying features – Strangford Lough SAC and Murlough SAC. In these areas NIEA undertakes monthly counts of the seal population to ensure that it remains within favourable conservation status. Monthly counts are also undertaken at various other locations around the shores of Northern Ireland to monitor the wider seal population.

As a result of previous concerns expressed about seal protection in Northern Ireland, the Department has recently introduced additional legislative protection for seals under the terms of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. As such, it is now an offence for any person to either intentionally or recklessly disturb common or grey seals in Northern Irish waters.

Any offences under the terms of the Wildlife Order are classed as wildlife crime and are investigated by the PSNI. NIEA can provide scientific expertise to assist in these cases.

## Election Posters

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of the Environment when he expects to make an announcement on the next stage of the consultation on the possible ban on the use of election posters in public spaces.

(AQW 2982/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** On receiving the parties' responses I will carefully consider all their views before deciding the way forward. However, I would anticipate further progress by mid November.

## Townland Addresses

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of the Environment whether a feasibility study was carried out on the possibility of Fermanagh District Council introducing the Pointer System in conjunction with the use of townland addresses so that those living in Co Fermanagh could continue to use their townland as their principal address.

(AQW 2984/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** I would refer the member to DFP where responsibility for the matter resides. I understand however, no study was undertaken.

## Discharge Consents

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment how many discharge consents were granted by his Department in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2991/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** Under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, the consent of the Department of the Environment is required to discharge trade or sewage effluent to a waterway or water contained in underground strata.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) administers a system of discharge consents which specify conditions relating to the quality and quantity of effluent that may be discharged. The conditions are formulated to ensure that the discharge can be sustained by the receiving waterway without damage to the aquatic environment and without breaching national or EU Directive standards.

The types of consent can be split into three broad categories:

- Industrial/Private Sewage
- Domestic septic tanks
- Discharges from Northern Ireland Water installations

The table below details the number of each type of consent issued by NIEA in each of the last five years.

| Year | Consent Type              |          |                        | Total       |
|------|---------------------------|----------|------------------------|-------------|
|      | Industrial/Private Sewage | Domestic | Northern Ireland Water |             |
| 2006 | 522                       | 4571     | n/a*                   | <b>5093</b> |
| 2007 | 504                       | 3644     | 1432                   | <b>5580</b> |
| 2008 | 409                       | 3069     | 51                     | <b>3529</b> |
| 2009 | 320                       | 2339     | 136                    | <b>2795</b> |
| 2010 | 326                       | 2471     | 118                    | <b>2915</b> |

\* Water Service became Northern Ireland Water on 1 April 2007 and was for the first time required to have consents issued under the Water Order in respect of all its discharges. Prior to this time discharges were controlled through registered discharge standards.

### Single Use Carrier Bags

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the proposed levy on single use carrier bags; and whether there have been any changes or alterations to what was originally proposed.

(AQW 3023/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** My objective is that charging for single use carrier bags should commence from April 2013. Achievement of this target depends, of course, on the required subordinate legislation and the necessary operational arrangements being in place in advance of that date.

The public consultation on proposals for the levy closed on 12 October 2011; the outcome will help determine my approach to implementation. I will of course keep the Executive informed of key policy developments; the Department will publish a synopsis of responses received, in due course.

I am considering whether, in the longer term, the charge should be extended to cover certain types of reusable bags. This would be similar to the approach in the Republic of Ireland, where the levy applies to reusable plastic bags which are sold for less than 70 cents. This issue was addressed in the policy consultation; any such extension of the Northern Ireland levy would require further primary legislation.

### Environmental Impact of Hydraulic Fracturing

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment whether the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is prepared to work with the Environmental Protection Agency in the Republic of Ireland on the study to investigate the environmental impact of hydraulic fracturing.

(AQW 3301/11-15)

**Mr Attwood:** The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has been in contact with the Republic of Ireland's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding the hydraulic fracturing proposals in counties Leitrim and Cavan.

The EPA informed NIEA that they are commissioning a desk study to investigate the environmental considerations and impacts of shale gas exploration and extraction, in particular with regard to the use of hydraulic fracturing technology. The study will also involve an investigation into the regulatory approaches of other countries, with a view to helping to establish Best Environmental Practice.

NIEA will consider the outputs of the desk study when made available by EPA and will then explore the opportunities for cooperating on further more substantial studies in future.

Initial discussions with colleagues in RoI have taken place to see if a common approach is helpful.

## Department of Finance and Personnel

### Chairperson or Chief Executive: Arm's-Length Bodies

**Mr Beggs** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the daily rate paid by his Department to each Chairperson or Chief Executive of each of its arm's-length bodies; and how this rate was determined and approved.

(AQW 2743/11-15)

**Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel):** The Chairpersons of DFP's arm's length bodies are paid in line with the central guidance – Remuneration of Chairmen and Members of Public Bodies and other Fee Rates – Annual Daily Rates – 2010 & 2011. This ranges from £136 to £470.

### Invoices for Construction Work

**Mr Beggs** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what proportion of invoices for construction work have been paid on time, broken down by each Department, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2922/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** The answer below relates to DFP. Please refer directly to other Departments for information relating to their invoices.

It is not possible to separate construction-related prompt payment performance entirely from non-construction orders. However as all DFP construction work is processed through a single Work Order Processing System (WOPS), the figures given below should be representative of the performance for construction-related invoices as these make up 80% of the payments processed through the system.

| Year                                     | FY09/10 | FY10/11 | FY11/12 to date |
|--|---------|---------|-----------------|
| Proportion of WOPS invoices paid on time | 88%     | 96%     | 86%             |

### Directive 200/35/EC

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the date when departmental guidance was issued following the final transposition of Directive 200/35/EC; and (ii) to whom the guidance was issued.

(AQW 3073/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** DFP issued guidance on the 'Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002' under DAO (DFP) 19/02 on 23 August 2002. Further guidance was also issued on 'Prompt Payment

of Invoices' under DAO (DFP) 12/08 on 27 November 2008. In addition, guidance is also included in Annex 4.6 of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI), which issued in June 2008.

DAOs (Dear Accounting Officer letters) are issued to the Accounting Officers in each department, but are applicable and should be forwarded to their Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs). MPMNI applies to all public bodies in Northern Ireland.

### **Corporation Tax**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of whether a lower rate of Corporation Tax would increase inequality; and what measures he intends to put in place to ensure that it does not.

(AQW 3118/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** While no one can be precise about the scale of the benefits the devolution of Corporation Tax powers might bring, I am in no doubt that reducing the tax rate would help us in attracting new inward investment and help local companies to invest and grow throughout the region. The Executive's objective, should we pursue this, will be seeking to increase growth across Northern Ireland which would be to the benefit of all our people.

Any reduction in the rate of Corporation Tax would apply across the whole of Northern Ireland. Therefore, while an equality impact assessment has not been carried out at this time, I do not expect that a lowering of the rate would impact differently on any Section 75 group.

### **Corporation Tax**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an estimate of the administration cost of devolving Corporation Tax powers.

(AQW 3119/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** I would refer the Member to the reply I provided to Mr Roy Beggs in AQO 511/11-15 issued on 10 October 2011.

### **October Monitoring Round**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any emerging financial pressures that have been identified by his Department in the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3143/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** My department did not identify any additional requirements for current expenditure or capital investment as part of the October Monitoring Round.

### **Vacant Domestic Properties**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of vacant domestic properties, based on rating records, in the (i) Ballymena Borough Council; (ii) Ballymoney Borough Council; and (iii) Moyle District Council areas,

(AQW 3160/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** The latest figures available, at 9th October 2011, indicate that there are (i) 1,189, (ii) 646 and (iii) 654 vacant domestic properties in the District Council Areas of Ballymena, Ballymoney and Moyle respectively.

## Air Passenger Duty

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, given that Air Passenger Duty is an excepted matter, when he expects primary legislation to be introduced to make its devolution possible; and whether he expects the powers devolved to extend to domestic flights within the UK.

(AQW 3229/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** The scope, including the question of Air Passenger Duty (APD) powers for domestic flights, and precise arrangements for the devolution of these powers has not yet been agreed and discussions with Treasury are ongoing in this regard.

The precise legislative changes that are needed will depend on which aspects of APD will be devolved and therefore I cannot be definitive on the legislative timetable for this at this stage.

## Jobs

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many jobs have been (i) created; and (ii) lost in each year since 1998.

(AQW 3243/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** It is not possible to provide an exact measure of the number of jobs that have been (i) created; and (ii) lost in each year from 1998. However, figures from the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) can be used to estimate the net change in employee job levels during this period.

Table 1 overleaf presents the total number of employee jobs and the net change each year between June 1998 and June 2011.

**TABLE 1 NI EMPLOYEE JOBS BETWEEN 1998 AND 2011 (SEASONALLY ADJUSTED)**

| Period | Total Employee Jobs | Annual Net Change |
|--------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1998   | 613,250             | 15,490            |
| 1999   | 625,700             | 12,450            |
| 2000   | 641,960             | 16,260            |
| 2001   | 651,530             | 9,570             |
| 2002   | 665,100             | 13,580            |
| 2003   | 674,140             | 9,040             |
| 2004   | 681,430             | 7,290             |
| 2005   | 695,890             | 14,460            |
| 2006   | 706,850             | 10,950            |
| 2007   | 720,820             | 13,970            |
| 2008   | 733,160             | 12,340            |
| 2009   | 710,610             | -22,550           |
| 2010   | 709,540             | -1,070            |
| 2011   | 699,650             | -9,890            |

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and refer to June each year.

## Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many times in the last three years each Department has requested the assistance of the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit.

(AQW 3338/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** The number of times each Northern Ireland (NI) Department has requested the assistance of the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU) is set out in the table below. It should be noted that most of the work of PEDU has been commissioned by the Executive, reflecting the requirements of all Departmental Ministers.

This includes the monitoring of the delivery of the Executive's Programme for Government, as well as the provision of advice and support for the 8 Accountability meetings that have been taken place with Departments when the monitoring reports have shown less than expected levels of progress.

Furthermore, at the request of the Executive, PEDU is currently working on two major projects in respect of the scope to make savings in the Education and Health & Social Care sectors, which collectively account for over 60% of current expenditure by NI Departments.

**TABLE: REQUEST FOR PEDU SUPPORT FROM NI DEPARTMENTS 2008-2011**

| Department                                       | Number of Requests |
|--|--------------------|
| NI Executive                                     | 3                  |
| Agriculture and Rural Development                | 1                  |
| Culture, Arts and Leisure                        | 0                  |
| Education  | 1                  |
| Employment & Learning                            | 0                  |
| Enterprise, Trade & Investment                   | 0                  |
| Finance and Personnel                            | 5                  |
| Health, Social Services and Public Safety        | 0                  |
| Environment                                      | 1                  |
| Justice  | 0                  |
| Regional Development                             | 0                  |
| Social Development                               | 1                  |
| Office of First Minister & Deputy First Minister | 2                  |

## Centre of Procurement Expertise

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the public bodies assessed for the Centre of Procurement Expertise status in (a) 2009/10; and (b) 2010/11; and (ii) the outcome of each assessment .

(AQW 3407/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy requires the competency of Centres of Procurement Expertise to be reviewed on a periodic basis. The last review was carried out in 2009 and the public bodies that were assessed were: Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Translink, NI Water, Health Estates, Procurement and Logistics Service, Roads Service and Central Procurement Directorate. All the bodies retained CoPE status. The full report can be found on the CPD website

at: [http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd\\_publications/cpd\\_review\\_of\\_centres\\_of\\_procurement\\_expertise.htm](http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/procurement-2/cpd/cpd_publications/cpd_review_of_centres_of_procurement_expertise.htm)

## Consultancy Firms

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what measures are in place to prevent any conflict of interest in the awarding of contracts by his Department, and their arm's-length bodies, to consultancy firms.

(AQW 3408/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) works closely with public bodies in the appointment process for consultants. The issue of conflicts of interest is taken very seriously and there are a number of safeguards built into the current procurement process.

Tenderers are required to highlight any potential conflicts of interest in tender documentation and where they exist, describe how they will be managed.

All selection and evaluation panel members are required to sign a Conflict of Interest declaration. The Chair of the selection/evaluation panel is responsible for ensuring this is done and that action is taken as appropriate in order to ensure there is no distortion of competition.

CPD guidance reminds panel members of the Seven Principles of Public Life and the NICS Code of Ethics.

## Equality Schemes

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cost to his Department of equality schemes since the publication of 'Reviewing the Effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998' by the Equality Commission in May 2007.

(AQW 3411/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** As work to fulfil the commitments detailed in our Equality Scheme has been mainstreamed within my department, information on the cost cannot readily be disaggregated.

## Special EU Programmes Body

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the review of staffing within the Special EU Programmes Body, for his assessment of whether there are sufficient staff to process applications in a timely manner.

(AQW 3492/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** A staffing review of the SEUPB in 2010 recommended that SEUPB's staffing complement remain at the present 65 until 2012 when a further review should be undertaken. This recommendation was based on the number of staff required in order to deliver the current EU programmes. This recommendation was implemented. I am therefore content that SEUPB have the sufficient staff complement to process applications in a timely manner.

## Public Sector Jobs: Co.Fermanagh

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the rationale in continuing to take public sector jobs out of Co.Fermanagh and relocating elsewhere.

(AQW 3516/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** There is currently no centralised programme for the location or relocation of public sector or civil service jobs. Individual public bodies, departments and Ministers can of course consider the relocation of public sector facilities and jobs subject to the normal requirements of business need, value for money and affordability.

## Public Sector Jobs: Co.Fermanagh

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what plans the Executive has to (i) stop the flow of public sector jobs out of Co.Fermanagh; and (ii) decentralise public sector jobs in the future.

(AQW 3517/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** There is currently no centralised programme for the location or relocation of public sector or civil service jobs. Individual public bodies, departments and Ministers can of course consider the relocation of public sector facilities and jobs subject to the normal requirements of business need, value for money and affordability.

## Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

**Mr Cree** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the average cost to his Department of answering (i) an Oral Assembly Question; and (ii) a Written Assembly Question during this mandate compared to two years ago.

(AQW 3551/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** My Department does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and comparative information between mandates is therefore not available.

## Civil Service Staff

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many staff are currently employed by the Civil Service.

(AQW 3572/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** The most recently published statistics are contained in the 'Equality Statistics for the NICS' publication, based on staff in post at 1 January 2011. This shows the number of permanent NICS staff (headcount) at 1 January 2011 was 27,701\*. The full report can be obtained from the link below:

<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/NICS%20Equality%20Report%202011.pdf>

\* Notes:

Includes staff on Career Break and Secondment

Includes Industrial and Non-Industrial staff

Excludes approximately 1800 uniformed Prison Service personnel.

## Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to give examples of how the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit has succeeded in encouraging greater cross-departmental co-operation and more effective use of public spending.

(AQO 647/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** Although it is important to further develop and enhance cross-departmental co-operation, this is not an explicit objective of the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit.

The primary focus of the Unit's work in recent years has been in respect of delivery. This has included projects examining the performance of the Planning Service as well as Land & Property Services within my own Department.

PEDU is currently working on two major projects, with the respective Departments, to identify the scope to make more effective use of available resources in the Education and Health & Social Care sectors.

