

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 27 January 2012

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 27 January 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company: One Plan for Derry Regeneration Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation of the recommendations in the review of the Ilex Urban Regeneration Company's One Plan for Derry regeneration programme.

(AQW 6204/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The One City, One Plan One Voice Regeneration Plan has not been the subject of a review. However since its launch in June 2011, there continues to be progress in taking forward the recommendations contained within the Plan. All departments have been briefed by the Strategy Board and along with our Ministerial colleague, the Minister for Social Development, we brought the One Plan to the Executive in November. The Executive agreed to support the recommendations and Ministers also agreed to provide a senior official to liaise between each department and the Strategy Board.

We have also ensured that key milestones in the achievement of One Plan outcomes are included in the draft Programme for Government.

Disposal of Former Military Sites

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the disposal of former military sites under the Hillsborough Agreement.

(AQW 6208/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena and parts of St Lucia Barracks, Omagh were gifted to OFMDFM in April 2011 under the Hillsborough Castle Agreement. The Shackleton Barracks site at Ballykelly was transferred to OFMDFM on 7 October 2011.

As these sites are complex and offer a range of possible uses, advice on the options for disposal of the sites to achieve value for the Executive is being developed with the help of the Asset Management Unit and its specialist advisers. We will consider the most appropriate way forward for each of them in due course.

Economic Downturn

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation of the Executive's priority measures to deal with the economic downturn.

(AQW 6261/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Executive published its package of priority measures to deal with the economic downturn on 20 May 2010. An interim evaluation of the package was undertaken by OFMDFM's Economic Policy Unit in the autumn of 2010. The results of this interim evaluation demonstrated positive progress in terms of recommendations completed, actioned and ongoing. Approximately four-fifths of the 151 recommendations were either complete or being

progressed (around one-quarter of recommendations fully completed, almost one-fifth being continued as part of departments' work programmes and just over one-third working towards completion dates). The OFMDFM Business Plan contains a target for the complete implementation of the Executive's Priority Measures to deal with the Economic Downturn by December 2011. A Post Project Evaluation of the complete package of measures is due to be undertaken shortly.

Victims and Survivors Service

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

(AQW 6262/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We would refer the Member to the reply we gave to AQO 985/11-15 on 16 December 2011.

Customised Brussels-Based Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether every new Minister has been offered a customised Brussels-based programme to assist them in furthering their European objectives and Executive priorities.

(AQW 6264/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Since the Assembly elections in May 2011, our Office in Brussels has facilitated eight programmes for the Ministers of Enterprise, Trade and Investment; Agriculture and Rural Development; Regional Development and Junior Ministers. The Office is also currently in discussions with a number of other departments concerning proposed programmes in the coming months.

Following the agreement of the Executive's European Priorities, the Head of our European Division wrote to all Permanent Secretaries on 6 September offering to develop a focused Ministerial programme in Brussels, based upon their EU priorities.

Level of Wealth Inequality

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the current level of wealth inequality; and what additional measures they intends to put in place to reduce the current level of inequality.

(AQW 6287/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Information on wealth equality is only available for Great Britain and not for here.

Given our sample size, an approach such as that used by the Wealth and Assets Survey is unlikely to yield results of sufficient accuracy to enable useful interpretation to be drawn. In addition, wealth inequality is very difficult to measure with precision because the valuation of assets and property is market led.

However, household income and poverty measures are monitored over time and the Executive has in place a wide range of policies to reduce poverty and social exclusion. The 'Lifetime Opportunities' anti-poverty strategy, the broad architecture and principles of which the Executive adopted in 2008, is supported by a range of measures that monitor poverty within different types of households.

The Executive has agreed to the establishment of new funds to address need. The first of these, the Social Protection Fund, currently in process of delivery, will initially provide help to those most in need of assistance with fuel costs. The second, the Social Investment Fund, which will become operational in 2012/13, has as a key aim of tackling poverty.

One of the ways we measure poverty is the relative income poverty measure. This will measure and monitor the relativity of poverty to the median UK household income.

Social Protection Fund and Social Investment Fund

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what independent monitoring system will be put in place to ensure transparency in relation to the (i) Social Protection Fund; and (ii) Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 6326/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The public consultation on our proposals for the Social Investment Fund ended on 23 December 2011 and the responses received are currently being analysed. It is intended that a monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed as part of the final delivery arrangements for the Fund.

The Social Protection Fund is being used, this financial year, to deliver a Winter Poverty Payment Scheme through DSD and DHSSPS. It will be for those Departments to ensure appropriate monitoring is put in place.

Strategy to Improve the Resilience of Key Infrastructure to Natural Hazards

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the strategy to improve the resilience of key infrastructure to natural hazards, which was included in their Department's Business Plan 2011/12.

(AQW 6362/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our officials have held detailed discussions with a number of departments and agencies about their work in assessing risks to key infrastructure and how these might be mitigated. As a result, officials are now undertaking a more detailed assessment of the applicability and extent of that work, with a view to determining if a formal strategy continues to represent the best way to proceed at this time.

Pandemic Influenza Framework

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Pandemic Influenza Framework, which was included in their Department's Business Plan 2011/12.

(AQW 6363/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM officials chair a sub-group of the Civil Contingencies Group (NI) comprising representatives from both health and non-health organisations working together to develop and maintain planning and response arrangements for an influenza pandemic. These arrangements will be set out within a Pandemic Influenza Framework, the terms of which we anticipate will be finalised within the next few weeks following consideration by key stakeholders.

Ministerial Budget Review Group

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they are supporting the Ministerial Budget Review Group in its review of arm's-length bodies.

(AQW 6365/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We jointly chair the Budget Review Group, which the Executive has decided should conduct a review of arms length bodies against criteria determined by the Executive.

Our officials, in collaboration with DFP officials, have been analysing detailed responses from departments on the review criteria. Following this, we intend to bring a paper to a future meeting of the Budget Review Group, and the views of the Group will inform the recommendations which we, as joint chairs of the Group, ultimately bring to the Executive.

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, for each of the last five years, to detail the functions that (i) have been transferred; and (ii) are planned to be transferred from their 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 their Department, of the final year when each of the functions were the responsibility of their Department; and (iii) may be transferred from their Department to local councils at a future date,

(AQW 6395/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No functions have been transferred from OFMDFM to local councils in the past five years, nor are there any plans to do so.

Asset Management Unit

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Asset Management Unit has produced regular reports for the Executive on the progress in delivering the asset disposal target, as set out in the Budget 2011-15.

(AQW 6456/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Asset Management Unit (AMU) reported to the Executive's Budget Review Group (BRG) on 11 October 2011 on progress with meeting asset disposal targets. The AMU is due to report again on this subject on 31 January 2012.

Funding for Trade Unions

Mr McCallister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the level of funding their Department allocated to each trade union in the (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11 financial years.

(AQW 6493/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

Financial year	Funding allocated to trade union
2000/2001	Nil
2005/2006	Nil
2010/2011	£3000 to FDA

The FDA (formerly the First Division Association) is a professional association and union representing senior public servants.

In 2010/2011 all departments including OFMDFM agreed to jointly fund the position of Secretary within the FDA.

The decision to fund FDA was agreed by Departmental officials through Human Resources Directors Group.

Londonderry's Designation as the UK City of Culture

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of a recent statement attributed to their Department's Junior Minister, in relation to Londonderry's designation as the UK City of Culture, which stated that 'the only way is to neutralise the UK prefix', whether this comment was issued in the role as junior Minister.

(AQW 6563/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Martina Anderson MLA's comments were not made in her role as Junior Minister.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr Durkan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the timescale for the establishment of an advisory group, as set out in the draft Programme for Government, to assist Ministers in alleviating hardship resulting from the Welfare Reform Bill.

(AQW 6570/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We will establish the advisory group and arrange its first meeting during February 2012.

Social Investment Fund

Mr S Anderson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Social Investment Fund.

(AQW 6638/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The public consultation on the Social Investment Fund proposals ended on 23 December 2011.

During the consultation period, six public events were held, at which initial proposals were outlined and then discussed in detail. Attendance at these public events was high, with almost 240 participants.

During the consultation period, our officials also met with a number of key statutory bodies and other departments. This was with a view to ensuring that the Social Investment Fund complements other area based initiatives.

We have received over three hundred formal consultation responses, which our officials are currently analysing. This will help to inform final proposals for operational arrangements for the Fund.

Whilst several key issues have already emerged, it would be wrong for us to detail these in depth until all of the input to the consultation has been fully reflected on.

We hope to be in a position to publish a consultation report in the coming months. In parallel, we will develop and bring final proposals to the Executive with a view to having the Fund fully operational as soon as possible.

Our Children and Young People-Our Pledge

Mr Storey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on 'Our Children and Young People-Our Pledge'.

(AQW 6652/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are currently evaluating the success of the 2008-11 Action Plan with a view to developing a successive Action Plan for the next period, along with the governance arrangements required to support its implementation.

Civil Contingency Framework

Mrs Hale asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Civil Contingency Framework will be consolidated into Civil Contingency Legislation.

(AQW 6653/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: There are no plans at present to incorporate the terms of the Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework into legislation.

Attorney General's Office

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Attorney General's Office is operating within the budget allocated at the start of this financial year.

(AQW 6707/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We can confirm that the Attorney General's Office is operating within the budget allocated at the start of this financial year.

Equality Impact Assessment for the Social Investment Fund

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Equality Impact Assessment for the Social Investment Fund will be repeated to ensure that the entirety of the fund proposals will be assessed and not just the objective of the fund.

(AQW 6757/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It is our intention that equality implications are fully considered when implementing the Social Investment Fund. In particular, equality impact screening, and if necessary full assessments, will be completed before funding is awarded through the Strategic Area Plans.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Laying Hens Directive: Compliance

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department has taken to ensure compliance with the Laying Hens Directive throughout Northern Ireland.

(AQW 6100/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Following on from the Statement which I made in the Assembly on 6 December 2011, I can confirm that robust enforcement action is underway to ensure compliance with the Welfare of Laying Hens Directive.

All producers targeted by my Department's risk-based analysis will be visited over the coming weeks. If contraventions are found at the time of the visit, they will be dealt with using provisions within the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations, and the Egg Marketing Regulations. If any hens are still in conventional cages at the time of the inspection, Rectification Notices will be issued to producers under the Welfare Regulations. Rectification notices will be followed up with an Advisory Notice to producers - permitting the marketing or movement of eggs for Class B grading or directly to processing establishments. If evidence comes to light that a packing centre is knowingly marketing conventional cage eggs as Class A, a Compliance Notice will be issued to the packer. Prosecution will also be considered. We anticipate that any remaining non-compliant producers here will have depopulated by end of January.

I am deploying the same methods as Defra to stop illegally produced eggs from entering the shell egg market in the north of Ireland, namely Ultra Violet light analysis combined with shared compliant producer lists to help identify and control non-compliant imports from other Member States. I will monitor the situation carefully here and will not hesitate to press the Commission further if any issues arise.

I, together with my counter parts in Britain, are taking steps to establish as much compliance as possible with the conventional cage ban for egg products. Ensuring that retailers, food manufacturers and the food service industry have stringent traceability in place to ensure that they are not using non-compliant eggs is an essential component of our enforcement strategy. The British Retail Consortium has come out publicly in support of egg producers and has guaranteed that conventional caged eggs will not be bought by the major retailers or used as ingredients in their own-brand products. They have put in place stringent traceability tests to ensure that they will not be buying non-compliant eggs. The main multi-national retailers who have operations in the north have also made this guarantee. Members of the Food and Drink Federation and the Hospitality Association have given similar

guarantees. We have also been assured by the Central Procurement Directorate that under Government Purchasing Standards only eggs and egg products from a compliant source will be used.

All of the actions outlined should ensure that local producers are protected as well as preventing any illegally produced eggs from reaching the shell egg market in the north of Ireland.

I would advise you that the Commission has begun the early stages of pre-infraction procedures with non-compliant Member States. Britain and the north of Ireland have been included in this action.

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

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development 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 6137/11-15)

Mrs O’Neill: The Post Project Evaluation in relation to the ‘Cessation of interceptor mixed stock fisheries on North Atlantic salmon not achieving their conservation limits’ was drafted by the Loughs Agency in January 2010 but returned on a number of occasions by the Loughs Agency’s two sponsor Departments as the Departments felt some issues had not been properly addressed.

These issues included the need for closer correlation between targets set and the record of their achievement, the need to improve clarity regarding the annual evaluation of the project and in relation to the comparison between cost estimates and cost totals.

Inshore Fisheries

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether there are any plans for managing and regulating inshore fisheries which are not presently managed by Lough Agencies.

(AQW 6182/11-15)

Mrs O’Neill: Inshore sea fisheries are managed and regulated directly by the Fisheries and Environment Division of my Department. The Department has commissioned the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute to develop a draft inshore sea fisheries strategy, which is intended for consultation with stakeholders during 2012. The strategy will include consideration of management and regulation issues.

Additional Funding for the Beragh Flood Alleviation Scheme

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the £1 million additional funding for the Beragh flood alleviation scheme, what additional funding is being made available to address the flooding that has occurred in Carnlough village; and how she determines where flood alleviation funding is to be allocated.[R]

(AQW 6199/11-15)

Mrs O’Neill: The additional £1 million funding made available to my Rivers Agency is to help with flood alleviation throughout the north of Ireland and was not specifically for the Beragh flood defence scheme. Funding for flood alleviation schemes throughout the north of Ireland is prioritised on the level of risk to property and health and the potential benefit gained in the reduction of that risk through completion of a scheme. Currently there are no plans to progress a flood alleviation scheme at Carnlough Village.

