

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 20 January 2012

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 20 January 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Visits by Heads of State of Foreign Countries

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) to outline what role, either formal or informal, their Department has in relation to planned public and private visits by Heads of State of foreign countries including the President of the Republic of Ireland; and (ii) whether their Department receives advance notification of such visits, and if so, who does it notify.

(AQW 3018/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister):

- (i) The Department has no role.
- (ii) The Department is usually advised in advance though has no role in notifying others.

Community Relations Council

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 4233/11-15, in relation to the First Minister's Principal Private Secretary making contact with the Community Relations Council, whether the contact was made on the instruction of the First Minister.

(AQW 5661/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Department holds no information with regard to this particular request; however officials would regularly make contact with outside bodies in order to brief Ministers.

Poverty and Social Exclusion

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what measures their Department will introduce to combat poverty and social exclusion.

(AQW 5753/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As stated within the draft Programme for Government, the Executive remains committed to tackling the problems of poverty and disadvantage here. OFMDFM will continue to forge strong links across the programme to ensure that the work of individual departments integrates to provide optimal solutions for everyone. Our work on addressing poverty and in promoting social inclusion is central to the work of the Executive.

In support of the Child Poverty Strategy, an outcomes model is being developed to drive progress of the plan towards eradicating child poverty.

Our officials have also been working with other departments on a Child Poverty Reduction Pilot Study. The purpose of the study is to quantify the extent to which child poverty can be reduced by allowing families on benefit to retain more of their earned income before deductions from benefit are made and to assess the extent to which additional services such as childcare can support low income families into work.

We also hope to put more detailed proposals on the development of a Childcare Strategy to the Executive early in the New Year.

The Social Investment Fund aims to reduce poverty and unemployment. The Fund's strategic objectives include:

- building pathways to employment; and
- tackling the systemic issues linked to deprivation.

The outcome of the public consultation, which ended on 23 December 2011, will inform how the Social Investment Fund will operate, including the arrangements for funding.

The Executive also proposed a Social Protection Fund to mitigate the impact of the financial cuts on the most vulnerable in our society.

The Executive subsequently agreed to prioritise fuel poverty through this fund and agreed that the £20 million budget would contribute towards a Winter Poverty Payment Scheme, distributed through DSD and DHSSPS.

We believe that the work associated with the Child Poverty Strategy and the Social Investment and Social Protection Funds demonstrates a very clear commitment on our behalf to ensure that those most disadvantaged in our society, by poverty and social exclusion, have their needs addressed.

Youth Work Projects in the North Down Area

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the level of funding provided by their Department to youth work projects in the North Down area in 2011/12; and (ii) the duration of funding in each case.

(AQW 5869/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM does not directly fund youth work as this is the responsibility of other departments. However, we do provide funding towards good relations and summer intervention work which either target or involve young people and youth workers in North Down.

In addition, OFMDFM funds a number of after school clubs. OFMDFM has also provided funding for 2011/12 to Glenraig Integrated Children's Centre totalling £9,131.

Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland

Mr Lunn asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what independent economic advice is available to Executive Ministers, following the demise of the Economic Research Institute for Northern Ireland.

(AQW 6038/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Independent economic advice is available from a range of sources. These include centres of academic expertise (for example in the universities), research institutes, think tanks, research councils as well as independent researchers. These sources have the potential to offer the Executive independent specialist expertise as well as sufficient flexibility to address new and emerging policy issues. The findings and work of the Independent Review of Economic Policy should also be noted including the establishment of the Economic Advisory Group. The latter consists of a focused group of experts whose role is to provide independent advice, aimed at challenging, and developing, public policy and strategic thinking on the economy.

North American and Executive Priorities

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the delivery of customised programmes to assist Ministers in furthering their North American and Executive priorities.

(AQW 6210/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Responsibility for the delivery of the Department's US and Canadian Strategy lies with the Northern Ireland Bureau which is based in Washington, DC. The Bureau also has one officer based in New York City.

Since April 2011, the Bureau has organised six visit programmes for seven Executive Ministers. All the programmes were designed to relate to each Minister's portfolio and a significant amount of discussion took place in advance of each visit to ensure the best use of the Minister's time while in the United States.

In the past nine months, the Bureau has delivered visit programmes to Washington DC, New York City, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Silicon Valley, New Orleans, Los Angeles and the Durham/Raleigh Triangle, North Carolina.

From our personal perspective, we have used our visits to the US to promote the local economy and to engage on a one-to-one basis with President Obama, Secretary Clinton, members of Congress and potential investors across the USA. In September, we undertook a very successful visit to Los Angeles, Silicon Valley, Chicago and New York. The objective of that visit was to promote our Creative Industries Sector by encouraging investment from IT and Film Production companies on the West Coast and to consolidate relationships with existing high-profile investors in the other locations.

Programme for Government

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they will ensure that there is regular reporting against the Programme for Government.

(AQW 6366/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The new Programme for Government is supported by a delivery framework within which there are regular monitoring and reporting schedules. The framework for delivery draws upon lessons learned from previous monitoring and reporting regimes. It has been developed to ensure that delivery against priorities and commitments is maximised.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Land Approved for Tree Planting

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how much land was approved for tree planting in the 2010/11 season; (ii) how much land was planted in the 2010/11 season; and (iii) of the land that was (a) planted; and (b) not planted, what percentage of the applicants dealt directly with the Forestry Service and not through an agent.

(AQW 6405/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development):

- (i) From 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011, there were a total of 608 hectares approved for tree planting.
- (ii) Over the same period, a total of 252 hectares were planted.
- (iii) All applications are processed by Forest Service whether submitted by an owner or their agent. We do not hold summary data to answer this specific question in relation to planted area, however, we can state that during this period, 49 % of the total number of applications received by Forest Service were through an agent.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

PPE 'Cessation of Interceptor Mixed Stock Fisheries on North Atlantic Salmon not Achieving their Conservation Limits'

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the issues raised by her Department which resulted in the delay of the original completion date of the draft PPE 'Cessation of interceptor mixed stock fisheries on North Atlantic salmon not achieving their conservation limits'.

(AQW 6136/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): My Department is not aware of the draft document referred to in this question.

The Department's salmon conservation policy development is informed by long term research undertaken by colleagues at the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and DCAL staff based at the River Bush Salmon Research Station.

The Department's salmon conservation policy development is evidence based and the current recommendations for a voluntary cessation of killing salmon reflect the out working of that ongoing process.

Review of Disabled Car Parking Regulations

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when she intends to undertake a review of disabled car parking regulations in relation to public angling estate waters which have disabled car park facilities available.

(AQW 6138/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has responsibility for two disabled car parks at Public Angling Estate (PAE) waters which are owned by NI Water.

NI Water has advised my Department of its intention to undertake urgent remedial and maintenance work at a number of reservoirs, including those adjacent to the two disabled car parks. This will result in the temporary closure of not only these PAE waters, but also the disabled car parks while the work is carried out.

As a result of the impending works closing the car parks my Department has delayed the review of arrangements for disabled parking while these works progress.

Licensed Nets

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 5609/11-15, whether the representations made by the individuals referred to in AQW 2685/11-15 was made before or after the meetings referred to in AQW 5609/11-15.

(AQW 6139/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The representations made by the individuals referred to in AQW 2685/11-15 took place in December 2008 before the final meetings in 2009 as referred to in AQW 5609/11-15.

Illegal or Unlicensed Nets

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 5736/11-15, to confirm if the warning letters issued to two people between 1 June 2009 and 31 March 2010 and the warning letter issued to one person between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011 were issued to any person(s) who are licensed by her Department.

(AQW 6140/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I can confirm that the warning letters issued to two people between 1 June 2009 and 31 March 2010 and the warning letter issued to one person between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011 were issued to persons who did not hold any licence issued by my Department.

Sea Angling

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what are the financial and holistic benefits to Northern Ireland of sea angling.

(AQW 6181/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A report entitled "The Social and Economic Impact of Recreational Angling in Northern Ireland" was published in 2007 and included sea/shore angling.

The study estimated that domestic sea/shore anglers had an overall gross expenditure impact of £7.4m on 2005.

A specific study into the holistic benefits was not commissioned.

A copy of the report can be accessed at http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/economic_impact_of_angling_final_report_july_2007.pdf

Quangos

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many quangos currently operate under the remit of her Department.

(AQW 6222/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are currently 5 operating under the remit of the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure, these are as follows:

- Arts Council NI
- Libraries NI
- National Museums and Galleries NI
- NI Museums Council
- Sport NI

Illegal or Unlicensed Nets

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 5736-11-15, for her assessment of the impact the receipt of a warning letter has on the recipient; and whether the receipt of such a letter has an impact on the recipient's renewal applications for other licences that are issued by her Department.

(AQW 6223/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The impact that a warning letter has on a recipient will vary depending on the individual and it is not possible for the Department to assess this impact.

The Department would expect that the recipient of a warning letter would not repeat the actions that lead to the issue of the warning and would comply with any other requirements contained in the letter.

The issue of a warning letter will have no direct impact on the applicant's renewal application for other licences that are issued by the Department.

Licence for Salmon Fishing Engines in Coastal Waters

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 1837/11-15, to detail the process for the renewal of a licence for salmon fishing engines in coastal waters.

(AQW 6224/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The process for the renewal and issue of a licence for salmon fishing engines in coastal waters are defined in the Fisheries Byelaws (Northern Ireland) 2003, Part II, sections 14 to 23.

2012 Olympics

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding her Department has allocated for the 2012 Olympics; and how much has been spent to date.

(AQW 6254/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL leads and facilitates the Olympic Strategy in the north through partnership arrangements and the Department has established the Games Legacy Unit to advance work to secure a local legacy from the Games with an allocation of £450k per annum by the Department. This money is

not being used to deliver the London 2012 Games – that is the responsibility of the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games – but is directed at ensuring programmes, projects and activities related to the Games deliver benefits to communities across the north.

DCAL's total expenditure on local 2012 related programmes is expected to be in the region of £1.8m resource and £0.5m capital by the end of March 2013. DCAL provides funding to local partners to support participation and deliver legacy across three themes of sport including disability sport, community engagement and economic.

Sport Matters: Community Capital Programme

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list the clubs and groups that are currently involved in the Sport Matters: Community Capital Programme, and the points they have been awarded. **(AQW 6271/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: Details of the clubs and groups that are currently involved in the Sport Matters Community Capital Programme, together with the points they were awarded, are as follows:

| Applicant Organisation | Points Awarded |
|---|-----------------------|
| Lurgan YMCA | 87 |
| St Columb's College, Derry | 86 |
| Crumlin United FC | 85 |
| Mourne Heritage Trust | 81 |
| Omagh Riding for the Disabled Association | 81 |
| Burnside Ulster-Scots Society, Antrim | 80 |
| Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School, Belfast | 80 |
| Moneyslane FC, Banbridge | 80 |
| Greenisland FC, Carrickfergus | 80 |
| Carrick Rangers FC | 79 |
| Omagh District Rifle and Pistol Club | 79 |
| Stadium Youth and Community Centre, Belfast | 79 |
| Ballinderry Shamrocks GFC, Cookstown | 79 |
| Trustees of Kilcluney LOL132, Markethill | 78 |
| Colin Glen Trust, Lisburn | 78 |
| Lamh Dearg GAC, Lisburn | 78 |
| Ardoyne Youth Providers Forum, Belfast | 77 |
| Cathedral Youth Club, Derry | 77 |
| Countryside Access and Activities Network | 77 |
| Dalriada School, Ballymoney | 77 |
| Sean Dolans GAC, Derry | 77 |
| John Mitchel's Glenullin GAC, Coleraine | 77 |
| Regent House School, Ards | 77 |

| Applicant Organisation | Points Awarded |
|--|-----------------------|
| Shankill United FC, Belfast | 76 |
| Eglinton Community Ltd | 76 |
| Doire Colmcille GFC, Derry | 76 |
| NE Educational & Library Board – Whitehouse Primary & Newtownabbey High School | 76 |
| Saints Amateur Boxing Club, Twinbrook | 76 |
| Sion Mills Buildings Preservation Trust | 76 |
| Aughintober Regeneration, Dungannon | 75 |
| Armagh City FC | 75 |
| The Boys Brigade, Belfast | 75 |
| Banbridge Amateur Boxing Club | 74 |
| Carrickfergus Historical & Cultural Society | 74 |
| Maghaberry Community Association, Lisburn | 74 |
| NE Educational & Library Board – Bushmills Education Centre | 74 |
| Ashton Community Trust | 73 |
| Larne FC | 73 |
| Tyrone GAA County Board | 73 |
| Colaiste Feirste, Belfast | 72 |
| East Antrim Rifle & Pistol Club | 72 |
| Hollywood Yacht Club | 72 |
| Malgrove, Belfast | 72 |
| Iveagh Branch of the Pony Club, Banbridge | 71 |
| Bangor FC | 71 |
| Coalisland Fianna GFC | 71 |
| Downpatrick FC | 71 |
| East Antrim Harriers AC | 71 |
| Millenium Integrated Primary School, Castlereagh | 71 |
| Mourne All Blacks Amateur Boxing Club | 71 |
| St Patrick's GAC, Cookstown | 71 |
| Magherabeg Rural Community Association | 70 |
| Annagh United FC | 70 |
| Belfast Indoor Bowling Club | 70 |
| Cairn Lodge Amateur Boxing Club, Belfast | 70 |
| Coaching4Christ, Ballymena | 70 |

| Applicant Organisation | Points Awarded |
|---|-----------------------|
| Portora Boat Club, Enniskillen | 70 |
| Share Discovery '80 Ltd, Lisnaskea | 70 |
| St Brigid's Cross Community Boxing Club, Newry | 70 |
| St Malachy's GAC, Moortown | 70 |
| 4th Portadown Scouts | 69 |
| Abbey Villa FC, Ards | 69 |
| Armagh Harps GFC | 69 |
| Belfast Education & Library Board – Belfast Boy's Model | 69 |
| Carnmoney Primary School, Newtownabbey | 69 |
| Castlewellan FC | 69 |
| Coa GAA Club, Fermanagh | 69 |
| Crossmaglen Rangers FC | 69 |
| Dungannon Rifle & Pistol Club | 69 |
| Dungannon United Youth FC | 69 |
| Knocks Grattans Hurling Club, Lisnaskea | 69 |
| Our Lady's & St Patrick's Mochua's Primary School & Derrynoose GAC, Keady | 69 |
| Park FC, Claudy | 69 |
| St Joseph's GAC, Ederney | 69 |
| Wallace High School, Lisburn | 69 |
| Ballymartin GFC | 68 |
| Benraw Rural Community Association, Banbridge | 68 |
| Caledon Regeneration Partnership | 68 |
| Killycurragh Youth Club, Omagh | 68 |
| Michael Davitts GAC, Belfast | 68 |
| Omagh Bowling Club | 68 |
| RUC Athletic Association, Belfast | 68 |
| St Mary's GAC, Rasharkin | 68 |
| St Peter's GAC, Lurgan | 68 |
| Ballyholland Development Association | 68 |
| St Killian's College, Larne | 67 |
| Clady Sean South GFC, Armagh | 67 |
| Eskra Emmett's GAC, Tyrone | 67 |
| Magherafelt Sky Blues FC | 67 |

| Applicant Organisation | Points Awarded |
|--|-----------------------|
| NE Education & Library Board – Woodhall Residential Centre | 67 |
| Portadown FC Youth | 67 |
| Portballintrae Residents' Association, Coleraine | 67 |
| Roslea Shamrocks GFC, Fermanagh | 67 |
| St Paul's High School, Newry | 67 |
| Newtownbreda FC | 67 |
| Ballyholme Yacht Club | 66 |
| Ballyhornan & District Community Association | 66 |
| Belfast Education & Library Board – Ashfield Girls High School | 66 |
| Belnaleck Art McMurrugh's GFC, Fermanagh | 66 |
| Brackaville Owen Roes GFC, Coalisland | 66 |
| Dromore First Presbyterian | 66 |
| Tir Na nOg GFC, Craigavon | 66 |
| An Charraigh Mhor GFC, Carrickmore | 65 |
| City of Armagh RFC | 65 |
| Pomeroy Plunketts GAC, Tyrone | 65 |
| St Agnes GAC, Belfast | 65 |
| Eire Og Hurling Club, Carrickmore | 64 |
| Killeavy GAC | 64 |
| O'Neills GFC, Armagh | 64 |
| Oxford Sunnyside FC, Craigavon | 64 |
| Ballymacnab GFC, Armagh | 63 |
| Tullylish GFC, Banbridge | 63 |
| St Patrick's GAC, Cullyhanna | 63 |
| Clan Na Gael GFC, Craigavon | 63 |
| Cushendun GAC, Moyle | 62 |
| Sperrin Integrated College, Magherafelt | 62 |
| Aughnacloy Golf Club | 62 |
| St Michael's GAC, Craigavon | 61 |
| Tullygally FC, Armagh | 61 |
| Windsor Lawn Tennis Club, Belfast | 61 |
| Carey Faughs GAC, Moyle | 60 |
| Loughgall Youth, Armagh | 60 |

| Applicant Organisation | Points Awarded |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| North Fermanagh Cricket & FC | 60 |
| Strand Presbyterian Church, Belfast | 60 |
| Armagh Stars Inline Hockey Club | 60 |
| Donaghmore Development Association | 59 |
| Lurgan District LOL No6 | 59 |
| Eoghan Ruadh Hurling Club, Dungannon | 59 |
| Carrickfergus Sailing Club | 57 |
| Carryduff GAC | 57 |
| Mournesports Ltd | 57 |
| Rathfriland FC | 57 |
| Thomas Davis Corrinshogo GFC | 57 |
| Camlough Rovers FC | 55 |
| Russell Gaelic Union, Belfast | 55 |
| Tullyvallen Rangers FC | 55 |

Líofa Campaign

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 4521 11/15, whether, as she seeks to move the Irish Language forward in a “positive, progressive and inclusive manner”, she will pay any regard to the way in which the Irish Language was politicised by the claim that every word of Irish spoken is another bullet in the struggle.

(AQW 6277/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In progressing the Irish language through programmes such as the Líofa Initiative I aim to broaden the appeal of the Irish language so that it can continue to be enjoyed by all in society.

Irish language

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of whether the attitude of Republicans in the past, who claimed that every word of Irish spoken is another bullet in the struggle, has contributed negatively to the current attitudes displayed towards the Irish language; and whether that attitude needs to be challenged and reversed in the future.

(AQW 6280/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The rich cultural and linguistic heritage on this island is something that we all share and something that we should all embrace and enjoy.

The Irish language is valued, respected, spoken and enjoyed by people of all backgrounds and traditions.

I am focused on the future development of the Irish Language.

Salmon and Inland Fisheries Forum

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 5915/11-15, for her assessment of the effectiveness of the Salmon and Inland Fisheries Forum; and how information is conveyed to her Department, given that departmental officials do not sit on the Forum.

(AQW 6337/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Since its establishment in December 2009 the Salmon and Inland Fisheries Forum (SIFF) has put forward a range of proposals to the Department for consideration and has commented on a number of issues put to it by the Department. I consider the Forum to be an effective conduit to reflect the views of the diverse interests in the sector.

The Forum is a stakeholder representative body and it would be inappropriate for Departmental officials to be members.

Information is conveyed between the Department and the Forum by letter and e-mail. On occasions Departmental officials attend Forum meetings, at the Chairman's request, to address specific issues.

Sectarian Attack on a Teenager Working on The Good Man

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans she has to restore the confidence of the film and TV production companies choosing Northern Ireland as a location for filming following the sectarian attack on a teenager working on The Good Man.

(AQW 6378/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department does not fund NI Screen's support of the film industry – responsibility for this area lies with DETI and Invest NI.

However, I am assured that NI Screen will continue with its robust, aggressive marketing to the global screen industry and is confident that the growing reputation for film and television in the North of Ireland is undiminished.

This has been a regrettable event that reflects poorly on our society but it does not represent the general experience of the film and television industry in the North of Ireland, whether inward investing or local.