These projects involve an examination of best practice across Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK as well as the extent to which the findings from previous studies have been taken forward.

## **Banks: Dormant Accounts**

**Mr W Clarke** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on dormant bank accounts.  
(AQO 653/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** The Reclaim Fund announced on 2nd August 2011 that the first tranche to be transferred to the Big Lottery Fund will be £30million of which Northern Ireland will receive a Barnett share.

It is expected that distributions from the Reclaim Fund in the first year will be between £60-100 million of which Northern Ireland will receive a Barnett share. I have no further information at this stage on the scale or timing of future releases as these will depend on the rate of reclaim.

Once, I have clarity as to the overall amounts likely to be available to

Northern Ireland I will bring forward my proposals as to our spending priorities.

## **Banks: Lending**

**Mr Elliott** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, following his recent discussions with the banking institutions, whether there are now clear targets in place for lending in Northern Ireland.  
(AQO 655/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** The Government's Project Merlin initiative has set lending targets for the UK as a whole but there are no separate targets within this for Northern Ireland, or for any other UK region.

I have been pressing the Treasury for such regional lending targets or, at minimum, a requirement on the banks that they would have to demonstrate lending throughout the UK in meeting these targets. We have been advised that the Project Merlin agreement cannot be reopened. I have also raised this issue with the Minister of Finance in relation to the Irish owned banks but again have been advised that the current lending targets for Irish banks do not include a separate element for Northern Ireland.

At my recent meetings with local banks they have assured me that, while overall lending has fallen, this partly reflects poor demand, that they do have money available to lend to viable projects, and that 9 out of 10 lending applications are approved.

I will continue to liaise with the BBA on the progress of the local banks have made in implementing an independent review mechanism for those who are refused bank lending that was promised in the Business Finance Taskforce recommendations. I hope that this will be in place soon.

## **Civil Service: Equal Pay**

**Mrs Overend** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he is aware of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, or any of the Civil Service trade unions, failing to advise retiring staff that they had a right to lodge a claim for equal pay within six months of leaving the service.  
(AQO 656/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** The Northern Ireland Civil Service does not give such advice. There is no onus on an employer to advise staff of their rights under equal pay legislation when leaving employment.

Responsibilities of the Civil Service trade unions is a matter for those organisations.

## **Public Sector Contracts**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has any plans to streamline the application process to assist small and medium sized enterprises and social enterprises in tendering for public sector contracts.

(AQO 658/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** My officials are working hard to streamline procurement processes to help small businesses (SMEs) and social economies (SEEs) tender for public sector contracts.

Let me highlight some progress made to date:

- The eSourcingNI procurement portal provides easy access to all competitions over £30k being run by CPD and Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPE). Suppliers have only to register their details on this system once thus saving time when tendering for contracts.
- A standard construction works Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) has been developed by CPD and CoPEs in conjunction with the industry. This incorporates proportionate minimum standards for issues such as experience and financial standing. Similar measures are being developed with the supplies and services sector.
- Updated guidance has been issued to help SMEs and SEEs understand the procurement processes better.

In addition to these measures CPD and CoPEs have regular engagement with suppliers at a range of supplier awareness and Meet the Buyer events. These events provide suppliers with practical advice on tendering for government contracts.

### **Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit: Department of Education**

**Mr McQuillan** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the work that the Performance Efficiency Delivery Unit has carried out in the Department of Education.

(AQO 659/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** In November 2010, the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU) commenced work on a Review of the Education Sector in collaboration with the Department of Education (DE). The Terms of Reference provided for the Review to be taken forward in two stages. The Stage One report, which was published by the Education Minister in March 2011, identified a range of broad areas within the education sector where there appeared to be scope to make savings.

At Stage Two the Review team examined the areas of Home to School Transport and School Catering in greater detail with a view to making recommendations on how savings could be achieved. Work on Stage

Two is nearing completion and I expect to receive reports setting out the findings on each area in the coming weeks.

### **Government Contracts: Payments to Subcontractors**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he has received any representations from sub-contractors working on Government contracts who are not being paid promptly by the main contractor.

(AQO 660/11-15)

**Mr Wilson:** I have not received any direct representations from subcontractors working on Government contracts who are not being paid promptly by the main contractor. However, I recently responded to a letter from such a subcontractor, which had been passed to me from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in which the subcontractor stated that he did not receive final payments of monies from the main contractor on completion of the contract.

I am also aware that while main contractors on public contracts are paid promptly, some have been slow to pay subcontractors and suppliers in their supply chain. This is disappointing and a matter of major concern. My officials have been working with the construction industry to

implement measures which would help to address the problem. I have also now instructed my officials in the Central Procurement Directorate to consider what further steps can be taken to improve matters.

## Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

### Intermediate Care

**Mr Girvan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the occupational cost to his Department of providing public sector intermediate care in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area, in each of the last three years; and (ii) how this compares to the cost of providing intermediate care in the private sector.

(AQW 3098/11-15)

**Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** Intermediate care relates to a wide range of services and is provided in two ways:

- Rehabilitation and reablement services provided to the patient in their own home through community rehabilitation staff and other visiting professionals where required; and
- Community bed based schemes where the patient stays for a period, generally no more than a few weeks.

Given the wide range of services it is therefore not possible to detail the occupational cost of providing public sector intermediate care in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area. A comparison of the cost of providing intermediate care in the private sector is also not possible.

### Occupational Therapists

**Mr Lynch** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many occupational therapists are employed by the Western Health and Social Care Trust for community visits and assessments; (ii) what is the waiting time for an assessment by an occupational therapist in the community after referral; and (iii) whether a GP can speed up the process.

(AQW 3162/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** The Western HSC Trust advised that there are 25 (23.69 Whole-Time Equivalent) Occupational Therapists employed by the Western Health and Social Care Trust specifically to carry out community visits and assessments as at October 2011. In addition to these Community Occupational Therapists, a further 31 (25.90 Whole-Time Equivalent) Occupational Therapists working within other departments within the Western HSC Trust are also responsible for community visits within their specialist area if the client's home is the preferred setting for assessment and intervention.

Waiting times figures are only available from referral to commencement of treatment by an occupational therapist. The latest waiting times for the Western Health and Social Care Trust, are detailed in the table below for information.

| HSC Trust | Waiting time from referral to treatment for Occupational Therapy (by weeks waiting) <sup>1</sup> |         |         |           |      | Total        |
|-----------|--|---------|---------|-----------|------|--------------|
|           | 0-3  | >3 to 6 | >6 to 9 | > 9 to 13 | > 13 |              |
| Western   | 305  | 279     | 232     | 227       | 327  | <b>1,370</b> |

1 Figures detailed were provided on request by the Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Board, and have not been validated by the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety. Information relates to 7 October 2011.

The Community Occupational Therapy service has open access system for referrals from multiple sources. In many cases after receiving a referral, the Occupational Therapy service will determine whether up to date medical information is required to assist with the prioritisation of a referral and to advise treatment planning. They will consider this medical information alongside other indicators of need and risk such as the extent of functional difficulties, level of social support and existing facilities available in the home to determine priority for assessment. This medical information may also indicate

whether medical or surgical interventions are planned which may address the underlying cause of disability, e.g. hip joint replacement, cardiac surgery which may in turn mean that adaptations may not be required to address longer term needs.

Early medical information indicating diagnosis, prognosis, presenting functional difficulties and planned medical or surgical interventions speeds up the process of screening and prioritising Community Occupational Therapy referrals.

### **Accidents in Care Homes**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many accidents in care homes have been reported by residents, or relatives of residents, in each of the last five years. (AQW 3166/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Care homes registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority have an obligation to report accidents to the Authority. Not to do so would be a breach of regulations. However information in the form requested is not available, as these reports are made by the registered person or registered manager on behalf of the service provider.

### **Misconduct by Care Home Staff**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how allegations of misconduct by care home staff have been reported by residents, or relatives of residents, in each of the last five years. (AQW 3167/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Care homes registered with the Regulation and Improvement Authority have an obligation to report allegations of misconduct by care home staff to the Authority. Not to do so would be a breach of regulations. However, information in the form requested is not available, as these reports are made by the registered person or registered manager on behalf of the service provider.

### **Misconduct by Care Home Staff**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how allegations of misconduct by care home staff have been reported by care homes in each of the last five years. (AQW 3168/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Care homes registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority have an obligation to report allegations of misconduct by care home staff to the Authority. Not to do so would be a breach of regulations. During the period 1 April 2010 to 30 September 2011, 546 allegations of misconduct by care home staff were reported.

Information for the period prior to 1 April 2010 is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

### **Care Homes**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many events which adversely affected the care, health, welfare or safety of a resident in a care home have been reported by residents, or relatives of residents, in each of the last five years. (AQW 3169/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Care homes registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority have an obligation to report to the Authority any event in the home which adversely affects the care, health, welfare or safety of a resident. Not to do so would be a breach of regulations. However, information in the form requested is not readily available, as these reports are made by the registered person or registered manager on behalf of the service provider.

## Care Homes

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many events which adversely affect the care, health, welfare or safety of a resident in a care home have been reported by care homes in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3170/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Care homes registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) have an obligation to report all “notifiable events” to the Authority. These include events that have the potential to adversely affect the care, health, welfare or safety of a resident. During the period 1 April 2010 to 30 September 2011 reports were received of 12,383 notifiable events. Because this total includes allegations that require further investigation, it is not possible to say definitively that all of these events adversely affected residents.

A database of notifiable events was introduced by the RQIA in 2010. Prior to that date the information is held on individual care home files and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## Accident and Emergency Unit in the Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry

**Mr Brady** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he can confirm a date for the opening of the extension at the Accident and Emergency Unit in the Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry.

(AQW 3176/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** The new extension to the Accident and Emergency Unit at Daisy Hill Hospital has been operational for the past 4 weeks. This area is being used to see minor injuries only whilst awaiting delivery of patient monitors, which are essential for the safe care of more seriously ill patients. Delivery of and commissioning and training on these new monitors will be completed by 31st October.

This will then allow the new extension to be utilised for the care of seriously ill patients from 1st November.

## Serious Injury to a Resident in a Care Home

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many incidents resulting in serious injury to a resident in a care home have been reported by residents, or relatives of residents, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3187/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Care homes registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority have an obligation to report any incidents resulting in serious injury to a resident in a care home to the Authority. Not to do so would be a breach of regulations. However information in the form requested is not available, as these reports are made by the registered person or registered manager on behalf of the service provider.

## Care Homes

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any of the bi-annual inspections of care homes carried out by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in each of the last five years have raised concerns about the policy and procedures adopted in relation to the care of vulnerable residents; and if so, what actions were taken by the Authority.

(AQW 3193/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Where RQIA inspectors identify a concern in relation to any aspect of the care of residents during bi-annual inspections, they will raise their concerns with the provider at the time of the inspection. In addition, where required, the inspector will also make time-bound recommendations based on minimum standards or make requirements to ensure full compliance with the relevant legislation. During the period 1 April 2010 to 30 September 2011, the RQIA made approximately

7000 legislative requirements and approximately 7,300 recommendations to care homes arising from inspections. Information prior to these dates is not held in the form requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Following an inspection, a home must respond to each legislative requirement and recommendation with a quality improvement plan detailing the action the provider will take to address the necessary improvements and the associated timescale. In subsequent inspections the RQIA's inspectors will check the progress made and, where necessary, take further enforcement action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents.

## Care Homes

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any of the bi-annual inspections of care homes carried out by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in each of the last five years have raised concerns about the care of vulnerable residents; and if so, what actions were taken by the Authority.

(AQW 3194/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Where RQIA inspectors identify a concern in relation to any aspect of the care of residents during bi-annual inspections, they will raise their concerns with the provider at the time of the inspection. In addition, where required, the inspector will also make time-bound recommendations based on minimum standards or make requirements to ensure full compliance with the relevant legislation. During the period 1 April 2010 to 30 September 2011, the RQIA made approximately 7000 legislative requirements and approximately 7,300 recommendations to care homes arising from inspections. Information prior to these dates is not held in the form requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Following an inspection, a home must respond to each legislative requirement and recommendation with a quality improvement plan detailing the action the provider will take to address the necessary improvements and the associated timescale. In subsequent inspections the RQIA's inspectors will check the progress made and, where necessary, take further enforcement action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents.

## Accidents in Care Homes

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many accidents in care homes have been reported by those responsible for the care homes in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3195/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Care homes registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) have an obligation to report accidents to the Authority. Not to do so would be a breach of regulations. During the period 1 April 2010 to 30 September 2011, a total of 2,401 accidents in care homes were reported to RQIA by nursing home and residential care home providers. However, information for the period prior to 1 April 2010 is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## Care Homes

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many incidents resulting in serious injury to a resident have been reported by care homes in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3196/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Care homes registered with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority have an obligation to report incidents resulting in serious injury to a resident to the Authority. Not to do so would be a breach of regulations. During the period 1 April 2010 to 30 September 2011, a total of 1,785 incidents resulting in serious injury to a resident were reported. However, information for the period prior to 1 April 2010 is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## Belfast Health and Social Care Trust: Buses

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how many buses are not currently being used by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) why the buses are not being used; (iii) where the buses are parked; and (iv) the cost of parking to date.

(AQW 3215/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** I can advise that six of the Belfast HSC Trust's 76 coaches and ten minibuses are currently not in use because they are over eight years old and have been replaced with newer vehicles. These six vehicles, which are due to be auctioned in accordance with proper procedures, are parked in Transport Services depots at Belfast City Hospital and Knockbracken Healthcare Park. No charge is incurred for parking the vehicles.

## Supplier Invoices

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the statutory remedy available to the suppliers to those Health and Social Care Trusts that have paid invoices late; (ii) whether the Health and Social Care Trusts are aware of the remedy available to the suppliers; and (iii) whether he can offer an assurance that all claims from suppliers will be settled promptly.

(AQW 3226/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** The statutory remedy available to suppliers where invoices have been paid late by HSC Trusts is the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998.

This statutory remedy has been communicated to all HSC Trusts (and all other arm's length bodies) by Departmental guidance, specifically Finance Circulars and the manual of accounts.

HSC Trusts are advised to deal promptly with Late Payment Claims from suppliers, balanced by the need to verify the legitimacy and accuracy of such claims.

## Supplier Invoices

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2224/11-15, how many supplier invoices were paid by his Department between 1 April 2011 and 31 August 2011; and of these, how many were paid late.

(AQW 3227/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** My Department paid 2,997 invoices between 1 April 2011 and 31 August 2011 and 229 of these were paid late.

## Huntingdon's Disease

**Mr Craig** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) what treatment and care is available for people with Huntington's Disease; (ii) the number of care homes which provide care for people with the disease; and (iii) the number of people currently suffering from the disease.

(AQW 3235/11-15)

**Mr Poots:**

- (i) People with Huntington's Disease have access to a wide range of services dependent on their individual assessed needs. Services range from domiciliary care, respite care, day care, direct payments, provision of aids and equipment as well as multidisciplinary support including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Dietetics.
- (ii) The information is not available.
- (iii) Information on the number of people currently suffering from Huntington's Disease in NI is not available. However, In 2010/11 there were 60 admissions to HSC hospitals in Northern

Ireland where a diagnosis of Huntington's Disease was recorded. These admissions equate to approximately 36 individuals.