River Flooding

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her Department’s roles and responsibilities in assisting with incidents of flooding which occur as a result of river flooding;

and how it is determined whether a flooding incident is serious enough for the people affected to receive assistance from her Department.

(AQW 6205/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In a flooding event my Rivers Agency will prioritise calls received on the level of risk attached to each incident reported. All calls relating to imminent danger to life are directed to the Emergency Services. Other calls relating to flooding or potential flooding of property caused by overtopping of rivers will be prioritised and my Rivers Agency will try to respond with properties at immediate risk of flooding being highest priority. However, it should be borne in mind that my Rivers Agency has a limited labour resource which is quickly exhausted and may not be able to respond to all calls to prevent flooding occurring. During a flooding event members of the public can contact the flooding incident line on 0300 2000 100.

Rescue of Farm Animals Trapped as a Result of River Flooding

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) what resources her Department has made available to aid the rescue of farm animals trapped as a result of river flooding; (ii) how farmers can access these resources; (iii) whether she is aware of the incident in Coleraine where flood water from the River Bann marooned 31 spring lambs, and the farmer had to seek assistance from elsewhere as her Department was unable to help; and (iv) to outline the reasons why her Department was unable to help the farmer affected by this incident.

(AQW 6212/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department and specifically my Rivers Agency do not have any specialist training nor any resources available to them to aid the rescue of farm animals trapped as a result of river flooding. I am aware of the incident involving lambs trapped by floodwaters at Coleraine and I am informed that the caller who reported the incident to my Rivers Agency was advised that the Rivers Agency are not trained in this specialist type of rescue and they were referred to the NI Fire and Rescue Service for assistance.

Harvested Wood

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the amount of wood under Forestry NI control that was (a) suitable for harvesting; and (b) harvested in each of the last three years; (ii) the revenue received from harvested wood; and (iii) the amount of harvested wood that was stolen over this period of time.

(AQW 6225/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: (i) The amount of wood that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Forest Service deemed suitable for harvesting and which was dispatched from forests in each of the last three years was:

	Quantity in cubic metres
April 2008 - March 2009	404,899 m ³
April 2009 – March 2010	437,196 m ³
April 2010 – March 2011	495,856 m ³

(ii) the revenue received from harvested wood; and (iii) the amount of harvested wood that was stolen over this period of time was:

	(ii) revenue received from harvested wood	(iii) amount of harvested wood stolen
April 2008 - March 2011	£22.47 million	449 m ³

Countryside Management Branch

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how many staff work in the Countryside Management Branch; (ii) what delays have been experienced by staff in carrying out the annual inspections of participants in the Countryside Management Scheme; and (iii) what steps have been taken by the Department to address these delays.

(AQW 6272/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Countryside Management Unit has three Branches which carry out all land –based inspections. The inspections for agri-environment schemes are carried out by 30 members of Countryside Management Delivery Branch.
- (ii) In-line with EU requirements 5% of claimants were inspected initially and a high level of non-compliance and over-declaration by claimants was detected. As a result, my Department had to increase the number of inspections from 66 to 358. The additional workload to complete these inspections, and the associated administrative checks, has resulted in delayed payments to scheme participants.
- (iii) The workload in Countryside Management Delivery Branch has had to be prioritised. As a result my Department has had to delay the entry into the NICMS for 1300 new participants, until 1 January 2013.

Hospitality: Spend

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what has been the total spend on hospitality by her Department in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6317/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Hospitality costs for each of the last five years for the Department and its Agencies were:

2006/07	£68,968
2007/08	£55,931
2008/09	£74,991
2009/10	£66,425
2010/11	£62,728

Fishing for Sea Bass

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) why fishing for Sea Bass has been allowed through a 'by-catch' clause; (ii) what were the alternatives; and (iii) why these alternatives were not used instead.

(AQW 6324/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is currently preparing the draft Protection and Conservation of Sea Bass (NI) Regulations 2012 that we hope to bring into operation later this year. A full consultation took place during 2010 on the proposed regulations. All parties with an interest were invited to comment through the consultation process. Opinions expressed were strongly divided between the recreational and commercial sectors.

Following receipt of the responses the draft proposals were reviewed and I decided that it was appropriate to provide an exemption from some of the proposed regulations for certain commercial fishing gears. This will either be by specifying which gears are exempt or by introducing a by-catch level for these gears. The exemption is only proposed for trawl gears currently used to catch Nephrops, white fish or herring and mackerel in offshore waters, inshore netting and long lining would remain subject to the Regulations.

We support the proposal for a general prohibition on the sale of Bass, but with an exemption for licensed fishing vessels that catch Bass accidentally in trawl gear. The justification for this is as follows: While the current catches of Bass are small and infrequent as these vessels operate in the offshore area, a prohibition on landings and subsequent sale will increase discards contrary to our discard reduction policy. Bass caught by trawling cannot be released alive and therefore the impact on the stock is no greater by allowing such landings and any Bass that is caught by these vessels would be recorded and could contribute to knowledge of the state of the stock

The only alternative to allowing a by-catch (or exemption element for certain trawl gears) is a total ban on all commercial fishing for Bass. This would result in more Bass discards from trawl fisheries and this would be contrary to our discard reduction policy. To condone discards would undermine our position in negotiations elsewhere, such as in Europe where we argue against proposals that might increase discards.

I would also reinforce the point that the main threat to Bass is likely to be from commercial netting and long lining in the inshore zone and we intend to prohibit landings and retention of Bass by these means.

The overall intent remains to prevent the overexploitation of Bass by recreational and commercial fishers and encourage conditions under which the stock may grow.

Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations (NI) 2012

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether an equality impact assessment has been carried out on the proposed Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations (NI) 2012.

(AQW 6325/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department carried out an equality screening test to determine if the proposed Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations (NI) 2012 have the potential to have a differential impact on different groups of people in terms of equality. The proposed Regulations will not impose any new or additional requirements in relation to welfare standards where good practice is already adopted by dog breeders and the proposed new requirements including the microchipping of dogs and pups will apply equally to all dog breeding establishments. In addition, in earlier discussions with stakeholders no information emerged to indicate that the proposed Regulations would impact adversely on any Section 75 Group. The draft Regulations have therefore been provisionally 'screened out' as regards equality impact, which means that a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is unnecessary. However, the Equality Screening Out Document was included as part of my Department's 12-week public consultation on the draft Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations, which closed on 10 January 2012. Consultees were asked if they agreed this assessment. Following the analysis of consultation responses, should any evidence be produced to the contrary, the equality impact screening document will be revised and a full EQIA will be completed if necessary.

Farm Animals Trapped as a Result of River Flooding

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of incidences of farm animals being trapped, as a result of river flooding during the current winter period, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 6330/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Rivers Agency do not collate this information and would have no statistics to provide.

Schmallenberg Virus

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the nature of any discussions her Department has had in relation to the Schmallenberg Virus; and (ii) what plans have been put in place to safeguard the industry from the virus.

(AQW 6383/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Officials from my Department have met with the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) to discuss the current situation in relation to Schmallenberg Virus (SBV) and consider what action may be appropriate here. In addition they have been in regular contact with officials in Defra and in DAFM in the south.

As a result of these discussions and the information emerging from the European Commission, and taking account of veterinary advice, we will carry out targeted surveillance focused on ruminants and their offspring that have been imported from affected areas since 1 June 2011 to help assess the risk of SBV incursion into the north of Ireland. We will also carry out enhanced surveillance of neonatal calves and foetuses that meet a clinical case definition. At this time there is no evidence of the disease here.

Information on this new disease has been posted on both the DARD and AFBI websites. We have sent letters to all Private Veterinary Practitioners and animal importers alerting them to the clinical signs of the disease and advising of the Department's intention to carry out some targeted surveillance. My officials have also met with key stakeholders to discuss the situation.

AFBI is in contact with the Friedrich Loeffler Institute (FLI) in Germany, which is the laboratory that identified the virus and which has developed a test for it. A Materials Transfer Agreement (MTA) has been put in place to allow AFBI access to their protocol for testing for Schmallenberg virus and this will allow AFBI to carry out tests for the virus. It is estimated that AFBI will have diagnostic capability in the next two weeks.

I would emphasise that knowledge of this new disease is changing rapidly and we will be monitoring developments very closely over the coming weeks as further information becomes available.

Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations (NI) 2012

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether she is aware of the concerns within dog breeding organisations about the proposed Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations (NI) 2012; and (ii) what steps she intends to take to alleviate the concerns.

(AQW 6384/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am aware that some dog breeding organisations have expressed concerns about some of the proposals in the Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations (NI) 2012, which have recently been the subject of public consultation. One breeding organisation has written to me requesting a meeting to discuss the proposed Regulations and I will be meeting them shortly so that I can hear their concerns at first hand.

The consultation on these draft Regulations issued to over 2,000 consultees and the process has given dog breeders, specialist interest groups, Councils and the general public the opportunity to consider and comment on the proposed new dog breeding regulations. The 12 week consultation closed on 10 January 2012 and a substantial number of responses have been received. My officials are currently analysing these responses and I will be considering all of them before I make any decisions on the draft regulations. It is not my intention to curtail legitimate breeding but to protect, and where necessary, to improve the welfare of all puppies and dogs in breeding establishments.

Rural Proofing: Legislation

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 3460/11-15, to detail (i) who offers the advice and support service for rural proofing; (ii) where this service can be accessed; and (iii) when the impact review will be carried out.

(AQW 6386/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Support and guidance for rural proofing is available from Sustainable Rural Communities Branch officials in my Department. This service can be accessed using the contact details listed in the

“Thinking Rural: The Essential Guide to Rural Proofing” booklet which is available on the DARD website. A review of the impact of rural proofing is planned for the latter part of this year.

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, 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 6396/11-15)

Mrs O’Neill: In relation to part (i) of your question, I can confirm that there were no departmental functions transferred to local councils in the past 5 years.

The tables below reflect departmental functions that are planned to be or may be transferred to local councils at a future date:-

(ii) Input covering the planned transfer of functions:

Description of function	Reason for transfer	Anticipated date of transfer
<p>Welfare of Animals – A new Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011 has been introduced with new powers for non-farmed animals. The Act defines that enforcement of these powers will be the responsibility of Council Inspectors.</p>	<p>These new powers will be introduced for the first time from April 2012 - this function has not previously been the responsibility of the Department.</p> <p>Annual funding of £760k was available in the DARD budget in 2011/12 to assist Councils to prepare for implementation. This funding will increase by £20k per annum for the following 3 years of the budget period to assist Councils in delivering their new animal welfare enforcement role in respect of non-farmed animals.</p>	<p>April 2012</p>

(iii) - input covering functions which may be transferred at a future date:

Description of function for transfer at a future date	Reason for transfer	Anticipated date of transfer
Animal Welfare licensing and registration functions involving non-farmed animals	As Councils will have responsibility under the new Welfare of Animals Act for enforcement in respect of non-farmed animals responsibility for licensing and registration functions for activities involving non-farmed animals (including for example, pet shops and riding establishments) will transfer to Councils. This is intended to provide clear demarcation lines so members of the public know who to report an animal welfare issue to.	Subordinate legislation on licensing, registration and fees in relation to pet shops etc., will be brought forward in 2012/13.

0845 Numbers

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much revenue has been raised by her Department in each of the last three financial years by the usage of 0845 numbers.

(AQW 6438/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As part of DARD's call management project, function based numbers with a 0845 prefix were adopted by my Department in 2008.

My Department has generated no revenue in the past three years from the use of these 0845 prefix numbers. There has been a small monthly cost to DARD for the use of the numbers based on the number of call minutes.

The 0845 prefix numbers used by my Department are being replaced by 0300 prefix numbers later this year in line with the NI Direct contact number protocol.

Dog Attacks on People

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many dog attacks on people were reported in each council area in 2011.

(AQW 6448/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Please see the table below which details the number of dog attacks on people investigated by each Council for the period from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011.

Council	Incidents investigated
Antrim	22
Ards	31
Armagh	41
Ballymena	14
Ballymoney	11
Banbridge	30

Council	Incidents investigated
Belfast	122
Carrickfergus	18
Castlereagh	30
Coleraine	19
Cookstown	16
Craigavon	29
Derry	60
Down	68
Dungannon	45
Fermanagh	22
Larne	1
Limavady	18
Lisburn	51
Magherafelt	7
Moyle	1
Newry	157
Newtownabbey	24
North Down	60
Omagh	8
Strabane	4
Total	909

Funding for Trade Unions

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the level of funding her Department allocated to each trade union in the (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11 financial years.

(AQW 6494/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department does not directly allocate funds to any trade union.

However, as part of the NICS Central Whitley arrangements, a small representative number of staff from DARD are attached to NIPSA through the Seconded Officers Scheme, and the Department meets the salary costs of these staff.

The level of gross salary paid by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for full time seconded officers to NIPSA in the financial years for which the information is available is £99,594 and £146,322 for 2005/06 and 2010/11 respectively.

The Department does not retain records for the 2000/01 financial year.

Civil Servants from the Foyle Constituency who Work in Greater Belfast

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the total number of civil servants in her Department who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area; and the total cost to her Department of subsidising the travel.

(AQW 6513/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Although there are currently 5 staff in DARD who travel to work in the Greater Belfast area from the Derry area, the Department has incurred no costs in respect of excess fares for subsidising travel during the period 1 January 2011 to 30 November 2011.

Farms in North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farms there are in North Down.