Transfer of Functions

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, for each of the last five years, to detail the functions that (i) have been transferred; and (ii) are planned to be transferred from her Department to local councils, and of these, to detail (a) the reason behind the transfer of each function; (b) whether additional funding was offered to local councils to assist them in carrying out the functions; and (c) the cost, to her Department, of the final year when each of the functions were the responsibility of her Department; and (iii) may be transferred from her Department to local councils at a future date,

(AQW 6397/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) The Community Festival Fund transferred to Local Government from April 2008. The cost to the Department in its last year of operation within the Department (2007 / 2008) was £450,000 plus £100,000 administration costs. In 2010 / 2011 the department provided £440,000 to local councils for Festival Funding.
- (ii) The functions which the Department plan to transfer are;

- a. Armagh County Museum

Armagh County Museum will transfer to the Armagh / Banbridge / Craigavon Council. This is a local museum which should come under the management of the local council. The cost of running Armagh County Museum in 2010 / 2011 was £233,000. This funding will transfer to local government as part of RPA.

- b. Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC)

The NIMC provides a support service to local and private museums and could transfer to local government provided that a suitable arrangement can be agreed with local government. However, the Department will consider where these functions can best be carried out during its review of the body, as part of its wider review of Arms Length Bodies. The cost of NIMC in 2010 / 2011 was £323,000.

c. Water Recreation Sites

Twenty one water recreation sites are to transfer to local councils. These are small sites which complement other leisure facilities owned by councils and councils also have the infrastructure to maintain outdoor facilities which DCAL lacks. The cost of maintenance in 2010 / 2011 was £67,000. The maintenance budget would transfer to local councils as part of RPA.

d. Local Arts Funding

The Department is committed to transferring the funding for local arts to local government in line with the guiding principles set out for RPA. The budget for local Arts in 2009 / 2010 was calculated at £1.1 million.

- (iii) The Department has not identified any further functions which may transfer to local councils at a future date. However my Department has commenced a review of its Arms Length Bodies and this may identify some further functions which could transfer to local councils.

Licences Permitting the Sale or Purchase of Salmon

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will suspend all licences permitting the sale, or purchase, of salmon caught by rod, line or nets in Northern Ireland waters. **(AQW 6406/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: Officials have written to individual stakeholders and representative bodies asking for support for a range of voluntary conservation measures for the 2012 salmon fishing season.

Current legislation does not empower the Department to suspend licences and does not readily enable the introduction of further restrictions on the sale or purchase of salmon in time for the opening of the 2012 fishing season.

0845 Numbers

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much revenue has been raised by her Department in each of the last three financial years by the usage of 0845 numbers. **(AQW 6436/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the last three financial years, the Department did not operate any 0845 telephone numbers. No revenue has therefore been raised.

Applications to Fish for Salmon with Nets

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the closing date for applications to fish for salmon with nets; (ii) the number of applications received to date; and (iii) the date on which she intends to issue the licences. **(AQW 6604/11-15)**

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) The closing date for applications to fish for salmon with nets can be found in the Fisheries Byelaws (Northern Ireland) 2003. The legislation regarding drift net licences can be found in sections 14 to 22. The legislation regarding draft net licences can be found in section 23.
- (ii) As of 18 January 2012 the Department has received five applications.
- (iii) The Department has written to those who held such licences in 2011 and consideration of their 2012 applications will be informed by their responses.

Department of Education

Primary Languages Programme

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the benefits of the Primary Languages Programme for children who take part in the programme.

(AQW 6116/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Primary Languages Programme was introduced to give our youngest pupils in Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 the opportunity to learn an additional language. One of the main learning outcomes of the programme is to support the development of communication skills and fit with the revised curriculum, particularly Language & Literacy and Citizenship.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board, who administer the Primary Languages Programme, advise that school evaluations of the Primary Languages Programme have been very positive. Teachers comments about the benefits of the programme have included: "participating in the programme has helped to enhance the children's self esteem, developed knowledge and skills involved in the area of learning The World Around Us and has helped develop transferrable skills such as concentration and listening; the programme is having a very positive impact on the children's learning".

The Education Training and Inspection (ETI) carried out an inspection of the programme and listed among the main strengths of the programme as the high levels of motivation and enjoyment of all the children, the good progress made by children, the positive response of parents, principals and teachers.

I am delighted that currently 412 schools are participating in the programme and that each week over 27,000 children are benefitting from the many positive aspects of this programme.

Irish Language Translation

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how his Department's spend on Irish language translation compares to (i) the Scottish Government's spend on Gàdhlig translation; and (ii) the Welsh Executive's spend on Welsh translation.

(AQW 6117/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Comparable information is not available for the Scottish Government's and the Welsh Government's Education Departments.

Integrated Education

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education how much his Department has spent on integrated education in the last three years.

(AQW 6152/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In each of the last three years, my Department has spent the following on integrated education:

| Financial Year | 2010-11 | 2009-10 | 2008-09 |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| £'000 | 76,390 | 82,169 | 77,915 |

These figures include salaries and non-teaching costs in respect of grant maintained integrated schools, as well as capital expenditure.

School Transport for Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education to outline the responsibilities of the Education and Library Boards in relation to the provision of school transport for pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

(AQW 6156/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs provides that, when assessing the special educational needs of a pupil and making a statement, an Education and Library Board will take account of non-educational needs. The Board is then responsible for deciding and specifying in the statement any relevant non-educational provision required, such as home to school transport, to meet the non-educational needs of the individual child based on recommendations from and agreement between the health services and/or social services and the Board.

Not every pupil with a statement of special educational needs will have a special transport need. In these cases Boards are responsible for determining whether a pupil is eligible for home to school transport assistance in line with the Department's transport policy Circular 1996/41 (as amended). Not every pupil with a special transport need will receive transport to the school of their parents' choice. If their choice involves a distant school and there is a nearer school which meets the pupil's needs, then Boards are legally required to provide transport only to the nearer school. Where parents prefer the more distant school, a Board may offer an allowance in lieu of transport. Also, pupils may be required to share a vehicle with other pupils who have similar needs.

Pupils special transport needs are also subject to on-going review.

Fire Safety in Schools

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education to detail the legal obligations on primary and post-primary schools in relation to fire safety in schools.

(AQW 6169/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Schools in the North of Ireland are required to meet the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and the Fire Safety Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010. This legislation is designed to ensure that buildings provide an acceptable level of fire safety for all people on the premises.

In addition, schools are designed and built to comply with the requirements of the Building Regulations for the North of Ireland that pertain at the time of construction and to comply with the requirements of the Department of Education's School Building Handbook.

Education and Library Board: Senior Managers

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of senior managers and their salary scale in each Education and Library Board transferring to the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 6171/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Review of Public Administration (RPA) outline Business Case required ESA to effect a 44% reduction in senior management posts which equates to 35 posts.

As a result of the Voluntary Severance Programmes for 2010/11 and 2011/12 the number of senior management posts have reduced and this will continue across the Budget period.

The announcement on the establishment of ESA has however changed the context within which the RPA will be implemented in education. ESA will subsume the functions of 8 bodies including the Education and Library Boards; Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; Staff Commission and the Youth Council.

The number of senior managers transferring to ESA cannot therefore be determined until the Voluntary Severance Programmes for 2011/12 and 2012/13 are completed and the impact of CCEA remaining

separate for the time being is quantified. The current salary scales for the senior management teams within each organisation are however published in their annual remuneration reports.

All senior managers in the affected organisations in post on the date of the establishment of ESA will have the right to transfer into this organisation under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE).

Distance to Irish-medium Schools

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what is the furthest distance a pupil would have to travel if they wish to attend their nearest (i) naíscoil; (ii) bunscoil; and (iii) meánscoil.

(AQW 6201/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department is not able to provide the information requested. However, it is able to provide information relating to the furthest distance pupils currently enrolled at Irish medium schools travel to their school. This is listed in the following table.

FURTHEST DISTANCE TRAVELLED TO THEIR SCHOOL BY A PUPIL CURRENTLY ATTENDING AN IRISH MEDIUM SCHOOL, 2011/12

| School type | Nursery unit | Primary | Post primary |
|----------------------------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| Distance travelled (miles) | 17.6 | 30.6 | 29.2 |

Source: school census

Note:

- 1 Figures for primary schools include children in reception and Year 1 – Year 7 classes. Children in nursery units in primary schools have been considered separately.
- 2 Distance travelled by pupils to voluntary and private preschool centres cannot be calculated, as data for this sector is collected at an aggregated school level only.
- 3 Distance travelled is straight line distance.
- 4 Pupils travelling to Irish medium units in English language schools have not been included.

Preparing Primary School Children for Transfer Tests

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how many complaints each Education and Library Board has received in relation to preparing primary school children for transfer tests in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6202/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: One written complaint was received by the Western Education and Library Board in the last three years in relation to a primary school in that area preparing its pupils for unregulated transfer tests. No written complaints were received by any of the other boards during that period and records are not kept of any verbal complaints.

School Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 705/11-15, AQW 706/11-15 and AQW 707/11-15, what specific actions he has taken to reduce the number of children with less than 85 percent school attendance.

(AQW 6215/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Pupils for whom school attendance has dropped below 85 per cent and who require further intervention are referred by the school to the relevant Education and Library Board's Education Welfare Service (EWS).

An Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will carry out a home visit to establish the reason for the poor attendance and will act as lead worker to agree an action plan, with the pupil, the parents and the school and other agencies, as required. For pupils with particular problems regular attendance at their host school, or any other mainstream school, may not be an option. Where this is the case, pupils may be referred by their EWO to a suitable alternative education programme through EOTAS (education other than at school). Court proceedings may also be considered.

My Department has developed over the years a series of support programmes targeted at specific groups of pupils such as school age mothers, Travellers and looked after children, who are known to be at risk of poor attendance. Beyond these specific groups it is recognised that there are other pupils whose pattern of poor attendance or non-attendance remains a concern.

Analysis of attendance data shows that, as the level of free school meal entitlement in a school increases, absence levels also increase. Since free school meal eligibility is indicative of levels of deprivation, my Department has commissioned a research project specifically aimed at identifying good practice in improving attendance in schools serving deprived areas. The findings of this research will be available to the Department by the end of March 2012.

These findings will be disseminated to schools with the aim of helping those with low attendance rates to develop policy and practice to improve attendance.

Surplus Places in Grammar Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of surplus places in grammar schools, broken down by sector.

(AQW 6233/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In the current school year there are 814 places available in grammar schools distributed as follows:-

- 199 in controlled grammar schools
- 615 in voluntary grammar schools.

These figures represent the sum of the differences between all grammar schools' enrolment numbers (the number up to which they must admit) and the number of the pupils actually enrolled. The figures exclude 309 enrolled pupils who are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs and 12 pupils who were (in the last year) admitted on appeal by the Education and Library Board appeal tribunals or by direction of the independent Exceptional Circumstances Body, as they may be admitted outside the agreed enrolment number for a school.

Redundancy Costs Associated with the Review of Public Administration

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education for an update on the funding set aside to cover redundancy costs associated with the Review of Public Administration and the creation of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 6234/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The existing budget allocation for voluntary severance/redundancy costs is:

| 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2014/15 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| £49.9m | £55.4m | £50.6m | £61.3m |

These funds have been set aside to reduce the long term cost base of the education sector, including costs associated with the Review of Public Administration and the creation of the Education and Skills Authority.

Middletown Autism Centre

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 359/09; AQW 355/09; and AQW 357/09; to provide an update on; (i) what has been the overall gross cost of operating Middletown Autism Centre since its inception; and (ii) what has been his Department's contribution to that cost on a yearly basis.

(AQW 6247/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The overall gross cost of operating the Middletown Centre for Autism since it opened in 2007 is £3,689,620. The Department of Education's contribution to meeting these costs for each financial year is shown below:

| Year | 2007-08 | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| DE Funding | £205,190 | £412,094 | £603,527 | £618,994 |

Report on Middletown Autism Centre

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education, following the Comptroller and Auditor General's 2009 Report on Middletown Autism Centre, whether anything has changed in the interim to contradict the assessment that 'Key services including working directly with young people with autistic spectrum disorders are not being achieved despite the Centre operating since 2007 and it appears unlikely that the position will change in the short term'.

(AQW 6248/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since the publication of his General Report for 2009 by the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Middletown Centre for Autism has provided intensive specialist support to a number of individual children and schools in each education and library board area on an outreach basis. Referrals to the Centre are made as a result of the continuing close partnership working with education and library boards and the Interboard Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Group.

This intensive specialist support offered by the Centre to these children includes:

- the provision of a trans-disciplinary assessment;
- the development and implementation of intervention using a trans-disciplinary Learning Support Plan;
- supporting the development of an ASD competent school environment;
- specialist placement for intensive assessment and support, as necessary, following assessment.

The Centre has also continued to deliver specialist training to front-line professionals working in education with children and young people with ASD. Over 8,500 professionals have received such training from the Centre since it opened.

Delivery of a programme of training to support parents of children with ASD was commenced by the Centre in October 2010 and nearly 4,000 parents have received this training.

The Centre's Research and Information Service has recently published a fifth research bulletin and continues to progress two island-wide research projects.

Preparing Children for the Transfer Tests

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of how schools which prepare children for the transfer tests, instead of teaching the curriculum, are affecting the attainment levels of these children.

(AQW 6273/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Articles 4-9 of the 2006 Education Order place a statutory obligation on primary schools to deliver the primary curriculum to all pupils. The Department of Education also strongly recommends that primary schools do not prepare children for unregulated entrance tests. I am disappointed at reports that some schools ignore this advice and focus valuable school time on preparing some children for

these unnecessary tests. This has an impact on both the children taking the test and those who are not taking the test. All pupils are entitled to enjoy the full benefits of the primary curriculum without the distorting effects of being taught to a test or segregated from their peers because some will be coached and others will not.

There are formal mechanisms for parents to make a complaint if they feel that the school is failing to meet its statutory obligation to deliver the curriculum to all its pupils.

In addition to this the Education and Training Inspectorate will advise the Department if, during the course of a formal inspection or an incidental visit to a primary school, they encounter a lesson where children are preparing for unregulated entrance tests. They will also raise the matter with the teacher and the Principal.

Pupils from the Irish-Medium Sector

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what percentage of pupils from the Irish-medium sector, who transferred to post-primary schools, transferred to non-Irish-medium post-primary schools in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 6274/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department is able to provide the information requested for each of the last two academic years. Figures have been provided in relation to those children who did not transfer from Irish medium primary schools or units to either the Irish medium post-primary school, or to Irish medium units.

In 2009/10, of the pupils for whom a destination is known, 58.7% of pupils transferring from Irish medium primary provision did not transfer to post-primary Irish medium schools or units. 27.6% transferred to the Irish medium post-primary school and 13.8% transferred to Irish medium units.

In 2010/11, of the pupils for whom a destination is known, 60.4% of pupils transferring from Irish medium primary provision did not transfer to post-primary Irish medium schools or units. 22.8% transferred to the Irish medium post-primary school and 16.8% transferred to Irish medium units.

Source: NI school census

Note:

- 1 There were 13 pupils who had attended Irish medium primary provision in 2009/10 that did not appear in post primary schools here in 2010/11.
- 2 There were 9 pupils who had attended Irish medium primary provision in 2010/11 that did not appear in post primary schools here in 2011/12.

Naíscoiléanna

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to list all naíscoiléanna, including the location and the enrolment number in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 6278/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested has been placed in the Assembly library.

Bunscoiléanna

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to list all bunscoiléanna, including the location and the enrolment number in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 6279/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested has been placed in the Assembly library.

Issues Relating to International Development

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education Minister whether issues relating to international development are included in the curriculum, and if so, to provide details.

(AQW 6286/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The revised curriculum now in place in grant aided schools provides pupils with the opportunity to learn about international development through areas such as Citizenship and Education for Sustainable Development.

Citizenship Education aims to develop the capacity of all young people to participate positively and effectively in society, to influence democratic processes, and to make informed and responsible decisions as local and global citizens throughout their lives. It is compulsory from Year 1 to Year 12.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is included in the curriculum across all Key Stages. At primary level, ESD is built into the statutory Area of Learning of The World Around Us (Geography, Science and Technology). At post primary, it is included in the statutory areas of Learning for Life and Work (Local and Global Citizenship, Employability), Environment and Society (Geography) and Science and Technology.

Primary Schools: Numbers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils in each of the fifty primary schools which currently have the highest number of pupils.

(AQW 6288/11-15)

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

ENROLMENTS IN EACH OF THE FIFTY PRIMARY SCHOOLS THAT HAVE THE HIGHEST TOTAL ENROLMENT – 2011/12

| School name | Total enrolment |
|--|-----------------|
| Strandtown Primary School, Belfast | 896 |
| St Bride's Primary School, Belfast | 859 |
| St Anne's Primary School, Belfast | 856 |
| St Patricks Primary School, Derry | 839 |
| St Francis Primary School, Lurgan | 815 |
| St Patrick's Primary School Dungannon | 777 |
| St Joseph's Primary School, Crumlin | 774 |
| Dromore Central Primary School | 694 |
| Kilmaine Primary School | 667 |
| Holy Trinity Primary School, Enniskillen | 647 |
| Holy Trinity Primary School, Belfast | 644 |
| Dundonald Primary School | 642 |
| King's Park Primary School | 627 |
| Abbey Primary School | 623 |
| Ballyholme Primary School | 618 |
| Tannaghmore Primary School | 611 |

| School name | Total enrolment |
|---|------------------------|
| Holy Trinity Primary School, Cookstown | 610 |
| Mossley Primary School | 606 |
| Christ the Redeemer Primary School | 606 |
| Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Belfast | 604 |
| Antrim Primary School | 596 |
| Downshire Primary School, Hillsborough | 592 |
| St Anthony's Primary School, Craigavon | 592 |
| Millington Primary School | 590 |
| Harmony Hill Primary School | 589 |
| Bangor Central Primary School | 577 |
| St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Belfast | 575 |
| Rathmore Primary School | 575 |
| Pond Park Primary School | 568 |
| St John's Primary School, Derry | 567 |
| Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt | 561 |
| Termoncanice Primary School | 557 |
| Lisnagelvin Primary School | 549 |
| St Ita's Primary School, Belfast | 537 |
| Elmgrove Primary School | 528 |
| Brooklands Primary School | 518 |
| Holy Child Primary School, Belfast | 514 |
| Fairview Primary School | 512 |
| St Bernard's Primary School, Newtownabbey | 512 |
| Victoria Primary School, Newtownards | 509 |
| Glenwood Primary School | 504 |
| Victoria Primary School, Carrickfergus | 498 |
| Primate Dixon Primary School | 482 |
| Cairnshill Primary School, Belfast | 481 |
| Limavady Central Primary School | 480 |
| St Joseph's Convent Primary School, Newry | 479 |
| St Kevin's Primary School, Belfast | 478 |
| St Dallan's Primary School, Warrenpoint | 471 |
| Hazelwood Primary School | 462 |

| School name | Total enrolment |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Stranmillis Primary School | 454 |

Source: school census

Note:

- 1 Figures for primary schools include children in nursery, reception and Year 1 – Year 7 classes.

Maintenance Repairs for Schools

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of all maintenance repairs that are required for schools in the North Down area.

(AQW 6290/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current cost of all maintenance repairs required for schools in the North Down area is £9.3 million, including a maintenance backlog figure of £4.8 million for Bangor Grammar School's existing premises. You will be aware that the new school build for Bangor Grammar is currently under construction. When complete, this will significantly reduce the maintenance backlog in this area.

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last five years, to detail the functions that (i) have been transferred; and (ii) are planned to be transferred from his Department to local councils, and of these, to detail (a) the reason behind the transfer of each function; (b) whether additional funding was offered to local councils to assist them in carrying out the functions; and (c) the cost, to his Department, of the final year when each of the functions were the responsibility of his Department; and (iii) may be transferred from his Department to local councils at a future date,

(AQW 6319/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No functions have transferred from my Department to local councils during the last five years, and I have no plans to transfer any functions.

Level of Truancy

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education to detail the level of truancy in each of the last three years (i) in total; and (ii) broken down by school.

(AQW 6332/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Information on pupil absence is recorded under a number of categories. The term truancy is not used as a descriptor. However the following four types of absence are categorised as unauthorised absence:

- No reason provided for absence
- Family holiday (not agreed)
- Reason provided not acceptable
- Late (after registration closed with no acceptable reason for lateness)

- (i) The total levels of unauthorised absence in 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 are as follows:

| | % of total half days | | |
|---------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| | Primary Schools | Post Primary Schools | Special Schools |
| 2007/08 | 1.1 | 2.6 | 3.2 |
| 2008/09 | 1.2 | 2.5 | 3.3 |
| 2009/10 | 1.3 | 2.6 | 3.4 |

- (ii) Attendance statistics for grant aided primary, post primary and special schools detailing both authorised and unauthorised absence is published annually by the Department and is available, broken down by school, for the years 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 at the link below. Statistics for the 2010/11 school year will be published by March 2012.

http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/32-statisticsandresearch_pg/32-statistics_and_research_statistics_on_education_pg/32_statistics_and_research_-_statistics_on_education-pupil_attendance.htm

Middletown Autism Centre

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education what has been the total cost of Middletown Autism Centre in each year since 2002.