## Protect Life Strategy

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to suicide prevention and the Protect Life Strategy (i) for his assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy; (ii) for an update on his Department's review of the Strategy; and (iii) whether the Strategy will be subject to a public consultation, and when this is expected to take place.

(AQW 3239/11-15)

### Mr Poots:

- (i) The review of Protect Life has indicated that its key strength has been the commitment and ownership of stakeholders in the community, voluntary and statutory sectors, and by families bereaved by suicide, in the implementation of the strategy. The main weakness has been the reliance on the achievement of the 15% reduction target as the primary gauge of the impact of the strategy since its publication in 2006. The NI Audit Office has acknowledged that the suicide rate alone is "an unreliable indicator of health patterns". Independent evaluation of Protect Life is being commissioned. This will provide a more comprehensive assessment of the impact of Protect Life.
- (ii) The Protect Life Strategy is currently being refreshed in light of the findings of the Health Committee Inquiry into the Prevention of Suicide and Self Harm, the findings from a review of international evidence and best practice, and feedback from a major workshop in September which had widespread community sector and Health and Social Care participation. The "refreshed strategy" is due for publication later this year.
- (iii) I do not intend to make the "refreshed" strategy available for public consultation. The Protect Life Strategy was developed following very widespread public consultation and the "refresh" is being overseen by the cross-sectoral Suicide Strategy Implementation Body. The "refreshed" strategy will have a two-year lifespan. New suicide prevention policy will be developed for 2013 and that will be subject to public consultation. In the meantime, I intend to seek the endorsement of the Health Committee and Executive for the "refreshed" strategy.

## Private Care Homes

**Mr McCartney** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide a breakdown of the cost of a patient residing in a private care home.

(AQW 3240/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** The average weekly cost of Independent Residential Care and Independent Nursing Care by Programme of Care is shown in the table below. This information is for 2009/10 (latest available) and is shown by Programme of Care:

|                              | 2009/10 Average Cost per Occupied Patient Week |                   |                    |                          |                                    |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                              | Family & Child Care<br>£                       | Elderly Care<br>£ | Mental Health<br>£ | Learning Disability<br>£ | Physical & Sensory Disability<br>£ |
| Independent Residential Care | 1,100  | 451               | 469                | 668                      | 594                                |
| Independent Nursing Care     | n/a  | 561               | 566                | 685                      | 642                                |

## Private Care Homes

**Mr McCartney** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current total annual cost to the Health Service of patients residing in private care homes.

(AQW 3241/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** The cost to the Health Service of patients residing in independent sector homes is set out in the table below. This information is for 2009/10 (latest available) and is shown by Programme of Care:

| Programme of Care             | Nursing Homes<br>£m | Residential Homes<br>£m | Total<br>£m  |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Family & Child Care           | -                   | 1.3                     | 1.3          |
| Elderly Care                  | 201.5               | 45.8                    | 247.3        |
| Mental Health                 | 8.9                 | 6.5                     | 15.4         |
| Learning Disability           | 26.6                | 27.3                    | 53.9         |
| Physical & Sensory Disability | 12.0                | 2.0                     | 14.0         |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>249.0</b>        | <b>82.9</b>             | <b>331.9</b> |

**Source:** Trust Financial Returns 2009/10

## Private Care Homes

**Mr McCartney** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of whether it is value for money to provide health care in private care homes rather than in Health Service care homes.

(AQW 3242/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** While direct comparison between homes is not straightforward, the information available would indicate that the cost of providing care in a private sector home would be less than the cost of care in a statutory sector home. However, value for money is about more than simply unit cost comparisons. It includes a host of other considerations like the quality of interaction that clients get from staff and whether their specific care needs are being met.

Ongoing DHSSPS policy for community care is to promote the development of a flourishing independent sector alongside good quality public services. Trusts have a duty to provide services that are good value for money, whether they are provided internally or externally, and both sectors should be capable of providing good value for money. Recent events surrounding Southern Cross Healthcare would serve to underline the value of that mixed economy of care.

## PARIS System

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2025/11-15, whether the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, or any of his Department's bodies, have any ownership of the intellectual property of the PARIS system.

(AQW 3249/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Neither the BHSC, nor any other Departmental body, has any ownership or intellectual property of the PARIS system.

## Community Information System

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2340/11-15, apart from the 11 staff which will implement the new Community Information System, (i) whether any additional staff will be required to achieve the objectives set out in the business case; (ii) to detail these objectives; and (iii) if any, how many of the staff will be recruited from outside the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 3251/11-15)

### Mr Poots:

- (i) In addition to the 11 administrative staff, it is anticipated that 12 service professionals or technical staff will be needed to contribute to the implementation of the system. However, achievement of the objectives will require day to day use of the system by a wide range of staff across the Trust.
- (ii) An extract from the business case setting out the objectives is attached.
- (iii) The BHSCT has tried to recruit as many staff as possible from within and only those posts that cannot be filled internally are being publicly advertised. This process is still on-going. To date 3 posts have been filled externally.

## 5 PROJECT AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS

### 5.1 Project Aims

The major aim of the proposed investment in a CIS system for BHSCT is to support individual community professionals in their role of improving the quality of care and providing high quality, safe and effective services to patients/clients in the BHSCT area. This will be achieved through providing the necessary information to professionals in order to facilitate change. Improvements should be possible in the following areas: -

To improve the quality of care provided to people living in the community through the integration of information which supports the efficient sharing of relevant information between health and social care professionals;

To implement a modern and flexible IT system which supports community professionals in providing high quality person-centred services to patients and clients within modernising service delivery models and in accordance with relevant national and regional initiatives.

To support the Trust in the targeting, planning and monitoring of the services provided to patients/clients to ensure continuing and improving efficiency and effectiveness.

To support the implementation of multi-disciplinary teams responsible for the assessment, planning, delivery and co-ordination of care and treatment at individual patient/client level;

To ensure that the information necessary for agencies to work together to provide co-ordinated care in the community is available;

### 5.2 Project Objectives

The objectives of this project will be met by a combination of both the CIS system and staff who use the system. CIS is an enabler for the business change required to meet the objectives. Whilst the system itself can meet some of the objectives and deliver some of the benefits, it is the working practices of the staff, assisted and facilitated by the system, which will ultimately result in the objectives being achieved.

### 5.3. Summarised Project Objectives

A summary of the business needs identified in Section 4.5 is as follows:-

- Risk Management
- Expanding Business Information Requirements
- Modernising Community Services.
- Performance Management
- Efficiency and Productivity
- Structured and standardised information
- Integrated Assessment Processes.
- HPSS ICT Programme objectives

The Trust has developed the project objectives as follows, listed in order of priority:

#### **Objective 1 – 1st Priority**

To procure and implement within 3 ½ years of business case approval, a fully integrated BHSCT CIS system which spans the whole Trust and meets the business needs identified above and the requirements in the Output Based Specification (OBS).

This objective is ranked highest as the provision of a system which meets the requirements of the BHSCT and ensures that safe, effective and efficient patient/client care can be provided is of paramount importance.

#### **Objective 2 – 2nd Priority**

To implement a system within 3 ½ years of business case approval that will meet the strategic objectives of the BHSCT in relation to the provision of integrated and modernised health and social care services across the Belfast area. A key requirement of this is the ability of professional staff to share patient/client information. Therefore, a system is required so that information relating to patients/clients can be gathered, shared and collated at an individual, team, management and organisational level.

This objective is ranked 2nd, as a system is required which will help the newly formed BHSCT meet its strategic objectives as outlined in 3.1.1. These can only be achieved if a fully integrated community system, which spans the whole Trust is in place.

The Trust aims to achieve the following targets within 3 ½ years of business case approval

- a) Implementation of a fully integrated electronic health and social care record for use by all community services in BHSCT. There will be a reduction in the number of systems being used by Community staff from 6 systems to 2 (CIS and Child Health System which is a regional system and not part of this procurement).
- b) All information for community services will come from one information source i.e. the CIS system.

#### **Objective 3 – 3rd Priority**

To implement a CIS System within 3½ years of business case approval that makes a greater contribution to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the Trust in its delivery of care. In particular, systems should enable the sharing of clinical information across disciplines, improve effectiveness in service planning, reduce the level of client index duplication and reduce the number of information systems used.

This objective is ranked 3rd, as improving effectiveness and efficiency is a key objective of the BHSCT.

The Trust aims to achieve the following targets within 3 ½ years of business case approval

- a) Reduce the need to record patient and client demographic and GP details on more than one community IT system by providing a common patient/client index.
- b) Reduce to 1% the number of duplicate records held across community systems by providing a single index and through use of the Health & Care Number. At present it is estimated that there are 7,000 duplicate records in NWB systems.
- c) Reduce the number of information IT systems that professional and administrative staff have to use to record patient/client information within the BHSCT community sector from the current number of six to two.
- d) Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the BHSCT in relation to service planning and performance management based on the ability to access accurate and timely information stored in a single Trust wide database. This will be accessible via flexible reporting tools, which will facilitate changing output requirements.
- e) Provide a single download of community information to the DHPSS data warehouse, instead of the current 6 downloads from current systems, which are either manual or automatic.

#### **Objective 4 – 4th Priority**

To implement a system, which will support the Trust's need to streamline administrative processes in order to make the best use of available resources.

The Trust aims to achieve the following targets within 3 ½ years of business case approval. Baseline measures of these targets will be taken prior to implementation with each service group. Learning from the SEB implementation has shown that this is the most efficient way of obtaining baseline measures in such a large and complex organisation. There will be differential baseline measures per benefit between services so measuring these on an individual service basis is the most accurate way of assessing outcomes.

- a) Reduce by 50% the number of times professional and administrative staff have to manually record demographic and GP details as part of the normal processes e.g. patient/client registration, referral, assessment, care planning, intervention, discharge and clinic management.
- b) Reduce the time spent by professional and administrative staff searching for patient/client details such as family relationships, home circumstances, other professional involvement and clinical alerts by 50%.
- c) Reduce the time spent by professional and administrative staff managing waiting lists and clinics by 20% by providing computerised waiting lists, clinic appointment diaries and automatic letter production.
- d) Eliminate the need for dedicated data input staff by providing professional and administrative staff with an efficient method of capturing patient/client information through utilising modern data capture technologies. This will eliminate the need for the current 5.5 WTE data input staff.

#### **Objective 5 - 5th Priority**

To introduce a modern, easy to use information system which is flexible enough to meet the Trust's changing business requirements and be capable of modification with minimal overheads to respond to changes in clinical practice, organisational change and Trust/Departmental information requirements.

The Trust aims to achieve the following within 3 ½ years of business case approval

- a) Staff surveys will be used to measure ease of use of the system and perceptions on flexibility of the system.

b) Standards for response times to requests for changes to the system will be set, which will be measured and monitored. The resources required to make these changes will also be measured and monitored. If changes can be carried out by in-house staff this will reduce the cost of overheads. The setting of these standards will take place during contract negotiations.

### **Objective 6 – 6th Priority**

To ensure that information on the system is held within the framework of security and confidentiality outlined in 'Protection and Use of Patient and Client Information – Guidance for the HPSS', and that the system is available to staff who require it subject to defined authorisation and access controls. The system must be configurable to control access to records and ensure that a full audit mechanism is in place to monitor access to records

This objective has a lower priority than the others as staff are already bound by codes of confidentiality through their employment contracts and professional bodies.

The Trust aims to achieve the following:-

- a) Audit processes and procedures will be put in place upon implementation to monitor unauthorised access to the system using system logs.
- b) Confirmation that access to the system is fully password protected and that the security settings are configurable as required prior to implementation.
- c) The commission of an independent evaluation of the system's security and confidentiality configuration by the last quarter of year 1 of implementation to ensure that it complies with the HSC ICT Security policy.

### **Technology Partner Framework**

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2339/11-15, to detail (i) the decision process used to decide that the Technology Partner Framework is an appropriate vehicle for the procurement of a system with an £8.9 million baseline budget; (ii) who made this decision; (iii) whether he intends to make funding available for all the Health and Social Care Trusts to procure this, or a similar, system; (iv) the estimated spend in capital and revenue if all Trusts avail of the Technology Partner Framework agreement to procure the system.

(AQW 3252/11-15)

#### **Mr Poots:**

- (i) The Technology Partner Framework is the main strategic ICT procurement vehicle supporting the whole of the HSC and would therefore be considered in any relevant procurement, regardless of value. It was assessed against all other viable options and was determined to be the best route for this project.
- (ii) The decision was made by the CIS Project Board, supported by Procurement and Logistics Service within the BSO, a Centre of Procurement Excellence (COPE), and legal advisors.
- (iii) If other Trusts take forward business cases for a similar system, then providing that they produce a sound business case, this would be considered for funding. Each business case would be considered in its own right against the available funding and other priorities at the time.
- (iv) It is not possible to estimate this at present as the cost would depend on the number of users from each Trust (licence costs) and the services procured from the Technology Partner to implement such a system – each Trust is likely to have different requirements for external services.

## PARIS System

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2339/11-15, (i) given that Civica is an existing supplier to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and was evaluated for this process, why in the interests of value for money, was the decision made to not evaluate any offers from other existing suppliers; and (ii) whether a production version of the PARIS System exists which meets the vast majority of the Trust's requirements or if further development work is required to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

(AQW 3253/11-15)

### Mr Poots:

- (i) HP, as the HSC's Technology Partner, procured through an EU advertised procurement, was asked to select the most appropriate solution to meet the Trust's output based requirements. The process did not involve the Trust evaluating offers from existing suppliers.
- (ii) The PARIS application is a commercially available product which is currently in use in many GB healthcare Trusts. It is therefore a production system and is deemed to meet the requirements of the Belfast HSC Trust. Further development of the software is not required to meet current requirements.

## Community Information System

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2339/11-15, when and how she will make (i) the document detailing the process followed in relation to the awarding of the contract; and (ii) the contractor solution document provided by Hewlett-Packard, available to the public.

(AQW 3254/11-15)

### Mr Poots:

- (i) The process followed in awarding the contract was as defined in the HSC Technology Partner Agreement. A copy of the Technology Partner Agreement could be made available to the public on request, subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- (ii) A copy of the Contractor Solution Document could be made available to the public subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## PARIS System

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2339/11-15, (i) to provide an estimate of the percentage of revenue and capital budget required to modify the PARIS System to make it fit for purpose; (ii) why the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust appointed Civica as supplier of the System before checking if it could meet requirements; and (iii) what is the budget cap for this project.

(AQW 3255/11-15)

### Mr Poots:

- (i) The PARIS software does not need to be modified to make it fit for purpose.
- (ii) The Belfast HSC Trust carried out a detailed assessment of requirements as part of the exercise and these were supplied to the Technology partner in order for them to provide a solution – to be provided by Civica.
- (iii) The budget cap is the approved amount in the Business Case. The Treasury Green Book rules require business cases to be resubmitted if at any time it appears likely that costs may exceed business case estimates by ten per cent.

## October Monitoring Round

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any financial pressures that have been identified by his Department in the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3263/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** I have written to the Finance Minister and advised the Health Committee of the following financial pressures for my Department in the context of October Monitoring:

### Residual demand pressures - £15m

This funding would support unfunded pressures such as elective care (including cardiac plastic and spinal surgery), bariatric surgery, respite care, hospital and community equipment and a deep-cleaning programme to address hospital infections across all trusts.