(AQW 6844/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The June 2010 Agricultural Census found 64 farm businesses in the North Down District Council area. Data for 2011 are published on the DARD website on 31 January 2012.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Sporting Interests that Decline to Accept Lottery Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding opportunities exist for sporting interests that, on principle, decline to accept lottery funding; and for her assessment of whether there is a gap in such funding provision.

(AQW 6455/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): If a group or individual decides not to apply for lottery funding because of moral, conscientious or religious objections, this is a decision they take for themselves. No separate fund exists for sporting interests that, on principle, decline to accept lottery funding.

However, Sport NI have a wide range of exchequer funded programmes which provide significant opportunities to sporting groups. The majority of Sport NI awards are made from that funding source.

Funding for Trade Unions

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the level of funding her Department allocated to each trade union in the (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11 financial years.

(AQW 6495/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the financial years 2000/01, 2005/06 and 2010/11 the Department did not directly fund any trade union.

Arts Council Funding to the Braid Centre in Ballymena

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what conditions were attached to the funding, given by the Arts Council to the Braid Centre, in Ballymena in relation to keeping the facility a neutral and shared space and welcoming to all.

(AQW 6501/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Braid Arts Centre is owned and operated by Ballymena Borough Council.

The Arts Council (ACNI) provided Lottery funding of £2m for the construction of the Centre which opened in 2008. Since then ACNI has not allocated any grants to Ballymena Borough Council.

A basic condition of all Lottery funding is that projects supported must be open and accessible to all sections of the community.

Plans to Erect Flags and Symbols in the Braid Centre, Ballymena

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether the Arts Council has been informed by Ballymena Borough Council of the plans to erect flags and symbols in the Braid Centre, Ballymena; and what action the Arts Council intends to take.

(AQW 6502/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: ACNI was contacted by Ballymena Borough Council after it made its decision regarding flags and symbols and will be meeting with representatives of the Borough Council in the near future to discuss the issue.

Arts Council Policy to Withdraw Funding

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether it is Arts Council policy to withdraw funding for facilities if the conditions that are attached to funding are not adhered to.

(AQW 6503/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: All Arts Council contracts contain clauses relating to withholding of funds or claw back of funds if an organisation breaches any condition of grant. It would be Arts Council policy to investigate any breach and seek to rectify the situation.

Civil Servants from the Foyle Constituency who Work in Greater Belfast

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the total number of civil servants in her Department who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area; and the total cost to her Department of subsidising the travel.

(AQW 6514/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In my Department there are currently no civil servants who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area.

Therefore the cost to DCAL of subsidising the travel is Nil.

Bag Nets Operated off the County Antrim Coast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether there is any distinction in what is permitted or licensed in catching salmon in the bag nets which are operated off the County Antrim coast compared to landing salmon on shore.

(AQW 6518/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Bag nets which are operated off the County Antrim coast are connected to the shore. Salmon are removed from the sea end of the net by a boat and carcasses must be tagged when the fish are landed.

Drift nets are curtains of mesh deployed from a boat further off shore and after a period of passive fishing are hauled back to the boat and taken on board. Fish are removed from the nets and must be tagged before being landed.

Bag and Drift Net Operations off the County Antrim Coast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action has been taken, in the last three years, to advance the buy-out of the bag and drift net operations off the County Antrim coast.

(AQW 6519/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There has been no further action taken by the Department in the last three years, regarding a buy-out of the bag and drift net operations off the County Antrim coast.

Bag and Drift Net Operations off the County Antrim Coast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether there is provision, in the present budget, for the buy-out of the bag and drift net operations off the County Antrim coast.

(AQW 6520/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There is currently no provision set aside in the present budget for any potential buy-out of the bag and drift net licence holders off the Co Antrim coast.

Bag and Drift Net Operations off the County Antrim Coast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what communications her Department has had with the EU Commission, over the last five years, in relation to the bag and drift net operations off the County Antrim coast.

(AQW 6521/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has no direct communication with the EU Commission regarding bag and draft net operations off the County Antrim coast.

The EU Commission communicates directly with British Government Departments, which relay information and request to the appropriate Departments in the devolved administrations. Responses are again channelled through British Government Departments.

Bag and Drift Net Operations off the County Antrim Coast

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what information her Department holds, for the last five years, on the rivers to which salmon were returning before they were caught in the bag and drift net operations off the County Antrim coast.

(AQW 6522/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: For a number of years DCAL has monitored salmon stocks in rivers in its jurisdiction and has commissioned AFBI to carry out scientific research and analysis of data. One of the major outputs of this work is the determination of Conservation Limits (CL) for each of 6 Index Rivers. The CLs are expressed in terms of the number of eggs (ova) required for deposition in gravels to fill the available juvenile habitat on hatching.

The CLs for Index Rivers in the DCAL area are shown in the table below:

River	Region	CL ova deposition range (000's ova)
Bush	Northern	2310
Glendun	Northern	361-540
Shimna	South east	209-314
Main	Lough Neagh	2184-3265
Blackwater	Lough Neagh	1725-2578
Garvary	South West	84-125

The table below indicates the percentage compliance with the CLs for each of the past five years.

River	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Bush	83	170	103	62	56
Glendun	57	77	96	33	64
Shimna	40	47	40	12	76
Main	42	96	170	68	61
Blackwater	32	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Garvary	n/a	101	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = data not available

The Department also commissioned AFBI to carry out field work and research to establish the rivers of origin of the salmon taken by the DCAL licensed fishing engines off the County Antrim coast. This has determined that these nets are intercepting mixed stocks of salmon from the following rivers:

DCAL AREA:

Shimna	Upper Bann	Northern Lough Neagh Rivers
Lower Bann	Blackwater	Carey
Glendun	Glenarm	Bush

LOUGHS AGENCY AREA:

North Foyle	West Foyle	South East Foyle
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Licences for the Salmon Nets on the North Antrim Coast

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when the licences for the six remaining salmon nets on the North Antrim Coast expire; and whether she intends to renew these licences.

(AQW 6650/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The six coastal salmon net licences issued by DCAL expired on 31 December 2011.

The Department is currently considering applications received for the 2012 season.

Illegal or Unlicensed Nets

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 5736/11-15, which section of the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 covers the sending of warning letters; and to specify the offences for which warning letters have been sent.

(AQW 6689/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The issue of warning letters is not covered under any section of the 1966 Fisheries Act. The Department has developed enforcement policy to include the option of a written warning as an alternative to prosecution in certain defined circumstances.

Warning letters may be issued where there is evidence that an offence has been committed, the offender has fully co-operated in the investigation and there are extenuating circumstances such as age (juveniles or the elderly) or a disability.

The Department is generally reluctant to prosecute juveniles, which would result in a criminal record that could impact on or impede their future career and development opportunities.

In each of the three cases referred to in AQW/5736/11-15 the written warnings were issued for placement of a net within the defined mouth of a river.

Legislative Programme

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 4123/11-15, when her Department will submit its legislative proposals to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

(AQW 6837/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have submitted my proposals for primary legislation to the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Department of Education

Department's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of his Department's Community Relations, Equality and Diversity policy in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6228/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): My Department has spent the following on community relations and the new Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy over the last five years:

	Community Relations	Transition Phase	CRED
2007/08	£3.9m		
2008/09	£3.5m		
2009/10	£3.6m		
2010/11		£1.1m	
2011/12			£1.1m

The previous community relations schemes ended in March 2010 and the 2010/11 financial year was used as a transition period to run-down existing programmes and prepare educators for the implementation of the new CRED policy. The CRED policy was launched in March 2011 and as such, three years costs are not yet available.

Community Relations

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how much his Department has spent on community relations in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6230/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has spent the following on community relations and the new Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy over the last five years:

	Community Relations	Transition Phase	CRED
2007/08	£3.9m		
2008/09	£3.5m		
2009/10	£3.6m		

	Community Relations	Transition Phase	CRED
2010/11		£1.1m	
2011/12			£1.1m

The previous community relations schemes ended in March 2010 and the 2010/11 financial year was used as a transition period to run-down existing programmes and prepare educators for the implementation of the new CRED policy. The CRED policy was launched in March 2011 and as such, three years costs are not yet available.

Phase 2 Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit Report

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education when the Phase 2 Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit report on his Department will be published.

(AQW 6232/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have previously given a commitment to publish the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit reports on Home to School Transport and School Meals after they were finalised. I met recently with the Finance Minister to discuss the reports and expect to share them with the Education Committee and with other key stakeholders, very shortly, after which they will be published on the Department of Education's website.

Quangos

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education how many quangos are currently operating under his Department.

(AQW 6235/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are 12 currently operating, as follows:

- Belfast Education & Library Board
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- Exceptional Circumstances Body
- General Teaching Council for NI
- Middletown Centre for Autism Ltd
- NI Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
- North Eastern Education & Library Board
- South Eastern Education & Library Board
- Southern Education & Library Board
- Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards
- Western Education & Library Board
- Youth Council for NI

Coláiste Feirste, Belfast

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the recent ruling in relation to Coláiste Feirste, Belfast.

(AQW 6276/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: This is a significant and important judgment which requires careful and detailed consideration before I can be in a position to provide an overall assessment on the outcome.

In line with the court judgment, Department officials are currently re-examining the transport arrangements for pupils travelling to Coláiste Feirste and will in the near future bring recommendations to me for consideration.

Maintenance Repairs for Schools in the North Down Area

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of maintenance repairs that are programmed for schools in the North Down area, in each of the next three years.

(AQW 6291/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) has responsibility for maintenance in the controlled and maintained school sectors in the North Down area. The Board has discretion to decide the amounts, from within their overall budget allocations, it will attribute to maintenance based on other competing priorities.

As allocations are made on an annual basis SEELB has confirmed it is not in a position to provide a programme for maintenance repairs for North Down over the next three years.

Age Weighted Pupil Unit

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education how the estimated figure of a five percent reduction in the cash value of the Age Weighted Pupil Unit for 2012/13, referred to in his Department's letter to schools on 25 November 2011, was arrived at, given the one percent reduction in current expenditure set out in Table 3.1 of the Budget 2011-15 for the corresponding financial year.[R]

(AQW 6292/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The funding which goes directly to schools - the Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB) - forms approximately 60% of the Department's overall Resource Budget, as detailed in Table 3.1 of the Budget 2011-15.

The ASB is distributed to schools using the Common Funding Formula, as outlined in the Common Funding Scheme. The details of the Scheme are available from the Departmental website. Around 80% of most schools' core funding is from the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU). The estimated cash value of the AWPU reflects the overall level of funding available in the ASB, a range of estimated demographic values and anticipated increased needs within the 'non AWPU' funding factors. On 25 November 2011 my officials wrote out to schools to notify them of the high level budget planning information then available for the next three financial years.

On 12 January, following talks convened by the First Minister and deputy First Minister, I announced an additional £120m for schools over the next 3 years. This is over and above the extra £40m that I reallocated to schools last November from within the then existing education budget. As a result of the additional £120m funding the estimated AWPU cash values have now changed. For your information the revised estimates are set out below:

	(Actual)	Estimated		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
AWPU Cash Value*	£2,041	£2,021	£1,981	£2,011
Change %*	-	(1.0)%	(2.0)%	1.5%

*rounded

These revised figures were notified to all schools by my officials on 16 January 2012.

While 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 the Department faces a real terms reduction of £180m (9.2%) in resource funding by 2014/15, compared to the

2010/11 baseline. Hence it is very important that schools continue to address the pressures facing them and take necessary action to ensure that they live within budgets.

Age Weighted Pupil Unit

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education how the estimated figure of a one percent reduction in the cash value of the Age Weighted Pupil Unit for 2013/14, referred to in his Department's letter to schools on 25 November 2011, was arrived at, given the 0.6 percent increase in current expenditure set out in Table 3.1 of the Budget 2011-15 for the corresponding financial year.[R]

(AQW 6293/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The funding which goes directly to schools - the Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB) - forms approximately 60% of the Department's overall Resource Budget, as detailed in Table 3.1 of the Budget 2011-15.

The ASB is distributed to schools using the Common Funding Formula, as outlined in the Common Funding Scheme. The details of the Scheme are available from the Departmental website. Around 80% of most schools' core funding is from the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU). The estimated cash value of the AWPU reflects the overall level of funding available in the ASB, a range of estimated demographic values and anticipated increased needs within the 'non AWPU' funding factors. On 25 November 2011 my officials wrote out to schools to notify them of the high level budget planning information then available for the next three financial years.

On 12 January, following talks convened by the First Minister and deputy First Minister, I announced an additional £120m for schools over the next 3 years. This is over and above the extra £40m that I reallocated to schools last November from within the then existing education budget. As a result of the additional £120m funding the estimated AWPU cash values have now changed. For your information the revised estimates are set out below:

	(Actual)	Estimated		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
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Change %*	-	(1.0)%	(2.0)%	1.5%

*rounded

These revised figures were notified to all schools by my officials on 16 January 2012.

While 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 the Department faces a real terms reduction of £180m (9.2%) in resource funding by 2014/15, compared to the 2010/11 baseline. Hence it is very important that schools continue to address the pressures facing them and take necessary action to ensure that they live within budgets.

Age Weighted Pupil Unit

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education how the estimated figure of a five percent reduction in the cash value of the Age Weighted Pupil Unit for 2014/15, referred to in his Department's letter to schools on 25 November 2011, was arrived at, given the 0.7 percent decrease in current expenditure set out in Table 3.1 of the Budget 2011-15 for the corresponding financial year. [R]

(AQW 6294/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The funding which goes directly to schools - the Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB) - forms approximately 60% of the Department's overall Resource Budget, as detailed in Table 3.1 of the Budget 2011-15.