(AQW 6333/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Middletown Centre for Autism is funded jointly on a 50/50 basis by the Department of Education and the Department for Education and Skills in the south. The Department of Education's total annual expenditure on the Middletown Centre for Autism project for each financial year is shown below. The Department of Education and Skills in the south has contributed an equivalent amount.

| Year | Expenditure |
|---------|-------------|
| 2002/03 | £55,069 |
| 2003/04 | £181,576 |
| 2004/05 | £1,729,195 |
| 2005/06 | £103,962 |
| 2006/07 | £139,233 |
| 2007/08 | £564,702 |
| 2008/09 | £784,369 |
| 2009/10 | £737,859 |
| 2010/11 | £807,113 |

Languages Taught in Post-Primary Schools

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the languages taught in post-primary schools; and (ii) the number of (a) GCSEs; (b) A Levels that were taken in each language in each of the last three years. **(AQW 6338/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) Modern languages are included as a statutory area of learning under the revised curriculum at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. While schools are now able to choose from any of the languages of the 27 EU member states to meet the requirements of the statutory curriculum, and can also offer other languages, the choice will vary from school to school and the Department does not hold information on the full list of languages taught in schools. It does however hold information on examination entries which provides an indication of the languages taught in post-primary schools and this is provided below.

- (ii) (a) The number of GCSE entries in each language in each of the last three years is detailed in the table below.

GCSE ENTRIES¹ IN EACH LANGUAGE, 2008/09 TO 2010/11

| | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Irish ² | 1696 | 1657 | 1656 |
| Dutch | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| French | 7605 | 7100 | 6510 |
| German | 1208 | 1251 | 1044 |
| Italian | 40 | 26 | 30 |
| Portuguese | 10 | 1 | 6 |
| Spanish | 3060 | 3113 | 3342 |
| Arabic | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| Bengali | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 30 | 12 | 13 |
| Polish | 40 | 48 | 49 |
| Russian | 12 | 15 | 27 |
| Urdu | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Turkish | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Persian | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Greek | 12 | 4 | 12 |
| Latin | 134 | 120 | 91 |

Notes

1 Data are sourced from the RM data solutions dataset

2 Excludes Gaeilge

- (b) The number of A level entries in each language in each of the last three years is detailed below.

A LEVEL ENTRIES¹ IN EACH LANGUAGE, 2008/09 TO 2010/11

| | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Irish ² | 328 | 334 | 319 |
| Dutch | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| French | 657 | 707 | 562 |
| German | 137 | 153 | 113 |
| Italian | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Portuguese | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Spanish | 407 | 443 | 461 |
| Arabic | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Bengali | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Chinese | 37 | 26 | 30 |
| Polish | 4 | 12 | 21 |
| Russian | 9 | 2 | 6 |
| Urdu | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Turkish | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Persian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Greek | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Latin | 16 | 20 | 19 |

Notes

- 1 Data are sourced from the RM data solutions dataset
- 2 Excludes Gaeilge

Irish-Medium Units in Primary Schools

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to list all Irish-medium units in primary schools, including the location and the enrolment number in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 6339/11-15)

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

ENROLMENTS AT IRISH MEDIUM UNITS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS, 2002/03 – 2011/12

| School | Local Government District | 2002/ 03 | 2003/ 04 | 2004/ 05 | 2005/ 06 | 2006/ 07 |
|--|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Christian Brothers' PS, Armagh | Armagh | 108 | 108 | 109 | 110 | 112 |
| Our Lady And St Patricks Primary School, Downpatrick | Down | na | na | na | na | na |
| St Brigid's PS Tirkane | Magherafelt | 73 | 72 | 68 | 64 | 66 |
| St Canice's PS, Dungiven | Limavady | 14 | 24 | 31 | 37 | 56 |
| St Columbkille's PS, Omagh | Omagh | na | 8 | 13 | 19 | 34 |
| St Francis PS, Lurgan | Craigavon | 22 | 38 | 55 | 71 | 95 |
| St John The Baptist PS, Portadown | Craigavon | 39 | 47 | 52 | 50 | 47 |

| School | Local Government District | 2002/ 03 | 2003/ 04 | 2004/ 05 | 2005/ 06 | 2006/ 07 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| St Mary's PS, Pomeroy | Cookstown | na | 14 | 16 | 19 | 21 |
| St Patrick's Boys' PS, Downpatrick | Down | 40 | 46 | 57 | 70 | 69 |
| St Patrick's PS, Crossmaglen | Newry & Mourne | na | 13 | 30 | 38 | 53 |
| St Patrick's PS, Gortin | Omagh | 21 | 31 | 35 | 38 | 4 |

| School | Local Government District | 2007/ 08 | 2008/ 09 | 2009/ 10 | 2010/ 11 | 2011/ 12 |
|--|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Christian Brothers' PS, Armagh | Armagh | 118 | 110 | 140 | 142 | 143 |
| Our Lady And St Patricks Primary School, Downpatrick | Down | na | na | na | na | 78 |
| St Brigid's PS Tirkane | Magherafelt | 75 | 80 | 91 | 86 | 94 |
| St Canice's PS, Dungiven | Limavady | 51 | 58 | 54 | 58 | 60 |
| St Columbkille's PS, Omagh | Omagh | 41 | 49 | 53 | 49 | 53 |
| St Francis PS, Lurgan | Craigavon | 109 | 110 | 107 | 121 | 129 |
| St John The Baptist PS, Portadown | Craigavon | 50 | 46 | 44 | 45 | 42 |
| St Mary's PS, Pomeroy | Cookstown | 25 | 29 | 19 | 16 | 10 |
| St Patrick's Boys' PS, Downpatrick | Down | 75 | 74 | 76 | 76 | na |
| St Patrick's PS, Crossmaglen | Newry & Mourne | 70 | 78 | 97 | 103 | 99 |
| St Patrick's PS, Gortin | Omagh | na | na | na | na | na |

Source: school census

Note:

- 5 Figures for primary include children in nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
- 6 'na' means school was not open during that academic year.

Irish-Medium Units in Schools

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils attending each Irish-medium unit in a school, as a percentage of the total number of pupils in each school, in each of the last five years. **(AQW 6340/11-15)**

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

PERCENTAGE PUPILS IN IRISH MEDIUM UNITS AS A PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT – PRIMARY SCHOOLS - 2007/08 – 011/12

| School | Local Government District | 2007/ 08 | 2008/ 09 | 2009/ 10 | 2010/ 11 | 2011/ 12 |
|--|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Christian Brothers' PS, Armagh | Armagh | 38.1 | 34.4 | 38.8 | 38.0 | 37.7 |
| Our Lady And St Patricks Primary School, Downpatrick | Down | na | na | na | na | 19.0 |
| St Brigid's PS Tirkane | Magherafelt | 56.4 | 55.2 | 58.7 | 59.3 | 58.4 |
| St Canice's PS, Dungiven | Limavady | 13.1 | 15.3 | 14.9 | 16.1 | 17.2 |
| St Columbkille's PS, Omagh | Omagh | 14.5 | 17.1 | 18.3 | 17.4 | 17.6 |
| St Francis PS, Lurgan | Craigavon | 14.3 | 14.2 | 14.0 | 15.4 | 15.8 |
| St John The Baptist PS, Portadown | Craigavon | 13.3 | 12.8 | 12.1 | 11.9 | 10.9 |
| St Mary's PS, Pomeroy | Cookstown | 14.5 | 16.0 | 11.4 | 9.8 | 6.1 |
| St Patrick's Boys' PS, Downpatrick | Down | 24.5 | 26.3 | 28.4 | 29.9 | na |
| St Patrick's PS, Crossmaglen | Newry & Mourne | 22.2 | 25.6 | 30.8 | 31.4 | 30.3 |
| St Patrick's PS, Gortin | Omagh | na | na | na | na | na |

PERCENTAGE PUPILS IN IRISH MEDIUM UNITS AS A PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENT – POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS - 2007/08 – 2011/12

| School | Local Government District | 2007/ 08 | 2008/ 09 | 2009/ 10 | 2010/ 11 | 2011/ 12 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| St Brigid's College, Derry | Derry | 3.4 | 2.8 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 1.2 |
| St Catherine's College, Armagh | Armagh | 9.2 | 10.2 | 11.5 | 11.3 | 14.1 |

| School | Local Government District | 2007/ 08 | 2008/ 09 | 2009/ 10 | 2010/ 11 | 2011/ 12 |
|--|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| St Joseph's Grammar School, Donaghmore | Dungannon | na | na | na | 2.7 | 5.9 |
| St Malachy's High School, Castlewellan | Down | na | na | na | na | 0.5 |

Source: school census

Note:

- 7 Figures for primary include children in nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
 8 'na' means school was not open during that academic year.

Services Expected from Schools in a Climate of Severe Budget Cuts

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Education what strategic direction his Department is giving in relation to the level and quality of services expected from schools in a climate of severe budget cuts. **(AQW 6374/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: My statement to the Assembly, "Putting Pupils First: Shaping our Future", set out the strategic direction for the education service and committed to the delivery of a significant programme of strategic, transformational change designed to ensure that we have an effective and efficient education system that puts the needs and aspirations of children and young people to the fore.

My focus is on improving educational outcomes for all young people; on ensuring the provision of a network of strong, sustainable schools planned on an area basis; and, through the establishment of ESA, on streamlining education administration.

I expect school governors to work within the resources available to them to ensure that their schools are effectively led and have an ethos of high expectations; that they deliver high quality teaching and learning; that they maintain a focus on the needs and wellbeing of every pupil; and that the curriculum they offer is broad, balanced, relevant and meets the requirements of legislation.

Since my appointment last May I have consistently highlighted the fact that the education budget faces unprecedented financial challenges over the next three years. I am on record as stating that I would argue the case with Executive colleagues for further investment to help alleviate pressures on school budgets.

On 12 January 2012 I announced £120m of additional funding for the Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB) over the next three years.

Whilst this is welcome news it is important to stress that these additional funds have alleviated rather than eradicated the financial pressures on schools. Even with this additional funding my Department faces a real terms reduction of £180m (9.2%) in resource funding by 2014/15, compared to the 2010/11 baseline.

Home to School Transport Policy

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Education what progress his Department has made in relation to the revision of the Home To School Transport Policy. **(AQW 6375/11-15)**

Mr O'Dowd: I am at present considering possible terms of reference for a policy review of the home to school transport scheme. A number of on-going initiatives such as the recently commissioned schools

audit and the recently completed report into transport efficiency of the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit have the potential to impact upon transport operations in the immediate and longer term. It will be important to take account of this context in progressing the review.

InCAS

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the current position in relation to InCAS; (ii) if it is to be discontinued to detail the reasons; and (iii) the revenue used to introduce InCAS.

(AQW 6379/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The Interactive Computerised Assessment System (InCAS) was the method specified by the Department to be used by schools in carrying out assessments in the autumn term. Schools administer the assessments throughout the term. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) monitors feedback from schools and receives regular reports from the developers about the performance of their systems. No systemic issues have been raised by schools this year.
- (ii) The contract with the University of Durham's Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) for provision of the InCAS assessments will end in January 2012 and there is no scope for further extension under the rules governing public procurement. The use of data from computer-based assessments remains a key aspect of the Department's school improvement policy and a public procurement process has been carried out to identify suppliers from September 2012 onwards. The procurement process concluded on 8 November 2011 and identified two new providers for separate Literacy and Numeracy assessments:
 - Tribal Education Ltd. for the Literacy assessment; and
 - Rising Stars UK Ltd. for the Numeracy assessment.

Schools have been notified about this outcome and more detailed communication, including arrangements for trialling and evaluation of the new assessments prior to implementation, will issue in the near future.

(iii) The revenue used to introduce InCAS was as follows:

| 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| £58k | £272k | £756k | £687k | £881k | £347k | £423k |

0845 Numbers

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Education how much revenue has been raised by his Department in each of the last three financial years by the usage of 0845 numbers,

(AQW 6392/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has not raised any revenue in each of the last three financial years by the usage of 0845 numbers.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Bus

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the success of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics bus.

(AQW 6461/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The STEM truck is a unique and flexible teaching laboratory which helps bring to life, inspire and profile the opportunities offered by Science Technology Engineering and Maths for pupils and teachers. The STEM truck has been in constant demand, making over 250 visits to schools, conferences and exhibitions as well as participating in many events across Ireland, since its launch in September 2009. It has been extremely well received.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Bus

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what plans he has for the continued operation of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics bus, and the introduction of additional buses.

(AQW 6462/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The STEM truck is a significant investment in, and a valuable resource for, the promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths within schools and I can confirm that it continues to play a key role in support of my Department's wider work to promote STEM in schools and to encourage young people to continue to study STEM-related courses.

I can confirm, however, that I have no plans to commission additional trucks at this stage.

Department for Employment and Learning

University of Ulster: Free iPads

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) whether it is practice to supply post-graduate students undertaking a diploma at the Graduate School of Professional Legal Education at the Magee campus of the University of Ulster with free iPads; (ii) whether the same provision is made for staff and other students at the School of Law; and (iii) to detail the cost of providing the iPads in each case.

(AQW 6112/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The University of Ulster, as with any university, is free to use its Teaching and Learning funding for purposes associated with Teaching and Learning. However, as my Department does not hold this detailed information, you may wish to contact the University of Ulster directly.

Queen's University, Belfast School of Nursing and Midwifery

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps Queen's University, Belfast School of Nursing and Midwifery takes when offering clinical placements to facilitate mature students with young children, who find it difficult to travel long distances to attend placements.

(AQW 6123/11-15)

Dr Farry: Queen's University Belfast has said that it advises all students, as part of their application packs and subsequent interview notification letters, that they will be required to undertake regional clinical placements, with varying shift patterns. Students cannot choose the location or timing of placements and are advised that travel difficulties, childcare and domestic arrangements do not qualify as extenuating circumstances when requesting a change of placement.

Students are normally advised of their clinical placements eight weeks in advance to allow sufficient time for personal arrangements to be made. In addition, there is a one-week period following release of the placement details whereby students can apply for a placement change/swop with another student if this meets curriculum needs. Students, judged to be fit for placement, are deemed to be fit for allocation to any clinical area.

Hospitality for Honorary Graduates

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much each university spent on providing hospitality for honorary graduates in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6129/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not provide funding for the provision of hospitality for honorary graduates and therefore does not hold any data on the cost of this. However, the universities have provided the following information on such spend in relation to each of the last three years.

| | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|-----|---------|---------|---------|
| QUB | £33,171 | £17,843 | £15,304 |
| UU | £17,046 | £5,587 | £4,726 |

The Queen's University of Belfast has advised that the year 2008/09 reflects conferral of a higher number of honorary degrees than would be normal; these were an integral part of the celebrations marking the centenary of the University. Travel costs are included in the figures shown above.

The University of Ulster has advised that it does not provide specific hospitality to those invited to receive honorary degrees. However, when an individual accepts an invitation to receive an honorary degree, the University offers to pay reasonable travel and accommodation costs to enable the individual and a family member or guest to attend the ceremony.

North West Regional College

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to provide copies of all correspondence between his Department and the governing body and the principal of the North West Regional College in relation to the on-going industrial relations dispute at the college.

(AQW 6130/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department has encouraged the governing body of North West Regional College to take all necessary steps to help resolve the current dispute between college management and the University and College Union (UCU). Following receipt of the report it commissioned into the application of redundancy and redeployment procedures, the governing body is considering the findings and is undertaking its own review of the background to the dispute. In the circumstances, I do not consider that the release of correspondence regarding this matter would be conducive to its resolution.

PricewaterhouseCoopers' Report into Human Resource Practices at the North West Regional College

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to provide copies of (i) all versions of PricewaterhouseCoopers' report into human resource practices at the North West Regional College; and (ii) all correspondence from (a) the governing body of the college; and (b) PricewaterhouseCoopers in relation to the reports.

(AQW 6131/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Governing Body of North West Regional College commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers to undertake a review of the application of redundancy and redeployment procedures by the college's management. The Governing Body is considering the findings of that report with a view to taking any further steps it deems necessary to address the concerns that have been raised. In the circumstances, the publication of correspondence on this matter would not assist the resolution of the dispute. However, I have referred the Member's request for a copy of the PWC report to the Chair of the Governing Body, for consideration.

Bridge to Employment Places in Software Development/Software Testing

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the (i) number; and (ii) location of Bridge to Employment places in software development/software testing in each constituency.

(AQW 6132/11-15)

Dr Farry: In 2009/10 there were 32 successful placements from Bridge to Employment in software development/software testing in Belfast South.

In 2010/11 there were 61 in Belfast South and 23 in Foyle.

Undergraduate Places at the Magee Campus and Coleraine Campus of the University of Ulster

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the net increase/decrease in undergraduate places at the (i) Magee campus; and (ii) Coleraine campus of the University of Ulster, resulting from the announcement by the University's Vice-Chancellor on rationalisation at the campuses.

(AQW 6133/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University of Ulster has said that its rationalisation of places is due to the additional places allocated to the University by my Department and the need to achieve operational efficiencies. Places funded by both my Department and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) are affected. The net impact is as follows:

Magee campus:

(i) +380

Coleraine campus:

(ii) 0 (zero)

The University has also stated that these changes will be phased in over the next 3 years in line with the release of the additional places funded by my Department.

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

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is meant by the term 'agreed, in principle' contained in his Department's press release of 21 December 2011, which states that the Stranmillis University College Governors had 'agreed, in principle' to the merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast given the discontent around the proposed merger, the disparity with St Mary's University College, Belfast and the suspension of the merger discussions.

(AQW 6187/11-15)

Dr Farry: The term 'agreed, in principle' means that the Governing Body of Stranmillis has agreed to a merger of the College with Queen's University Belfast but recognises that this is subject to the completion of due process including approval by the Assembly of relevant legislation to discontinue the College.

Catholic Certificate of Religious Education

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 6104/11-15, whether St Mary's University College, Belfast has a rule, directive or standing order, on the instruction of representatives of the Catholic Church, that it will not accommodate Stranmillis University College students in the sitting of the Catholic Certificate of Religious Education.

(AQW 6427/11-15)

Dr Farry: I referred the Member's question to St. Mary's University College and I have been informed that there are no rules, directives or instructions emanating from any source which would prevent the College from offering the Certificate of Religious Education to students from Stranmillis University College.

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

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether Queen's University, Belfast has offered Methodist College, Belfast the opportunity to exchange sites with Stranmillis University College, Belfast, should the proposed merger of Queen's and Stranmillis go ahead.

(AQW 6504/11-15)

Dr Farry: Queen's University Belfast has advised me that it has not offered Methodist College, Belfast the opportunity to exchange sites with Stranmillis University College, Belfast should the proposed merger of Queen's and Stranmillis go ahead.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the time frame for the planned consultation on Education Maintenance Allowance.

(AQW 6597/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can advise the Member that my Department and the Department of Education are currently considering a range of options for the future of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme.

Once joint Ministerial agreement has been secured on the options to be taken forward, it is intended that these options will be presented to the Executive as soon as practically possible and this will be followed by a public consultation.

Any proposals to change the current provision of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme in Northern Ireland will also be subject to the appropriate equality considerations.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

InvestNI: East Antrim

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many initial business advice sessions, training plans and business plans have been delivered by InvestNI in the East Antrim constituency since 30 September 2011.

(AQO 1043/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Invest NI is not currently delivering a Business Start Programme.

Invest NI had proposed to launch a new Business Start Programme on 1st October 2011. However the launch of this programme has been delayed as a result of legal action by Enterprise Northern Ireland challenging the award decision.

Those individuals in East Antrim interested in starting a business can access relevant advice and guidance through Invest NI's North Eastern Office in Ballymena.

Jobs Fund: West Belfast

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many jobs have been created in West Belfast as a result of the Jobs Fund since its establishment.

(AQO 1037/11-15)

Mrs Foster: To date The Jobs Fund, through its Neighbourhood Renewal Area Business Start grant, has issued offers of support to sixty three individuals to start new businesses in West Belfast. While many of these businesses are still at a very early stage, this support has already led directly to the creation of 19 new jobs.