### Invest to Save Projects - £15m

This funding would be applied to a range of projects that aim to deliver savings of some £8.5m - £9m per annum from 2012/13.

### Specialist drugs - £5m

This would enable the purchase of anti TNFs/biological treatments for rheumatoid arthritis and psoriasis, cochlear implants and will also contribute to reducing the backlog in NICE technical appraisals.

### Capital schemes - £12m

This would enable significant improvements to be made to service delivery within the HSC Trusts to maintain existing services.

## Street Parking in Bangor Town Centre

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any instances, in each of the last three years, when ambulances and fire engines have had their access obstructed due to on street parking in Bangor town centre.

(AQW 3302/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** I can advise that neither the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) nor Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) routinely records incidents of obstruction due to on-street parking. However, NIFRS records do show that during this three-year period there were no reports or complaints received about obstruction of fire engines due to on-street parking.

## Physiotherapy: Waiting Times

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he intends to address the waiting times for patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis who are in need of physiotherapy.

(AQW 3305/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Physiotherapy services are available to anyone with an identified clinical need, including people with Rheumatoid Arthritis. The nature of a person's condition determines how quickly the service responds. No patient should wait longer than nine weeks to have their needs assessed and treated. The nine week access standard is currently not being achieved by Physiotherapy services and, consequently, the Public Health Agency, in conjunction with the HSC Board, is leading a process of engagement with all Trusts across Northern Ireland to establish the reasons for all breaches of the access standard and to agree recovery plans.

## Meals on Wheels Service

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he intends to ensure that (i) the Meals on Wheels Service will continue to be available; and (ii) the meals are of a high nutritional standard.

(AQW 3312/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Meals on Wheels services are provided, or arranged, by HSC Trusts for vulnerable people where a needs assessment shows that the person is unable to secure a nutritious cooked meal and therefore would be at risk of malnutrition, should a meal service not be provided. There are no plans to make substantive changes to the availability of the service for current recipients.

The nutritional value of meals is a specification included in contracts for the procurement of Meals on Wheels; however, all clients have the right to choose what they wish to eat and to source meals available from a range of providers.

## Consultants

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the consultants employed by the (i) South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) Southern Health and Social Care Trust since 1 April 2007, and to detail the remuneration paid to each.

(AQW 3346/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Under the Data Protection Act 1998 it is inappropriate to release personal data relating to an individual and therefore details of remuneration paid to a named consultant cannot be provided.

Since April 2007 109 consultants have been employed at Southern Trust and 82 have been employed at South Eastern Trust at the appropriate point on the salary scale. The consultant scale for 2011/12 is £74,504 - £100,446.

## Downe Hospital Site in Downpatrick

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what progress has been made on the disposal of the old Downe Hospital site in Downpatrick.

(AQW 3381/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Following disposal advice from Land & Property Services (LPS), a planning application for a mixed use scheme was submitted in May 2010 and approved by Planning Service and Down District Council in May 2011. Draft planning conditions are awaited from Planning Service. Once a Decision Notice is issued, the site will be disposed of in accordance with LPS advice.

Following a public sector trawl of the site in March 2010, Down District Council (DDC) and Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) registered interest. However, as LPS has not received any proposal for the site from DDC to demonstrate need, this interest is no longer being considered by LPS. NIHE remains interested in only part of the site for housing. However the impact of a part site disposal on the value and marketability of residual lands needs to be considered by LPS. Neither DSD nor Northern Ireland Tourist Board has expressed interest in the site.

The planning application was discussed with Paul Hogarth Company on behalf of DSD, in the context of DSD's Downpatrick Masterplan; the mixed use scheme is consistent with the proposed use specified for the site in DSD's Downpatrick Masterplan.

The current planning application was presented to Down District Council in February 2010 who were broadly content with the proposals.

There has been no approach by or consultation with Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

## **Downe Hospital Site in Downpatrick**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions his Department has had with the (i) the Department for Social Development; (ii) the Northern Ireland Tourist Board ; and (iii) Down District Council in relation to the regeneration and tourism potential of the old Downe Hospital site in Downpatrick.

(AQW 3382/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Following disposal advice from Land & Property Services (LPS), a planning application for a mixed use scheme was submitted in May 2010 and approved by Planning Service and Down District Council in May 2011. Draft planning conditions are awaited from Planning Service. Once a Decision Notice is issued, the site will be disposed of in accordance with LPS advice.

Following a public sector trawl of the site in March 2010, Down District Council (DDC) and Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) registered interest. However, as LPS has not received any proposal for the site from DDC to demonstrate need, this interest is no longer being considered by LPS. NIHE remains interested in only part of the site for housing. However the impact of a part site disposal on the value and marketability of residual lands needs to be considered by LPS. Neither DSD nor Northern Ireland Tourist Board has expressed interest in the site.

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The current planning application was presented to Down District Council in February 2010 who were broadly content with the proposals.

There has been no approach by or consultation with Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

## **Pay Bill of the Health Service**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2602/11-15, to provide an estimate of the level of funding that will be allocated to the steps required to be taken to reduce the pay bill of the Health Service in the 2011-2015 budget period.

(AQW 3417/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Decisions on the future pattern of care that may be taken following the HSC Review will help determine what additional steps may be necessary to reduce pay bill costs further. Until those decisions are considered, definitive estimates or allocations cannot be made against pay bill costs.

## **Development of a Prescribing Formulary for Drugs**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2719/11-15, (i) when he expects the Joint Formulary for primary and secondary care to be completed and implemented; (ii) what notional formulary is being used in the interim; (iii) how he expects the new Formulary to differ from what is currently in use.

(AQW 3418/11-15)

### **Mr Poots:**

- (i) The Health and Social Care Board is currently revising the processes for the implementation, management and review of a new Formulary with five chapters of the main therapeutic areas now drafted. The formulary will be issued following Board approval on the formulary process. The anticipated time-line for this is December 2011.
- (ii) In the mean time, the Health and Social Care Board is providing specific guidance on individual therapeutic areas through their Medicines Management Forum. This guidance and advice on good medicines management practice can be viewed at:

(<http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/medicinesmanagement/index.html>). Other forms of prescribing guidance are also currently being utilised such as those available from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE).

- (iii) The new Joint Formulary for primary and secondary care will present a preferred composite list of medicines for initiation and maintenance of treatment in at least 70% of first and second line treatment choices for patients, selected on the basis of the available evidence for their effectiveness to treat a condition, for their safety profile (including reduced likelihood of side effects) and for their cost-effectiveness.

## **Accident and Emergency Services in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Area**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2721/11-15, when he plans to announce the arrangements for consultation on the reconfiguration of accident and emergency services in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 3419/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** I hope to make an announcement shortly on the arrangements for consultation.

## **Equality Schemes**

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost to his Department of equality schemes since the publication of 'Reviewing the Effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998' by the Equality Commission in May 2007.

(AQW 3429/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Equality is mainstreamed within the Department and is part of the policy development process. Disaggregated costs for equality are not maintained or readily available.

## **Prescriptions**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many prescriptions have been issued by GPs in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3453/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** The information requested is not available. Information about prescriptions is only collated by HSC Business Services Organisation once they have been dispensed and submitted for payment. Not all prescriptions issued are subsequently dispensed and presented for payment, so the number of prescriptions issued by GPs, or any type of prescriber, is not known centrally. Information in relation to prescriptions that have been issued, dispensed and presented for payment is held centrally.

## **Department Spend**

**Dr McDonnell** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his Department's (i) direct; and (ii) indirect spend in each of the last ten years in the Belfast City Council area.

(AQW 3499/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** It is not possible to provide this information as it could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

## **Motivate Programme**

**Mr McQuillan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his Department's assessment of the success of the Motivate Programme being carried out at Causeway Hospital, Coleraine.

(AQW 3506/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** The Motivate Programme is an obesity intervention programme which makes use of behavioural principles to promote change in patients' health related behaviours. The programme primarily focuses on defining and understanding patients' eating and activity patterns.

It is an evidence based approach to lifestyle change, delivered over a 6 month period, on a bi-weekly basis. To date 121 have completed the pilot programme at the Causeway Hospital in Coleraine with another 73 individuals due to complete in December 2011.

Results from the initial pilot show a number of positive impacts affecting the participants and the Department awaits the findings which should demonstrate the long term impact of the programme on those participants who successfully completed the course.

### **Maternity Services at the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine**

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the ongoing review into maternity services, whether he can offer an assurance that maternity services at the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine, are secure at present and in the future.

(AQW 3513/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** On 28 September, I launched a public consultation on a draft Maternity Strategy for Northern Ireland. The draft Strategy aims to provide women, professionals, policy makers and commissioners with a clear pathway for maternity services in Northern Ireland, from pre-conceptual care through to postnatal care.

The draft Strategy does not propose closing any of the maternity units; however, when the final strategy is published in 2012, it will be for commissioners and providers to take account of it when planning the shape of maternity services over the next 5 years.

The consultation closes on 23 December; I would urge anyone with an interest in maternity services to respond to the consultation.

### **Cerebral Angiogram**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients who underwent a cerebral angiogram since mid-August have not received the results.

(AQW 3535/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** I have been informed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust that 25 patients have undergone a cerebral angiogram since the 15th August 2011. Five of these patients, all of whom underwent the procedure within the last month, are still to receive the results of the procedure.

### **Causeway Area Hospital: Admissions**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2453/11-15, how many of the in-patients admitted to the Causeway Area Hospital were emergency admissions in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3537/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** It is not possible to determine how many of the inpatients stated in AQW 2453/11-15 were emergency admissions, these figures relate to patients admitted within all Programmes of Care i.e. Acute, Maternity & Child Health, Elderly Care, Mental Health and Learning Disability, and the elective/emergency split is not available for non Acute Programmes of Care.

The table below details the number of non elective admissions for patients treated under the Acute Programme of Care in each of the last five years.

| Financial Year | Inpatients | Non Elective Admissions |
|----------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 2006/07        | 9,301      | 7,158                   |
| 2007/08        | 10,142     | 7,885                   |
| 2008/09        | 10,525     | 7,949                   |
| 2009/10        | 10,386     | 7,975                   |
| 2010/11        | 10,403     | 8,129                   |

**Source:-** Hospital Inpatient System (HIS)

#### Notes

1. Inpatient admissions include both (a) patients admitted electively with the expectation that they will remain in hospital for at least one night, and (b) non-elective admissions (e.g. emergency admissions). A patient who is admitted with this intention but who leaves hospital for any reason without staying overnight is still counted as an inpatient. Day cases and regular attenders are not included.

## Community Pharmacies

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many community pharmacies have closed since the recent cuts to the community pharmacy budget.

(AQW 3632/11-15)

**Mr Poots:** Any community pharmacy intending to close or cease providing health service pharmacy arrangements is legally required to give 3 months written notification to the Health and Social Care Board of their intention to do so. The HSC Board has advised that, to date, no such notifications have been received and that it continues to receive a significant number of new applications seeking to provide health service community pharmacy arrangements across Northern Ireland.

## Department of Justice

### Bench Warrants

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many Bench Warrants, including European Arrest Warrants, which were issued by Northern Ireland courts, are currently outstanding in each court division; and how many of these warrants were issued more than twelve months ago.

(AQW 3013/11-15)

**Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice ):** The following table details the number of Arrest Warrants (Magistrates' Court and Youth Court) and Bench Warrants (Crown Court), including European Arrest Warrants, that are currently outstanding:

| Court Division        | Outstanding Warrants issued less than 12 months ago | Outstanding Warrants issued more than 12 months ago | Total |
|-----------------------|---|---|-------|
| Antrim                | 63  | 408   | 471   |
| Ards                  | 77  | 322   | 399   |
| Armagh and South Down | 68  | 554   | 622   |
| Belfast               | 398   | 1,579   | 1,977 |

| <b>Court Division</b> | <b>Outstanding Warrants issued less than 12 months ago</b> | <b>Outstanding Warrants issued more than 12 months ago</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------------|--|--|--------------|
| Craigavon             | 100  | 639  | 739          |
| Fermanagh and Tyrone  | 117  | 651  | 768          |
| Londonderry           | 76   | 350  | 426          |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>899</b>   | <b>4,503</b>   | <b>5,402</b> |

### **Convictions for Corporate Manslaughter**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many convictions for corporate manslaughter, or similar offences, have been secured in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3043/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The offence of corporate manslaughter was introduced in 2008 before which the offence of gross negligence manslaughter by a corporation applied. To date there have been no convictions for corporate manslaughter. The offence of corporate manslaughter has specific requirements and when there has been a death at a place of work, prosecution under the provisions of the Health and Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 may be appropriate. Data from the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland shows that in 2007/8 there were five deaths prosecuted under the 1978 Order; seven in 2008/9; eleven in 2009/10; and five in 2010/11.

### **Level of Force that a Householder can use against an Intruder**

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister of Justice to clarify the current legal position with regards to the level of force that a householder can use against an intruder.

(AQW 3046/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** Along with the common law defence of self-defence, Section 3(1) of the Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 provides that a person may use such force as is reasonable in the circumstances in the prevention of crime or in effecting or assisting in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders or of persons unlawfully at large. Section 76 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 clarified the provisions of the 1967 Act and the common law defence of self-defence. Assessing the reasonableness of the level of force for the purposes of self-defence is a matter for the prosecuting authorities and the court.

### **Death of Kevin McDaid: Trial**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Justice what the anticipated timeframe is for the trial of the people charged in connection with the death of Kevin McDaid in Coleraine in May 2009.

(AQW 3123/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The prosecution file for this case is currently being prepared by the Public Prosecution Service for committal proceedings. That will be followed by arraignment in the Crown Court and then the case will be set down for trial.

It is not possible to provide a timeframe for the trial. However, all of the criminal justice agencies and the judiciary are committed to ensuring that cases progress to trial as quickly as possible.

## Released Prisoners

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many prisoners have been released to no fixed abode upon completion of a custodial sentence in each of the last three years, broken by court division.

(AQW 3126/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The information requested is not available.

## Separated Prisoners

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice whether separated prisoners, who are ill, are transferred to the hospital wing if their condition was such that they would be transferred to the hospital wing if they were non-separated prisoners.

(AQW 3268/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** Admission to the healthcare wing within the prison, or transfer to an NHS facility, is directed by clinical need. This assessment and the admission process is the same for all prisoners irrespective of whether separated or non-separated.

## Disturbance at Roe House, Maghaberry Prison

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 2825/11-15, to detail (i) the total cost of the damage caused as a result of this incident; (ii) where the prisoners were held when their cells were rendered unusable, including whether they remained in Roe House Maghaberry Prison as separated prisoners; (iii) what action has been taken to prevent a recurrence of any such behaviour; and (iv) whether the Prisoner Ombudsman has been notified of the damage and what was the response.

(AQW 3269/11-15)

**Mr Ford:**

- (i) The total cost of damage caused as a result of this incident was £8,800.
- (ii) Following the damage caused to their cells each prisoner was removed and relocated to another cell on the ground floor (Roe 4) landing. They remained as separated prisoners.
- (iii) Before the prisoners were relocated the sanitary ware was removed and water supply cut off from the appropriate number of cells on Roe 4 to prevent a recurrence of any such behaviour.
- (iv) The Prisoner Ombudsman was not notified of the damage.