The ASB is distributed to schools using the Common Funding Formula, as outlined in the Common Funding Scheme. The details of the Scheme are available from the Departmental website. Around 80% of most schools' core funding is from the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU). The estimated cash value of the AWPU reflects the overall level of funding available in the ASB, a range of estimated demographic values and anticipated increased needs within the 'non AWPU' funding factors. On 25 November 2011 my officials wrote out to schools to notify them of the high level budget planning information then available for the next three financial years.

On 12 January, following talks convened by the First Minister and deputy First Minister, I announced an additional £120m for schools over the next 3 years. This is over and above the extra £40m that I reallocated to schools last November from within the then existing education budget. As a result of the additional £120m funding the estimated AWPU cash values have now changed. For your information the revised estimates are set out below:

	(Actual)	Estimated		
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
AWPU Cash Value*	£2,041	£2,021	£1,981	£2,011
Change %*	-	(1.0)%	(2.0)%	1.5%

*rounded

These revised figures were notified to all schools by my officials on 16 January 2012.

While 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 the Department faces a real terms reduction of £180m (9.2%) in resource funding by 2014/15, compared to the 2010/11 baseline. Hence it is very important that schools continue to address the pressures facing them and take necessary action to ensure that they live within budgets.

Budgets for Schools in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what plans his Department has to address any shortfalls in the budgets for schools in the North Down area in this financial year.

(AQW 6307/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All schools receive a fully delegated budget under the Common Funding Scheme arrangements on an equitable basis, irrespective of geographical location.

As I announced on 12 January 2012, the Executive has agreed to provide the Education sector with £120m of additional funding, which will go straight to school budgets over the next three years.

Since being appointed Education Minister I have consistently highlighted the fact that that the education budget faces unprecedented financial challenges over the next three years. I have argued the case with Executive colleagues for further investment to help alleviate pressures on school budgets. I am, therefore, pleased that as a result of my raising these matters with the Executive the additional allocations over the next three years of £30m/£15m/£75m have been made.

Whilst this is welcome news it is important to stress that these additional funds have alleviated rather than eradicated the financial pressures on all schools. Even with this additional funding the Department faces a real terms reduction of £180m (9.2%) in resource funding by 2014/15, compared to the 2010/11 baseline. It will be important that schools, in conjunction with the Funding Authorities, review their financial plans to ensure that they operate within their delegated budgets.

My Statement in the Assembly on 26 September 2011: "Putting Pupils First: Shaping our Future" set out a significant programme of strategic transformational change involving the viability audit and area planning to ensure that we have an effective and efficient education system. In addition the

establishment of the Education and Skills Authority will have a significant impact on the delivery of education services.

It is crucial that we continue to deliver these key strategic policy objectives and my clear intention is to work with all key stakeholders to ensure that these are fully delivered.

School Maintenance Budgets

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Education what are the implications resulting from the lack of capital spend on school maintenance budgets.

(AQW 6376/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I would point out that expenditure on maintenance comes from the resource budget and not the capital budget.

The Department provides funding to the Education and Library Boards for maintenance programmes through the block grant allocation. During this financial year, 2011-12 an additional £19.8 million of funding has been provided to support the maintenance programme for schools.

Any reduction in the budget available for maintenance obviously has implications for the pace at which planned maintenance can be undertaken. The Boards seek to prioritise all essential and response maintenance work ahead of planned maintenance programmes.

My Department continues to liaise with the Education and Library Boards on tackling the backlog of maintenance.

Teachers and other School Staff: Redundancies

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education for an estimate of the number of teacher, and other school staff, redundancies as a result of the cut in funding.

(AQW 6403/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Education faces significant challenges. The harsh reality is that the cuts imposed on this administration by the British Government have severely impacted upon schools' budgets. Although it is too early to predict the impact of the reduction in funding in terms of jobs, as over 80% of schools' expenditure is staff related there will inevitably be an impact on staff if costs are to be contained within budget.

However, it has always been my intention to protect frontline services as much as possible and the Executive has agreed to provide an additional £120m which will be allocated directly to schools over the budget period. In addition, I have already reallocated £40m into the Aggregated Schools' Budget to mitigate the impact on schools. These additional resources will help alleviate the burden on school budgets, but will not completely eradicate the pressures bearing down on schools.

I believe that through collaborative working between my Department, the employing authorities and the trades unions, redundancies can be managed, as far as possible, through a voluntary process. To this end I have provided additional funding to allow employing authorities to make enhanced severance payments to teachers made redundant at August 2012. I believe that this will encourage teachers to volunteer for redundancy and minimise the number of compulsory redundancies.

However the final decision for schools on how to live within their budget rests with the Principal and Board of Governors under the arrangements for Local Management of Schools. Hence it is both inappropriate and logistically impossible to anticipate the individual decisions made across 1,200 schools.

Price of Milk in Schools

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking to reduce the price of milk in schools, particularly for pupils from deprived backgrounds.

(AQW 6439/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: At present, free school milk is provided to all pupils at special schools, to pupils in nursery and primary schools who do not have access to school meals and to individual nursery and primary school pupils where it is deemed necessary in the interests of their health.

Subsidised milk is also available to all pupils through the EU School Milk Subsidy Scheme, which is administered by the Department Of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Education and Library Boards administer the Scheme and currently charge parents 16p per one third of a pint. It is a matter for individual schools to decide if they wish to participate in the scheme. I would encourage all parents to take advantage of the Scheme, where possible.

Milk and dairy products are excellent sources of nutrients such as calcium, protein and vitamins and, for this reason, they are included in the Department of Education's Nutritional Standards for School Lunches and for Other Food and Drinks in Schools. Every lunch served in school must contain at least one portion of food from the milk and dairy foods group and, in addition, drinking milk must be available as an option every day.

In light of the arrangements currently in place, and the many competing priorities within the education budget, a further subsidy for milk in schools would not represent the best use of resources.

Schools Closures

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of schools in the (a) controlled; (b) maintained; (c) integrated; (d) voluntary grammar; and (e) Irish-medium sectors which have closed in each year since 2007; and (ii) the enrolment number in each school at the time of closure.

(AQW 6460/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: (i) There have been 51 school closures between 2007 and 2011. This total is broken down as follows:

- 33 Controlled schools
- 24 Primary schools. 8 in 2007, 6 in 2008, 3 in 2009, 3 in 2010 and 4 in 2011.
- 7 Post primary schools. 1 in 2007, 3 in 2008 and 3 in 2009
- 1 Nursery School in 2007 .
- 1 Special school in 2007.
- 12 Maintained schools
- 9 Primary schools. 1 in 2007, 4 in 2009, 2 in 2010 and 2 in 2011
- 2 Post primary schools. 1 in 2007 and 1 in 2008
- 1 Special school in 2009
- 3 Integrated schools
- 2 Controlled Integrated primary schools in 2008
- 1 Grant Maintained Integrated post primary school in 2009
- 2 Preparatory departments in 2011
- 1 Other Maintained primary school (Irish Medium) in 2008

Additionally, 31 schools have been closed due to amalgamations, between 2007 and 2011, to form 14 new schools. This total is broken down as follows:

- 14 Controlled schools

- 8 Primary schools. 2 in 2007 and 6 in 2008.
 - 1 Post primary school in 2011.
 - 5 Special schools in 2007.
 - 14 Maintained schools
 - 12 Primary schools. 6 in 2007, 2 in 2008 and 4 in 2011
 - 2 Post primary schools in 2010.
 - 2 Voluntary grammar schools. 1 in 2010 and 1 in 2011.
 - 1 Other Maintained primary school in 2007.
- (ii) A list of schools that have closed or amalgamated between 2007 and 2011 is included below and this includes detail of the school enrolment in the year of closure.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Ref no	School Closed	Board	Type	Management	Date of closure	Enrolment in year of closure
311-6019	Ballycastle Nursery School	NEELB	Nursery	Controlled	31/08/07	26
301-6226	Ballyduff Primary School	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	24
401-1508	Charley Memorial Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	10
401-1686	Drumbo Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	12
501-2616	Eglisk Primary School	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	11
401-3001	Groomsport Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	25
401-1648	Hillhall Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	39
401-1627	Lambeg Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	23
431-6546	Lindsay Hospital School	SEELB	Special	Controlled	31/08/07	0
121-0273	Mount Gilbert Community College	BELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/07	94
223-0141	St Joseph's High School Plumbridge	WELB	Secondary	Maintained	31/08/07	85
403-3029	St Mary's Primary School Ballygowan	SEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/07	3
501-1618	Tullymacarette Primary School	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	14
121-0288	Balmoral High School	BELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/08	58

Ref no	School Closed	Board	Type	Management	Date of closure	Enrolment in year of closure
501-0988	Collone Primary School	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08	24
401-3032	Conlig PS	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08	43
425-0272	Down Academy	SEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/08	240
104-6654	Gaelscoil an Damba	BELB	Primary	Other Maintained	31/08/08	29
403-1295	Guinness PS	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08	18
405-3016	Kindle CIPS	SEELB	Primary	Controlled Integrated	31/08/08	32
421-0030	Lisnasharragh HS	SEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/08	69
501-6109	Minterburn Primary School	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08	11
201-1866	Shanmullagh PS	WELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08	24
123-0032	St Gabriel's College	BELB	Secondary	Maintained	31/08/08	93
201-2709	Trillick PS	WELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08	35
405-0618	Hilden Controlled Integrated PS	SEELB	Primary	Controlled Integrated	30/11/08	36
403-1693	St Colman's PS Moira	SEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/03/09	2
526-0307	Armagh Integrated College	SELB	Secondary	GMI	31/08/09	61
501-2451	Benburb PS	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/09	11
121-0258	Castle HS Belfast	BELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/09	62
421-0031	Donaghadee HS	SEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/09	126
321-0090	Maghera HS	NEELB	Secondary	Controlled	31/08/09	133
401-1610	Newtownbreda PS	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/09	78
503-1155	St Colmcille's PS Armagh	SELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/09	15

Ref no	School Closed	Board	Type	Management	Date of closure	Enrolment in year of closure
203-2679	St Columba's PS Curley	WELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/09	16
133-6012	St Francis De Sales Special School	BELB	Special	Maintained	31/08/09	29
203-2716	St Patrick's PS Garvallah	WELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/09	14
101-0863	Suffolk PS	BELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/09	76
301-6171	Ballee Primary School Ballymena	NEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/10	40
503-1658	St John's Primary School, Glenn, Newry	SELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/10	20
203-2681	St Patrick's PS, Creggan	WELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/10	12
101-0271	Beechfield Primary School, Belfast	BELB	Primary	Controlled	30/09/10	51
101-0283	Grove Primary School, Belfast	BELB	Primary	Controlled	15/10/10	31
162-0018	Bloomfield Collegiate School Prep Dept	BELB	Preparatory	Voluntary	31/08/11	9
462-0015	Connor House Preparatory Department	SEELB	Preparatory	Voluntary	31/08/11	85
401-1678	Ballycloughan Primary School, Saintfield	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/11	17
501-2659	Clogher Regional Primary School	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/11	12
401-3309	Derriaghy Primary School	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/11	40
101-0321	Vere Foster PS, Belfast	BELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/11	41
303-0836	Braid Primary School, Broughshane	NEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/11	16
303-6093	Lourdes Primary School, Whitehead	NEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/11	20

SCHOOL AMALGAMATIONS

Ref no	School Amalgamated	Board	Type	Management	Date of closure	Enrolment in year of closure
303-0888	St Louis' PS	NEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/07	284
303-6250	St Joseph's PS		Primary	Maintained		73
303-6128	St Mary's PS		Primary	Maintained		45
303-3302	All Saints, PS Ballymena <i>(Formed 2 new schools)</i>		Primary	Maintained		216
331-6272	Beechgrove Special School	NEELB	Special	Controlled	31/08/07	24
331-6271	Dunfane Special School		Special	Controlled		154
331-6511	Loughan Special School		Special	Controlled		77
401-1582	Crossgar PS	SEELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	52
404-1545	Drumaghlin PS		Primary	Other Maint.		36
503-1171	St Joseph's, PS Poyntzpass	SELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/07	96
503-1182	St James' PS, Tandragee		Primary	Maintained		14
231-0007	Limegrove Special School	WELB	Special	Controlled	31/08/07	70
231-6526	Glasvey Special School		Special	Controlled		15
201-2228	Dungiven PS <i>(Closed as first phase of the amalgamation of Burnfoot PS, Dungiven PS and Largy PS)</i>	WELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/07	17
101-0289	Sydenham Infants' PS	BELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08	126
101-0231	Strand PS, Belfast		Primary	Controlled		180

Ref no	School Amalgamated	Board	Type	Management	Date of closure	Enrolment in year of closure
303-6072	St Joseph's PS, Ahoghill	NEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/08	18
303-0889	St Patrick's PS Aughtercloney		Primary			5
501-6195	Killyman PS	SELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08	92
501-2629	Tamnamore PS, Dungannon		Primary	Controlled		23
201-2276	Burnfoot PS	WELB	Primary	Controlled	31/08/08	58
201-2058	Largy PS, Limavady (Dungiven PS closed 31/08/2007 as first phase of amalgamation)		Primary	Controlled		33
342-0094	St McNissi's College	NEELB	Post Primary	Voluntary	29/03/10	609
323-0066	St Comgall's HS		Post Primary	Maintained		153
323-0019	St Aloysius HS		Post Primary	Maintained		43
103-6091	St John the Baptist Girls PS	BELB	Primary	Maintained	28/02/11	215
103-6092	St John the Baptist Boys PS		Primary	Maintained		218
403-1644	St Patrick's Boys PS	SEELB	Primary	Maintained	31/08/11	254
403-1384	Convent of Mercy PS Downpatrick		Primary	Maintained		150
241-0096	Strabane Grammar	WELB	Post Primary	Voluntary	31/08/11	406
221-0164	Strabane High			Controlled		276

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Subjects

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for his Department's assessment of the importance of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects.