In addition, a further nine new young entrepreneurs aged 16-24 have also been offered support through the NEET Business Start Grant (aimed at young people Not in Employment, Education or Training). The Jobs Fund has also provided support to three social enterprises based in West Belfast which will create a further seven new jobs.

As you know, the Jobs Fund is ongoing and Invest NI is continuing to build a pipeline of projects which will lead to further new job creation in West Belfast in the near future.

Tourism: “The Gathering”

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact on visitor numbers arising from the initiative taken by the Dublin government to launch ‘The Gathering: An Irish Homecoming’ in 2013.

(AQO 1039/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Gathering is an initiative being run by the Republic of Ireland Government with the aim of attracting the diaspora home for a holiday during 2013. Any increase in tourism numbers to the Island is to be welcomed and Northern Ireland is well placed to benefit as the initiative fits in well with our plans for 2013 when Londonderry is the UK City of Culture and Northern Ireland is hosting the World Police and Fire Games. Not to mention that we will also have Titanic Belfast and the new Causeway Visitor Centre to offer tourists in 2013.

We will capitalise on all the tourism initiatives running in 2013 to maximize visitor numbers to Northern Ireland.

Golf: Irish Open

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline how her Department intends to maximise the tourism potential arising from the Irish Open Golf Competition that is to be held in Portrush.

(AQO 1040/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The staging of the Irish Open in July at Royal Portrush presents a wonderful opportunity for both NITB and Tourism Ireland to showcase golf to prospective visitors in the UK, Ireland and worldwide. Tourism Ireland will exploit every potential promotional opportunity this year in Great Britain, and in other important golf markets, to capitalise on the potential of this prestigious sporting event and have extended their ‘Home of Champions’ campaign for 2012.

The Irish Open will be integrated into the ni 2012 marketing activity and be included in all the key communications.

Jobs Fund

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the Jobs Fund.

(AQO 1041/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As you will be aware, the £19 million Jobs Fund has been developed to help businesses create new, sustainable jobs that will tackle our current levels of unemployment.

To date there has been an encouraging uptake and the Jobs Fund is already making a positive impact on achieving its target of creating 4,000 new jobs by March 2014. The largest single project announced under the fund so far was the 336 job announcement by Capita Life and Pensions in Belfast. Alongside this there have been a number of smaller announcements where businesses have been supported to create more modest, but no less important, numbers of jobs. These have included Creative Composites in Lisburn, Axa Insurance, Fresh Food Kitchen and One Stop Data - all based in Londonderry, Enterprise Stationary in Lurgan and most recently JMG Systems based in Omagh. Collectively these projects illustrate the range of businesses which can benefit from the fund.

The Jobs Fund also includes support for new business starts by residents of Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRA) and by young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and this support has already led to the creation of almost 100 new jobs.

Across all its measures the Jobs Fund has now actually created over 300 new jobs. I can also confirm that Invest NI is maintaining a healthy pipeline of potential projects and at present there are over 60 diverse projects at different stages of development. Collectively these proposals have the potential to create a further 1,250 new jobs.

Renewable Energy

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what lessons her Department has learnt from the manner in which the Scottish Government has promoted renewable energy sources.
(AQO 1042/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Scottish Government is committed to generating an equivalent of 100% of electricity demand from renewable sources by 2020 given the high level of renewable resources available in Scotland.

The Northern Ireland target is to achieve 40% electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020. This is an evidence based target set against the amount of renewable resource available.

The cost of additional grid infrastructure required to facilitate renewables will be met by our relatively small consumer base whereas in Scotland, the cost is spread across all GB consumers.

Hotels: Ballycastle

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what her Department is doing to increase the number of hotel rooms for tourists in the Ballycastle area.
(AQO 1044/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The development of 4 & 5 star hotels in the region is documented as a strategic action in the Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Masterplan 2004 – 2013 and NITB supports this.

Investment in hotel accommodation will require the private sector to take the lead albeit that they can apply for support through Invest NI.

Invest NI will meet with any promoter and NITB's Quality & Standards Unit can also provide advice regarding compliance with tourism legislation and star rating requirements.

InvestNI: Walsh Doherty Capital

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the nature of the relationship between InvestNI and Walsh Doherty Capital.
(AQO 1045/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Other than being an invitee to an event originally planned for October 2011 which subsequently did not take place, Invest NI does not, nor ever has had, any relationship with Walsh Doherty.

Gas Network

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on her plans to expand the gas network.
(AQO 1046/11-15)

Mrs Foster: During 2011, my Department carried out a 3 month consultation on the potential for extending the natural gas network in Northern Ireland. This closed on 30 September 2011 with 29 responses received. I have assessed the responses and consider that there is sufficient support for extension of the natural gas network to allow the matter to be progressed to the next stage. This will involve preparation of the outline business case, followed by a more detailed economic appraisal and close working with the Utility Regulator in relation to the nature and geographical extent of prospective gas licence areas. In respect of taking gas to towns in the West of Northern Ireland, a licence competition(s) and award, network design, and various consents will be necessary. Hence construction of any new gas transmission networks is unlikely to commence before spring 2015, with gas distribution roll-out following thereafter.

Hotels: North Antrim

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the need for additional hotel accommodation on the North Antrim coast from a tourism perspective.

(AQO 1047/11-15)

Mrs Foster: NITB is undertaking a research exercise aimed at identifying future tourism accommodation requirements. Without pre-judging results it is likely that this will continue to highlight the requirement for accommodation on the north coast.

Development of hotels in the region is documented in the Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Masterplan 2004-2013.

Department of the Environment

Breaches of Planning Applications

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of breaches of planning applications for conservation areas in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4431/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Enforcement cases are categorised on the Departments IT data base by Breach Type. The number of cases relating to Breach of Conditions investigated by the Department in each of the last 3 years is set out in the table below.

| | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | Total |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Breach of Condition | 778 | 551 | 252 | 1581 |

To identify which cases relate to Conservation Areas a manual search of files would need to be carried out. This is disproportionate in terms of time and costs and would result in unvalidated statistics being released.

It is however possible to extract information in relation to demolition in conservation areas from the database.

The number of cases relating to the alleged demolition within Conservation Areas investigated by the Department in each of the last 3 business years is set out in the table below.

| | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | Total |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Demolition in Conservation Area | 8 | 6 | 5 | 19 |

In terms of 'live' cases, as of 1 December 2011, there were 3 live cases relating to the alleged demolition within Conservation Areas under investigation by the Department.

Unnecessary Packaging for Products

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what steps his Department intends to take to reduce the amount of unnecessary packaging for products, particularly products aimed at children.

(AQW 4667/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department, in conjunction with DEFRA and the Devolved Administrations of Scotland and Wales, developed a strategy in June 2009 'Making the most of packaging' aimed at reducing the impact of packaging on the environment and encouraging design based on sustainability principles. This strategy underpins proposals and targets for reducing packaging through producer responsibility legislation and initiatives such as the 'Courtauld Commitment'.

The Courtauld Commitment is a voluntary agreement between the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP, an organisation funded by the Department) and members of the British Retail Consortium, the Food and Drink Federation and manufacturing sectors that sets targets and aims, amongst other things, to reduce primary packaging. As part of its wider work on packaging reductions, WRAP will work with manufacturers and retailers products considered excessively packaged e.g. work already carried out with industry has resulted in a 25-30% reduction in Easter Egg packaging. The current agreement runs until December 2012 when results will be reported.

The Department is currently developing new ambitious targets for recovery and recycling of packaging waste up to 2017 through amendments to the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (NI) 2007. It is anticipated that the introduction of these industry targets will reduce the amount of non - recyclable primary packaging used in their products and result in an additional 2.3million tonnes of packaging being diverted from landfill compared to 2010.

The Department is also involved in educating children through its Rethink Waste campaign and partial funding of the Eco- Schools initiative whereby schools and their children are encouraged to develop environmental awareness and actions which extend to the wider community. By participating in events such as waste free lunch initiatives and reducing packaging in lunch boxes children are made aware of the impact of excess packaging on the environment.

During 2010/11 the Department provided grant assistance of £80k to Tidy NI to fund the Eco-Schools Project. This grant was awarded to update educational 'waste' resources and to boost Eco-school registration to around 60% of all NI schools. This funding also assisted with the production of new Key Stage books to support the waste related messages, especially the 3R message – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, within the Eco-Schools Programme and be more broadly available for children online and at libraries. In addition, Bryson House was also awarded a Rethink Waste (Revenue) grant of £62k to implement a number of measureable waste prevention activities in schools. These activities are undertaken in conjunction with TidyNI as part of the Eco-Schools project.

To ensure that this work continues an additional injection of funding amounting to £105,000 has been made available during this current financial year with a further £80,000 set aside up to 2014.

Derelict Buildings and Incomplete Brownfield Sites

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of derelict buildings and incomplete brownfield sites which have become eyesores and which could potentially become (i) areas for fly-tipping; or (ii) adventure playgrounds for children.

(AQW 4733/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am becoming increasingly aware of the growing problem of derelict buildings and incomplete brownfield sites that have the potential to become eyesores, and which could be used as areas for fly-tipping or adventure playgrounds for children.

As Minister I convened an interagency discussion in Portstewart on 7th October 2011 to address the growing problem of dereliction and dilapidation in the coastal towns of Portrush and Portstewart. However, this is a problem clearly prevalent in many of our settlements.

I considered the summit an opportune time for myself as Minister, to show good authority, to intervene and maximise response from those who have a responsibility in tackling these issues in our settlements. In attendance were Planning officials, Coleraine Borough Council, Environmental Services, NIHE, DSD and the Portrush Regeneration Manager.

Officials have advised that the Department of the Environment has no powers to make developers implement a grant of planning permission or to force the completion of any building works that have begun on site. Whilst Article 37 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 (the Planning Order) enables the Department to terminate a planning permission, in certain circumstances, invoking these powers would not have the desired effect at those sites where the developer is not implementing the permission due to the current economic climate.

A number of other Government Departments and statutory bodies do have powers, however, to address some of the problems associated with derelict buildings and incomplete brownfield sites across Northern Ireland.

District councils have powers under Articles 65 and 66 of the Pollution Control and Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 to deal with defective premises that are in such a state as to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance, and to deal with ruinous and dilapidated buildings and neglected sites that are seriously detrimental to the amenities of a neighbourhood. In certain circumstances, district councils may also be able to take action under; section 75 of the Town Improvement (Ireland) Act 1854, where the condition of premises gives rise to a danger to neighbours or passers by; sections 107 to 127 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878, in respect of premises which are in such a state as to be a nuisance or prejudicial to health; or section one of the Public Health and Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1962, which applies section 30 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907, in respect of dangerous buildings etc which are fronting, adjoining or abutting a street or public footpath.

The Minister for Social Development (DSD) has advised that his Department is aware of the potential hazards presented by derelict buildings and incomplete brownfield sites. His Department is working closely with other organisations such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, who are also taking forward work on empty homes in order to both reduce the consequences of blight and increase housing supply particularly in the private sector, local councils and the respective property owners to ensure all steps are taken to minimise such risks. His Department's Development Offices monitor the situation in this respect very closely and are proactive in introducing appropriate barriers to deter such activity.

The Minister for Regional Development, has advised that as the majority of buildings are located on land adjacent to public roads, it is the responsibility of property owners, or occupiers of those lands, to ensure that such properties or building sites do not endanger or obstruct road users.

During routine maintenance inspections, his Department's Roads Service may identify buildings or properties that could endanger or obstruct road users. Members of the public or public representatives would also, from time to time, report suspect buildings/properties to a local Roads Service Section Office. In both cases, these reports are usually forwarded to the local council's Building Control office, for attention.

In some cases, Roads Service may also try to identify the owners/occupiers of the building, to seek their co-operation in removing the danger, which may include the erection of temporary signing and fencing. Should this course of action fail, Roads Service has powers, under Article 51 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993, to serve a notice on the owner/occupier. This would require them to carry out such works so as to remove the hazard, if in Roads Service's opinion, it considers that the building, wall or other structure is in such a condition that it could present a danger to road users.

Where an owner/occupier does not comply with the requirements of the notice, or cannot be identified, Roads Service may carry out the necessary remedial works to ensure the safety of road users and will seek to recover the costs, where possible.

In an attempt to address the issue of vacancy/dereliction, I am considering the setting up of an inter-departmental group, to focus on prioritising and agreeing actions to enhance and improve the physical environment and image of many of our settlements.

I am also considering a pilot working arrangement in advance of RPA, to bring together the functions of economic development, planning, regeneration and local roads to work on practical solutions with a focus on place making.

Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what additional measures will be necessary to meet the new 35 percent reduction target in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, as outlined in the Draft Programme for Government.

(AQW 4795/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The 35% target is in the draft PfG. I intend to consult in a dedicated way with external groups, to make a further decision on “stretching” the 35%. That said, the Draft Programme for Government 2011-15 commits Northern Ireland to continue to work towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 35% on 1990 levels by 2025.¹ The latest annual projection figure (based on 2008 data) indicates that Northern Ireland emissions in 2025 are likely to reduce by 33% compared with the baseline (1990).² This lends weight to the argument for a more challenging target. The Northern Ireland Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Action Plan published in February 2011 sets out the existing measures that are considered likely to achieve this level of reduction.

It is the role of the Cross Departmental Working Group on Climate Change, which I chair, to monitor progress against the activities contained in the Action Plan and take steps to agree amendments, if appropriate, on the basis of the annual projection figure to ensure that we remain on a trajectory to meet the Programme for Government target.

However, there is more to do. The Committee on Climate Change provided advice to me recently that suggested there is potential for further reductions, particularly in transport, agriculture and residential emissions. It is my view that climate change legislation can help deliver further reductions and contribute to greater certainty on progress towards achieving our target for greenhouse gas emission reductions. I shall be urging the Executive to put challenging environmental targets on the face of a climate Bill.

Human Waste Sludge Site on the A37 Broad Road, Limavady

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the circumstances which led to the implementation of enforcement processes at the human waste sludge site on the A37 Broad Road, Limavady, in April 2011.

(AQW 5017/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency has granted a mobile plant licence to a company to permit the storage and treatment of sewage sludge in an old quarry alongside the A37 Limavady to Coleraine Road.

The licence includes a range of conditions to ensure the sludge is managed properly and fully complies with waste legislation. The licence also includes a Site Specific Working Plan.

The company was issued with a Statutory Notice on 8 April 2011 to remedy breaches of the Site Specific Working Plan, relating to odour, mud on the road and the quantity of material treated at the site. These breaches had been substantiated by the Waste Licencing Section in NIEA as a result of a site inspection.

The Notice required the company to comply with the Plan and only treat a maximum of 250 tonnes of sludge per day.

As Minister, I am determined to put in place and have demonstrated a rigorous enforcement regime. I believe this is an essential element of good planning and enforcement and plan to roll out a number of interventions in this regard.

Double Glazed Windows in Listed Buildings

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the total number of (i) successful applications; and (ii) unsuccessful applications for the installation of double glazed windows in listed buildings in each of the last five years.

(AQW 5023/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The installation of double glazing in listed buildings in all cases requires Listed Building Consent. The Department does not hold information in relation to the number of applications which

1 <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/programme-for-government-and-budget-v1.htm>

2 http://www.doeni.gov.uk/northern_ireland_action_plan_on_greenhouse_gas_emissions_reductions.pdf

specifically relate to or include the installation of double glazed windows; to identify such cases would require a manual search of files for Listed Building Consent. This is disproportionate in terms of time and costs and would result in unvalidated statistics being released.

The following table shows the numbers of applications for Listed Building Consent as published in the Department's Annual Publications Table 1. The figures do not correlate to the number of 'live' applications under consideration for each of the last 3 business years – I regret I have only information for the last 3 years - but only to the numbers of cases received, decided, approved or withdrawn within each business year.

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATIONS

| | Received | Decided | Approved | Withdrawn |
|-------|----------|---------|----------|-----------|
| 08/09 | 299 | 322 | 307 | 24 |
| 09/10 | 282 | 276 | 262 | 26 |
| 10/11 | 263 | 271 | 245 | 13 |

Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the additional measures which are necessary to meet the new target of a 35 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, as outlined in the Programme for Government.

(AQW 5037/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Draft Programme for Government 2011-15 commits Northern Ireland to continue to work towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 35% on 1990 levels by 2025.³ The latest annual projection figure (based on 2008 data) indicates that Northern Ireland emissions in 2025 are likely to reduce by 33% compared with the baseline (1990).⁴ The Northern Ireland Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Action Plan published in February 2011 sets out the existing measures that are considered likely to achieve this level of reduction. In these circumstances, a 35% rate is well within our reach. Indeed, it may prove the case that the PFG should be amended after consultation to achieve a more robust target.

It is the role of the Cross Departmental Working Group (CDWG) on Climate Change, which I chair, to monitor progress against the activities contained in the Action Plan which is also reviewed and updated annually. The CDWG will take steps to agree amendments to the measures in the Action Plan, if appropriate, on the basis of the annual projection figure to ensure that we remain on a trajectory to meet the Executive's Programme for Government target.

However, I believe that there is more to do. The Committee on Climate Change provided advice to me recently that confirms there is potential for further reductions, particularly in transport, agriculture and residential emissions. I will therefore continue to challenge all in government to do more. My view is that we should use all the robust and expert evidence at our disposal to set climate change targets which are rigorous and challenging. I believe new local climate change legislation can help deliver further reductions and contribute to greater certainty on progress towards achieving our target for greenhouse gas emission reductions.

Reminder Letters for MOT Expiration and Vehicle Tax Expiration

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department has spent on sending reminder letters for (i) MOT expiration; and (ii) Vehicle Tax expiration in each of the last five years.

(AQW 5124/11-15)

³ <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/programme-for-government-and-budget-v1.htm>

⁴ http://www.doeni.gov.uk/northern_ireland_action_plan_on_greenhouse_gas_emissions_reductions.pdf

Mr Attwood:

- (i) In relation to MOT reminders the costs for sending reminders in each of the last 5 years is as follows:

| Financial Year | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Cost | £156,880 | £166,687 | £169,127 | £195,456 | £209,056 |

Figures include the cost of printing and producing the reminder letter and associated postage costs.

The principle of issuing reminders is not being reviewed at present primarily since it is considered to have contributed to the reduction in MOT non-compliance from over 28% in 2002 to under 5% currently and since the concomitant increase in demand for testing has enabled the efficiency of the service to be improved progressively and enabled the test fee to be retained at its current level since 1 October 2005.

As reported separately, however, the question of whether reminders should be issued by post, by email or by SMS is currently under active consideration in the context of a wide range of relevant factors including the implications of any changes for costs, the accuracy of records, compliance and customer satisfaction.

- (ii) In relation to vehicle tax reminders, vehicle licensing is an excepted matter that is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport, but it is administered in NI by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) under an agreement between the Department and the Department for Transport (DfT).

The policy in relation to reminder notices is set by DfT and its agency, DVLA and the costs are met in full by DVLA.

DVA is unable to provide information on the costs associated with the issue of reminders for the period since May 2010 as from this date the bulk printing service is provided by DVLA through its in-house printing unit.

Additionally for the period 2006 to April 2010, DVA are unable to provide the bulk printing costs associated with the printing of reminders as during this period Fujitsu Services Ltd provided DVA with a range of bulk printing services under a managed service maintenance and support contract, the Bulk Printing charges were not broken down into the individual items of printing. However, DVA are able to provide volumes of reminders issued in this period as well as the associated stationery and postage costs.

| Financial Year | Cost | Volumes |
|----------------|----------|-----------|
| 2006/07 | £215,340 | 1,119,166 |
| 2007/08 | £232,527 | 1,174,613 |
| 2008/09 | £255,790 | 1,232,967 |
| 2009/10 | £273,694 | 1,277,498 |
| 2010/11 | £41,920* | 111,393* |

* Relates to April 2010 only, as from May 2010 all printing and dispatch was carried out by DVLA

SMS Reminder Scheme for MOT Expiration and Vehicle Tax Expiration

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has considered the introduction of an SMS reminder scheme for (i) MOT expiration; and (ii) Vehicle Tax expiration.

(AQW 5125/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In relation to MOT expiration, the Driver and Vehicle Agency has and continues to consider the merits of issuing reminders by SMS. It is, however, recognised that the collection and maintenance of up-to-date information particularly mobile telephone numbers could be significant.