## Tender Specification for the Desertcreat Training College

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister of Justice how he intends to ensure that adequate social clauses are built in to the tender specification for the Desertcreat Training College.

(AQW 3288/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The Desertcreat Training College Project Team will be working closely with Central Procurement Directorate of DFP and the Strategic Investment Board, who are leading on the development of Social Clauses for all public sector contracts in Northern Ireland, to ensure that adequate social clauses are built into the tender specification for the College. These will contain requirements in relation to the provisions for apprenticeships, long term unemployed people and SMEs subject to European Procurement regulations.

## October Monitoring Round

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Justice to detail any financial pressures that have been identified by his Department in the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3316/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** Given the Department of Justice's ringfenced funding status, it did not declare any pressures to the Department of Finance and Personnel as part of the October in-year monitoring round.

The main pressure currently facing the Department this year relates to legal aid funding. The Department plans to fund this, together with any other pressures that emerge in-year, from within the funding currently available.

### **Disturbance at Roe House, Maghaberry Prison**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice to make a statement on the lead-up to the disturbance which occurred at Roe House, Maghaberry Prison on 6 May 2011 and the damage which ensued.

(AQW 3322/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** From early 2011 a number of prisoners in separated republican accommodation in Roe House had indicated that they planned to embark on some type of protest action. Despite the agreement of 12 August 2010, which removed the requirement for routine full body searching within the prison, the protest action is based on prisoners' calls for the further removal of the requirement for full body searching both entering and leaving prison, and for unrestricted movement and numbers on Roe three and four landings.

On 6 May 11 prisoners engaged in protest action and caused damage to their cells. All 11 prisoners damaged the sanitary- ware, cell furniture and spyglasses in their cells.

### **Disturbance at Roe House, Maghaberry Prison**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 2825/11-15 whether he will consider revising the figure given for the number of separated prisoners involved and charged with criminal damage during the disturbance which occurred at Roe House, Maghaberry Prison on 6 May 2011.

(AQW 3325/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The total number of separated prisoners involved in the disturbance on 6 May was in fact 11. One of the prisoners involved was released on bail on 22 May. The remaining ten are currently in Roe House.

### **Gerry McGeough**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice whether Gerry McGeough is a separated prisoner and whether he has signed the required Compact.

(AQW 3326/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** Gerry McGeough is a separated prisoner and has signed the required compact.

### **Gerry McGeough**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the claims made in the press by prisoner Gerry McGeough regarding conditions in Maghaberry Prison and the treatment he has received there after being discharged from hospital.

(AQW 3357/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** Mr McGeough was discharged from an outside hospital back to Maghaberry Prison on 27 September 2011. When a prisoner is discharged from an outside hospital to return to prison custody, the receiving prison will take cognisance of any discharge advice from the hospital, this can include a short stay in a prison health care unit.

Mr McGeough is not on protest and as such is in a clean cell. All other areas of the wing on which Mr McGeough is housed are cleaned daily by industrial cleaners. The prison closely monitors contamination levels within the area and the results of recent tests carried out have not shown cause for concern.

## October Monitoring Round

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Justice to detail any easements that have been identified by his Department in the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3431/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The Department of Justice declared a ringfenced Resource DEL easement of £11m to the Department of Finance and Personnel as part of the October in-year monitoring round.

## Custodial Sentences

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 2052/11-15, in the cases in which an appeal was allowed and the outcome was varied or reversed, how many of the defendants went on to commit an offence within two years of their appeal decision.

(AQW 3437/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The information provided in the answer to AQW2052/11-15 cannot be disaggregated further without incurring disproportionate cost.

## Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 3019/11-15, why a different approach was taken by his Department on tax and National Insurance deduction in the Part-time Reserve Gratuity Scheme than that taken by the Department of Finance and Personnel in the Equal Pay settlement; and for his assessment of how this demonstrates a joined-up Government approach.

(AQW 3466/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The Part-time Reserve Gratuity Scheme was an ex gratia scheme and its terms cannot be compared to the settlement of the equal pay claim against DFP. The tax and national insurance liabilities arising from the gratuity payment were met in line with advice provided by HMRC. A central agreement – whereby tax and national insurance liabilities would be deducted before the quantum of the payment payable to individuals in each band was calculated – would have worked to the advantage of higher-rate tax payers and to the disadvantage of those who pay little or no tax.

The Equal pay settlement is a matter for the Department of Finance and Personnel.

## Complaints Against a Parole Commissioner

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Justice what mechanisms are in place to deal with complaints against a Parole Commissioner that could lead to suspension and dismissal.

(AQW 3509/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** Paragraph (3) (d) of Schedule 4 of the Criminal Justice Order 2008 provides the legislative basis for the dismissal of Parole Commissioners. The process involves consultation with the Lord Chief Justice.

In the event of a complaint that could lead to suspension and dismissal, the matter would be referred to the Lord Chief Justice to be handled in accordance with procedures approved by him.

## Parole Process

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Justice what steps are being taken to remove the automatic right of prisoners to an oral hearing following the Single Parole Commissioner stage of the parole process.

(AQW 3511/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The Department is currently working with the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland (PCNI) and the relevant criminal justice agencies to update the Parole Commissioners' Rules (Northern Ireland) 2009. This includes a review of the right of certain offenders to an automatic oral hearing. With

justice partners, my officials are in the process of refining our proposals. However, before we can bring forward a revised draft of the rules, we must first await a Court of Appeal judgement which will directly address the issue of access to oral hearings. In due course, the draft rules will be subject to the proper Assembly procedures, including consultation with the Justice Committee.

### Separated Republican Prisoners

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice what terms or conditions the separated Republican prisoners are protesting against in refusing to conform to prison rules.

(AQW 3523/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The demands set out in the reply to AQW 2902/11-15 are the basis for protest action by Republican Separated Prisoners. The main issues being contested are full body searching and controlled movement. Prisoners contend that the Prison Service is in breach of the terms of the 12 August 2010 agreement. Refusal to comply with a full body search is a breach of Prison Rule 16. Refusal to comply with controlled movement is a breach of Prison Rule 38 (23) "disobeys or fails to comply with any rule or regulation applying to him".

### Disturbance at Roe House, Maghaberry Prison

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice whether a public statement was issued by his Department or the Prison Service in relation to the incident on 6 May 2011 in which separated Republican prisoners caused extensive damage to Roe House.

(AQW 3529/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The Prison Service does not routinely issue statements on disturbances within its establishments. In relation to the above incident, the Prison Service did respond to a number of media enquiries.

### Conditional Discharge

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many convictions have been dealt with by Conditional Discharge in each of the last five years, broken down by court division.

(AQW 3531/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The table below gives the number of convictions dealt with by conditional discharge, by court division, for the calendar years 2004 to 2008 (the latest year for which figures are currently available).

#### NUMBER OF PEOPLE DISPOSED BY MEANS OF CONDITIONAL DISCHARGE BY COURT DIVISION 2004-2008

| Court division        | Year         |              |              |              |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                       | 2004         | 2005         | 2006         | 2007         | 2008         |
| Antrim                | 115          | 104          | 83           | 106          | 97           |
| Ards                  | 264          | 183          | 99           | 143          | 131          |
| Armagh and South Down | 163          | 150          | 150          | 162          | 174          |
| Belfast               | 548          | 473          | 376          | 427          | 352          |
| Craigavon and Lisburn | 105          | 111          | 99           | 116          | 127          |
| Fermanagh and Tyrone  | 169          | 114          | 126          | 212          | 147          |
| Londonderry           | 205          | 219          | 192          | 212          | 203          |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>1,569</b> | <b>1,354</b> | <b>1,125</b> | <b>1,378</b> | <b>1,231</b> |

Data for 2004 to 2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2008 as the data sets are sourced from different systems. Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

### Department Spend

**Dr McDonnell** asked the Minister of Justice to detail his Department's (i) direct; and (ii) indirect spend in each year since May 2010 in the Belfast City Council area.

(AQW 3539/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The Department of Justice (DOJ) is unable to provide this information in the format requested because it is not recorded in this way on the DOJ finance system.

### Speeding Offences

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) prosecuted; and (ii) convicted of speeding offences in each of the last two years.

(AQW 3755/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** Speeding offences may be prosecuted under Article 7(9) and Article 43 of the Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 and Article 19(a) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.

The table below gives the number convicted by court division for the calendar years 2007 to 2008 (the latest year for which figures are currently available). It is not possible to provide prosecution data for this period.

#### NUMBER OF PEOPLE CONVICTED FOR SPEEDING OFFENCES 2007-2008

| Year        | 2007  | 2008  |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| Convictions | 3,580 | 2,847 |

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

### Annex 1 of the Final Report of the Prison Review Team

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Justice (i) in relation to the figures contained in Annex 1 of the Final Report of the Prison Review Team; and (ii) in the prison population generally, to detail the number of prisoners in each religious background category who were convicted of, or are awaiting trial on, scheduled offences.

(AQW 3812/11-15)

**Mr Ford:**

- (i) The number of prisoners in each religious background category who are convicted of, or are awaiting trial on, scheduled offences, in relation to Annex 1 of the Final report of the Prison Review Team is set out in Tables 1 - 3 below.

**Note:** The figures relating to basic and enhanced privileges level, and the segregation unit, refer to the average percentage of the prisoner population (snapshot taken on the first day of each month). The figures relating to adjudications, use of force and the number of approved leave applications refer to the average number of incidences of adjudication, use of force and approved leave applications (snapshot taken on the first day of each month) and not necessarily to individual prisoners.

**PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS BY RELIGION IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES, JANUARY – JUNE 2011****TABLE 1**

| <b>Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre (excludes adults)</b> |                 |                                 |                   |                                   |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
|   | <b>Catholic</b> | <b>Catholic<br/>(Scheduled)</b> | <b>Protestant</b> | <b>Protestant<br/>(Scheduled)</b> |
| Average % Population  | 56%             | 0                               | 34%               | 0                                 |
| Basic Privileges Level  | 74% (63)        |                                 | 21% (17)          |                                   |
| Enhanced privileges level                                     | 49% (242)       |                                 | 43% (213)         |                                   |
| Adjudications   | 62% (367)       |                                 | 24% (143)         |                                   |
| Use of Force  | 61% (33)        |                                 | 22% (12)          |                                   |
| In Segregation Unit   | 71% (22)        |                                 | 19% (6)           |                                   |
| Approved Leave Applications                                   | 36% (36)        |                                 | 64% (63)          |                                   |

**TABLE 2**

| <b>HMP Maghaberry (excludes Young Adults and Separated Prisoners)</b> |                 |                                 |                   |                                   |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
|   | <b>Catholic</b> | <b>Catholic<br/>(Scheduled)</b> | <b>Protestant</b> | <b>Protestant<br/>(Scheduled)</b> |
| Average % Population  | 54%             | 9                               | 34%               | 17                                |
| Basic Privileges Level  | 66% (101)       | *4                              | 21% (32)          | 0                                 |
| Enhanced privileges level   | 44% (850)       | 5                               | 41% (789)         | 17                                |
| Adjudications   | 67% (407)       | 3                               | 23% (142)         | 4                                 |
| Use of Force  | 68% (133)       | 1                               | 20% (40)          | 0                                 |
| In Segregation Unit   | 64% (54)        | 1                               | 28% (24)          | 3                                 |
| Approved Leave Applications   | 36% (65)        | 2                               | 64% (118)         | 6                                 |

\* figure includes Inmates on Basic or Standard Regime

**TABLE 3**

| <b>Table 3 - HMP Magilligan (excludes Young Adults)</b> |                 |                                 |                   |                                 |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
|   | <b>Catholic</b> | <b>Catholic<br/>(Scheduled)</b> | <b>Protestant</b> | <b>Protestant<br/>Scheduled</b> |
| Average % Population                                    | 56%             | 2                               | 35%               | 2                               |
| Basic Privileges Level                                  | 82% (91)        | 0                               | 16% (18)          | 0                               |
| Enhanced privileges level                               | 52% ( 1008)     | 2                               | 38% (738)         | 2                               |
| Adjudications   | 73% (178)       | 0                               | 21% (52)          | 0                               |
| Use of Force  | 95% (18)        | 0                               | 5% (1)            | 0                               |
| In Segregation Unit                                     | 67% (22)        | 0                               | 27% (9)           | 0                               |
| Approved Leave Applications                             | 58% (425)       | 0                               | 37% (275)         | 0                               |

- (ii) The number of prisoners in each religious background category who are convicted of, or are awaiting trial on, scheduled offences, in relation to the overall prisoner population by establishment is set out in Table 4 below.

**TABLE 4**

| Prisoner Population on 25 October 2011 |                              |            |          |        |   |                      |                          |
|--|------------------------------|------------|----------|--------|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
|  | Number of Inmates in Custody | Protestant | Catholic | Others | Number of Inmates with Scheduled Offences | Protestant Scheduled | Roman Catholic Scheduled |
| Hydebank Wood                          | 280                          | 80         | 153      | 47     | 0   | 0                    | 0                        |
| Maghaberry                             | 988                          | 335        | 507      | 146    | 70  | 27                   | 43                       |
| Magilligan                             | 519                          | 183        | 286      | 50     | 4   | 2                    | 2                        |
| Total                                  | 1787                         | 598        | 946      | 243    | 74  | 29                   | 45                       |

These figures were correct as at 25 October 2011.

## Department for Regional Development

### Dropped Kerb Schemes

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what dropped kerb schemes are planned for the Millisle area for the next two financial years.

(AQW 2997/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development):** I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

### A5 Road Scheme

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any implications for the A5 road scheme following his announcement on funding for the Coleraine to Londonderry railway line.

(AQW 3015/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** Phase one of the Coleraine to Londonderry rail re-lay, which is estimated to cost £27 million in 2012/13, will be financed by pro-actively managing the Department's Budget by re-profiling some planned strategic road schemes. This will provide £22 million of the required funding, with Translink providing the balance.

The choice of road schemes to be re-profiled will need to take account of commitments made by the Irish Government in respect of the A5/A8 schemes, the current state of progress on these and other roads schemes, including the A2 and A6 schemes, risks arising from procurement and critically, the capacity of the construction industry to deliver on the roads programme.

I should advise that with the significant scale of planned investment on the A5 and A8 in 2012/13, if a diminution of the budget profile by up to £22 million were to reflect on these two schemes alone, it would have a limited impact on the commencement dates, and would still facilitate full scale construction starting in 2012/13, albeit a month or two later than previously estimated.

## Airport Passenger Numbers

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an estimate of the change in passenger numbers using (i) Belfast International Airport; (ii) Belfast City Airport; and (iii) Londonderry Airport between 1 April 1998 and 1 April 2011.

(AQW 3016/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** The data in the table below is supplied by the Civil Aviation Authority. Figures are only available by calendar year. The figures for 2011 are not yet available.