(AQW 6463/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The promotion of STEM subjects is important to our future economic growth and, as Education Minister, I am committed to playing my part and my Department is undertaking a wide range

of interventions to ensure that STEM subjects are seen as exciting, stimulating and fulfilling and also to link the Mathematics element into our work to improve standards of numeracy (and literacy) for all our young people.

The study of science, technology and mathematics subjects is embedded in the Revised Curriculum, which is now in place in all grant aided schools across the north of Ireland and provides much greater freedom for teachers to explore STEM-related learning with pupils in an interesting and innovative way.

The Entitlement Framework, which will be implemented by September 2015, will guarantee all post primary pupils aged 14 and above greater choice and flexibility of courses regardless of the school in which they are enrolled. This increased choice is being supported with improved careers education, information, advice and guidance, again with a particular focus on STEM-related career opportunities.

The promotion of STEM subjects is one of my Department's priorities and since the publication of the Report of the STEM Review, my Department has also commissioned and is supporting a wide range of additional initiatives beyond the delivery of the statutory curriculum, aimed at encouraging an increase in the uptake of STEM subjects in schools here.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Subjects

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to extend the delivery of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics subjects to primary schools.

(AQW 6464/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Revised Curriculum, which is now in place in all grant aided primary schools, provides much greater freedom for teachers to explore STEM-related learning with pupils. Mathematics, science and technology are compulsory elements of the revised primary curriculum with science and technology covered through The World Around Us area of learning.

Since the publication of the Report of the STEM Review, my Department has been and continues to take significant action on a number of fronts aimed specifically at primary schools to engage primary pupils with STEM in an interesting and exciting way. These include: annual funding to Sentinus to deliver a suite of primary STEM programmes, including the successful annual Sentinus Young Innovators event; a new pilot programme 'Smart Gear' to enhance STEM based learning at Key Stage 2 involving over 700 pupils from 35 primary schools; 'Promoting STEM in Primary Schools' project which has developed a series of Key Stage 2 case studies and thematic units to improve teachers' and pupils' understanding of connections between STEM school-based learning and the STEM 'world of work'; and a 'STEM Primary Professional Development Project' which enables primary school teachers to act as 'STEM Teacher Developers' trained to provide a range of STEM professional development activities to teachers across a cluster of local primary schools.

Funding for Trade Unions

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Education to detail the level of funding his Department allocated to each trade union in the (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11 financial years.

(AQW 6465/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not allocate funding to any trade union.

Civil Servants from the Foyle Constituency who Work in Greater Belfast

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Education to detail the total number of civil servants in his Department who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area; and the total cost to his Department for subsidising the travel.

(AQW 6470/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Currently, there are no DE staff living in the Foyle constituency who travel to work in the Greater Belfast area. There are 120 DE staff who work in Waterside House which is located in the Foyle constituency.

Development Proposal for Redburn Primary School, Hollywood

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education when a decision will be taken by his Department on the development proposal for Redburn Primary School, Hollywood.

(AQW 6482/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Development Proposal for the closure of Redburn Primary School was published on 20 December 2011 and is now in the statutory 2 month consultation period which ends on 20 February 2012. Following this, I will make a decision within the context of stated priorities and policies, taking account of all pertinent information and comments received.

My Department will endeavour to complete the process and notify the proposer of the decision within 4 – 6 weeks of the close of the statutory consultation period.

Youth Services: Capital Funding

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education to detail the level of capital funding that was available for Youth Services in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6490/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The capital budget allocated for youth services in each of the last three financial years was as follows:

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
£5,016,000	£8,015,000	£4,602,000

Youth Services: Capital Spend

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education what is the projected capital spend on Youth Services in (i) this financial year; and (ii) the next two financial years.

(AQW 6491/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The projected capital spend for Youth Services this financial year is £4.274million. The Budget 2010 indicative Youth Services capital budget is £5million in each of the next two years. The actual allocation of future years' capital budgets will be made, with my approval, following consultation with the various capital budget stakeholders.

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education why there was an increase of 51.7 percent in the staff complement of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools between 2002/03 and 2009/10.

(AQW 6533/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information on which this percentage increase is based did not differentiate between full-time and part-time equivalent staff numbers.

In 2002/03, the full-time equivalent staff was 47.755, and in 2009/10 it was 59.913, which equates to an increase of 25.49%. This increase was due to the number of part-time staff employed by CCMS over this period. Extra staff were required as a result of the additional responsibilities of CCMS regarding the re-organisation of the post-primary estate and the implementation of the Entitlement Framework.

Currently CCMS have 57 staff on their payroll which equates to 51 full-time equivalent posts.

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what discussions have been held with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools in relation to the delivery of financial savings.

(AQW 6537/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The delivery of financial savings for the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools is closely monitored by my Department. Discussions have been undertaken via a range of meetings held with Departmental officials during the year. The meetings referred to have included:

- Governance and Accountability meetings with the CCMS Chief Executive;
- One to one meetings with the Finance Officer of CCMS;
- Ad-hoc meetings on request to discuss budgetary issues in the context of the delivery of financial savings or other financial matters.

Sustainable Schools Policy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what weight is given to each of the six criteria set out in the Sustainable Schools Policy when considering a development proposal to close a school.

(AQW 6549/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The six criteria and their associated quantitative and qualitative indicators (set out in Annex A to the Sustainable Schools Policy) provide a framework for assessing the range of factors which may affect a school's sustainability.

No weightings are attached to either the criteria or indicators as the intention is not to have a mechanistic application of the criteria and indicators, but to provide a view of how effectively a school is functioning and of the range of factors affecting its performance.

The policy document notes that "difficulties with one or more factors should draw attention to the need for a more detailed review and evaluation". It also notes that the local circumstances of each individual school will need to be considered in determining what action should be taken, and that, as a result, each case should continue to be assessed individually. When I make decisions on development proposals for closure, therefore, I do so on a case by case basis, taking into account all pertinent information. The over-riding consideration is the quality of education that a school provides for the children.

Age Weighted Pupil Unit Funding

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education what is the planned Age Weighted Pupil Unit funding for the (i) 2011/12; (ii) 2012/13; and (iii) 2013/14 financial years for primary and post-primary school pupils.

(AQW 6553/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Having consistently highlighted the pressures on the Education Budget, I was pleased to announce on the 12 January that the Executive had agreed to provide additional funding of £120m to help alleviate the pressures on school budgets. While these additional funds are very welcome, it is important to highlight that the Aggregated Schools Budget (ASB) will still be lower, in cash terms in 2012/13 and 2013/14, than the actual funding available in the current financial year.

The Common Funding Formula distributes the ASB to the 1,150 grant-aided schools in the north. Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) funding is determined by the amount of the ASB available and the numbers and profiles of pupils. The resulting 'cash value' for an AWPU is then multiplied by appropriate weightings to provide the core 'per pupil' funding element of a school's delegated budget.

The only AWPU figures which can be confirmed, at this time, are those for the current 2011/12 financial year. However, on the basis of current estimated cash values, and no changes being applied to the current pupil group weightings, the table below provides for primary and post primary pupils the actual cash values for 2011/12 and estimates for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Year		AWPU Cash value £	Illustrative funding for year groups		
			Primary Yr 1-7	Post-primary Yr 8-12	Post-primary Yr 13-14
2011/2	Actual	2,041	2,163	3,429	4,449
2012/13	Estimated	2,021	2,142	3,395	4,406
2013/14	Estimated	1,981	2,100	3,328	4,319

Terms of Reference for Area Planning

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) any work his Department has carried out on investigating the various models of education provision outlined in the terms of reference for Area Planning; and (ii) whether his Department has researched the different education models that have been developed in the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England.

(AQW 6559/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Terms of Reference for the area planning process were issued on 15 December 2011. These specify the key objective to develop a network of sustainable and viable schools that can fully meet the educational needs of all of our young people into the future.

These also invite the school managing authorities to consider and develop, where appropriate, realistic, innovative and creative solutions to address need, including opportunities for shared schooling on a cross sectoral basis reflecting local circumstances.

I have also given a commitment in the draft Programme for Government to establish a Ministerial advisory group to explore and bring forward recommendations before the end of 2012/13 to advance shared education. I aim to establish this group by 1 April 2012. This will involve examining a range of models including, as appropriate, practice in other jurisdictions, and will inform and support the work on area planning.

Irish-Medium Primary School in Dungiven

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education, in light of the recent advertisement by the Western Education and Library Board, in relation to the establishment of a controlled Irish-medium primary school in Dungiven, on what evidence is the projected long-term enrolment based.

(AQW 6562/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Development Proposal for the establishment of Gaelscoil Neachtain in Dungiven was published by the Western Education and Library Board on 9 January 2012. The publication triggered a statutory 2-month period during which comments and objections may be offered to the Department. After this 2-month period has expired, officials will present all pertinent information, including evidence of demand, for my consideration and decision.

I understand that it is intended that the new Gaelscoil will replace the unit currently located at St Canice's Primary School in Dungiven which currently has 60 pupils enrolled. The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools intends to bring forward a separate development proposal for the closure of this unit.

In line with the Sustainable Schools policy, the requirement for recognition as a grant-aided school, and therefore eligibility for recurrent funding, is that schools in rural areas such as Dungiven will meet minimum annual Year 1 intake of 12 pupils in the first year, rising to 15 pupils in subsequent years. This equates to a school of 105 pupils over seven years in line with the minimum thresholds stated in the Sustainable Schools Policy.

Capital Grants Schemes for Youth Services

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education when the funding for the capital grants schemes for youth services will be released by his Department.

(AQW 6564/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am currently considering funding for a capital grant scheme for youth services in line with other capital commitments and priorities.

Budget Reductions

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education, for the 2011-15 budget period, to detail all budget reductions over £1,000, broken down by (i) the name of the item; (ii) the amount of the reduction; and (iii) the reduction as a percentage of the previous funding awarded.

(AQW 6565/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Budget 2011-15 outcome for education has produced major challenges as the level of funding available over the period 2011-12 to 2014-15 is less than what had previously been in place. The shortfall between the Department's anticipated spending requirements and the Budget 2011-15 outcome was some £101m/ £187m/ £229m/ £306m. At that time, a Savings Delivery Plan was developed to deliver the reductions necessary to ensure that the Department remained within budget. On 12 January 2012, following talks convened by the First Minister and deputy First Minister, I announced an additional £120m for schools over the next 3 years. This is over and above the extra £40m that I reallocated to schools last November from within the then existing education budget. As a result of this additional funding, the reductions necessary are now £101m/ £147m/ £199m/ £216m. Details of the information requested is set out below.

Area Of Reduction	2010/11 Baseline	Amount of Reduction			
		2011/12 £m	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
Schools Delegated Budget	1,127.0				
Aggregated Schools Budget		26.6	45.2	84.1	89.9
% of 2010/11 baseline		2.4	4.0	7.5	8.0
Teacher Substitution Costs		2.1	3.7	3.9	4.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4
Procurement Goods & Services and Energy		2.9	5.8	8.7	11.6
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.3	0.5	0.8	1.0
ELB Block Grant	399.8				
Home to School Transport		5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3
Professional Support for Schools		2.6	17.6	17.6	17.6
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.6	4.4	4.4	4.4

Area Of Reduction	2010/11 Baseline	Amount of Reduction			
		2011/12 £m	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
ELB Centre Resource Budget Efficiencies		2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
ALB Admin & Management Costs		12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
% of 2010/11 baseline		3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
Procurement Goods & Services and Energy		2.1	4.2	6.3	8.4
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.5	1.1	1.6	2.1
Teacher Substitution Costs		0.9	1.5	1.6	1.6
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
School Meals Service (ELB School-related Centre Resource Budget)		0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Primary Principals - Transfer Interviews (ELB School-related Centre Resource Budget)		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
ICT in Schools	50.8				
Classroom 2000		12.0	16.0	16.0	16.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		23.6	31.5	31.5	31.5
Professional Support for Schools	20.2				
School Improvement Programme		6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2
% of 2010/11 baseline		30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5
Regional Training Unit		0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
% of 2010/11 baseline		1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Curriculum Development		6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		29.6	29.6	29.6	29.6
Newcomers		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4

Area Of Reduction	2010/11 Baseline	Amount of Reduction			
		2011/12 £m	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
Voluntary Grammar and GMI Schools Support Costs	23.6				
Entitlement Framework		0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
% of 2010/11 baseline		3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
Teacher Substitution Costs		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4
CCMS	4.1				
Entitlement Framework		0.3	0.6	0.6	0.6
% of 2010/11 baseline		6.9	13.8	13.8	13.8
ALB Admin & Management Costs		0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
% of 2010/11 baseline		10.8	10.8	10.8	10.8
Entitlement Framework	18.3				
ELB Earmarked Funding		4.9	6.6	12.6	18.2
% of 2010/11 baseline		27.1	36.3	69.1	99.6
NICIE - Entitlement Framework		0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3
CnaG - Entitlement Framework		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
AccessNI Costs	1.2				
AccessNI		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		86.7	86.7	86.7	86.7
Capacity Building	8.3				
Capacity Building		3.8	3.8	4.8	4.8
% of 2010/11 baseline		45.8	45.8	57.8	57.8
ALB Admin & Management Costs	51.3				
CCEA		1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
% of 2010/11 baseline		2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
Staff Commission		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

Area Of Reduction	2010/11 Baseline	Amount of Reduction			
		2011/12 £m	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
ELBs Youth		0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
% of 2010/11 baseline		1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Youth Council		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
% of 2010/11 baseline		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
GTCNI	1.2				
GTCNI		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		83.9	83.9	83.9	83.9
Departmental Administration (incl ESAIT)	32.7				
Departmental Administration		2.7	3.2	3.7	4.2
% of 2010/11 baseline		8.3	9.8	11.3	12.9
Funding for RPA Institutions	2.9				
RPA Institutions		2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
% of 2010/11 baseline		100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Reductions		101.5	146.9	198.6	215.7

School-Based Counselling

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) what accreditation is required for counsellors to work in primary schools; (ii) for his assessment of the effectiveness of school-based counselling; and (iii) what organisations are currently providing counselling in primary schools.