In relation to vehicle tax, vehicle licensing is an excepted matter which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport, but it is administered in NI by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) under an agreement between the Department and the Department for Transport. The provision of services to NI customers is a policy matter for DVLA (Swansea), however they do not currently offer this service in Britain. I am advised that DVLA (Swansea) do review enhancements to customer service as technology develops and I am advised that any future proposals will consider how those services can be extended to NI.

Article 31 Planning Decisions

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many Article 31 planning decisions have been issued in (i) 2008; (ii) 2009; (iii) 2010; and (iv) 1 January 2011 to 5 May 2011.

(AQW 5319/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The number of Article 31 planning decisions issued is available on a financial year basis and is detailed below.

| 1 April 2008 - 31 March 2009 | 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010 | 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 | 1 April 2011 – 5 May 2011 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 26 | 10 | 27 | 2 |

The Planning Forum

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the Planning Forum, to detail (i) the membership; (ii) the terms of reference; (iii) the date of each meeting to date; and (iv.) when and where the minutes of each meeting are published.

(AQW 5501/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) The membership of the Forum is attached at Annex A.
- (ii) The terms of reference for the Forum are attached at Annex B.
- (iii) Meetings have taken place on 12th January 2011, 29th June 2011, 21st September 2011 and 7th December 2011.
- (iv) The minutes of Forum meetings are issued to members of the Forum and published as news items on the Planning website.
- (v) There are 4 sub-groups of the Planning Forum and detail of the membership, purpose, work to date, date of meetings and outcomes so far is included in Annex C.

ANNEX A

PLANNING FORUM MEMBERS

| No. | Name & Position | Organisation |
|------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Michael Worthington (Member of CBI & Managing Director of Pragma Planning & Development Consultants) | CBI |
| 2 | Brett Hannam (Chief Operating Officer and interim CEO of SIB) | SIB |
| 3 | Nigel Lucas – had been John Armstrong (Deputy Secretary) | CEF |

| No. | Name & Position | Organisation |
|-----|---|--------------------------------|
| 4 | Richard Hunter (Member of IoD Northern Ireland Division and Director of R. Robinson & Sons Architects) | IoD |
| 5 | Ald. Jim Dillon (Chair of NILGA's Planning Working Group) | NILGA |
| 6 | Derek McCallan (Chief Executive) | NILGA |
| 7 | Sue Christie (Director) | NIEL |
| 8 | Eamonn McMullan (Martin McDonald retiring as Chief Executive) | Rural Development Council |
| 9 | Diana Thompson (Chair of RTPI NI and an Associate at Michael Burroughs Associates) | RTPI |
| 10 | Nuala O'Neill (RICS Public Policy Executive) or Diana Fitzsimons (RICS Planning spokesperson) | RICS |
| 11 | Norman Hutchinson (President) | RSUA |
| 12 | Dr. Jennifer Donald – had been Grainia Long (Policy & Public Affairs Officer) | Chartered Institute of Housing |
| 13 | Prof. Greg Lloyd (Head of School of the Built Environment) | UUJ |
| 14 | Dr. Stephen McKay (Senior lecturer at School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering [SPACE]) | QUB |
| 15 | Una McKernan - had been Seamus McAleavey (Deputy Chief Executive) | NICVA |
| 16 | Paul McTernan (Chairman of IPI Northern Branch and Technical Director of SLR Consulting Ltd) | Irish Planning Institute |
| 17 | Henry Johnston (Director of the Urban Regeneration Strategy Directorate) | DSD |
| 18 | Graeme Hutchinson (Director of Strategic Planning Economics and Statistics Division) | DETI |
| 19 | Steve Chambers (Head of Property Solutions Unit) | Invest NI |
| 20 | Glyn Roberts (Chief Executive) or Des Stephens (Planning Consultant) | NIIRTA |

| No. | Name & Position | Organisation |
|-----|---|--|
| 21 | Colm Bradley (Director) | Community Places |
| 22 | Michael Hegarty (Director) | PLACE |
| 23 | Rita Harkin (Research Officer) | Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (UAHS) |
| 24 | Dr. Brendan Murtagh (Reader at School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering [SPACE]) | QUB |
| 25 | Prof. Michael McGarry (Lecturer at the School of Planning, Architecture and Civil Engineering [SPACE]) | QUB |
| 26 | Claire Ferry (Senior Conservation Officer) | RSPB |

ANNEX B

Terms of Reference for Planning Forum

- To enable engagement with key stakeholders, professional bodies, the universities and other Departments on fundamental planning issues in a systematic and planned way.

ANNEX C

PLANNING FORUM SUB GROUPS

| GROUP 1 – The Planning Reform Bill | Chair: Maggie Smith |
|--|---|
| <p>Aim 1: To advise on whether the proposals for the new Planning Reform Bill are sufficient/establish if further provision is required</p> <p>Aim 2: To examine the potential for Reforms in the Planning Act to be introduced on a voluntary basis in advance of/preparation for the transfer of planning functions [emphasis on Planning Performance Agreements, Pre Application Discussions, etc.]</p> | <p>Members: Maggie Smith (DOE - PPD)</p> <p>Irene Kennedy (DOE – PPD)</p> <p>Michael Hegarty (PLACE)</p> <p>Ken Sterrett (QUB)</p> <p>Colm Bradley (Community Places)</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| GROUP 2 – Streamlining | Chair: Fiona McCandless |
| <p>Aim:</p> <p>To advise on ways to improve the current system including the option of extending the range and type of planning applications which could be streamlined</p> | <p>Members: Fiona McCandless (DOE - LPD)</p> <p>Nigel Lucas (CEF)</p> <p>Michael Worthington (CBI)</p> <p>Ian Wilson (NILGA - Lisburn City Council)</p> <p>Claire Ferry (RSPB)</p> |
| GROUP 3 – Planning & the Economy | Chair: Mary MacIntyre |
| <p>Aim:</p> <p>To examine practical ways of improving planning performance with a particular focus on strategic/specialist applications</p> | <p>Members: Mary MacIntyre (DOE - SPD)</p> <p>Chris Carvill (The Carvill Group)</p> <p>Sue Christie (NIEL)</p> <p>Brendan Murtagh (QUB)</p> <p>Ann McGregor (Chamber of Commerce)</p> <p>Eddie Nicell (Cara Development Ltd)</p> <p>Nigel Lucas (CEF)</p> |
| GROUP 4 – Renewables | Chair: Mary MacIntyre |
| <p>Aim:</p> <p>To look at peat, single wind turbines, windfarms and offshore renewables in the context of planning applications and licensing; along with resources and structures for dealing with such proposals</p> | <p>Members: Graham Seymour (DOE - NIEA)</p> <p>Susanna Allen (NIEA)</p> <p>Michael Gordon (Turley Associates)</p> <p>Simon Kirk (SPD)</p> <p>Anthony McKay (SPD)</p> <p>Michael Harper (B9 energy)</p> <p>Gordon Kyle (SSE Renewables)</p> <p>Paul Carson (Simple Power)</p> <p>Lucy Whitford (Renewable Energy Systems Ltd)</p> |

Issues Being Addressed – Planning Reform Bill – group met on 28 September 2011

- Statement of community involvement;
- New Development Plan System;
- Conservation Areas;
- Funding to Non-Profit Organisations;
- Sustainable Development;
- Development Plans.

Issues Being Addressed – Streamlining – group met on 3 October 2011

- Way Forward – a number of options such as:
 - a All applications to be included except Article 31 strategic applications;

- b Refusals also to be streamlined;
- c Applications with up to 5 objections should remain streamlined;
- d An extension of the categories of applications included in the current agreed extended scheme.
- Option (d) above represented the best way forward and as an interim measure all minor and intermediate applications should be included in the streamlined scheme.
- Agreement was also reached that major applications for housing development up to a maximum of 25 houses should also be included plus office accommodation up to a maximum of 200 sq m. This would result in about 75% of all applications being streamlined.

Issues Being Addressed – Renewables – group met on 3 October 2011

- Marine Renewables – Streamlining of consenting;
- Wind Farms;
- Single Turbines;
- Planning Fees;
- Communication.

Issues Being Addressed – Planning and the Economy – group met on 11 October 2011

- Pre-application Discussions (PADs) – undertake further work in conjunction with CEF to improve the PADs process;
- Time-bound consultations would make a big difference to applicants provided the consultation response was substantive and any information requested was proportionate to the proposal;
- There is a perception of inconsistency in the standard of service and decision making between different offices; and
- The current arrangements for telephone calls through NI Direct are unsatisfactory.
- The Group agreed to undertake further work in conjunction with CEF to improve the pre-application process and to undertake relevant training to enhance case officer's understanding of the economics of development and to improve consistency in decision making.

Recyclable Material Collected in Each Council Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the amount of recyclable material collected in each council area in each of the last 12 months.

(AQW 5612/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It is not possible to detail the amount of all recyclable material collected (i.e. municipal and non-municipal waste) in each council area as the data available for non-municipal collected materials cannot distinguish between those materials collected for recycling and those for recovery.

It is however possible to provide the amount and nature of recyclable material collected by each council at the kerbside, civic amenity sites and at "bring banks" during the period April 2010 to March 2011, which is the latest period for which final validated figures are available, see 'Table 8' below (Table 8a classifies further the 'other waste' material types collected at these sites). It is not possible for the Department to break down these annual totals on a monthly basis, as the vast majority of District Councils do not enter data on a monthly basis.

The source of the data in both Table 8 and Table 8a is the Northern Ireland Municipal Waste Management Statistics 2010/11 Annual Report Appendix published 8/12/2011 which is available via the web link below.

It should be noted that:

- a Table 8 does not include the amount of recycled materials which came from residual (i.e. non-source segregated) wastes (e.g. household black bag waste) as these wastes were not collected with the intention of recycling but rather for disposal.
- b Further Table 8 does not take account of material collected by the council but then subsequently rejected for example by material recovery facilities.

The Northern Ireland Municipal Waste Management Statistics Annual Report 2010/11 and its associated Appendix provide further information (including some historical trends) which may be of use and are available via the links below:

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/waste_2011.pdf

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/waste_2011_appendix.xls

Further information relating to waste reporting and councils is also available via the link below:

http://www.doeni.uk/niea/waste-home/municipal_data_reporting.htm

TABLE 8: MATERIAL TYPES COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING (INC COMPOSTING) AT KERBSIDE, CIVIC AMENITY SITES AND BRING SITES IN NORTHERN IRELAND, 2010/11 UNITS ARE TONNES

| Council (alphabetically within each of the 3 Waste Management Groups) | Glass | Metal | Paper | Plastic | Compostable (excluding all wood) | WEEE | 'Other waste' collected | All recycled materials collected |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---|-------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Antrim | 450 | 565 | 2,163 | 211 | 7,529 | 544 | 5,664 | 17,124 |
| Ards | 1,079 | 814 | 3,632 | 377 | 8,366 | 684 | 1,876 | 16,828 |
| Ballymena | 1,050 | 346 | 2,379 | 269 | 5,068 | 314 | 1,717 | 11,143 |
| Belfast | 2,847 | 1,775 | 10,779 | 1,135 | 14,707 | 1,631 | 4,362 | 37,236 |
| Carrickfergus | 896 | 325 | 1,292 | 215 | 4,117 | 282 | 2,573 | 9,701 |
| Castlereagh | 1,263 | 457 | 2,796 | 374 | 6,385 | 429 | 1,420 | 13,125 |
| Down | 955 | 474 | 2,839 | 290 | 4,151 | 535 | 862 | 10,106 |
| Larne | 474 | 349 | 1,721 | 163 | 3,664 | 335 | 1,003 | 7,709 |
| Lisburn | 840 | 804 | 5,093 | 517 | 11,760 | 978 | 4,085 | 24,075 |
| Newtownabbey | 2,002 | 666 | 3,231 | 524 | 9,793 | 689 | 1,352 | 18,256 |
| North Down | 1,204 | 813 | 4,002 | 401 | 8,833 | 748 | 4,495 | 20,496 |
| Ballymoney | 248 | 234 | 1,329 | 179 | 2,193 | 212 | 649 | 5,045 |
| Coleraine | 735 | 448 | 2,742 | 349 | 4,542 | 476 | 1,566 | 10,857 |
| Derry | 1,226 | 864 | 4,783 | 624 | 1,764 | 784 | 2,820 | 12,866 |
| Limavady | 335 | 160 | 1,948 | 342 | 1,748 | 155 | 515 | 5,201 |
| Magherafelt | 336 | 333 | 2,199 | 300 | 5,655 | 300 | 2,028 | 11,152 |
| Moyle | 178 | 97 | 765 | 111 | 692 | 82 | 218 | 2,142 |
| Strabane | 527 | 328 | 1,889 | 250 | 929 | 180 | 809 | 4,912 |

| Council (alphabetically within each of the 3 Waste Management Groups) | Glass | Metal | Paper | Plastic | Compostable (excluding all wood) | WEEE | 'Other waste' collected | All recycled materials collected |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---|---------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Armagh | 1,199 | 438 | 2,176 | 344 | 4,921 | 328 | 2,473 | 11,881 |
| Banbridge | 1,206 | 407 | 1,922 | 252 | 8,500 | 427 | 1,949 | 14,663 |
| Cookstown | 375 | 240 | 2,040 | 316 | 3,146 | 242 | 1,733 | 8,093 |
| Craigavon | 748 | 672 | 4,894 | 453 | 7,155 | 801 | 1,861 | 16,583 |
| Dungannon | 413 | 342 | 2,998 | 472 | 4,983 | 407 | 1,312 | 10,927 |
| Fermanagh | 1,108 | 587 | 3,698 | 996 | 2,764 | 474 | 1,883 | 11,510 |
| Newry & Mourne | 1,010 | 564 | 5,078 | 469 | 5,028 | 666 | 2,138 | 14,954 |
| Omagh | 552 | 434 | 2,876 | 443 | 3,612 | 431 | 1,782 | 10,130 |
| Northern Ireland | 23,256 | 13,535 | 81,266 | 10,375 | 142,005 | 13,133 | 53,145 | 336,715 |

Totals are calculated on exact figures and then rounded to the nearest tonne. Thus they may not always exactly agree with similarly rounded individual council tonnages above.

TABLE 8A: 'OTHER WASTE' MATERIAL TYPES COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING (INC COMPOSTING) AT KERBSIDE, CIVIC AMENITY SITE AND BRING SITES IN NORTHERN IRELAND, 2010/11 UNITS ARE TONNES

| Council (alphabetically within each of the 3 Waste Management Groups) | Batteries | Oil | Paint | Rubble | Textile | Wood | Un-classified | All 'other waste' collected |
|--|------------------|------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------------------|--|
| Antrim | 3 | 19 | 53 | 3,564 | 92 | 1,933 | 0 | 5,664 |
| Ards | 19 | 35 | 35 | 0 | 83 | 1,703 | 0 | 1,876 |
| Ballymena | 6 | 33 | 11 | 1,071 | 73 | 524 | 0 | 1,717 |
| Belfast | 36 | 25 | 143 | 102 | 449 | 3,576 | 30 | 4,362 |
| Carrickfergus | 2 | 16 | 21 | 1,680 | 61 | 769 | 24 | 2,573 |
| Castlereagh | 14 | 11 | 42 | 782 | 105 | 457 | 10 | 1,420 |
| Down | 8 | 12 | 32 | 0 | 101 | 706 | 2 | 862 |
| Larne | 11 | 14 | 6 | 214 | 68 | 681 | 8 | 1,003 |
| Lisburn | 23 | 10 | 59 | 2,337 | 135 | 1,497 | 24 | 4,085 |
| Newtownabbey | 22 | 15 | 52 | 44 | 112 | 1,106 | 0 | 1,352 |
| North Down | 26 | 15 | 74 | 2,731 | 89 | 1,561 | 0 | 4,495 |
| Ballymoney | 6 | 9 | 15 | 326 | 46 | 113 | 134 | 649 |
| Coleraine | 5 | 19 | 38 | 218 | 82 | 944 | 260 | 1,566 |

| Council (alphabetically within each of the 3 Waste Management Groups) | Batteries | Oil | Paint | Rubble | Textile | Wood | Un-classified | All 'other waste' collected |
|--|------------------|------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------|--|
| Derry | 13 | 30 | 134 | 955 | 113 | 981 | 594 | 2,820 |
| Limavady | 0 | 10 | 17 | 0 | 64 | 276 | 148 | 515 |
| Magherafelt | 4 | 14 | 20 | 1,104 | 68 | 602 | 217 | 2,028 |
| Moyle | 2 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 38 | 71 | 87 | 218 |
| Strabane | 5 | 5 | 27 | 13 | 47 | 526 | 187 | 809 |
| Armagh | 7 | 18 | 20 | 1,460 | 106 | 862 | 0 | 2,473 |
| Banbridge | 11 | 17 | 0 | 1,455 | 159 | 260 | 46 | 1,949 |
| Cookstown | 3 | 18 | 16 | 803 | 114 | 619 | 161 | 1,733 |
| Craigavon | 16 | 36 | 71 | 0 | 136 | 1,056 | 546 | 1,861 |
| Dungannon | 6 | 20 | 0 | 14 | 113 | 922 | 237 | 1,312 |
| Fermanagh | 8 | 23 | 53 | 14 | 156 | 1,322 | 307 | 1,883 |
| Newry & Mourne | 7 | 13 | 30 | 8 | 212 | 1,191 | 676 | 2,138 |
| Omagh | 11 | 30 | 54 | 449 | 97 | 931 | 210 | 1,782 |
| Northern Ireland | 276 | 470 | 1,031 | 19,353 | 2,919 | 25,189 | 3,907 | 53,145 |

Totals are calculated on exact figures and then rounded to the nearest tonne. Thus they may not always exactly agree with similarly rounded individual council tonnages above.

Historic Debt Between District Councils

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department intends to take to address the differential in the historic debt between some district councils, ahead of the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 5675/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I attach a schedule which outlines the current historic debt levels in all 26 Councils and the particular figures between Councils that will be merged under the Executive's 11 model. Of course, under the 15 model, six councils would not be subject to merge and the debt issue would not arise. The 11 model makes the debt issue more difficult than would be the case under a higher number.

This issue will however need to be addressed in the consideration of a number of complex aspects of council finances and will pose a significant challenge to councils and government in the run up to the creation of the new councils.

SCHEDULE 1 TOTAL COUNCIL DEBT AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 2011

| Council | Total | 11 Model Structure |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Antrim | 15,182,481 | 61,225,928 |
| Newtownabbey | 46,043,447 | |

| Council | Total | 11 Model Structure |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Ards | 13,971,249 | 42,420,381 |
| North Down | 28,449,132 | |
| Armagh | 27,605,117 | 56,261,226 |
| Banbridge | 20,663,518 | |
| Craigavon | 7,992,591 | |
| Ballymena | 24,436,386 | 60,133,653 |
| Carrickfergus | 21,469,985 | |
| Larne | 14,227,282 | |
| Ballymoney | 9,454,077 | |
| Coleraine | 28,508,954 | 59,113,760 |
| Limavady | 12,395,920 | |
| Moyle | 8,754,809 | |
| Cookstown | 1,487,123 | |
| Dungannon | 3,481,440 | 4,968,563 |
| Magherafelt | 0 | |
| Castlereagh * | 18,612,585 | |
| Lisburn | 18,525,881 | 37,138,466 |
| Derry | 26,149,594 | |
| Strabane | 2,309,732 | 28,459,326 |
| Down | 23,928,145 | |
| Newry & Mourne | 18,800,274 | |
| Fermanagh | 3,505,713 | 13,719,690 |
| Omagh | 10,213,977 | |
| Belfast | 25,852,530 | |
| Total | 432,021,942 | |

* Certain areas of Castlereagh Borough Council will merge with Belfast City Council under the proposed 11 model structure.

Fixed Penalty Fines

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of fixed penalty fines that have been imposed since February 2011, broken down by (i) company; and (ii) the reason for the fine.

(AQW 5831/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) has primary responsibility for the licensing and enforcement of heavy goods vehicles and passenger carrying vehicles. The table below details the number of fixed penalty tickets issued by the DVA per offence and type of vehicle under the graduated fixed penalty scheme from its introduction in March 2011 up to 15 December 2011. A fixed penalty ticket is issued not to the company but to the driver of the vehicle at the time of detection of the offence.

In preparation for the implementation of taxi operator licensing, however, new data capture arrangements are being developed for use at the roadside. They will enable all offences committed by taxi drivers to be linked directly to the holders of operator licences.