### TERMINAL PASSENGER TRAFFIC VIA NI BY AIRPORT: 1998-2010

| Year | Number of terminal passengers |                          |               |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
|      | Belfast International         | George Best Belfast City | City Of Derry |
| 1998 | 2,625,825                     | 1,313,442                | 49,095        |
| 1999 | 3,011,734                     | 1,281,963                | 103,504       |
| 2000 | 3,127,337                     | 1,288,164                | 162,704       |
| 2001 | 3,602,702                     | 1,191,973                | 187,519       |
| 2002 | 3,551,103                     | 1,889,692                | 199,146       |
| 2003 | 3,954,432                     | 1,974,036                | 205,505       |
| 2004 | 4,402,500                     | 2,090,923                | 234,487       |
| 2005 | 4,819,512                     | 2,236,977                | 199,357       |
| 2006 | 5,015,264                     | 2,105,597                | 341,531       |
| 2007 | 5,236,055                     | 2,186,867                | 427,586       |
| 2008 | 5,222,839                     | 2,570,741                | 438,996       |
| 2009 | 4,536,498                     | 2,621,733                | 345,857       |
| 2010 | 4,010,972                     | 2,740,305                | 338,505       |

**Source:** CAA

Note: A terminal passenger is a traveller who boards or disembarks an aircraft on a commercial flight at the reporting Northern Ireland airport. The term therefore excludes transit passengers who remain on board aircraft which land at the airport and then depart for another destination.

## Quay Lane Car Park, Enniskillen

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the ruling by an independent adjudicator in December 2010 that the signage in Quay Lane Car Park, Enniskillen was “confusing and ambiguous” (i) how many parking tickets have been issued at this car park since that ruling; (ii) whether these tickets are enforceable; and (iii) what plans are in place to rectify the problem with the signage and the faded parking bay lines in Quay Lane South Car Park.

(AQW 3029/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department’s Roads Service has advised that the Adjudicator’s ruling to which the Member refers, is dated 9 May 2011 and relates to a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) issued on 16 December 2010 in the car-park at Quay Lane North, Enniskillen.

In the period since the Adjudicator’s ruling, to the end of September 2011, 245 PCNs were issued to vehicles parked in Quay Lane North car-park for various parking contraventions. All PCNs are enforceable unless cancelled as a result of a Challenge, Representation or formal Appeal.

Following the Adjudicator's decision Roads Service provided additional lines in the car-park to identify a non parking area.

Roads Service has no plans to renew the parking bay markings as funding is not currently available for this type of work.

### Budget Plans for Translink

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his budget plans for Translink for each of the next four years.

(AQW 3050/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** The table below sets out the budget plans for Translink for each of the next four years:

|                        | 2011/12        | 2012/13       | 2013/14       | 2014/15       |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Translink Funding      | £k             | £k            | £k            | £k            |
| <b>Revenue Funding</b> |                |               |               |               |
| Rail                   | 33,507         | 32,702        | 33,458        | 29,507        |
| Bus                    | 35,744         | 37,244        | 31,444        | 32,944        |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>   | <b>69,251</b>  | <b>69,946</b> | <b>64,902</b> | <b>62,451</b> |
| <b>Capital Funding</b> |                |               |               |               |
| Rail                   | 92,065         | 18,646        | 11,327        | 30,404        |
| Bus                    | 12,864         | 2,800         | 58            | 1,400         |
| <b>Total Capital</b>   | <b>104,929</b> | <b>21,446</b> | <b>11,385</b> | <b>31,804</b> |
| <b>Total Funding</b>   | <b>174,180</b> | <b>91,392</b> | <b>76,287</b> | <b>94,255</b> |

The figures above have not been adjusted for recent announcements made in respect of Londonderry to Coleraine track re-lay or on street car parking charges in Provincial towns. It is intended to confirm these adjustments when budget mechanisms allow.

### Down Community Transport

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development how much funding Down Community Transport has received from his Department in this financial year; and what is the proposed allocation for each of the next four years.

(AQW 3051/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** Based upon the Business plan submitted by Down Community Transport for the financial year 2011/2012, my Department, through the auspices of the Rural Transport Fund, has awarded funding to this organisation of £395,619. Allocations for the next four years cannot be determined until Business plans from Down Community Transport to cover that period are received and agreed.

### Londonderry to Coleraine Railway Line

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an estimate of the annual number of passengers who will use the Londonderry to Coleraine railway line after the upgrade work is completed.

(AQW 3124/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** Translink advise that whilst it is difficult to be precise in making forward passenger projections, they estimate that with the increase in train frequencies and journey time improvements,

they would anticipate future growth at up to 10% per annum over the coming years on the Coleraine to Londonderry line.

The number of passengers using the line for the 2010/11 year was 292,488.

## NI Water

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans NI Water has to deal with potential severe winter weather in North Down.

(AQW 3132/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that its Major Incident Plan has been revised following lessons learned from last winter and it is now better prepared to handle the effects of severe weather conditions. A substantial amount of work has been undertaken which focused on communication, contingency planning, supply failures and governance. The Major Incident Plan aims to provide a fully planned response to all types of emergency and includes a range of contingency plans for specific types of events including severe weather conditions.

The Utility Regulator's report into NIW's handling of the 2010/11 freeze/thaw concluded that 80% of the additional water demand caused by the severe weather conditions leaked from private domestic and business water pipes. To raise public awareness of the need to protect water supply pipes, NIW has commenced an extensive winter awareness campaign using a wide range of media outlets. The key message is 'Don't Wait, Insulate' and the campaign will include a leaflet drop to properties throughout North Down and across Northern Ireland. The campaign has also promoted the 'lag and tag' message to ensure customers are aware of the location of their stop valve in the event of a burst pipe.

NIW has also enhanced its plans for the provision of alternative drinking water supplies in the event of severe weather conditions. Alternative water supply locations have been identified for distribution of drinking water to customers using static water tanks, wheel mounted towable bowsers, tankers, standpipes or bottled water.

## Shuttle Bus Service Between Belfast and the University of Ulster, Jordanstown

**Mr McElduff** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of students who travel from Belfast to the University of Ulster, Jordanstown on a daily basis by public transport; (ii) the cost of a return ticket; and (iii) the cost to Translink of providing a free shuttle service on this route.

(AQW 3134/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** It is not possible to detail of the number of students who travel on public transport from Belfast to the University of Ulster, Jordanstown. The Translink bus ticketing system does not identify passengers who are students and passenger data is not available for those students who travel with other operators.

The cost of a day return ticket from Belfast to University of Ulster, Jordanstown using the Ulsterbus UniLink from Botanic Avenue to Jordanstown or using the rail service from Botanic to Jordanstown (student rate) is £3.60. Passengers using the Metro 2G bus service are charged £2 for a single journey.

I have insufficient data on which to make a meaningful estimate of the cost of a free shuttle service.

## Coleraine to Londonderry Railway Line

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the current journey time on a train from Coleraine to Londonderry; and what is the expected journey time after the completion of phase 1 of the relay in April 2013.

(AQW 3137/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** Translink advise that present rail journey times between Coleraine and Londonderry range from 45-50 minutes. Time variations arise because of different train stopping/train passing patterns

during the day. They anticipate that journey times will reduce by 4 to 5 minutes in each direction following the completion of Phase 1 of the planned re-lay work.

It must be noted that without Phase 1 of the re-lay project additional speed restrictions would have increased journey times by at least 3 to 5 minutes.

### **Brookeborough Roads Service Depot**

**Mr Lynch** asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) to outline the financial rationale for moving the Brookeborough Roads Service Depot to Fivemiletown; (ii) whether a feasibility study was carried out to assess the cost implications of the move; and (iii) if a study was undertaken, if he will provide a copy of the study.

(AQW 3157/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** I can advise the Member that my Department's Roads Service continually reviews its operations with the objective of ensuring that they are both effective and efficient. Faced with the challenge of delivering its services within the limitations of the Executive's Budget 2010 settlement, it reviewed all of its costs, with a view to identifying potential efficiencies. One of the options identified where potential efficiencies could be achieved was through a rationalisation of its depot structure. A subsequent review confirmed that efficiencies could be achieved by closing a number of depots, including Brookeborough depot, which is due to close in December 2011. The services currently delivered from Brookeborough depot will continue to be delivered from the Roads Service depot at Fivemiletown, where the staff will be relocated.

Roads Service carried out a review of Brookeborough depot, which considered the operational and economic implications of retaining the existing depot, relocating to Silverhill depot in Enniskillen and relocating to Fivemiletown depot. I have asked Roads Service to provide the Member with a copy of this review.

### **Weed Problems in the Spencer Street Area of Holywood**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to address the weed problems in the Spencer Street area of Holywood.

(AQW 3188/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that the weed growth in the Spencer Street area of Holywood was identified during a recent inspection. Work is currently underway to remove the weeds and should be completed before the end of October 2011.

### **Sewerage Infrastructure Problems in the Millisle Area**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to address the sewerage infrastructure problems in the Millisle area.

(AQW 3189/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it is planning a capital investment of £2.2 million to upgrade the Millisle sewerage system to meet EU Bathing Water Standards and to reduce the risk of property flooding.

The upgrading work is being undertaken in two phases. The first phase of construction has already commenced in the Moss Road area of Millisle and is due to be completed in early 2012. This will reduce spills to the beach and flooding risks on Main Street/Donaghadee Road. The second phase involves the provision of a new sewage pumping station (planned to be located in the Ballycopeland Presbyterian church car park) a new 300 metre long sea outfall to be laid under the beach and associated land based pipelines. This will reduce the risk of out-of-sewer flooding at Shore Road.

NIW is currently in consultation with representatives of Ballycopeland Presbyterian church regarding site acquisition and will consult with local residents prior to seeking formal planning permission.

NIW expects construction to commence during 2012, subject to successful site acquisition and the satisfactory completion of all statutory approvals.

In the interim, NIW will continue to maintain the existing pumping station and associated infrastructure in order to minimise the risk of out-of-sewer flooding.

### **Footpaths in the Ashfield Area of Donaghadee**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to repair the footpaths in the Ashfield area of Donaghadee.

(AQW 3190/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 61/11-15 and can confirm that the position remains unchanged.

### **Road Markings in the North Down Area**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of refreshing road markings in the North Down area in the last financial year.

(AQW 3191/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that the total cost of refreshing road markings in the North Down area for the financial year 2010/11 was approximately £22,000.

### **Footpaths**

**Mr Dickson** asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to ensure that footpaths are free from obstructions to people who are visually impaired.

(AQW 3221/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service is highly cognisant of the need to ensure the safety of visually impaired members of the public who use footpaths. The Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 empowers the Department to take action to remove obstructions.

Roads Service will intervene and consider the removal of obstacles from footpaths usually in circumstances where a complaint is made by a member of the public. It will request the removal of any obstacles which are considered to compromise the safety of members of the public using the footpath, and in doing so, is particularly mindful of the risks posed to those who may be visually impaired.

### **Audio-Visual Information Systems to Buses**

**Mr Dickson** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department will support the extension of audio-visual information systems to buses.

(AQW 3222/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department, in partnership with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and Translink, is currently running a three-month audio visual pilot on bus services on the 5A Metro route in east Belfast. The pilot project is intended to assess the benefits of audio visual systems for all passengers and in particular for those with visual impairments, hearing impairments and older people. A full evaluation of the pilot project will be carried out by the Department. Future decisions about the extension of audio visual information systems will be taken in light of the evaluation and the resources available at the time.

## Public Transport

**Mr Dickson** asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to improve the public perception of, and attitude towards, the use of public transport.

(AQW 3223/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Travelwise Northern Ireland initiative is seeking to promote, and raise the awareness levels of the general public, towards more sustainable transport options including cycling, walking, greater use of public transport. This includes car sharing and park and ride facilities, in order to encourage a change in public attitudes away from the private car as the main mode of travel in Northern Ireland.

In addition my Department established an Active Travel Forum during March 2010 with the principal aim of drawing up a high level strategy for active travel, setting out the framework to help people choose more sustainable and active transport modes, including walking and cycling for shorter everyday journeys and linked to public transport for longer trips. The draft Active Travel strategy, is currently being finalised and will set out the strategic context and vision, as well as proposals for future programme and partnership delivery mechanisms.

Information about the range of Travelwise initiatives can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/travelwiseni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/travelwiseni).

In consultation with key stakeholders, my Department is also taking steps to implement the Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This legislation enables contracts be awarded and introduces a new system of regulation for public transport services, helping to ensure that decisions on services are taken in the public interest.

In recognition of the importance of Park and Ride in promoting sustainable transport, and with the aim of developing proposals which would offer the best prospect of maximising modal shift away from the private car to public transport, my Department recently published a Strategic review of Park and Ride including the provision of quality bus corridors. The Review sets out a number of conclusions and recommendations, and identifies those Park and Ride sites which the Department will aim to prioritise as available funding permits.

In the most recent Passengers Charter monitor (spring 2011), Translink met or exceeded all reliability and punctuality targets for both bus and rail. In addition, customer satisfaction also remains at very high levels.

Translink recently announced there will be no fares increase in 2011 across bus and rail services. Fares being frozen combined with a high quality bus and rail service means that there has never been a better time to switch to public transport.

Reflecting the depth of commitment to continue to invest in improving public transport, the table below sets out the budget plans for Translink for each of the next four years:

|                        | 2011/12       | 2012/13       | 2013/14       | 2014/15       |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Translink Funding      | £k            | £k            | £k            | £k            |
| <b>Revenue Funding</b> |               |               |               |               |
| Rail                   | 33,507        | 32,702        | 33,458        | 29,507        |
| Bus                    | 35,744        | 37,244        | 31,444        | 32,944        |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>   | <b>69,251</b> | <b>69,946</b> | <b>64,902</b> | <b>62,451</b> |
| <b>Capital Funding</b> |               |               |               |               |
| Rail                   | 92,065        | 18,646        | 11,327        | 30,404        |
| Bus                    | 12,864        | 2,800         | 58            | 1,400         |

|                      | 2011/12        | 2012/13       | 2013/14       | 2014/15       |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Translink Funding    | £k             | £k            | £k            | £k            |
| <b>Total Capital</b> | <b>104,929</b> | <b>21,446</b> | <b>11,385</b> | <b>31,804</b> |
| <b>Total Funding</b> | <b>174,180</b> | <b>91,392</b> | <b>76,287</b> | <b>94,255</b> |

The figures above have not been adjusted for recent announcements made in respect of Londonderry to Coleraine track relay or on street car parking charges in Provincial towns. It is intended to confirm these adjustments when budget mechanisms allow.

### **Illegally Selling Cars on a Public Footpath or Road**

**Mr Craig** asked the Minister for Regional Development how many (i) companies; and (ii) individuals have been cautioned or fined for illegally selling cars on a public footpath or road in each of the last three years.

(AQW 3236/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not record details of the number of companies and individuals that have been cautioned or fined for illegally selling cars on a public footpath or road.

However, Roads Service would contact car sellers on an informal basis and advise of the restrictions on offering vehicles for sale, as covered by the Roads Order (NI). Such approaches are generally successful and it has not been necessary to divert any resources in pursuit of prosecution action.

### **Translink: New Rolling Stock**

**Mr Craig** asked the Minister for Regional Development when Translink will begin using the new rolling stock on the rail network; and to detail the new trains' maximum speed.

(AQW 3244/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** Translink advise that the first three of the new trains entered into passenger service on 29 September 2011 on the Larne line. The next 2 units are due to be introduced during November 2011. It is anticipated that all units will be in service during 2012.