(AQW 6566/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not make provision for counselling support, which is independent of the school, on a universal access basis in primary schools. The Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS) currently provides support to pupils in grant-aided post primary schools and to young people of post primary age in special schools.

The ICSS provides counselling support to primary age pupils, when required, as part of the response to a critical incident. Primary schools can make arrangements to provide counselling support from within their own resources and the Department encourages the use of ICSS service standards.

All counsellors employed in ICSS must be qualified to at least Diploma level in counselling and have a minimum of 150 hours clinically supervised practice before starting work in a school. The Diploma in Counselling or equivalent should be from a recognised validating organisation e.g. Central School for Counsellor Training (CSCT), Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB) or such a qualification from a third level establishment. Counsellors should hold or be working towards the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) or Irish Association for Counselling and Therapy (IACT) or equivalent accreditation.

The evidential base in support of school based counselling is very strong both locally and internationally. The most recent independent evaluation of the ICSS was undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate and was published in June 2009. The report confirmed the benefits of access to counselling for pupils and its value to schools. Some of the key findings were that:-

- there is an increasing demand and need by young people for a counselling service in most of the schools participating in the evaluation; the inspectors endorse the Department's policy of providing a counselling service to post-primary schools;
- the pupils valued the independence of the counsellor, separate from the school staff, giving greater freedom to discuss 'personal', embarrassing and more personal issues; and
- the schools valued the expertise of the counsellors and particularly their skills in identifying individual pupils whose personal safety is at high risk.

The Department does not collect information about counselling services in primary schools. However, it is widely known that organisations such as Barnardo's, New Life Counselling and Familyworks as well as a number of self-employed counsellors provide services to primary schools.

School-Based Counselling

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education how many primary schools offer school-based counselling; and what is the timescale for extending school-based counselling to all primary schools.

(AQW 6568/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not make provision for counselling support, which is independent of the school, on a universal access basis in primary schools. Any expansion of the Independent Counselling Service for Schools into the primary sector would require additional resources which are not available at present.

Counselling support is made available to primary age pupils as part of the response to a critical incident.

Schools, including primary schools, can provide counselling support from within their own resources. Some primary schools have access to resources from initiatives such as Neighbourhood Renewal and use these to purchase counselling support. The Department does not collect information from primary schools about the provision made.

Achieving Belfast Programme and Bright Futures Programme

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Achieving Belfast programme and the similar Bright Futures programme in the Londonderry area, including costs.

(AQW 6605/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In 2011/12, the Department provided funding of £360,000 to both the BELB and the WELB in support of the Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry-Bright Futures programmes. This was a similar level of support to previous years.

Through these programmes, the BELB and the WELB are continuing to support the participating schools in their work to tackle underachievement and raise standards, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

An Evaluation of the Early Progress of the Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry-Bright Futures programmes was published by the Education and Training Inspectorate in May 2010. The evaluation report highlighted strengths in both programmes, as well as areas for improvement, which the BELB and WELB are continuing to address.

While the schools have made progress, there is still much work to be done to raise standards further, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and to close the gaps in achievement.

Northern Ireland Office's Longitudinal Research Study on Young Men

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for an update on his Department's and the Northern Ireland Office's longitudinal research study on young men.

(AQW 6607/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The five year longitudinal study into adolescent male post primary school life experiences (2006-2011) is co-funded by the Department of Education and the Department of Justice (previously the NIO) and carried out by the Centre for Young Men's Studies at the University of Ulster.

Over the five year period of the study, over 370 young men across nine schools as well as a number of teachers and principals have participated.

The study is now near completion and the Steering Group overseeing the study plans to publish a report on the study in the near future.

Child Internet Safety

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Education to outline the strategic development within his Department on child internet safety.

(AQW 6614/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Schools are required to have in place policies on the safe and effective use of the Internet. The Department of Education issued advice to schools on drawing up policies for the safe and acceptable use of the Internet and digital technologies via DE Circular 2007/1. Additional advice was provided in September 2011 in DE Circular 2011/22, in particular the circular addressed C2k filtering of internet access, the accessing and reporting of inappropriate material, security considerations within a non-C2k system, classroom use of materials and resources from blocked websites and informing parents about blocked websites. Links to guidance produced by key organisations involved in child protection are available on the DE website to assist schools when drawing up and updating their acceptable use policies.

C2k provides all grant-aided schools with access to the Internet as part of its managed Information and Communications Technology (ICT) service. To keep pupils safe when on-line, the service operates a rigorous internet filtering policy which automatically sifts websites into a number of categories. On the basis of these categories, C2k's filtering policy permits or denies access, with the list of allowed and disallowed websites updated daily C2k limits internet access to pupils, teachers and school employees only. This access is age appropriate to the pupils and further physical controls such as firewalls and password protection are employed on every C2k computer.

ICT plays a central role in the revised curriculum and pupils need to be suitably educated so that they have the confidence and skills to navigate the Internet safely. Using ICT is a cross-curricular skill, compulsory at all key stages of the curriculum. As part of Using ICT, pupils learn how to keep safe and display acceptable online behaviour. C2k is currently collating resources and tools to promote Internet safety and these will be made available to schools in support of Safer Internet Day 2012.

Funded Pre-school Places

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Education for an update on plans to provide one year of funded pre-school places for all children.

(AQW 6639/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Draft Programme for Government includes a commitment to ensure that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it. This is consistent with the aim of the Department's Pre-School Education Expansion Programme (PSEEP) which was launched in 1998.

The pre-school year is a non-compulsory phase of education. In the 2011/2012 school year there are over 23,000 children in funded pre-school education provision. However, it is not always possible to make a place available in the setting expressed by a parent as the first preference.

The review of the pre-school admissions arrangements, which I announced on 17 January, will be an important factor in considering what changes are needed. The establishment of the Education and Skills Authority will also offer a changed context in which to take forward some of the actions identified in the Report.

DE is continuing to work with the Education and Library Boards to ensure an adequate number of funded pre-school places are available in future years. If necessary, additional capacity in the pre-school education sector may be achieved through several options such as the creation of new/ additional statutory nursery units or by the allocation of funded places in the voluntary and private settings participating in the PSEEP

Sure Start

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education to detail the services currently provided by Sure Start in the South Belfast constituency.

(AQW 6641/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Sure Start services are provided to 6 wards within the South Belfast constituency. Inner City South Belfast Sure Start currently operates in the ward areas of Blackstaff, Shaftesbury, Botanic and Ballynafeigh, and within the Taughmonagh and Benmore Estates, which sit within the Upper Malone ward. In addition services are provided for Chinese families with a pre school child living in the Greater Belfast area. The Woodstock ward is served by the East Belfast Sure Start project. The services offered by Sure Start are aimed at families with children aged birth -4 years and include:

- family Support through home visits and befriending services;
- early learning and care experiences for children;
- programmes for parents to provide support for parenting, and educational opportunities;
- health promotion including support for prospective parents, breast feeding, nutrition, dental health, addiction and wider health issues including mental health; and
- speech, language and communication support.

Youth Service in the South Belfast Constituency

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education to detail the activities currently provided by the Youth Service in the South Belfast constituency.

(AQW 6642/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Youth provision in the South Belfast Constituency is a matter for the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB). The BELB has advised that youth activities are currently provided via 49 registered youth providers in the area.

The youth work curriculum is distinctly educational and involves constructive interventions with young people mainly in non-formal settings. All activities offered within youth service are aligned to the programme areas as defined within the document 'Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice'. While faith based and 'uniformed' youth groups may base their activities around different programme models, the 'personal and social development' of young people as a central theme is common to all.

A detailed list of activities offered by each youth provider is not held by the Department of Education nor the BELB and could only be gathered at disproportionate cost. However a sample of the activities and programmes that have been evidenced during youth officer monitoring visits and from reports submitted by youth groups is included below:

Youth Services activities provided in the South Belfast constituency area**Enjoying, Learning and Achieving**

- Residential opportunities
- International visits/exchanges
- Educational visits
- Bullying awareness programmes
- General youth club activities such as pool, snooker, table tennis, arts and crafts, competitions, quizzes

Economic and Environmental Well Being

- Entrepreneurship
- OCN youth leadership
- Homework clubs
- Youth work in schools, delivering COPE and XL programmes
- Accredited and non-accredited certification
- Environmental projects including community clean ups, gardening projects, road safety campaigns, murals, photographic projects, recycling initiatives

Being Healthy and Living in Safety

- Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
- Community safety programmes
- Drug awareness projects
- Healthy lifestyle projects
- Sex education programmes
- Healthy eating workshops
- Young men's work
- Young women's work
- Sporting activities including football, hockey, dance, indoor and outdoor games
- Outdoor educational activities including hill walking, canoeing, abseiling, orienteering, bouldering, map reading

Participation and Making a Positive Contribution

- Local youth forums
- Involvement of young people in planning their own programmes
- Millennium Volunteer Award Scheme
- Local advisory committees for youth centres
- South Belfast Steering Group
- Late night 'drop in' Friday evenings
- Detached and outreach youth work
- Inter-agency/community partnership work
- Inter-generational programmes

- Charity fundraising
- Developing young volunteers
- Young people identified within 'Section 75'
- Cross community programmes

Sustainable Schools Policy

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education when there will be a requirement for the minimum number of enrolled pupils in a school to be higher than the minimum threshold, as outlined in the Sustainable Schools Policy.

(AQW 6646/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Sustainable Schools Policy sets out six criteria and associated indicators for consideration of a school's educational viability. Stable Enrolment Trends is only one of the six criteria against which a school is assessed.

The policy specifies minimum enrolment thresholds and is explicit that these are not optimum. It will be a matter for school managing authorities to determine in each case, the size a school needs to be to ensure a high quality education can be delivered in an effective and efficient manner within the available budget delegated to the school and taking account of the overall need for places within the area.

Area-based Planning

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education how many meetings each Education and Library Board has held with the integrated and Irish-medium sectors in preparation for area-based planning; and how many such meetings he expects the Boards to hold.

(AQW 6648/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Terms of Reference for area planning, which issued on 15 December 2011, recognise that the Trustees and Boards of Governors of grant-maintained integrated schools, voluntary grammar schools and Irish medium schools, together with the relevant sectoral bodies, all have an important contribution to make to the area planning process. It is a requirement of the process for the Education and Library Boards (ELBs), working with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) to engage with, and seek input from, these sectors.

I am aware that many of the ELBs have met the various sectors on a range of issues including area planning and that further meetings are planned. There is no set procedure to determine how often the ELBs should meet or how many meetings are required. I would, however, anticipate that the process will be refined as area planning develops.

Area-Based Planning

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education the detail the geographical areas involved in the area-based planning process.

(AQW 6649/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have commissioned the Education & Library Boards, working with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and engaging with other school sectors to develop collective strategic plans based on each Board area.

The initial plans will cover provision within each Board area and take account of cross boundary issues. This is as specified in the Terms of Reference for area planning, issued to the Boards and CCMS on 15 December 2011.

The planning process may involve developing constituent local plans which will be combined to produce the overall Board level area plan.

Integrated Schools

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how many pupils currently attending integrated schools have been expelled from their previous schools.

(AQW 6677/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold the requested information.

Statistics on pupil suspensions and expulsions are collected annually from each of the Education and Library Boards and published on the Department's website at http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/21-pupils-parents-pg/pupils_parents-suspensions_and_expulsions_pg.htm.

This data does not include information on the education placement of expelled pupils which is a matter for the pupil's parent(s) and the relevant Education and Library Board.

Corran Integrated Primary School, Larne

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education to outline the status of Corran Integrated Primary School's application for accommodation for permanent school buildings at its current site.

(AQW 6679/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In my statement to the Assembly on 26 September 2011 I announced that I had commissioned the five Education and Library Boards, working in close conjunction with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectors, to co-ordinate a strategic area planning process for the education provision required in each Board area. This process will result in an effectively planned, sustainable and affordable pattern of schools and will ensure that we have the right type and size of schools, in the right places, to meet the needs of pupils.

Potential projects will be critically assessed as part of the area planning process to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed. No school building project will be looked at in isolation; all will be considered in the context of the wider area, and future capital investment will be targeted at supporting area plans.

Until this work is completed (I have asked for plans for primary provision by June 2012), I will not be in a position to comment on any individual school.

Funding Allocated to the Trustees of St Comgall's College, Larne

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education (i) what steps his Department is taking to reclaim funding allocated to the Trustees of St Comgall's College, Larne, for the construction and maintenance of school buildings at the Bankhead site; and (ii) how the amount of funding to be reclaimed is calculated.
(AQW 6680/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Where there is disposal of an education asset which has been funded, wholly or in part, by Government grants proportionate re-imburement is sought.