The Agency has recently introduced new procedures that directly link fixed penalty tickets to licensed goods vehicle and bus operators and these, in addition to convictions and any other relevant data available, are now taken into consideration for operator licensing suspension and revocation purposes.

| Nature of Offence | Number of Fixed Penalty Notices Issued | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------|------------|----------|------------|
| | Goods Vehicle | Coach Bus Minibus | Taxi | Car | Total |
| Defective exhaust and silencer system | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Defective lights | | | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Defective tyre | 2 | | 38 | 1 | 41 |
| Driving with, causing or permitting no insurance | | 1 | 6 | | 7 |
| Exceeding driving periods | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Excess axle weight | 7 | | | | 7 |
| Excess weight | 71 | | | | 71 |
| Failing to keep tachograph record sheets in clean condition | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Failing to operate switch mechanisms to tachograph | 3 | 3 | | | 6 |
| Failing to take daily rest period | 1 | 1 | | | 2 |
| Failing to wear taxi driver's badge | | | 25 | | 25 |
| No goods vehicle test certificate | 3 | | | | 3 |
| No PSV licence | | 1 | 81 | | 82 |
| No taxi roof sign | | | 8 | | 8 |
| No vehicle test certificate (MOT) | 1 | | | 5 | 6 |
| Overcrowding on PSV | | | 3 | | 3 |
| Using goods vehicle in dangerous condition | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Totals | 90 | 7 | 164 | 7 | 268 |
| Overall Total | | | | | 268 |

Community Planning Legislation for Local Councils

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will introduce community planning legislation for local councils in advance of the reform of local government structures.
(AQW 5857/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The current position on the reform of local government is reflected in the draft Programme for Government 2011-15, published for public consultation on 17th November 2011.

I intend to progress work on Local Government Reform across its varied and complex stages on this basis. I will, however, continue to press my argument for 15 Councils on the grounds of good government and good politics.

Consultation on the draft document ends on 22nd February 2012 and the views expressed on the proposals will then be carefully assessed.

I will then be in a position to consider the way forward with Ministerial colleagues. I will run a series of pilots to help Councils prepare for the transfer but I do not intend at this time to bring forward the proposal you outline.

Car Insurance

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the report published by the Office of Fair Trading into the cost of car insurance in Northern Ireland, what steps his Department intends to take to address the higher cost of car insurance in Northern Ireland compared with Britain.

(AQW 5941/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am keen to work with the insurance industry to identify how issues in relation to the cost of motor insurance in Northern Ireland can best be addressed and shall meet with representatives of the Association of British Insurers on 18 January 2012 to discuss road safety matters and motor insurance costs, particularly in relation to young drivers.

There are a number of practical measures under consideration in the Department to improve road safety which could, potentially, indirectly impact on the cost of motor insurance for young and other novice drivers. I am considering, for example, the outcome of a consultation carried out earlier this year on reforming our Learner and Restricted Driver Schemes and the possibility of introducing a system of Graduated Driver Licensing. Measures under review include:

- raising or removing the 45 mph restriction for learners and restricted drivers;
- allowing learners to take lessons on motorways;
- requiring learner drivers to undergo a minimum learning period;
- revising the practical driving test to make it more representative of 'real life' driving conditions; and
- increasing the duration of the restricted period.

Departmental officials have also been exploring with the local motor insurance industry representatives the potential availability in Northern Ireland of young driver 'Pay How You Drive' insurance products linked to in-car technology capable of monitoring driving performance.

I would also wish to highlight the Department's plans to bring forward legislation to lower the BAC limit from 80mg/100ml of blood to 20mg/100ml for new drivers in the first two years post test.

In all of these ways and others, I am attempting to bear down on car insurance costs.

Prosecutions for Driving Without an MOT Certificate

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of prosecutions for driving without an MOT certificate in each of the last five years.

(AQW 5946/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The enforcement of MOT compliance has historically been carried out by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and the Driver & Vehicle Agency has no relevant data for the last five years. The information has been requested and will be provided in due course.

The new graduated fixed penalty scheme, which was introduced in March 2011, enables DVA enforcement officers to issue fixed penalty tickets for a wide range of road traffic offences, and since 1 March 2011 DVA staff have issued five £60 fixed penalty notices to drivers of private cars where no valid MOT certificates were in force.

Cost of Recruiting Chief Executives and Directors/Heads of Service for Local Councils

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost of recruiting Chief Executives and Directors/Heads of Service for local councils in each of the last two years.

(AQW 6013/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The cost of recruiting Chief Executives and Directors for the 26 District Councils during 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 is provided in the attached table.

AQW 6013/11-15

| Council | Chief Exc Recruitment 2009/2010 (i) | Chief Exc Recruitment 2010/2011 (ii) | Director/Head of Service Recruitment 2009/2010 (iii) | Director/Head of Service Recruitment 2010/2011 (iv) |
|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Antrim | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ards | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Armagh | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ballymena | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ballymoney | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9,794 |
| Banbridge | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Belfast | 0 | 0 | 16,182 | 7,085 |
| Carrickfergus | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Castlereagh | 0 | 18,778 | 0 | 0 |
| Coleraine | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,349 |
| Cookstown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Craigavon | 0 | 25,209 | 0 | 18,150 |
| Derry | 0 | 11,686 | 3,382 | 14,115 |
| Down | 4,504 | 0 | 18,847 | 15,408 |
| Dungannon | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fermanagh | 2,582 | 4,889 | 0 | 0 |
| Larne | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Limavady | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lisburn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10,639 |
| Magherafelt | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Moyle | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Newry & Mourne | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Newtownabbey | 0 | 6,900 | 0 | 5,950 |
| North Down | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15,164 |

| Council | Chief Exc Recruitment 2009/2010 (i) | Chief Exc Recruitment 2010/2011 (ii) | Director/Head of Service Recruitment 2009/2010 (iii) | Director/Head of Service Recruitment 2010/2011 (iv) |
|----------------|--|---|---|--|
| Omagh | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Strabane | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 7,086 | 67,462 | 38,411 | 99,654 |

Flood Plain Areas in the Strategic Flood Map

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what protection, from flood damage and house depreciation, his Department will offer to householders and business owners in the flood plain areas in the Strategic Flood Map, given that his Department was responsible for granting planning permission in those areas.

(AQW 6017/11-15)

Mr Attwood: All relevant planning applications are determined with reference to the Strategic Flood Map for Northern Ireland which was developed by DARD Rivers Agency in consultation with planning officials.

The Department's current policy for the protection of houses and businesses from flood risk is set out in PPS 15: Planning and Flood Risk. Where appropriate, mitigation measures may be required and on occasions permission may be refused where new development within a flood plain would result in a significant flood risk. However, historically many cities and towns in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere in the UK, have been built in flood plains in advance of the introduction of PPS 15 in June 2006.

PPS15 is currently being reviewed to put greater emphasis on flooding from all sources including surface water rather than focusing on flooding from rivers and the sea.

However, the planning system cannot in itself prevent the flooding of properties but it does have a key role to ensure that the development decisions we make today and in the future does not increase flood risk.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify potential flood risk as early in the development process as possible and demonstrate how the development can be made safe through design and flood resilient construction and that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere. The Department's responsibility in respect of flooding does not affect the liability position of developers or owners.

Strategic Flood Map

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department plans to use the Strategic Flood Map when implementing planning policy.

(AQW 6020/11-15)

Mr Attwood: All relevant planning applications are determined with reference to the Strategic Flood Map for Northern Ireland which was developed by DARD Rivers Agency in consultation with planning officials.

DARD Rivers Agency is normally consulted by my Department for advice on applications within flood plains identified on the Strategic Flood Map in accordance with PPS 15 – Planning and Flood Risks. Where appropriate, mitigation measures may be required and on occasions permission may be refused where new development within a flood plain would result in a significant flood risk.

PPS15 is currently being reviewed to put greater emphasis on flooding from all sources including surface water rather than focusing on flooding from rivers and the sea.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the applicant to identify potential flood risk as early in the development process as possible and demonstrate how the development can be made safe through design and flood resilient construction and that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere. The Department's responsibility in respect of flooding does not affect the liability position of developers or owners.

Wind Turbines

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has any evidence of the health impact of wind turbines that are located close to houses.

(AQW 6078/11-15)

Mr Attwood: To date my Department has received no evidence linking the erection of wind turbines to impacts on the health of people living in the vicinity of wind turbines.

Late Nights Flights Clause

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 4488/11-15, whether he is aware that his definition of 'extraordinary circumstances' contradicts a European court ruling which states that technical or maintenance issues are not to be considered 'extraordinary circumstances' unless they arise from an exceptional event beyond the control of the airline.

(AQW 6094/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The obligation in the existing Planning Agreement between the Department and George Best Belfast City Airport states that only in "exceptional circumstances" can delayed aircraft use the Airport during the extended hours (between 9.31 pm and 11.59 pm local time).

I have not purported to define "exceptional circumstances". The Department has construed and will continue to construe the term "exceptional circumstances" by reference to the applicable planning context and particular circumstances.

There was an EU court ruling in relation to air passenger compensation for cancelled/delayed flights and addressed the question of "extraordinary" circumstances. This is different from the "exceptional" circumstances for the purpose of the Article 40 agreement referred to above.

Horse Mussel Beds in Strangford Lough

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the meetings which he, or his Department, has had with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the protection and restoration of the horse mussel beds in Strangford Lough since May 2011.

(AQW 6250/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Meetings between DOE officials and DARD officials to discuss horse mussel beds took place on 16 June, 12 September, 25 November and 12 December 2011 with a representative of the fishing industry also present at the meeting on the 12 December. In addition, I met with the DARD Minister on two occasions on 21 July 2011 and 9 January 2012. The discussions at these meetings focussed on proposals for further restrictions to protect remaining *Modiolus* reefs.

Local Government Reform

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment to outline how he is engaging with his Executive colleagues on the issue of Local Government Reform.

(AQO 1054/11-15)

Mr Attwood: This is a major policy, government and community issue. It offers a once in a political lifetime opportunity to remodel local government in a far better image.

The Executive decided on 16 November 2011 to opt for an 11 council model. The Executive did not discuss the issue at length, did not agree to my proposal to take 'a little time' and a half day to

interrogate our choices, did not review the savings potential created by the Council/Solace proposal of August 2011, savings of up to £570 million over 25 year period (etc).

I have to believe that good government and best advice will prevail, that fresh thinking will emerge on this issue, that the cost, identity, logistical and other arguments which favour a 15 model will be embraced.

I have requested my officials to take forward the Executive decision. This is still an enormous undertaking, complex, with many diversions and challenges. As of 16 January 2012, I have met DSD, DETI, and DRD Ministers around powers to be transferred.

Planning Applications: Anaerobic Digesters

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for anaerobic digesters are under consideration.

(AQO 1055/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As of 10 January 2012, 73 applications for anaerobic digesters are under consideration. This is an emerging renewable and economic opportunity, with a total of 20 decisions to date with six more imminent. I am meeting with officials this week to identify how planning can better manage AD applications, in relation to noise/odour issues, capacity in the planning system and technology issues in order to enable the proper and prompt processing of AD applications.

Planning: Runkerry, Bushmills

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the reasons for the delay in announcing his decision on the proposed Runkerry development in Bushmills.

(AQO 1056/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The planning application for a Golf Resort, Hotel and 75 Guest Suites was submitted in February 2007. There is no doubt that the application has suffered from significant delay. In September 2011, I instructed planning officials to bring forward papers on the application by the end of November. It was my view that all issues around this application had been or were being exhaustively interrogated and it was time to make a decision.

Unfortunately during a final round of consultation, an issue was raised in relation to the impact of a proposal on a listed wall and railings at the proposed entrance to the development on Whitepark Road. This necessitated the submission of additional plans, further Environmental Information and a non technical summary as required by the EIA Regulations. This information has now been received and the application was re-advertised in the local press during the first week in January.

In order to prevent any further delay, I have stated my intention to make a decision on this planning application as expeditiously as possible following the expiry of the statutory 4 week period for public representation.

Climate Change Bill

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment when he will introduce a Climate Change Bill.

(AQO 1057/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I intend bringing forward a Climate Change Bill in the course of the current Assembly. I have indicated this to my Ministerial colleagues in a memo on 24 December 2011.

In doing so I took account of the advice of the independent Committee on Climate Change. The Committee has stated that, from its experience in Whitehall, legislation is crucial in three regards:

- it has ensured targets have been set through a transparent evidence-based and analytically robust process;
- it has integrated activity across Whitehall; and
- it has introduced a transparent monitoring process in relation to the targets set.

This has confirmed my commitment to climate change legislation. Establishing a target in legislation will help contribute to our economic recovery by supporting the transformation to a low carbon green economy, encouraging innovation while at the same time providing greater certainty for business and assisting job creation.

Planning: Complaints

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of how the new streamlined complaints procedure will impact on the planning system.

(AQO 1058/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The new Planning complaints procedure is designed to make the process of complaining easier and more user-friendly for members of the public. The key change has been to reduce the number of stages in the process from three to two, the first stage being handled by the appropriate Area Manager and the second at Director level – this will significantly shorten the process and should lead to speedier resolutions of complaints. Another change is the requirement at Stage 1 for the complaint to be reviewed by a Planning Officer who is independent to the team which dealt with the related application, which will help to ensure objectivity.

I believe that these changes will make for a more customer-focused and streamlined procedure which will be easier and less frustrating for members of the public to navigate through. Any complainant who remains dissatisfied will, of course, retain the right to ask an MLA to take their complaint to the Assembly Ombudsman for investigation.

I will also consider if a further independent element is required, though a fully independent complaints system is not an option under consideration.

Scrap Metal

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the need to amend the Waste Management Licensing or Pollution Prevention Control regulations, which govern scrap metal dealer licences and permits, to assist the PSNI in identifying those who are inexplicably supplying scrap metal to dealers.

(AQO 1059/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The ‘theft’ element of this crime is for the Department of Justice to address. I am committed to ensuring that the Department of the Environment does all it can to prevent this serious criminal activity.

To that end, I have written to the Minister for Justice and, Department of the Environment and Department of Justice officials have met to determine how best to identify and co-ordinate activity to seek to combat this crime.

In the meantime, while waste legislation does already provide significant powers to allow the Department to assist the PSNI in dealing with serious crimes such as this, Department officials are reviewing existing legislation to see if it is necessary and possible for any further improvements to be made.

In addition, at an operational level, NIEA and PSNI officials are already working to combat this illegal activity. On 6 December, I launched the working partnership between NIEA’s Environmental Crime Unit (ECU) and PSNI on environmental and heritage crime in Northern Ireland and metal theft has been identified as a key area.

Planning Applications: New Dwellings

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications have been received in the past twelve months for new dwellings, and how many have been refused.

(AQO 1060/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A total of 3,094 applications for new single dwellings were received in 2010/11. Of this, 378 were applications in urban areas and 2,716 were applications in rural areas.

The number of applications for new single dwellings which were refused in 2010/11 was 851. Of this, 47 were in urban areas and 804 were in rural areas.

All applications received in the year may not have had a decision issued within the same time period and applications decided in the year may not have been received in the same time period. Therefore direct comparisons between the figures can not be made.

This information is available on the Planning NI website under Planning Statistics Publications. The most recent information for a complete year is contained in the bulletin 'Annual Development Management Statistics (Northern Ireland) 2010/11', in particular tables 4 and 6.

Marine Environment

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment when he will introduce new legislation to protect the marine environment.

(AQO 1061/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I remain committed to introducing the Marine Bill (Northern Ireland) as soon as possible, subject to Executive approval.

As currently drafted, the legislation provides for marine spatial planning, for the streamlining of certain energy licences, and for conservation zones to help protect habitats and species. However, among other issues, I believe strongly that a Marine Management organisation is a necessary managerial model going forward. I hope Executive will also endorse this approach.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Government Buildings in Ballymena and Ballymoney

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list the Government buildings in the (a) Ballymena; and (b) Ballymoney areas that are connected to gas.

(AQW 5685/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The Government buildings in the Ballymena area that are connected to gas are detailed below:

- Ballymena County Hall, Galgorm Road;
- Academy House, 121A Broughshane Street, Ballymena;
- 4 Parkway, Ballymena, Public Prosecution Service;
- Probation Board, 3 Wellington Court, Ballymena;
- Northern Trust Audly Terrace Community Social Services Centre, 27 Ballymoney Road;
- Northern Trust Cottage Hospital – Northern Trust HQ ,5 Greenmount Road;
- Northern Trust Ballymena Health Centre, Braid Valley 52 Cushendall Road;
- Northern Trust Braid Valley Hospital, as above;
- Northern Trust Finance Offices, as above;
- Northern Trust Management Accounts, as above;
- Northern Trust Salaries and Wages, as above;
- Northern Trust Slemish House, as above;
- Northern Trust Training Suite, as above;

- Northern Trust Spruce House, as above;
- Northern Trust George Sloan Centre, 35 Pennybridge Industrial Estate;
- Northern Trust Massereene Hospital Complex, Station Road;
- Northern Trust New Braid Valley Hospital, Cushendall Road;
- Northern Trust Raphael House, 11 Fenaghy Road Galgorm;
- Northern Trust Wilson House, 17 Raceview Road, Broughshane;
- Northern Regional College, Farm Lodge Building, Ballymena;
- Northern Regional College, Café Lamont, Trostan Avenue, Ballymena; and
- DVTA, Pennybridge Industrial Estate, Larne Road, Ballymena.
- The Government buildings in the Ballymoney area that are connected to gas are detailed below:
- Northern Trust Acorn Business Centre, 2 Riada Avenue;
- Northern Trust Ballymoney Health Centre, 21B Newal Road;
- Northern Trust Child Adolescent Mental Health Services, 9-15 Newal Road; and
- Northern Trust Mental health Resource Centre, 17-19 Newal Road.

Government Buildings in Ballymena and Ballymoney

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list the Government buildings in the (a) Ballymena; and (b) Ballymoney areas that are not connected to gas.