The maximum speed of the Class 4000 rolling stock is 90 mph.

### **Proposed Road Safety Measures for the Cotton Area of North Down**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed road safety measures for the Cotton area of North Down.

(AQW 3257/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it currently has no proposals to introduce road safety measures at this location. However, it is currently undertaking an assessment of a scheme to improve junction visibility at the A48 Newtownards Road/Bailie Terrace junction, in the Cotton area.

The results of this assessment will determine whether the scheme is included in a future programme of improvement works for the Ards Borough Council Area.

I have asked my officials to contact you directly when the outcome of the assessment is known.

## Traffic Calming Measures

**Mr Girvan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what traffic calming measures are planned for the (i) Newtownabbey Borough Council area; and (ii) Antrim Borough Council area in each of the next three years.

(AQW 3280/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** I can advise the Member that information on 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 also advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

## Footpath Resurfacing Schemes

**Mr Girvan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what footpath resurfacing schemes are planned for the (i) Newtownabbey Borough Council area; and (ii) Antrim Borough Council area in each of the next three years.

(AQW 3281/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 3280/11-15.

## Grit Boxes

**Mr Girvan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to increase the number of grit boxes in the (i) Newtownabbey Borough Council area; and (ii) Antrim Borough Council area in preparation for this winter.

(AQW 3282/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it already maintains a large number of grit boxes and grit piles at various locations in both the Newtownabbey and Antrim Borough Council Areas. The table below lists the locations at which new grit boxes are to be provided in the near future:

| Provision of New Grit Boxes |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Council Area                | Location                     |
| Newtownabbey                | Knockane Way, Cloughfern     |
|                             | Sharonmore Avenue, Ballyduff |
| Antrim                      | Dunadry Road, Antrim         |

Roads Service commits significant resources to maintaining, and regularly replenishing, approximately 4,200 grit boxes and over 39,000 grit piles provided on public roads. All requests from the public are assessed against the criteria set out in its Winter Service Policy and Procedure Guide. Salt boxes are provided at those locations that meet the criteria. However, new grit boxes will not be provided unless requested by a member of the public, who also agrees to spread the salt provided.

## Road Lighting Schemes

**Mr Girvan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what road lighting schemes are planned for the (i) Newtownabbey Borough Council area; and (ii) Antrim Borough Council area in each of the next four years, broken down by ward.

(AQW 3283/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 3280/11-15.

## October Monitoring Round

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any financial pressures that have been identified by his Department in the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3315/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** The October Monitoring Round was discussed and agreed at the Executive meeting on 20 October and presented to the Assembly on 24 October.

The Statement to the Assembly on the outcome of the October Monitoring Round can be found on the DFP website. The published Statement includes a table (Table D) which provides details of bids to meet financial pressures for DRD and all other NI Departments.

The Statement can be found using the link below:

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/2011-12-october-monitoring-round-statement.pdf>

## Arm's-Length Bodies

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has (a) carried out any value for money audits on its arm's-length bodies; and (b) identified any savings that could be made by these bodies.

(AQW 3333/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department has two arm's-length bodies: Northern Ireland Water (NIW) and Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC), parent company of Northern Ireland Railways, Ulsterbus and Citybus (trading as Metro) which operate under the brand name of Translink.

### NIW

Under the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 NI Water (NIW) is regulated by the Utility Regulator. The Regulator's responsibilities include promoting the economy and efficiency of NIW. The Regulator sets targets for NIW as part of its Price Control process. The current Price Control ("PC10"), which covers the period 2010 – 13, set challenging efficiency targets for NIW. The Regulator's PC10 Final Determination (published February 2010) highlighted cumulative savings on operational expenditure of £65m to be delivered over the PC10 period. The company's PC Monitoring Plan states NIW's aim to reduce annual operational expenditure from £198m to £176m over the PC10 period. NIW is on track to meet these challenging efficiency targets which are well above those faced generally across the public sector.

### NITHC

In November 2010 the Department completed a review of the Outline Business Case for Public Transport Reform, which included a review of cost efficiency and cost effectiveness of the three Translink companies - Ulsterbus, Metro and Northern Ireland Railways. The review identified the savings which had been achieved over the previous two years and estimated the scope for further savings, taking account of various factors that are unique to the public transport sector in Northern Ireland. A copy of the review is available on the Department's web site via the link below.

Public Transport Reform Outline Business Case | My Department is also participating in the arm's-length body review being conducted centrally by the Budget Review Group to establish the scope for abolition, merger or absorption into departmental structures of each body. The Budget Review Group is expected to convey its recommendations to the Executive in due course.

### Car Parking in Housing Estates

**Mr Irwin** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 1295/10, to provide an update on the review of the policy for providing car parking in housing estates; and to detail how his Department plans to address the lack of car parking spaces in older housing estates.

(AQW 3336/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's policy, 'Car Parking Facilities in Existing Social Housing Estates', was issued in February 2011. This policy sets out how my Department's Roads Service will consider requests for parking facilities in older social housing estates, where provision for car parking does not comply with current standards.

While it is not my Department's policy to provide parking for amenity reasons, or to address the lack of car parking in older housing estates, it is recognised that, in some circumstances, a facility may be needed where there are traffic progression or road safety concerns. The main aspect of the policy, issued earlier this year, addresses traffic progression issues.

### October Monitoring Round

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any easements that have been identified by his Department in the October Monitoring Round.

(AQW 3359/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** The October Monitoring Round was discussed and agreed at the Executive meeting on 20 October and presented to the Assembly on 24 October.

The Statement to the Assembly on the outcome of the October Monitoring round can be found on the DFP website. The published Statement includes tables (Tables A and G) detailing the easements (Reduced Requirements) that have been identified by my Department and all other NI Departments.

The Statement can be found using the link below:

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/2011-12-october-monitoring-round-statement.pdf>

### Daily Traffic Levels

**Mr Beggs** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the latest available daily traffic levels on (i) the A8 between Larne and Ballyclare; (ii) the A8 between Ballynure and Bruslee; and (iii) the A57 between Ballynure and Ballyclare.

(AQW 3367/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service collects data from automatic traffic counting sites located throughout the Northern Ireland and details of the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) traffic flow information, recorded at various locations on the A8, are provided in the table below.

Unfortunately, information is not available for the A57, between Ballynure and Ballyclare. However, I have included details for the A57 near Templepatrick.

| Road | Census Point No | Location                          | AADT (7 day) | Year |
|------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|------|
| A8   | 135             | Larne – Ballynure, at Craiginorne | 13,506       | 2011 |
| A8   | 120             | Larne – Ballynure, at Drumnahoe   | 18,612       | 2009 |

| Road | Census Point No | Location                                | AADT (7 day) | Year |
|------|-----------------|---|--------------|------|
| A8   | 233             | Belfast Road, North of Coleman's Corner | 10,719       | 2009 |
| A57  | 148             | Ballyclare Road, Templepatrick          | 13,292       | 2010 |

### Vehicles Entering Armagh City

**Mr Irwin** asked the Minister for Regional Development, based on the most recent traffic count results, to detail the number of vehicles entering Armagh City from the (i) A29 Moy Road; (ii) A3 Portadown Road; (iii) A3 Monaghan Road; (iv) A28 Newry Road; (v) A28 Killylea Road; (vi) A29 Keady Road; and (vii) A51 Hamiltonsbawn Road.

(AQW 3388/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it collects data from approximately 300 automatic traffic counting sites located throughout the Northern Ireland road network.

Unfortunately, there are no figures available for the A51 Hamiltonsbawn Road and only temporary count data available on the A28 Killylea Road. However, details of the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), traffic flow information, recorded at the other locations requested are provided in the table below:

| Road | Location                           | Direction (AADT 7 Day) | Direction (AADT 7 Day) | 2 Way (AADT) | Year |
|------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------|
| A29  | Armagh Road, Armagh                | To Moy<br>5,169        | To Armagh<br>5,230     | 10,399       | 2011 |
| A3   | Portadown – Armagh, at Stonebridge | To Armagh<br>5,787     | To Portadown<br>6,023  | 11,810       | 2011 |
| A3   | Armagh – Middleton, at Milford     | To Armagh<br>3,091     | To Border<br>3,052     | 6,143        | 2011 |
| A28  | Armagh – Newry, at Markethill      | To Newry<br>4,807      | To Armagh<br>4,662     | 9,469        | 2011 |
| A28  | Killylea Rd @ St Light 0524        | To Armagh<br>3,392     | From Armagh<br>2,295   | 5,687        | 2007 |
| A29  | Armagh - Keady                     | To Armagh<br>2,732     | To Keady<br>2,712      | 5,444        | 2011 |

### Clean-Up of his Department's Property

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place to carry out a clean-up of his Department's property, such as road signs, poles and kerb-stones, which have been defaced with sectarian flags, paint and messages advocating support of terror groups.

(AQW 3396/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service does not approve or support the unauthorised use of the Department's property for any purpose. However, the Member will appreciate that the removal of sectarian motivated signs and emblems is an issue that needs to be handled sensitively as it has the potential to create tension within local communities and consideration must also be given to the risk of escalating the problem. In addition, Roads Service must have due regard to the safety of its staff that are involved in removing/treating such items.

When Roads Service becomes aware of such signs or emblems on its property, it will assess the situation to determine if action can be taken, either directly or in support of others. This often involves working with elected and local community representatives and the PSNI.

Roads Service gives priority to situations that are considered to present a road safety hazard, for example, signs or painting on the face of road signs, etc.

### Salt or Grit Boxes

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of salt or grit boxes sited in the (a) Coleraine Borough Council area; and (b) Limavady Borough Council area in 2010; (ii) the number of boxes that have gone missing from these areas; and (iii) the number that will be sited in these areas for the 2011 winter period.

(AQW 3398/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** Details of the number of salt boxes sited in the Coleraine and Limavady Borough Council areas in 2010 and 2011 and the number of boxes that have gone missing in those areas, are set out in the table below:-

|                                    | Limavady | Coleraine |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Salt Boxes sited in 2010           | 178      | 250       |
| Salt Boxes sited in 2011           | 185      | 256       |
| No of Boxes that have gone missing | Nil      | 2         |

### Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

**Mr Cree** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average cost to his Department of answering (i) an Oral Assembly Question; and (ii) a Written Assembly Question during this mandate compared to two years ago.

(AQW 3446/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** The Department for Regional Development does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and comparative information between mandates is therefore not available.

### Resident's Parking Scheme for Derry City

**Mr McCartney** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the resident's parking scheme for Derry City.

(AQW 3488/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that a local consultation exercise has been successfully completed on proposals for a scheme in the Bogside area of Londonderry and details are being finalised in preparation for the necessary legislative procedures.

### Equality Schemes

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost to his Department of equality schemes since the publication of 'Reviewing the Effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998' by the Equality Commission in May 2007.

(AQW 3505/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** Equality Schemes have been in place in the Department for Regional Development since 2001. Implementation of the Department's commitments under the first scheme and the latest scheme, which was approved in August 2011, has been mainstreamed and forms part of the policy

development process. The equality duties are an intrinsic part of staff responsibilities and, as such, costs could not be readily quantified.

### **Travel Ticket for People with Disabilities**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he is aware of any plans by Translink to introduce a travel ticket for people with disabilities.

(AQW 3658/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy:** Translink has advised that it has no plans to introduce a commercially discounted fare or any travel ticket solely for people with disabilities. My Department's Concessionary Fares Scheme offers a half fare discount to specified categories of people with disabilities and provides free travel for those who are registered blind on public transport. Under the Scheme both able bodied and disabled people can travel for free when they reach 60.

## Department for Social Development

### **Pension Credit Branch**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development how many staff from Social Security Offices in the North West Region have applied for posts in the new Pension Credit Branch in Londonderry.

(AQW 3140/11-15)

**Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development):** The Social Security Agency's State Pension Branch is relocating from Belfast to Londonderry. As part of that process staff across the Social Security Agency were invited to express an interest in posts which may be available as a result of the relocation.

37 staff from Social Security Agency offices in the North and West regions applied for posts through this exercise.

### **Pension Credit Branch**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how his Department intends to fill any staffing gaps in the new Pension Credit Branch if current staff opt not to remain in the Branch when it transfers to Londonderry; and (ii) whether staff who opt not to transfer will be offered Social Security Office positions in the Greater Belfast area.

(AQW 3141/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** The human resources aspects of the re-location of the Social Security Agency's State Pension Branch to Londonderry are being managed under a business-driven Recruitment, Training and Redeployment Strategy. A key requirement of the Strategy is the need to ensure that the services provided to customers are maintained throughout the relocation exercise and that Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) policies on staff redeployment and vacancy management are complied with.

The Strategy provides that staff required for the relocated function will be identified from a range of sources, including those staff currently in post and who wish to move with their post; Departmental staff who have been identified for redeployment; and NICS staff placed on priority pools for redeployment, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) work adjustments and Welfare transfers. In addition, in order to secure the degree of experience necessary to allow the maintenance of service levels, and to reflect the fact that this exercise is essentially about the relocation of existing posts, staff across the Department with relevant experience have been invited to express an interest in the vacancies available. Where vacancies remain after these stages, expressions of interest will be invited from staff across the wider NICS.

The redeployment of those staff who choose not to move with their current posts will be managed in accordance with the Department's Redeployment Strategy which is in line with the NICS redeployment policy and has been subject to discussion and agreement with Trade Union side (Northern Ireland

Public Service Alliance). This will include the redeployment of staff to posts elsewhere in the Social Security Agency, the wider Department for Social Development or, if necessary, the wider NICS.

### Pension Credit Branch

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many staff in the Pension Credit Branch have opted (a) to relocate to the new Branch; and (b) not to relocate to the new Branch in Londonderry. (AQW 3142/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** Five members of staff have opted to move with their current posts when the Department's State Pensions Branch is relocated from Belfast to Londonderry. The remainder of the staff currently in State Pensions Branch, 125 people across 91 whole-time-equivalent posts, have decided not to relocate.

The Department's State Pension Credit Branch is already in Londonderry and staff are unaffected by the relocation exercise.

### Housing Stress

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Social Development what percentage of housing applicants are in Housing Stress aged (i) up to 35; (ii) between 35-55; and (iii) over 55.

(AQW 3284/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available as the Housing Executive does not hold the information in the format requested. However, the table below gives a percentage breakdown of the Waiting List by grouped household compositions at 30 June 2011, which is the latest information available. At that date, 39,993 applicants were on the waiting list of whom 21,123 were deemed to be in housing stress.

| <b>Elderly</b> | <b>Large Adults Household</b> | <b>Large Families</b> | <b>Single</b> | <b>Small Adult Families</b> | <b>Small Families</b> |
|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 9.1%           | 0.7%                          | 2.5%                  | 24.0%         | 2.3%                        | 14.2%                 |

| <b>Definition of Household Groups: -</b> |  |
|--|--|
| Elderly                                  | 1 or 2 persons aged 16 or over and one or both of whom are 60 or over  |
| Large Adults Households                  | 3 or more persons aged 16 or over with or without 1 persons aged 0-15 yrs  |
| Large Families                           | 1 or 2 persons aged 16 or over and 3 or more person aged 0-15, or 3 or more persons 16 or over and 2 or more persons aged 0-15 yrs |
| Single                                   | A Person aged 16-59 years  |
| Small Adult Families                     | 2 Persons aged 16-59 years   |
| Small Families                           | 1 or 2 person aged 16 or over and 1 or 2 persons aged 0-15 years   |

### Vacant Houses

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses are currently vacant.