When it is clarified that St Comgall's College is no longer required for other educational purposes the department's disposal procedures will be implemented.

However when an existing school building is to be closed and replaced, as in the case with St Comgall's College, the proceeds from the sale of the old premises go towards the cost of capital investment to accommodate the additional pupils in the replacement premises (St Killian's in this case). The proceeds which would be due to the Department and the Trustees are preserved in an equity share in the school.

In the event that St Killian's becomes surplus in the future, grant recovery calculations will take account of all the investments made by the Department.

Foyle College and Ebrington Primary School

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposal to move Foyle College and Ebrington Primary School to a new site in Clooney.

(AQW 6681/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In my statement to the Assembly on 26 September 2011 I announced that I had commissioned the five Education and Library Boards, working in close conjunction with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectors, to co-ordinate a strategic area planning process for the education provision required in each Board area. This process will result in an effectively planned, sustainable and affordable pattern of schools and will ensure that we have the right type and size of schools, in the right places, to meet the needs of pupils.

Potential projects will be critically assessed as part of the area planning process to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed. No school building project will be looked at in isolation; all will be considered in the context of the wider area, and future capital investment will be targeted at supporting area plans.

In common with all other proposed capital projects, the continued progression of the Foyle and Ebrington project will be subject to the area planning process for the Derry city area.

Until this work is complete I will not be in a position to comment on individual schools or areas. Pre-school Places

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of applications received for a pre-school place in the 2011/12 academic year at (a) Dundela Infants School, Belfast; (b) Loughview Integrated Nursery, Belfast; (c) St Colmcille's Pre-School, Belfast; (d) Ravenscroft Nursery, Belfast; (e) Orangefield Nursery, Belfast; (f) Sandbrook Nursery, Belfast; (g) Little Ducks Playroom, Belfast; (h) Dundonald Nursery, Dundonald; (i) McArthur Nursery, Belfast; (j) Knocknagoney Nursery, Belfast (k) Glendhu Nursery, Belfast; (l) Avoniel Nursery, Belfast; (m) Greenwood Nursery, Belfast; (n) St Matthews Nursery, Belfast; (o) Braniel Nursery, Belfast; (p) Brooklands Nursery, Dundonald; (q) Castlereagh Nursery, Belfast; (r) Belmont Pre-School, Belfast; (s) Kings Road Nursery, Belfast; and (t) Ballybeen Women's Centre Pre-School, Dundonald.

(AQW 6718/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of applications to each named nursery school/unit/playgroup in the 2011/12 academic year was as follows:-

	Nursery School/Unit/Playgroup	Applications
a	Dundela Nursery Unit	125
b	Loughview Nursery Unit	47
c	St Colmcille's Playgroup	88
d	Ravenscroft Nursery School	86
e	Orangefield Nursery Unit	100
f	Sandbrook Nursery School	63
g	Carew II (Little Ducks) Family & Training	18
h	Dundonald Nursery Unit	35
i	McArthur Nursery School	62
j	Knocknagoney Nursery Unit	52
k	Glendhu Nursery Unit	48
l	Avoniel Nursery Unit	66

	Nursery School/Unit/Playgroup	Applications
m	Greenwood Nursery Unit	104
n	St Matthew's Nursery Unit	43
o	Braniel Nursery Unit	89
p	Brooklands Nursery Unit	76
q	Castlereagh Nursery School	57
r	Belmont Pre-School Playgroup	90
s	King's Road Nursery School	83
t	Ballybeen Women's Centre Pre-School Playgroup	13

Board of Governor Positions

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how his Department advertises Board of Governor positions; and whether his Department is considering changes to this process.

(AQW 6720/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department advertises for school governors in the main daily newspapers; through a wide range of business, voluntary and community networks; and via the 'All Aboard' newsheet published by the Central Appointments Unit prior to each reconstitution of school Boards of Governors.

We keep the arrangements for advertising governor positions under review. To encourage more people from all walks of life to put themselves forward for consideration we have recently extended our governor recruitment actions to include advertising in local newspapers in areas where there are schools with vacant governor posts and have been making use of social media networks including Twitter.

Board of Governor Positions

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how he intends to encourage more people to apply for Board of Governor positions.

(AQW 6721/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Ensuring effective governance is a key element of my wider work to improve educational outcomes and it is my aim to raise awareness and interest in the important work that school governors undertake.

We have already made changes in how we advertise governor vacancies, including for example by broadening the range of publications and networks through which we publicise governor vacancies and this is already helping to encourage more people to come forward. We will also be working to identify new and additional ways of promoting the work of school governors, particularly as we prepare for the next major reconstitution exercise in 2013, with the aim of encouraging more people to come forward from all sections of the community.

Legislation

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what legislation his Department plans to bring to the Assembly in the 2011-15 period.

(AQW 6722/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department plans to bring the following primary legislation to the Assembly:

An Education Bill, which will provide for the establishment and functions of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA); the dissolution of a number of existing statutory education bodies; and the transfer of their assets, liabilities, functions and staff to the ESA.

A General Teaching Council for NI Bill, which will repeal the existing General Teaching Council for NI provisions in the Education (NI) Order 1998 (as amended) and replace them in order to provide for: the extension of the existing remit of the Council to cover further education lecturers; additional disciplinary functions of the Council; and the establishment of the Council as a body wholly independent from Government.

A Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Bill, which will enable the Department of Education to implement the revised policy resultant from the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion review.

My Department also intends to introduce legislation to put in place arrangements for the regulation of qualifications.

Shared Education Projects

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how he intends to ensure that the Irish-medium sector benefits from shared education projects.

(AQW 6724/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The draft Programme for Government includes a commitment to ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015 and this includes those within the Irish-Medium sector. It is recognised that given the distinctive characteristics of immersion education this will be challenging. However, I am aware that Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta has engaged in a shared education project funded by the International Fund for Ireland under its Sharing in Education Programme, which will provide valuable learning as to the challenges and potential solutions for this sector.

I intend to establish a Ministerial Advisory Group on shared education which will be tasked with making recommendations on how sharing within education can contribute to the Department's vision for education. This work is expected to encompass all sectors, including the Irish-Medium sector.

Youth Workers

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of youth workers employed in (a) North; (b) South; (c) East; and (d) West Belfast, including in what capacity they are employed; and (ii) whether the Belfast Education and Library Board plans to re-deploy youth workers from St Agnes and St Michael's Youth Club in West Belfast.

(AQW 6726/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Youth provision in the Belfast area is a matter for the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB).

- (i) The BELB has provided the following information about the number of youth workers employed in (a) North; (b) South; (c) East; and (d) West Belfast, including in what capacity they are employed:

Area	Part-time	Full-time	Outreach (fixed term)
North Belfast*	91	13	5 North 4 Shankill**
South Belfast	59	6	3
East Belfast	24	7.5	2
West Belfast	93	10.5	3

* The Shankill is included within the North Belfast Divisional Area.

** Four of these posts are on a half time basis.

- (ii) The BELB has advised that there are currently no plans to re-deploy any of the current youth workers from St Agnes' or St Michael's Youth Clubs in West Belfast

Area-Based Planning

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education (i) which organisations will be involved in the area-based planning process; and (ii) to provide details of the proposed public consultation, including the timetable.

(AQW 6734/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: (i) Prior to the establishment of the Education & Skills Authority, the area planning process will be taken forward by the Education & Library Boards working with CCMS and engaging extensively with other school sectors.

The Terms of Reference, issued on 15 December, define other school sectors as the trustees and Boards of Governors of grant-maintained integrated schools, voluntary grammar schools and other voluntary maintained schools, including Irish-medium schools and the relevant sectoral bodies.

- (ii) Given the wide scope and complexity of the task, the timescales specified in the Terms of Reference for completion of the initial plans for the Post-primary and Primary phases, end-March and end-June 2012 respectively, are necessarily indicative and will be subject to discussion with the Education and Library Boards. Public consultation will take place following the Department's consideration of the initial draft area plans to ensure compliance with the Departmental policy framework. The Department will consider and, if satisfied, approve the area plans after the consultation has been completed and the responses considered. Full detail of the consultation process will be made available at that time.

Teacher Redundancies

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education whether there will be an upper limit on the number of teacher redundancies allowed in an Education and Library Board area, and if so, what is the proposed limit for each Board.

(AQW 6735/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of teacher redundancies in 2012 will be determined by Boards of Governors in light of pressures on school budgets. It will not be dictated by the number of teachers who wish to leave the profession.

Redundancies are a matter for each individual school/employer and the reasons for teacher redundancies, in addition to budgetary constraint, may include school closures/amalgamations, falling enrolments or the curriculum needs of the school. The final decision for schools on how to live within their budget rests with the respective Principal and Board of Governors under the arrangements for Local Management of Schools. It is not possible to anticipate the individual decisions made across 1,200 schools.

I have made funding available to allow schools and employing authorities to manage teacher redundancies at August 2012. The funding will allow employers to offer enhanced compensation and thus encourage volunteers to transfer into redundant posts, keeping compulsory redundancies to a minimum. However, there will be a finite number of redundant posts: there is no open-ended voluntary severance scheme for all teachers who wish to leave the profession.

Funding will only be available for teacher redundancies at August 2012 where employers provide evidence of cost reductions and can demonstrate that there has been a corresponding reduction in full-time equivalent (FTE) staff numbers.

Teachers: Redundancy

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education whether a lower age limit will be applied to teachers who would wish to take redundancy.

(AQW 6736/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Employees, irrespective of age, with more than two years' continuous service are entitled to a redundancy payment from their employer, based on their age and length of service.

School Closures

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education (i) to provide an estimate of the number of school closures expected; and (ii) which schools are being considered for closure, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 6737/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Management of education provision in the schools estate is in the first instance the responsibility of the relevant School Managing Authorities. Should any authority wish to close an individual school they are required to publish a statutory Development Proposal (DP) for the affected school.

An integral element of the DP process is consultation – both prior to publication, when the managing authority and Education and Library Board must consult with those considered to be directly affected by the proposal, and post-publication, when there will be a 2-month period during which anyone who wishes to do so may make their views known to the Department of Education. All comments received are taken into consideration as part of the decision making process before I make a final decision.

Recently I have approved Development Proposals for the closure of two schools with effect from 31 August 2012. The schools involved are:-

Board Area	School
SELB	Keady Primary School
SELB	Aghavilly Primary School

In addition Development Proposals have been approved for the amalgamation of four schools to form two new schools with effect from 31 August 2012. These schools are:

Board Area	School
WELB	St Mary's Boys' PS. Strabane
	St Mary's Girls' PS. Strabane
WELB	Elmbrook Special School Enniskillen
	Erne Special School Enniskillen

Currently my Department is also considering a further three Development Proposals for the closure of schools with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter. Details of the schools being considered for closure are provided below:-

Board Area	School	Date of Publication of DP
SEELB	Ballykeigle PS. Comber	13 December 2011
	Dunmurry High School	13 December 2011
	Redburn PS. Holywood	13 December 2011

Redburn Primary School, Holywood

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education when a final decision will be taken on the future of Redburn Primary School, Holywood.

(AQW 6758/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Development Proposal for the closure of Redburn Primary School was published on 20 December 2011 and is now in the statutory 2 month consultation period which ends on 20 February 2012. Following this, I will make a decision within the context of stated priorities and policies, taking account of all pertinent information and comments received.

My Department will endeavour to complete the process and notify the proposer of the decision within 4 – 6 weeks of the close of the statutory consultation period.

Donaghadee High School Site

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what plans his Department has for the old Donaghadee High School site.

(AQW 6759/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the former Donaghadee High School was adapted to accommodate Killard House School which relocated from their previous site in Newtownards. The relocation took effect from 1 September 2009.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education (i) what plans are in place for the relocation of staff in the event of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) being established; and (ii) to detail why ESA-affected staff in Rathgael House, Bangor, have been advised of probable relocation, whereas such staff in Londonderry have not been advised.

(AQW 6787/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are no plans in place for the relocation of staff. The functions of my Department that will transfer to the ESA are currently based in Bangor and Derry. Staff in the relevant teams have been advised that, following the establishment of the ESA, the functions will be based in their current locations initially, and that future locations will be determined in a location strategy for the entire organisation. The location strategy will be developed in the coming months.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education (i) what is the gender breakdown of staff who may be relocated to facilitate the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority; (ii) what consideration will be given to any adverse impact on the established work-life balance of affected staff, particularly woman; and (iii) whether an Equality Impact Assessment will be conducted before the implementation of a relocation programme.

(AQW 6788/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No decisions have been made of the future location of the functions of my Department that will transfer to the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). Of the staff currently delivering those functions, 62 are male and 94 are female. This is similar to the gender profile of the Department as a whole. The development of a location strategy for the ESA will include consideration of equality impacts. Any member of staff in a transferring function who considers that his or her work life balance may be adversely affected by the location of the function may choose the option of a temporary transfer to the ESA. An officer choosing temporary transfer would, for a period of up to three years, be eligible for redeployment to suitable posts within the civil service.

Statementing Process

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Education to detail the total number of children in the Southern Education and Library Board area who have gone through the statementing process and are currently waiting beyond the agreed timescales for (i) their final statement; and (ii) the allocation of (a) primary; and (b) post-primary school places.

(AQW 6870/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of children in the Southern Education and Library Board who have gone through the statementing process and are currently awaiting their final statement is 12.

No children are currently awaiting the allocation of either a primary or post-primary school place.