(AQW 5686/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Government buildings in the Ballymena area that are not connected to gas are detailed below:

- 62 Church Street, Ballymena;
- 48-50 Linenhall Street, Ballymena;
- 35-39 Bridge Street, Ballymena;
- Ballymena Court House, Albert Place;
- 7 Springwell Street, Ballymena;
- PSNI, 26 Galgorm Road, Ballymena;
- Northern Trust Adult centre , 23-25 Ballymoney Street;
- Northern Trust Area Stores, 21 Pennybridge Industrial Estate;
- Northern Trust Arran Garages 9 Arran Avenue Ballykeel;
- Northern Trust Ballee Children's Home, 5A Hollybank Park;
- Northern Trust Challenging Behaviour Team, 1 Castle Street;
- Northern Trust Community Addiction Team, 1 Parkmore Drive;
- Northern Trust Community Addictions Team, Lamont House 105A Railway Street;
- Northern Trust Cottagewood, Units 1-4 Cottagewood, High Street, Cushendall;
- Northern Trust Duriston House, Dunclug;
- Northern Trust Eco Centre, Kernohan's Lane, Broughshane Road;
- Northern Trust Glenlough Community Centre, 60 Croft Road, Carnlough;
- Northern Trust Glenmona Resource Centre, Glenmona Resource Centre, Cushendall;
- Northern Trust ICATS, 6 Garfield Place;

- Northern Trust Kintyre Hostel, 47-57 Kintyre Park, Ballykeel;
- Northern Trust Larne Road Doctor's Accommodation, Larne Road BT42 3AU;
- Northern Trust Loughlin School for Mental Handicap, Old Ballymoney Road BT43 6LX;
- Northern Trust Pinewood OPH & Social Services, 101 Frys Road;
- Northern Trust Portglenone Health Centre, 17 Townhill Road, Portglenone;
- Northern Trust Rockfield Medical Centre, Doury Road BT43 6JD;
- Northern Trust Salisbury House, Queen Street BT42 2BD;
- Northern Trust Conference Room, Larne Road Link, 80 Larne Road Link;
- NIFRS Ballymena District , First Floor Offices Salisbury Square;
- NIFRS Ballymena Fire Safety, 21 Henry Street;
- NIFRS Ballymena Fire Station, 22-26 Waveney Road;
- NIFRS Carnlough Fire Station Main Building, 14 Largy Road;
- NIFRS Fire Station Yard Area, 92 Newtownards Road,Carnlough;
- PCC, Broughshane Office Houston Mill, 10A Buckna Road, Broughshane;
- Ballymena Ambulance Station, Braid valley Hospital, Cushendall Road;
- Northern Regional College, Trostan Avenue Building, Ballymena;
- Ballymena Central Library, 5 Pat's Brae, Ballymena, BT43 5AX;
- Regional Administrative Centre, 25-31 Demesne Avenue, Ballymena,BT43 7BE;
- Broughshane Library, Main Street, Broughshane, BT42 4JW;
- Kells & Connor Library 5 Main Street, Kells, Ballymena, BT42 3JH;
- Portglenone Library 19 Townhill Road, Portglenone, BT44 8AD;
- Lockkeepers Cottage 153 Dunminning Road, Glarryford, Ballymena, BT44 9ET;
- Hill Farm , 62 Glenhead Road, Glenwherry, Skerrywhirry, Ballymena, BT42 4RF;
- Office, portacabin, store and visitors toilet block. Portglenone Forest – 69 Ballymena road BT44 0JJ;
- St. Patrick's Barracks, Demesne Avenue; and
- Regional Government Headquarters (decommissioned), Woodside Road Industrial Estate.
- The Government buildings in the Ballymoney area that are not connected to gas are detailed below:
 - Ballymoney Jobs and Benefits Office, 37-45 John Street;
 - PSNI, 79 Charlotte Street, Ballymoney;
 - Roads Depot, 190 Larne Road, Ballymena;
 - NI Water Depot, Larne Road, Ballymena;
 - Trillick House, 8 High Street, Ballymoney;
 - Roads Depot, 28 Market Street, Ballymoney;
 - NI Water Depot, Ballybrakes Road, Ballymoney;
 - Northern Trust , 32 High Street;
 - Northern Trust Ballymoney Adult Centre (Millbrook), 22 Frosses Road;
 - Northern Trust Trust Headquarters, 8 Coleraine Road;

- Northern Trust Podiatry Dept & Training Centre ,21 Newal Road;
- Northern Trust Robinson Hospital Site: Speech & Language Therapy & Children's Services, 9 Newal Road;
- Northern Trust Robinson Hospital site: 9,11 & 13 Newal Road;
- Northern Trust Robinson Memorial Hospital 23 Newal Road;
- Northern Trust, Route Hospital, 8e Coleraine Road;
- Northern Trust, Unit 7 Ballybrakes Industrial Estate, BT53 6LW;
- Northern Trust, Unit 8 Ballybrakes Industrial Estate, BT53 6LW;
- NIFRS, Ballymoney Fire Station, 31 Market Street;
- NIFRS, Ballymoney Ambulance Station, The Bungalow, St James Road, BT53 6BJ;
- Northern Regional College, 2 Coleraine Road, Ballymoney;
- Ballymoney Library, Rodden Foot, Queen Street, Ballymoney, BT53 6JB;
- Movanagher Fish Farm, 152 Vow Road, Kilrea, Ballymoney, BT53 7NT; and
- Dwelling – Let, Craigs Forest -118 Mullan Road.

Civil Servants: Full-time Trade Union Officials

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many civil servants are currently paid from the public purse as full-time trade union officials.

(AQW 5792/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The number of civil servants that are currently paid for from the public purse as full-time trade union officials is 28.

Retail Levy

Mr Ó hOisín asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on proposals for a large retail levy.
(AQO 1069/11-15)

Mr Wilson: On 15 December the Executive agreed the way forward on a range of measures aimed at rebalancing the rating system during a period of economic downturn through to recovery. This includes the introduction of a large retail levy, which will fund an expansion of the small business rate relief scheme.

Yesterday, I introduced the Rates (Amendment) Bill to give effect to these policies, along with some other measures to help business during the downturn. The second stage debate will take place on 24 January and the Bill should pass through the Assembly by 7 February.

Taking account of concerns expressed during consultation, and a modest increase in regional rate revenue, the levy has been reduced from 20% to 15%. It will affect 76 properties with an average levy of approximately £66,000 per store in 2012/13. The levy will raise around £5m in 2012/13, which will be used to fund expansion of the small business rate relief scheme. This will enable the Executive to roughly double the level of overall help provided under the main scheme, and increase the number of business ratepayers qualifying by around 50%.

Civil Service: Under-representation

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what groups have been identified as being under-represented in appointments to the general service grades in the Civil Service, in the past five years.
(AQO 1070/11-15)

Mr Wilson: None of the competitions advertised in the past five years for general services grades including Administrative Assistant, Administrative Officer and Executive Officer 2 has shown significant

under-representation by any equality group in appointments. Corporate HR of the Department liaises closely with colleagues in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency to minimise any potential adverse impact of selection tools on particular groups of applicants.

Small Business Rate Relief Scheme

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme.

(AQO 1071/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Executive has agreed to expand the small business rate relief scheme, funded from a 15% levy on the largest shops. Additional support, of around £6m in 2012/13, will be provided to up to 8,300 business ratepayers with a net annual value of £5,001 - £10,000. This will enable the Executive to roughly double the level of overall help provided under the main scheme and increase the number of business ratepayers qualifying by around 50%.

During consultation I listened carefully to the concerns expressed about help being provided to businesses that occupy multiple premises, particularly where that business is a national or multi national company. From April business ratepayers occupying multiple premises will not be entitled to relief. For 2012/13 ratepayers can occupy no more than three properties, of any size, in total to receive relief. Those that occupy four premises or more in total will not be eligible for relief on any of their properties. My Department will undertake a review of this condition for the years 2013/14 and 2014/15, bearing in mind the desire to retain an automated scheme and minimise administrative costs.

Yesterday, I introduced the Rates (Amendment) Bill to the Assembly to give effect to these policies, along with some other measures to help business during the downturn. The second stage debate will take place on 24 January and the Bill should pass through the Assembly by 7 February. The changes, along with the large retail levy, will be operational from 1 April subject to Assembly approval.

Rates: Vacant Properties

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many applications have been received for rates relief and exemption since the introduction of the vacant property rates scheme.

(AQO 1072/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Rating of Empty Homes was introduced on 1st October 2011. From that date, rates are payable on all vacant domestic property subject to certain exclusions and exemptions. Some exemptions were applied prior to any rate bills being issued that is, those relating to properties with a Net Annual Value of less than £20,000 and those where properties are completed before 1st April 2012.

Applications must be made for other exclusions for example where owner(s) have moved into nursing homes or where occupation is prohibited or from representatives of a deceased person and so on.

At 11th January 2010, 944 applications have been received for exclusion from rating of empty homes.

Small Businesses

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what support his Department will offer to small businesses in 2012.

(AQO 1073/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Executive has agreed to expand the small business rate relief scheme, funded from a 15% levy on the largest shops. Additional support, of around £6m in 2012/13, will be provided to up to 8,300 business ratepayers with a net annual value of £5,001 - £10,000. This will enable the Executive to roughly double the level of overall help provided under the main scheme and increase the number of business ratepayers qualifying by around 50%.

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Yesterday, I introduced the Rates (Amendment) Bill to the Assembly to give effect to these policies, along with some other measures to help business during the downturn. The second stage debate will take place on 24 January and the Bill should pass through the Assembly by 7 February. The changes, along with the large retail levy, will be operational from 1 April subject to Assembly approval.

Special European Union Programmes Body

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the average length of time taken by the Special EU Programmes Body to process a funding application.

(AQO 1074/11-15)

Mr Wilson: With regard to the INTERREG IVA Cross Border Cooperation Programme, SEUPB has advised that it takes on average approximately sixty weeks for a project to progress from initial application to final letter of offer.

In the case of the PEACE III Programme, SEUPB has advised it has taken on average approximately forty three weeks to progress a project from initial application to final letter of offer.

DFP: Consultants

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department has paid to consultants in the current financial year.

(AQO 1075/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Expenditure by my Department on External Consultancy in the current financial year as at 10 January 2012 is £115,000.

Air Passenger Duty

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he will support the derogation of Air Passenger Duty, similar to the Scottish Highlands example, to assist plans for tourism in 2012.

(AQO 1076/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Air Passenger Duty (APD) exemption for flights from the Scottish Highlands and Islands was introduced in recognition of the extremely low population density and heavy reliance on air transport in that remote region of the UK.

While Northern Ireland's situation is different, Executive colleagues and I have been concerned about the impact APD was having on our ability to attract and retain air services, particularly to long haul destinations. That is why the Executive successfully pressed the Government to agree to the devolution of APD for direct long haul flights. Once devolved, the draft Programme for Government commits the Executive to eliminating APD on direct long haul flights. We are in the process of finalising the precise arrangements for the devolution of these powers and discussions with Treasury are ongoing in this regard.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when he expects air passenger duty powers to be devolved.

(AQO 1077/11-15)

Mr Wilson: We are in the process of finalising the precise arrangements for the devolution of these powers and discussions with Treasury are ongoing in this regard. This will include agreeing which aspects of APD will be devolved, precise costs, and the administrative arrangements for its collection.

The Government is also currently considering the precise legislative changes that will be required. Current expectations are that these changes will be made in the 2012 Finance Bill at Westminster which I would expect to have Parliamentary approval by the summer 2012 and Royal Assent by early autumn 2012.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Recruitment Drive by the Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of applicants for the most recent recruitment drive by the Fire and Rescue Service, broken down by geographic area of the applicants; and (ii) the religious background of those who (a) applied; and (b) were appointed.

(AQW 6127/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The information requested is shown in the table.

NORTHERN IRELAND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE: RECRUITMENT

NUMBER OF APPLICANTS BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA

| Eastern | Western | Southern | Northern | Outside Ni | Total |
|---------|---------|----------|----------|------------|-------------|
| 1069 | 1132 | 1865 | 1404 | 298 | 5768 |

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF APPLICANTS AND APPOINTEES

| | Protestant | Catholic | Other | Total |
|------------|------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| Applicants | 2764 | 2426 | 578 | 5768 |
| Appointees | 16 | 18 | 3 | 37 |

Recruitment Drive by the Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the most recent recruitment drive for the Fire and Rescue Service, how many applicants were informed that they had failed in a section of the process and following appeal were re-instated.

(AQW 6128/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has advised that the recent recruitment competition comprised four stages: a multi stage fitness test; an assessment of the candidate's application form: a Practical Aptitude Test (PAT); and an interview. Only the Practical Aptitude Test had an appeal process and the outcome of that process is set out below.

| Number of candidates attending the PAT | Number of candidates who failed the PAT | Number of candidates who appealed | Number of candidates retested | Number of successful candidates after retest |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 665 | 373 | 67 | 45 | 37 |

Funding for the Health Centre in Omagh

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the conditions and the reasons for allocating a substantial amount of funding for the Health Centre in Omagh; (ii) why acute renal services are not being moved to the new acute hospital in Enniskillen; and (iii) whether such a move would be considered at a later date, and if not, why.

(AQW 6162/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) I assume you are referring to the planned Health and Care Centre as part of the new Omagh Local Hospital project.

I approved this project because a sound and robust justification was made in a comprehensive business case by the Western HSC Trust and supported by the Health and Social Care Board. The business case sets out the need for the project. In particular, I consider the health and care element to be a high priority as it will assist in the move of services to the community and help reduce reliance on acute hospitals except where necessary.

- (ii) & (iii) The Western Health and Social Care Trust has advised that acute renal services will transfer from the Erne Hospital to the new South West Hospital.

Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Hospital

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the commitment of £19 million from the Government of the Republic of Ireland towards funding the radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin hospital.

(AQW 6179/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Republic of Ireland Government remains committed to the provision of up to €19m capital funding towards the cost of the project. This has been reaffirmed through letters from ROI Ministers and through ongoing discussions between my Departmental officials and officials from the Department of Health and Children.

Waiting List for Neurology Services in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are on the waiting list for neurology services in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area and what is the average waiting time for an appointment.

(AQW 6190/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of patients waiting to attend a first outpatient appointment with a neurology consultant at the Belfast HSC Trust, at 30th September 2011, the latest position for which official statistics are available, is outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF PATIENTS WAITING FOR A FIRST APPOINTMENT IN THE NEUROLOGY SPECIALTY AT THE BELFAST HSC TRUST: POSITION AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2011

| HSCT | Number of patients waiting (by length of time waiting in weeks) | | | | | | Total waiting |
|---------|--|--------|---------|----------|----------|-----|---------------|
| | 0 - 6 | >6 - 9 | >9 - 13 | >13 - 21 | >21 - 26 | >26 | |
| Belfast | 740 | 263 | 230 | 543 | 239 | 362 | 2,377 |

Source: Departmental Return CH3

Data on outpatient waiting times are collected by my Department by aggregate timeband. While it is not possible to calculate an average waiting time from data collected in aggregate timebands, it is possible to calculate the median timeband, a similar statistical measure.

The median waiting time for a first outpatient appointment in the neurology specialty at the Belfast HSC Trust, at 30th September 2011, was '>9-13 weeks'.

The number of patients waiting for inpatient admission in the neurology specialty at the Belfast HSC Trust, at 30th September 2011, is outlined in Table 2.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF PATIENTS WAITING FOR INPATIENT ADMISSION IN THE NEUROLOGY SPECIALTY AT THE BELFAST HSC TRUST: POSITION AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2011

| HSC T | Number of patients waiting (by length of time waiting in weeks) | | | | | | Total waiting |
|---------|--|---------|--------|--------|--------|-----|---------------|
| | 0 - 6 | >6 - 13 | >13-21 | >21-26 | >26-36 | >36 | |
| Belfast | 30 | 19 | 20 | 4 | 22 | 101 | 196 |

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Time Dataset

Data on inpatient waiting times are collected on a patient level basis, enabling average waiting time to be calculated. The average waiting time for inpatient admission in the neurology specialty at the Belfast HSC Trust, at 30th September 2011, was 39 weeks.

Domiciliary Care Patients

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of domiciliary care patients who are currently in receipt of support packages that would exceed the cost of nursing care accommodation; and (ii) what assessment has been made of the level of satisfaction of such patients and their families in terms of the quality and quantity of the care they receive in their own home. **(AQW 6211/11-15)**

Mr Poots: (i) The information requested is not gathered.

(ii) In August 2010, my Department published findings from the 2009 Survey of NI Home Care Service Users, administered by Community Information Branch (CIB). This publication reflects a high level of satisfaction, with nearly nine-tenths (89%) of respondents saying that they felt they were always treated with respect and dignity by their care worker(s), and more than four-fifths (85%) of respondents saying that they could not manage at all without the help they get from their care worker(s). Further results from the full survey can be accessed via the following link: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/survey_of_home_care_service_users_northern_ireland_2009.pdf.

[//www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/survey_of_home_care_service_users_northern_ireland_2009.pdf](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/survey_of_home_care_service_users_northern_ireland_2009.pdf) .

Satisfaction levels for domiciliary care patients who are currently in receipt of support packages that would exceed the cost of nursing care accommodation are not collated separately.

People Waiting for a Hip Replacement Procedure

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people who are waiting for a hip replacement procedure in each Health and Social Care Trust area. **(AQW 6252/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The number of people on the waiting list for a hip replacement procedure, in each Health and Social Care Trust area, at 30th September 2011, the most recent date for which official data are available, is shown in the table below.

| HSC Trust | Number of people on the inpatient waiting list for a hip replacement procedure, at 30th September 2011 |
|-----------|--|
| Belfast | 712 |

| HSC Trust | Number of people on the inpatient waiting list for a hip replacement procedure, at 30th September 2011 |
|-----------------------|---|
| Northern ¹ | N/A |
| South Eastern | 1 |
| Southern | 149 |
| Western | 338 |
| NI Total | 1,200 |

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

1 The Northern HSC Trust does not provide inpatient services in the Trauma and Orthopaedic specialty.

Waiting Time for an Appointment with a Neurologist

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the waiting time for an appointment with a neurologist; and (ii) the number of people on the waiting list, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 6253/11-15)

Mr Poots: The (i) waiting time for a first outpatient appointment with a neurologist and (ii) the number of people on the waiting list for a first outpatient appointment in the neurology specialty, at each HSC Trust, is outlined in Table 1 below. This information relates to the position at 30th September 2011, the latest date for which official statistics are available.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF PATIENTS WAITING FOR A FIRST APPOINTMENT IN THE NEUROLOGY SPECIALTY AT THE EACH HSC TRUST: POSITION AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2011

| HSC Trust | Number of patients waiting (by length of time waiting in weeks) | | | | | | Total |
|------------------|--|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | 0-6 | >6-9 | >9-13 | >13-21 | >21-26 | >26 | |
| Belfast | 740 | 263 | 230 | 543 | 239 | 362 | 2,377 |
| Northern | 194 | 94 | 106 | 203 | 88 | 362 | 1,047 |
| Southern | 268 | 79 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 348 |
| South Eastern | 183 | 86 | 63 | 120 | 76 | 75 | 603 |
| Western | 260 | 117 | 117 | 236 | 127 | 739 | 1,596 |
| Total | 1,645 | 639 | 516 | 1,103 | 530 | 1,538 | 5,971 |

Source: Departmental Return CH3

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Guidance

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2044/11-15, whether he will outline or publish the revised process for the implementation of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance, introduced on 28 September 2011.

(AQW 6487/11-15)

Mr Poots: Circular HSC (SQSD) NICE 04/11 provides full details of the new process for the endorsement, implementation, monitoring and assurance of NICE Technology Appraisals and Clinical Guidelines in Northern Ireland.

It is available on my Department's website using the following link <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/phealth/sqs/sqsd-guidance/sqsd-guidance-nice-guidance.htm>

Obesity Prevention Framework

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the proposed Obesity Prevention Framework given the current reports of substantial increases in the numbers of people suffering from obesity.

(AQO 1078/11-15)

Mr Poots: Obesity is one of the key public health challenges facing Northern Ireland. While recent data from the Northern Ireland Health Survey appears to show a levelling off in the prevalence of obesity, we are not complacent and realise that more needs to be done.

The Executive has recently agreed the framework for preventing and addressing overweight and obesity in Northern Ireland, entitled "A Fitter Future for All", and we are currently in the process of finalising the document which will be launched in the near future.

The Framework consists of a range of short, medium and long-term outcomes to address obesity, encourage healthy eating, and promote participation in physical activity. The Public Health Agency has already begun to put in place arrangements to oversee the implementation of the framework.

I am pleased that the draft Programme for Government, currently out for consultation, commits us to investing £7.2million on the Framework over the next three years.

Health and Social Care: Compton Review

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the progress and outworking of the Compton Report.

(AQO 1092/11-15)

Mr Poots: I initiated the Take Note Motion on "Transforming your Care - a Review of Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland" in this House yesterday, and during the debate I outlined the importance of the Review and the work which would now be taken forward in light of it. The debate provided a valuable opportunity for Members to comment on the detail of the Report, following my Statement to the House on the 13 December.

The Review contains a wide-ranging set of proposals which provide a framework for service reconfiguration to be taken forward. In the coming weeks and months the proposals will need to be assessed in detail and translated into more detailed plans on specific changes to be taken forward. The Review recommended that implementation and stakeholder engagement plans should be drawn up and published by June 2012. The plans will be based on population plans for each area, drawn up by each of the Local Commissioning Groups with the Health and Social Care Trusts.

Requests for Respite Care

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how many requests were made for respite care; and (ii) how many requests were successful in gaining respite care provision, in the last 12 months, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 6651/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of requests made for respite care and how many requests were successful in gaining respite care provision, in the last 12 months, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area is not available centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate costs.

Mental Health

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his priorities for mental health services.

(AQO 1086/11-15)

Mr Poots: Priorities for mental health services are to modernise and develop the range and capacity of community based services as an alternative to inpatient treatment. This is in line with the Bamford recommendations.

Community Pharmacies

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what role he sees community pharmacists playing within the evolving new healthcare model.

(AQO 1087/11-15)

Mr Poots: The “Transforming Your Care “ proposals envisage a changing model of care which will move the care of patients as close to home as possible. This is an opportunity for community pharmacists to strengthen their role in improving medicines management for patients, helping to minimise waste, contributing to avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions due to medicines induced morbidity or preventing conditions deteriorating through improved concordance. It is a model of care not based on prescription volume but on health outcomes and working as a member of an integrated primary care team.

Given the accessibility that community pharmacy provides to the population, it is uniquely placed to support the delivery of health improvement measures taking the many patient and public interactions to influence health and well being.

Pharmacies

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department is doing to alleviate some of the current difficulties faced by pharmacies.