(AQW 3320/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** I assume the Member is referring to the number of social houses currently vacant. The Housing Executive has 2,182 properties vacant as at 19 October 2011. At the 25 September

2011 there were 911 vacant Housing Association properties. These are the most up to date figures available.

### Winter Fuel Payment

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister for Social Development to provide an estimate of how much it would cost to extend the Winter Fuel Payment to people suffering from cancer, in each year of the current Comprehensive Spending Review period.

(AQW 3356/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** There are no medical conditions of entitlement attached to Winter Fuel Payments currently. They are paid to persons of pension age in certain circumstances. There are two rates; £300 to households containing a person aged 80 or over and £200 to households with a person of pension age. The Department does not hold information on the number of persons suffering from cancer and not all of sufferers would be claiming a Social Security Benefit. It would therefore not be possible to cost the extension of the Winter Fuel Payment at this time.

### Loughview Estate, Holywood

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many new build houses have been proposed for the Loughview Estate, Holywood.

(AQW 3391/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** The Economic Appraisal undertaken to support the demolition of the West Green flats in the Loughview Estate, Holywood, estimated that up to 55 new units could be put back in a new scheme.

The Housing Executive are currently appointing a Housing Association to take this work forward and until they are in a position to submit a formal planning application the exact number of new homes that could be delivered will remain an estimate that is subject to planning.

### Housing Executive Staff

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many staff currently work for the Housing Executive.

(AQW 3392/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive currently employs 3,135 staff. This includes both permanent and temporary staff.

### Housing Associations: Funding

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of funding his Department has allocated to housing associations in each of the last three years.

(AQW 3393/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** The table below shows the funding the Department has allocated to Housing Associations including the Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association (NICHA) in each of the last three years.

| 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|---------|---------|---------|
| £143.5m | £172.3m | £184.8m |

## Equality Schemes

**Mr Nesbitt** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost to his Department of equality schemes since the publication of 'Reviewing the Effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998' by the Equality Commission in May 2007.

(AQW 3430/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** Equality Schemes require the mainstreaming of Section 75 obligations into the policy making process. The costs of implementing such schemes cannot therefore be readily disaggregated from the overall cost of my Department's work.

## Jobseekers Allowance

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development how many females in the North Down area have (i) applied for; and (ii) received Jobseekers Allowance in each of the last 6 months.

(AQW 3455/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** The Department does not hold information in the form requested. Information is held only on the number of successful claims to Jobseekers Allowance.

The table below shows the number of females in the North Down Westminster Parliamentary Constituency whose claims to Jobseekers Allowance started in the 6 months between 1 March 2011 and 31 August 2011 following a successful application.

| Month         | Mar 11 | Apr 11 | May 11 | Jun 11 | Jul 11 | Aug 11 |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| New claimants | 100    | 72     | 101    | 128    | 159    | 122    |

The table below shows the total number of females in the North Down Westminster Parliamentary Constituency claiming Jobseekers Allowance in each of the 6 months March 2011 to August 2011.

| Date                  | Mar 11 | Apr 11 | May 11 | Jun 11 | Jul 11 | Aug 11 |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Female claimant count | 568    | 567    | 557    | 579    | 645    | 683    |

## Jobseekers Allowance

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development how many males in the North Down area have (i) applied for; and (ii) received Jobseekers Allowance in each of the last 6 months.

(AQW 3456/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** The Department does not hold information in the form requested. Information is only held on the number of successful claims to Jobseekers Allowance.

The table below shows the number of males in the North Down Westminster Parliamentary Constituency whose claims to Jobseekers Allowance started in the 6 months between 1 March 2011 and 31 August 2011 following a successful application.

| Month         | Mar 11 | Apr 11 | May 11 | Jun 11 | Jul 11 | Aug 11 |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| New claimants | 203    | 145    | 208    | 223    | 186    | 217    |

The table below shows the total number of males in the North Down Westminster Parliamentary Constituency claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in each of the 6 months March 2011 to August 2011.

| Date                | Mar 11 | Apr 11 | May 11 | Jun 11 | Jul 11 | Aug 11 |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Male claimant count | 1,461  | 1,432  | 1,402  | 1,396  | 1,423  | 1,455  |

## Mortgage Relief Scheme

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of uptake of the Mortgage Relief Scheme to date.

(AQW 3483/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** From 1 April 2011 to 30 September 2011 603 homeowners in mortgage difficulties have contacted the Mortgage Debt Advice Service. This help directly prevented 131 clients from becoming homeless. Appropriate debt advice and support enables people to remain in homeownership and retain financial independence during a difficult time, preventing further pressures on an already strained public purse. Anyone who may think they are in danger of losing their home, due to debt secured on it, should take immediate action and contact their lender to discuss their position and also seek independent advice, such as that offered by the Mortgage Debt Advice Service.

My Department also funds a wide range of advice networks, the Law Centre, Advice Northern Ireland and Citizens Advice Bureau, thereby helping people in debt.

## Funding for Community Groups

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total number of community groups funded by his Department.

(AQW 3484/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** In 2010/11 DSD provided funding to just over 1,700 voluntary and community groups. This figure includes some 1,256 grants to groups funded through the Council led Community Support Programme, a jointly funded programme delivered by the 26 District Councils in partnership with the Department for Social Development and an additional 447 grants to groups funded directly by the Department.

## Department Spend

**Dr McDonnell** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail his Department's (i) direct; and (ii) indirect spend in each of the last ten years in the Belfast City Council area.

(AQW 3500/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** Unfortunately my Department is unable to answer this question. Information is not delineated by Council Area and thus could only be provided through an extensive and time-consuming examination of both manual and computer records, which would incur disproportionate cost.

## Cost of Answering Assembly Questions

**Mr Cree** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the average cost to his Department of answering (i) an Oral Assembly Question; and (ii) a Written Assembly Question during this mandate compared to two years ago.

(AQW 3550/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** The Department for Social Development does not routinely estimate the cost of answering Assembly Questions and comparative information between mandates is therefore not available.

## Incapacity Benefit and Employment and Support Allowance

**Mr Molloy** asked the Minister for Social Development, of the people who have migrated from Incapacity Benefit to Employment and Support Allowance in the last 12 months, how many have (i) been made exempt from the Work Capability Assessment; (ii) failed the Work Capability Assessment; (iii) been placed in the Work Activity Group; and (v) been placed in the Support Group.

(AQW 3557/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** Approximately 76,000 Incapacity Benefit customers will have to undertake a work capability assessment over the 3 year period to March 2014. A further 9967<sup>1</sup> Incapacity Benefit customers, who are due to reach State Pension Age before 30 September 2014, are exempt from the reassessment process.

The other information you requested is set out in the table below:

|   | <b>Number of customers</b> |
|---|----------------------------|
| Failed the Work Capability Assessment     | 438 <sup>2</sup>           |
| Placed in the Work Related Activity Group | 668 <sup>3</sup>           |
| Placed in the Support Group               | 534 <sup>3</sup>           |

1. Sourced from Incapacity Benefit MIDAS scan September 2011. Please note this figure may differ from forthcoming published National Statistics.
2. Sourced from the Business Objects data as at 30 September 2011.
3. Sourced from the Jobseekers Allowance Payment System data as at 30 September 2011.

## **Fuel Poverty**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Social Development what advice his Department is providing for people in fuel poverty.

(AQW 3595/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** Every person who contacts the Warm Homes Scheme free phone number 0800 9880559, whether eligible for assistance from the scheme or not, receives energy efficiency advice and is offered a Benefits Entitlement Check. This gives householders practical information about actions that can be taken to reduce energy consumption and save on fuel bills. The Benefits Entitlement Check may find that the householder is entitled a benefit which would qualify them for assistance from Warm Homes.

In addition, as part of its 2011/2012 Benefit Uptake Programme, the Social Security Agency is writing to 25,000 existing customers who may have additional benefit entitlement, to offer them a full and confidential assessment. This assessment provided by the Independent Advice Sector partner, Advice NI, will explore potential entitlement to all social security benefits.

The Agency's Outreach to Older People Campaign promotes a Freephone Benefits Advice Line. Anyone who contacts the number will receive a full benefits assessment which includes information on Warm Homes.

A province-wide advertising campaign using television, radio, press and outdoor locations, will run from mid November 2011 through to March 2012. The aim of the campaign is to encourage all older people across Northern Ireland to check if there is additional benefit to which they may be entitled.

The Social Security Agency is also working with community and voluntary sector partners in order to test new ways of reaching those harder to engage who could have additional benefit entitlement. The Agency will announce the projects to be funded through the Innovation Fund for Increasing Benefit Uptake on 1 November 2011.

## **Boiler Replacement Scheme and Warm Homes Scheme**

**Mr McLaughlin** asked the Minister for Social Development what help is available for pensioners who receive housing benefit and are therefore excluded from the Boiler Replacement Scheme and the Warm Homes Scheme.

(AQW 3698/11-15)

**Mr McCausland:** Housing Benefit is, and always has been, a qualifying benefit for the Warm Homes Scheme. A person in receipt of Housing Benefit can apply for insulation and/or heating measures from the Warm Homes Scheme.

Any private sector householder, aged 60 years or over, in receipt of Rate Relief or over 70 and in receipt of Lone Pensioner Allowance but not Housing Benefit and with an existing boiler that is 15 years old or more can apply for the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme.

## Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

### Pension Arrangements for MLAs and Ministers

**Mr Campbell** asked the Assembly Commission to detail any difference in the pension arrangements for MLAs and Ministers depending on their individual arrangements for how their salary is paid.

(AQW 2994/11-15)

**Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The pension arrangements are common to all MLAs and Ministers. Pension contributions are based on a Members' total salary of £43,101 plus any office holder element, if applicable. Pension benefits accrue in accordance with a Members' number of years of service as an MLA (and office holder), the rate of personal pension contributions and a Members' salary in their final year of service.

### Pension Contributions for Members

**Mr Allister** asked the Assembly Commission, pursuant to AQW 2698/11-15, whether pension contributions are made on behalf of every Member who is not an MP on the basis that they are earning £43,101, or more if they are an office holder, and that pension entitlements accrue accordingly.

(AQW 3136/11-15)

**Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The Assembly Commission makes pension contributions based on a Members' total salary (i.e. £43,101 plus any office holder element). The accrual of pension entitlements are linked to the rate of Members' pension contributions which are made at either 6% or 11.5% of a Members' actual salary each month. Supplementary contributions are deducted at the same rate(s) from any office holder salary. Members' pension entitlements accrue at either 1/50th or 1/40th (1/50th for contributions of 6% and 1/40th for contributions of 11.5%) of final Members' salary for each year of service. Final salary is defined as the Members' salary paid in the last 12 months of service. Office holder pension entitlements accrue with reference to a more complex formula but this is broadly based on the relationship of any office holder salary to the salary as a Member for each year.

### MLA Salaries

**Mr Allister** asked the Assembly Commission whether the monthly salary of each MLA is paid into their own personal bank account; and whether any salary is paid into the bank account of a political party or any other third party account, and if so, how many.

(AQW 3225/11-15)

**Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The Assembly Commission can confirm that the salary to which each individual Member is entitled is paid into an account of his or her nomination. However, for the Assembly Commission to provide further information which would disclose the banking details of individual Members would breach the Data Protection Act 1998.

## Members' Pension Funds

**Mr McKay** asked the Assembly Commission what action is being taken to ensure that Members' pension funds are invested on an ethical basis and that all companies involved have abided by the necessary ethical and human rights standards.

(AQW 3368/11-15)

**Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The Assembly Members Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) is a trust-based occupational pension scheme. Five Members are appointed by resolution of the Assembly to act as Trustees. The Trustees are responsible for administering the Pension Fund in accordance with the scheme rules, the law as it relates to pensions, tax and trust matters and regulatory guidance. The Trustees appoint an Investment Manager to invest the pension fund in accordance with the Statement of Investment Principles. The Statement of Investment Principles is a matter for the Pension Trustees.

## Travel Costs

**Mr Dallat** asked the Assembly Commission to detail the travel costs incurred by Assembly Committees and Committee staff in the last 12 months.

(AQW 3564/11-15)

**Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The total cost of travel by Committees for the last 12 months from 1 October 2010 to 30 September 2011 is £30,460. This can be split between the cost for Members of £18,374 (shown at Table 1 below) and the cost for staff of £12,086 (shown at Table 2 below).

**TABLE 1: COMMITTEE TRAVEL - MEMBERS**

|  | <b>Amount</b>  |
|--|----------------|
| Committee Members - Airfares                         | £5,687         |
| Committee Members - Car Parking                      | £115           |
| Committee Members - Car/Coach Hire                   | £2,374         |
| Committee Members - Day Subsistence                  | £148           |
| Committee Members - Mileage Taxable                  | £137           |
| Committee Members - Night Subsistence (incl. hotels) | £6,969         |
| Committee Members - Public Transport                 | £93            |
| Committee Members - Reduced Mileage Over 20,000      | £156           |
| Committee Members - Taxis                            | £352           |
| Committee Members - Non Tax 10,001-20,000 Miles      | £351           |
| Committee Members - Non Tax Less than 10,001 Miles   | £1,992         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>£18,374</b> |

**TABLE 2: COMMITTEE TRAVEL - STAFF**

|                               | <b>Amount</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Committee Staff - Airfares    | £4,600        |
| Committee Staff - Car Parking | £162          |

|  | <b>Amount</b>  |
|--|----------------|
| Committee Staff - Mileage Allowance                | £1,959         |
| Committee Staff - Night Subsistence (incl. hotels) | £4,711         |
| Committee Staff - Passenger Allowance              | £116           |
| Committee Staff - Personal Allowance               | £210           |
| Committee Staff - Public Transport Costs           | £38            |
| Committee Staff - Public Transport Rate Mileage    | £171           |
| Committee Staff - Taxis                            | £119           |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>£12,086</b> |

### **Assembly Members Pension Fund**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Assembly Commission to detail the change in Investment Management Expenses for the Assembly Members Pension Fund in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3655/11-15)

**Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The Assembly Members Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) is a trust-based occupational pension scheme. Five Members are appointed by resolution of the Assembly to act as Trustees. The Trustees are responsible for administering the Pension Fund and this is not, therefore, a matter for the Assembly Commission. However, I understand that the Trustees have agreed to respond to you directly.

### **Home-to-school Transport**

**Mr A Maginness** asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the equity of the current school transport system.

(AQO 643/11-15)

**Mr O'Dowd:** The current system, set out in Departmental Circular 1996/41 (amended September 2009), determines eligibility for assistance with school transport based on the distance that each pupil lives from a suitable school.

This distance criterion is in line with that used elsewhere (for example, in the South), and allowance is made for age through a lower qualifying distance for younger pupils. Suitable schools are those in the recognised categories of controlled, integrated, Irish medium, maintained, denominational and non-denominational grammar, which in turn reflect parental choice.

Since each pupil is assessed against the same criteria then the system is equitable.

However, following the outcome of the recent debate in the Assembly on school transport, a review of the existing policy has been initiated to determine whether it continues to be fit for purpose.



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