(AQO 1088/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department recognises that it has an obligation to provide fair and reasonable remuneration for community pharmacy. To ensure that there is sufficient cash flow within community pharmacy to cover drugs needed by patients, contractors also receive an upfront advance payment each month to cover the cost of drugs that they need to purchase. An Essential Small Pharmacy Scheme is in place which is designed to ensure the viability of small pharmacies in key locations including rural areas and deprived urban areas.

The HSC Board, as part of its routine business continuity role, monitors the provision of all commissioned health and social care services including community pharmacy services and if any evidence does emerge of any shortfall in services then steps will be rapidly taken to address that shortfall.

The HSC Board is also currently working with CPNI to establish the extent of the financial problems faced by some pharmacies and considering ways in which some alleviation may be provided if necessary.

NHS: Quality Ethos

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to embed a quality ethos throughout the Health Service.

(AQO 1089/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am committed to protecting and improving the quality of health and social care services in Northern Ireland. I launched Quality 2020: A 10-Year Strategy to Protect and Improve Quality in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland on 17 November 2011 and implementation will begin in April 2012. It defines quality in terms of three key components: safety, effectiveness and patient/client focus. All are important in developing a quality ethos within health and social care.

Embedding this ethos also plays an important part in a number of other current strategies and plans including: the Implementation of the HSC Review; Quality Improvement and Cost Reduction Planning; and the Public Health Strategy.

Learning Disabilities

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what he is doing to improve the lives of people with a learning disability and their families.

(AQO 1090/11-15)

Mr Poots: Improving services for people with a learning disability remains one of my highest priorities. Through continued implementation of the Bamford Action Plan my Department, in collaboration with other Departments and Agencies, is working to deliver improvements across a range of learning disability services such as respite provision, day opportunities, and transition to adulthood.

We have also recently published, for consultation, a Learning Disability Service Framework. This Framework aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people with a learning disability and their carers and families, by promoting social inclusion, reducing inequalities in health and social wellbeing and improving the quality of health and social care services, especially supporting those most vulnerable in our society.

Community Pharmacy: Judicial Review

Ms Gildernew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any discussions have been held with Community Pharmacy following the outcome of the recent judicial review.

(AQO 1091/11-15)

Mr Poots: Mr Justice Treacy made his judgement on the Judicial Review, brought by CPNI against changes to pharmacy remuneration made by the Department and the HSC Board on 21 December 2011 and also announced that a remedy hearing was scheduled for 9 January 2012. However, the written judgement was not issued until 10 January 2012. The remedy hearing has now been scheduled for mention on 16 January when a date for the hearing will be set.

I have already indicated to CPNI that once I have considered the written judgement and the outcome of the remedy hearing I will meet with them, as soon as possible thereafter, to discuss the way forward.

Department of Justice

Alternative to or Diversion from Prison

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what new projects or initiatives his Department intends to introduce as an alternative to or diversion from prison.

(AQW 6164/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): In response to a commitment made in the Hillsborough Castle Agreement, I consulted last year on a review of community sentences, which explored the role, scope and effectiveness of current community disposals, opened up the debate on the value of short prison sentences for low level offenders, and sought views on the need for change.

My officials are currently in discussion with the Justice Committee on draft proposals on the way forward, in light of responses to the consultation - the consensus of responses was that custody for this cohort of offenders should be used as a last resort and that community sentences here did much more to tackle the factors that lead offenders to reoffend – and the recommendation of the Prisons Review Report that community sentences should be the preferred method of dealing with those who would otherwise get short custodial sentences.

I hope to announce definitive proposals on the way forward in the near future.

Alternatives to Prison

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what new trends have been identified as alternatives to prison.
(AQW 6166/11-15)

Mr Ford: In response to a commitment made in the Hillsborough Castle Agreement, I consulted last year on a review of community sentences, which explored the role, scope and effectiveness of current community disposals, opened up the debate on the value of short prison sentences for low level offenders, and sought views on the need for change.

My officials are currently in discussion with the Justice Committee on draft proposals on the way forward, in light of responses to the consultation - the consensus of responses was that custody for this cohort of offenders should be used as a last resort and that community sentences here did much more to tackle the factors that lead offenders to reoffend – and the recommendation of the Prisons Review Report that community sentences should be the preferred method of dealing with those who would otherwise get short custodial sentences.

I hope to announce definitive proposals on the way forward in the near future.

Closure of Courthouses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to detail, for each of the last five years, the number of summonses that were processed per annum through each of the five courthouses which are now targetted for closure.

(AQW 6189/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the number of cases processed at each Hearing Centre by business type.

| Processing Office [1] | Business Type | Cases Dealt With [2] | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| | | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | Total |
| Bangor | Criminal | 2095 | 2081 | 1910 | 1597 | 1702 | 9385 |
| | Civil & Family | 462 | 217 | 205 | 198 | 144 | 1226 |
| | Total | 2557 | 2298 | 2115 | 1795 | 1846 | 10611 |
| Larne | Criminal | 819 | 768 | 733 | 726 | 576 | 3622 |
| | Civil & Family | 414 | 233 | 192 | 170 | 181 | 1190 |
| | Total | 1233 | 1001 | 925 | 896 | 757 | 4812 |
| Limavady | Criminal | 1282 | 1315 | 1079 | 1246 | 1068 | 5990 |
| | Civil & Family | 178 | 110 | 111 | 117 | 41 | 557 |
| | Total | 1460 | 1425 | 1190 | 1363 | 1109 | 6547 |
| Magherafelt | Criminal | 1009 | 1078 | 1061 | 1096 | 1122 | 5366 |
| | Civil & Family | 273 | 71 | 85 | 115 | 82 | 626 |
| | Total | 1282 | 1149 | 1146 | 1211 | 1204 | 5992 |

| Processing Office [1] | Business Type | Cases Dealt With [2] | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | Total |
| Strabane | Criminal | 1476 | 1314 | 1003 | 1145 | 1042 | 5980 |
| | Civil & Family | 606 | 136 | 162 | 208 | 184 | 1296 |
| | Total | 2082 | 1450 | 1165 | 1353 | 1226 | 7276 |

- [1] Court offices based on the processing office as recorded on the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service ICOS IT system for 2007-2010. In 2006 Crown Court, Magistrates' Court, and family and children order business were recorded on manual forms and pertain to the court office which disposed of/dealt with the case. In 2006 civil County Court business was recorded on ICOS and therefore the court offices are based on the processing office as recorded on ICOS. A case may be processed at one venue and heard at another.
- [2] Cases dealt with are based on criminal defendants, civil and family cases, Children Order cases and applications disposed of. The figures for criminal cases include cases initiated by way of charge sheet. The total figures include cases initiated by way of summons, charge sheet and application. Debt cases in the Magistrates' Court (from 2007 onwards) and licensing in the Magistrates' and County Court are excluded as these numbers are held manually and not centrally collated.

Proposals to Close Courthouses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether distance and access will be taken into account when considering the proposals to close a number of courthouses for (i) people attending court; and (ii) legal representatives, particularly those representatives who are legal aid funded and entitled to mileage costs.

(AQW 6260/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is recognised that under the proposals some court users may be required to travel further to attend court. The consultation document seeks views in relation to the transfer of business to alternative venues and travel time. All responses will be considered as part of the consultation process.

Closure of Court Houses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the proposal to close a number of court houses, whether existing cases would be absorbed into the court division from which they originated, or whether court division area will widened.

(AQW 6418/11-15)

Mr Ford: Under the Hearing Centre courthouse closure proposals, cases would transfer to an alternative court venue within the County Court Division. As there is limited scope to absorb additional hearing days at Londonderry Courthouse, Limavady business would transfer to Coleraine and Magherafelt business would transfer to Antrim which are not in the same County Court Division. It is proposed that these transfers would only take place following the implementation of wider boundary reforms which were the subject of previous consultation.

Security Forces: Risks Associated with Using Social Media

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Justice what advice is given to members of the security forces on the risks associated with using social media.

(AQW 6603/11-15)

Mr Ford: Whilst this is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, I have been assured that he has taken appropriate steps to remind police officers of the risks associated with using social media.

Responsibility for providing advice to members of the armed forces rests with the Ministry of Defence.

Department for Regional Development

Road Safety Engineering Measures at Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the development of a new all embracing policy that will focus on rationalising all the current road safety engineering measures at schools, including measures available to improve safety outside schools.

(AQW 6176/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I can advise the Member that my Department's Roads Service has, for a number of years, been developing and implementing a wide range of road safety engineering measures at schools. Further initiatives, such as part time 20 mph speed limits and sustainable school travel measures, have also been successfully developed.

I am advised that a new Roads Service Policy and Procedure Guide is going to be developed that will contain all the most successful and effective engineering measures. A Working Group has been established, and it is anticipated that the policy will be in place by April 2012.

Foyle Ferry Service

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he has taken to facilitate the restoration of the Foyle Ferry Service.

(AQW 6239/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have had no involvement in this matter. My Department was not involved in setting up the Magilligan to Greencastle ferry service and has not had any operational responsibility for it. In addition my Department does not have the legislative authority to support such a ferry service.

School Buses

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will consider introducing legislation to prohibit the overtaking of parked school buses and Translink vehicles which are carrying school children.

(AQO 1050/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member may be aware that this issue was considered as part of the joint NI Assembly Inquiry into home to school transport in 2006 which resulted in a series of recommendations to improve the safety of school children during their journeys to school.

While several Government Departments contribute, in various ways, to the safety of children travelling to and from school, my Department's Roads Service has responsibility for the enabling legislation to prevent vehicles overtaking stationary school buses when children were boarding or unboarding at bus stops.

Roads Service officials have advised that they would be very reluctant to support such legislation for the road safety and traffic management for the following reasons:

- that prohibiting the overtaking of school buses by other vehicles may result in school children becoming complacent when alighting from normal service buses both during and outside school times or during school holidays;
- drivers following a school bus may take unnecessary risks in trying to overtake the bus before it comes to its next stopping point;
- officials consider that educating children to exercise caution when alighting from all bus services, combined with increased driver awareness is the most appropriate way forward. Department of the Environment (DOE) currently delivers this message to schools, as part of its road safety education programme;

- The Department for Transport in England has conducted research and considers that the introduction of a ban on traffic passing a stationary school bus, where children are getting on or off, could well increase, rather than decrease, casualties;
- If the proposal was to apply to Translink service buses, it would result in unsustainable traffic congestion, for much of the day, on major urban and rural roads; and
- on a world-wide basis, only the USA and Canada have an overtaking ban, while the vast majority of countries have similar regulations on school buses to the UK. In the USA, laws banning the overtaking of stationary school buses are widely reported to be central to the success of yellow school buses. However, even in the USA, evidence varies greatly from state to state. An official estimate from New York State was that 50,000 vehicles pass stopped school buses illegally every day. In North Carolina, where many school buses are fitted with cameras on the stop-arm of the buses, it is estimated that illegal passing of school buses takes place an average of 1900 times per day.

I take the safety of school children very seriously, and my Department and other statutory road safety partners are continually researching and implementing measures to make the journey to school as safe as possible. Initiatives such as the Safer Routes to Schools programme and part time 20 mph speed limits have additional engineering measures installed to protect children and to alert drivers to their presence. These include additional signing and road markings, flashing lights, central reserves and off-road bus parking.

Traffic on the Rathgael Road, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department intends to take to reduce the volume of traffic on the Rathgael Road, Bangor.

(AQW 6356/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service currently has no plans to implement any measures in order to reduce the volume of traffic on Rathgael Road, Bangor.

Department for Social Development

Reviving High Street Retailers

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development whether her Department has any plans to adopt the measures in the Mary Portas report in England aimed at reviving high street retailers.

(AQW 6154/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Portas Review extends only to Great Britain and does not include Northern Ireland. However, given that many of the issues will have a direct read across to towns and cities in Northern Ireland, my Department is presently considering the report and its findings and how they could be used to assist our existing plans to support urban regeneration at a time of economic hardship for retailers and businesses.

Reposessed Houses

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses have been reposessed in each of the last four years.

(AQW 6415/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not hold the information requested. However, the Department of Justice has provided the information in the table attached and has advised as follows: -

The table attached details the number of repossession cases disposed of by the Enforcement of Justice Office (EJO). It should be noted that not all repossession cases granted by the court are lodged with EJO. In some cases an arrangement may be agreed between the creditor and debtor

following the court hearing. It is also the case that some debtors will recognise that they can no longer afford to keep the property and choose to hand the property over to the creditor without recourse to enforcement. It is not possible to quantify the number of cases which end in these ways as they are resolved outside the control or knowledge of the EJO.

TABLE – POSSESSION CASES DISPOSED BY EJO

| Disposal/ Year | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | Disposal Description |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| Eviction | 195 | 438 | 681 | 875 | Order for Possession was executed where the property was not vacated voluntarily by the debtor |
| Handover | 15 | 14 | 43 | 78 | Order for Possession was executed where the property was vacated voluntarily by the debtor |
| Withdrawal | 163 | 90 | 76 | 81 | Where the creditor has withdrawn proceedings in the EJO |
| Total Cases Disposed | 373 (-1% from 07) | 542 (+45% from 2008) | 800 (+47% from 2009) | 1034 (+29% from 2010) | |

Reposessed Houses in the Foyle Constituency

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses have been reposessed in the Foyle constituency in each of the last four years.

(AQW 6571/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not hold the information requested. The Department of Justice has also advised me that the information is not available in the format requested but has provided the following information:

A plaintiff begins an action for an order for possession of property. The court, following a judicial hearing, may grant an order for possession. This entitles the plaintiff to apply to have the defendant evicted. However, even where an order for eviction is issued the parties can still negotiate a compromise to prevent eviction.

The court orders the defendant to deliver possession of the property to the plaintiff within a specified time. If the defendant fails to comply with the court order the plaintiff may proceed to apply to the Enforcement of Judgements Office to repossess the property and give possession of it to the plaintiff.

Not all writs and originating summonses lead to eviction or repossession

Mortgage Applications – Orders Made – Foyle Constituency

| Orders made[1] | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Possession | 61 | 91 | 125 | 123 |

[1] More than one order can be made per case so these figures do not necessarily equal the number of cases disposed of

Reposessed Houses

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses have been reposessed in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6630/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not hold the information requested. However, the Department of Justice has provided the information in the table attached and has advised as follows: -

The table attached details the number of repossession cases disposed of by the Enforcement of Justice Office (EJO). It should be noted that not all repossession cases granted by the court are lodged with EJO. In some cases an arrangement may be agreed between the creditor and debtor following the court hearing. It is also the case that some debtors will recognise that they can no longer afford to keep the property and choose to hand the property over to the creditor without recourse to enforcement. It is not possible to quantify the number of cases which end in these ways as they are resolved outside the control or knowledge of the EJO.

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| Disposal/ Year | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | Disposal Description |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
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| Handover | 14 | 43 | 78 | Order for Possession was executed where the property was vacated voluntarily by the debtor |
| Withdrawal | 90 | 76 | 81 | Where the creditor has withdrawn proceedings in the EJO |
| Total Cases Disposed | 542 (+45% from 2008) | 800 (+47% from 2009) | 1034 (+29% from 2010) | |

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 20 January 2012

(AQW 4461/11-15)

I will answer both these questions together.

Ten paediatric intensive care ventilators purchased as part of the preparation to meet expected additional surge capacity during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic were returned to the manufacturer on 29 September 2011. This was part of a buy-back option negotiated with the manufacturer and the process for recouping the sum of £84,280 (plus VAT) has been instigated by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

One hundred intensive care ventilators (plus associated equipment) were purchased between 1 April and 31 December 2009 at a total cost of £4.3m. Of these, 13 were purchased as direct replacements of older stock; 87 were purchased as additional stock to enable Trusts to expand their critical care capacity to meet the demands of the pandemic at that time, but also to enhance capacity to meet other surge demands such as annual winter pressures.

Eleven paediatric intensive care ventilators have not been used to date but remain available for use by Trusts to meet any future surge demands. A breakdown of information by Trust area is outlined in the table below.

TABLE: NUMBER OF INTENSIVE CARE VENTILATORS PURCHASED BETWEEN 1 APRIL AND 31 DECEMBER 2011, BROKEN DOWN BY TRUST AREA

| Trust | Number of intensive care ventilators purchased between 1 Apr. and 31 Dec. 2009 | Were these purchased as | | How many ventilators remained unused between 31 Dec. 2010 and 31 Oct. 2011? |
|---------------|--|--|-------------------|---|
| | | direct replacements of existing stock? | additional stock? | |
| BHSCT Adult | 18 | - | 18 | 0 |
| Paeds | 21* | 1 | 20 | 6 |
| Neonatal | 6 | - | 6 | 0 |
| NHSCT Adult | 7 | - | 7 | 0 |
| Paeds | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Neonatal | 2 | - | 2 | 0 |
| SEHSCT Adults | 16 | 12 | 4 | 0 |
| Paeds | 4 | - | 4 | 0 |
| Neonatal | 3 | - | 3 | 0 |
| SHSCT Adult | 4 | - | 4 | 0 |
| Paeds | 8 | - | 8 | 0 |
| Neonatal | 3 | - | 3 | 0 |
| WHSCT Adult | 2 | - | 2 | 0 |
| Paeds | 3 | - | 3 | 3 |
| Neonatal | 1 | - | 1 | 0 |

| Trust | Number of intensive care ventilators purchased between 1 Apr. and 31 Dec. 2009 | Were these purchased as | | How many ventilators remained unused between 31 Dec. 2010 and 31 Oct. 2011? |
|---------------|--|--|-------------------|---|
| | | direct replacements of existing stock? | additional stock? | |
| Totals | 100 | 13 | 87 | 11 |

* 10 of these paediatric intensive care ventilators were placed in sealed storage and returned as part of the buy-back option which was exercised in Sept. 2011

(AQW 4463/11-15)

I will answer both these questions together.

Ten paediatric intensive care ventilators purchased as part of the preparation to meet expected additional surge capacity during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic were returned to the manufacturer on 29 September 2011. This was part of a buy-back option negotiated with the manufacturer and the process for recouping the sum of £84,280 (plus VAT) has been instigated by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

One hundred intensive care ventilators (plus associated equipment) were purchased between 1 April and 31 December 2009 at a total cost of £4.3m. Of these, 13 were purchased as direct replacements of older stock; 87 were purchased as additional stock to enable Trusts to expand their critical care capacity to meet the demands of the pandemic at that time, but also to enhance capacity to meet other surge demands such as annual winter pressures.

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|---------------|--|--|-------------------|---|
| | | direct replacements of existing stock? | additional stock? | |
| BHSCT Adult | 18 | - | 18 | 0 |
| Paeds | 21* | 1 | 20 | 6 |
| Neonatal | 6 | - | 6 | 0 |
| NHSCT Adult | 7 | - | 7 | 0 |
| Paeds | 2 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Neonatal | 2 | - | 2 | 0 |
| SEHSCT Adults | 16 | 12 | 4 | 0 |
| Paeds | 4 | - | 4 | 0 |
| Neonatal | 3 | - | 3 | 0 |

| Trust | Number of intensive care ventilators purchased between 1 Apr. and 31 Dec. 2009 | Were these purchased as | | How many ventilators remained unused between 31 Dec. 2010 and 31 Oct. 2011? |
|---------------|--|--|-------------------|---|
| | | direct replacements of existing stock? | additional stock? | |
| SHSCT Adult | 4 | - | 4 | 0 |
| Paeds | 8 | - | 8 | 0 |
| Neonatal | 3 | - | 3 | 0 |
| WHSCT Adult | 2 | - | 2 | 0 |
| Paeds | 3 | - | 3 | 3 |
| Neonatal | 1 | - | 1 | 0 |
| Totals | 100 | 13 | 87 | 11 |

* 10 of these paediatric intensive care ventilators were placed in sealed storage and returned as part of the buy-back option which was exercised in Sept. 2011

(AQW 5243/11-15)

- (i) Under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, all departments are required to fulfil the statutory duty to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

My Department's work on the Regional Development Strategy and Regional Transportation Strategy will connect and support communities, strengthen community cohesion and promote city and town centres as shared spaces. The plans for a phased re-lay of the Coleraine to Londonderry Rail link and the Rapid Transit pilot network proposals which I announced in October will also assist in promoting a shared future. In addition, Roads Service assists other agencies and communities to deal with flags, graffiti and illegal monuments in ways designed to best promote good relations.

- (ii) As part of their obligations under the Act all departments are required to consider how all policy development and spending decisions contribute to promoting good relations. The approach to maintaining good relations considerations into policy development and resource allocation will also be considered as part of the development of the final Cohesion, Sharing and Integration strategy.



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