Department for Employment and Learning

Institute of Professional and Legal Studies at Queen's University, Belfast

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students are currently taking (i) the Bar course; and (ii) the solicitor's course at the Institute of Professional and Legal Studies at Queen's University, Belfast; and what the limit is on the number of students that can take each course. **(AQW 6231/11-15)**

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Queen's University, Belfast has confirmed that 30 students are currently taking the Bar course and 113 students are currently taking the solicitor's course at its Institute of Professional and Legal Studies. It has also confirmed that there are 30 Barrister places and 120 Solicitor places available at the Institute.

The University has also advised that, in addition to the above intake, the following persons may apply for admission as "recommended students" of the Institute:

Any person who has either:

- (a) Been admitted as a student of the Honorable Society of the Inn of Court of Northern Ireland and whom the Inn recommends. Such students shall be admitted only to the course for intending barristers.
- (b) Registered as a student of the Law Society of Northern Ireland and whom the Society recommends. Such students shall be admitted only to the course for intending solicitors.

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

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when he expects to announce a final decision on the proposed merger of Stranmillis University College, Belfast and Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQW 6331/11-15)

Dr Farry: I set out my thinking on the proposed merger in a statement to the Assembly on 28 November 2011. I announced a two-stage study of the teacher training infrastructure in Northern Ireland to be completed by the autumn of this year. I support the merger and will take it forward if there is sufficient political support for it. This could be in parallel with the study or ahead of it if appropriate.

Total Spend on Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what has been the total spend on hospitality by his Department in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6357/11-15)

Dr Farry: The total spend on hospitality in the Department in each of the last five years was as follows:

2006-07	£30,193
2007-08	£35,455
2008-09	£47,348
2009-10	£64,936
2010-11	£47,640

It should be noted that expenditure in 2009-10 includes £10,382 that arose as a result of the resolution of disputed invoices for costs originating in 2007-08 (£3,122) and 2008-09 (£7,260).

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, 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 6398/11-15)**

Dr Farry: In the last five years no functions have been transferred from my Department to local councils. I can also confirm that no such transfers are planned or may occur at a future date.

Degree Courses in Veterinary Medicine

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, given the growth in our agri-foods industry, why local universities do not offer degree courses in veterinary medicine; and what financial assistance is available to local students, who wish to study veterinary medicine but are forced to move to Great Britain, and incur excessive tuition fees to complete their degree. **(AQW 6459/11-15)**

Dr Farry: Higher Education Institutions are responsible for their own policies and procedures, including course provision. Queen's University and University of Ulster have, however, stated that the main reason for not offering undergraduate courses in this area is due to the substantial costs involved in establishing such a programme.

Trends within the veterinary profession are surveyed regularly by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). The most recent survey does not indicate any impending shortfall in the number of veterinary surgeons, nor has the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development identified any such difficulties within Northern Ireland. Furthermore, research undertaken by my Department in 2009, on forecasting future skills needs in Northern Ireland, shows that the supply of veterinary science graduates is projected to meet the indicative graduate requirement up to 2020.

My Department will continue to provide financial support for eligible students from Northern Ireland who commence all undergraduate degree courses, including veterinary science, in Great Britain in academic year 2012/13. Eligible students can apply for a non means-tested tuition fee loan of up to £9,000 for each year of the course. In addition, students may apply for a maximum grant of up to £3,475 and a maximum loan of up to £6,780 for living costs if they live in London, or £4,840 for those living elsewhere.

Civil Servants from the Foyle Constituency who Work in Greater Belfast

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the total number of civil servants in his Department who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area; and the total cost to his Department of subsidising the travel. **(AQW 6515/11-15)**

Dr Farry: There are currently 3 staff employed in the Department for Employment and Learning who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area whose travel is subsidised by the Department. The total cost of Excess Fares Allowance paid to these staff during the period 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011 was £8020.60.

St Mary's University College's Board of Governors

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 4887/11-15, of the 15 members of St Mary's University College's Board of Governors, who were listed as non-clergy by occupation, whether any of these Board members were lay clergy, or had any other occupational association to the Catholic Church, either salaried or unsalaried, during their tenure, including those who have retired from their professions.

(AQW 6577/11-15)

Dr Farry: St Mary's University College has advised me that, having carried out an examination of the Board of Governors' register of interests, as far as it can ascertain, none of the 15 members referred to in my response to AQW 4887/11-15 have any occupational association etc. with the Catholic Church.

Study USA Scheme

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when the 'Study USA Scheme' will be open for applications.

(AQW 6595/11-15)

Dr Farry: Applications for Study USA opened on Friday 13 January 2012. All higher and further education institutions in Northern Ireland and those students who have expressed an interest in participating in the programme have been informed. Interviews have been scheduled for February 2012.

Financial Support to Young People on Pre-Vocational Schemes

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he intends to provide financial support to young people on pre-vocational schemes, such as the Give and Take Scheme, who are currently not entitled to a non-means tested training allowance, unlike their peers on mainstream Training for Success programmes.

(AQW 6852/11-15)

Dr Farry: Legislative restrictions prevent my Department from providing a non-means tested Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to a participant on a pre-vocational programme apart from those funded under provisions in the Employment and Training Act (Northern Ireland) 1950, for example, the Training for Success programme which includes Programme-Led Apprenticeships.

The Include Youth organisation, which administers the Give and Take Scheme, successfully applied for funding under the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme for 2007 to 2013. Participants on this scheme are not paid training allowances as such payments are not eligible under the conditions of support from the Fund.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

2012 Irish Open Golf Championship

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to the 2012 Irish Open Golf Championship, what financial assurances have been made in terms of (i) firm financial commitments; and (ii) under-writing, should other sources of financial backing, such as commercial sponsorship, fail to emerge.

(AQW 6124/11-15)

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

- (i) The approximate cost of running the Irish Open Golf Championship is £4million. The exact DETI/NITB contribution has not been finalised but is not expected to exceed £2million. However associated costs of marketing and promotion of the event may amount to a further £0.5million.
- (ii) No assurance has been given to under-write the event

Go For It Programme

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what changes have been made to the Go For It Programme since October 2011; (ii) how many InvestNI staff currently work for the Go For It Programme; and how the figure compares to October 2010; and (iii) to detail the number of (a) client advisory sessions; (b) client training sessions; and (c) business plans completed in October 2011; and how the figures compare to October 2010.

(AQW 6125/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is not currently delivering the Go For It programme (i.e. a business start programme under the 'Go For It' branding).

Petroleum Licences

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail whether her Department has any statutory duties to consult with local councils in advance of issuing petroleum licences.

(AQW 6142/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Although my Department has no statutory obligation to do so, notification is provided to a number of organisations including the District Councils, informing them of the intention to grant a petroleum licence and inviting them to make representations to the Department.

Insulation Cash Back Schemes

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what provisions his Department would be willing to put in place to ensure that people, who wish to avail of insulation cash back schemes with local electricity providers, are not required to use specific installers, given the need to provide competition and value for money for customers availing of these schemes and also the need to encourage local businesses.

(AQW 6155/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department has no role in setting the criteria for the approval of insulation installers and has no plans to put in place provisions to determine the installers which local energy companies should use.

Regulation of Pay Day Lenders

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration he has given to improving the regulation of pay day lenders.

(AQW 6157/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Payday lenders are required to be licensed under the Consumer Credit Act (CCA) 1974 and the Office of Fair Trading is responsible for issuing such licences. In addition to complying with the CCA, if a payday lender behaves in a manner that is unfair, misleading or aggressive, it may also give rise to an offence under The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

I consider the current Controls and Regulatory Framework that apply to payday lenders to be sufficient to deal with any reported legal non-compliance by these lenders in Northern Ireland.

However, given recent concerns raised, I have asked my officials to keep a close watching brief on any developments on this issue.

Top Twenty Destinations: Visitor Numbers

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the top twenty destinations in terms of visitor numbers in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6194/11-15)

Mrs Foster: This information is sourced from the Northern Ireland Visitor Attraction Survey. The report for 2011 will not be available until March 2012 so data has been provided for the years 2006 to 2010. It is important to note that the Visitor Attraction Survey is a voluntary survey and all data presented in the report is based solely on the visitor numbers provided by attractions choosing to take part in the survey. Visitor numbers are provided by the proprietor of the attraction and are taken in good faith.

TOP TWENTY DESTINATIONS IN TERMS OF VISITOR NUMBERS 2006 - 2007

	2006	2007
1	Crawfordsburn Country Park	Crawfordsburn Country Park
2	Redburn Country Park	Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre
3	Botanic Gardens	Botanic Gardens
4	Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre	Roe Valley Country Park
5	Lagan Valley Regional Park	Belfast Zoological Gardens
6	Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park	W5
7	Roe Valley Country Park	Delamont Country Park
8	Oxford Island National Nature Reserve	Scrabo Country Park
9	Colin Glen Forest Park	Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge
10	Belfast Zoological Gardens	Oxford Island National Nature Reserve
11	W5	Historic Walls in Londonderry
12	Scrabo Country Park	Belfast Lough RSPB Reserve
13	Historic Walls in Londonderry	Carnfunnock Country Park
14	Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge	Belleek Pottery
15	Ulster Museum	Ulster Folk & Transport Museum
16	Carnfunnock Country Park	Castle Archdale Country Park
17	Ulster Folk & Transport Museum	Ulster American Folk Park
18	Castle Archdale Country Park	Tollymore Forest Park
19	Ulster American Folk Park	Saint Patrick Centre
20	Tollymore Forest Park	Castlewellan Forest Park

TOP TWENTY DESTINATIONS IN TERMS OF VISITOR NUMBERS 2008 - 2009

	2008	2009
1	Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre	Crawfordsburn Country Park
2	Crawfordsburn Country Park	Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre
3	Botanic Gardens	Botanic Gardens
4	Lagan Valley Regional Park	Lagan Valley Regional Park
5	Oxford Island National Nature Reserve	Oxford Island National Nature Reserve
6	Roe Valley Country Park	Belfast Zoological Gardens
7	W5	Titanic's Dock & Pump-House

	2008	2009
8	Island Arts Centre	W5
9	Belfast Zoological Gardens	Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge
10	Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge	Scrabo Country Park
11	Colin Glen Forest Park	Historic Walls in Londonderry
12	Scrabo Country Park	Carnfunnock Country Park
13	Historic Walls in Londonderry	Sir Thomas And Lady Dixon Park
14	Ulster Folk & Transport Museum	Portstewart Strand
15	Delamont Country Park	Ulster Folk & Transport Museum
16	Carnfunnock Country Park	Tollymore Forest Park
17	Castle Archdale Country Park	Ulster American Folk Park
18	Portstewart Strand	Belleek Pottery
19	Ulster American Folk Park	Ulster Museum
20	Belleek Pottery	Delamont Country Park

TOP TWENTY DESTINATIONS IN TERMS OF VISITOR NUMBERS 2010

	2010
1	Crawfordsburn Country Park
2	Botanic Gardens
3	Lagan Valley Regional Park
4	Dundonald Ice Bowl
5	Ulster Museum
6	Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre
7	Roe Valley Country Park
8	Historic Walls in Londonderry
9	Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge
10	W5
11	Belfast Zoological Gardens
12	Scrabo Country Park
13	Carnfunnock Country Park
14	Delamont Country Park
15	Castle Archdale Country Park
16	Ulster Folk & Transport Museum
17	Belleek Pottery
18	Mount Stewart House and Gardens

	2010
19	Ulster American Folk Park
20	Dungannon Park & Lake

Financial Support to Companies that are Engaged in the Arms Trade

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether InvestNI has provided any financial support to companies that are engaged in the arms trade, in each of the last five years; and, if so, to provide further details.

(AQW 6196/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below provides details of the amounts of financial assistance offered by Invest NI for such projects in the last five years:

Amount	Date of Offer	Type of Support
£356,000	March 2005*	Selective Financial Assistance
£3,483,200	December 2009	Research and Development
£2,996,417	January 2012	Research and Development

* Whilst the date of the original offer is outside the five year period in question, drawdown for this project did not commence until March 2006.

Quangos

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many quangos currently operate under the remit of her Department.

(AQW 6221/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department currently sponsors four Executive NDPBs.

Former Army Barracks Site at Ballykelly

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has had any correspondence with with her Executive colleagues in relation to the acquisition of the former army barracks site at Ballykelly, and if so, to detail this correspondence; and what steps she intends to take to produce a masterplan for the development of this site.

(AQW 6241/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have not had any correspondence with Executive Ministers on this issue.

Please also note that OFMDFM assumed responsibility for the Shackelton Barracks site at Ballykelly in October 2011.

Project Kelvin

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the outcomes of Project Kelvin in terms of the jobs created and the business attracted.

(AQW 6242/11-15)

Mrs Foster: All investment decisions are based on a number of factors. It is not possible to align a company's decision to invest solely with the benefits provided by Project Kelvin. Furthermore, my Department does not hold details of the uptake by businesses of the services offered by Project Kelvin, as these are commercial transactions between Hibernia Atlantic and their customers.

Northern Ireland's telecoms infrastructure, including the direct transatlantic link provided by Project Kelvin, contributes to the positioning of the region as a location capable of providing solutions to the business needs of both new and existing investors. Other factors also contribute to the Northern Ireland proposition, including our highly capable workforce, our proximity to customers and the support provided by Invest NI.

Invest NI has identified the benefits provided by Project Kelvin and incorporated these into its sales messages. Invest NI also works closely with all local telecoms suppliers to position the benefits with customers. While it is certain that Project Kelvin has enhanced Northern Ireland's attractiveness to potential investors, it is not possible to directly attribute investment to one infrastructural element and quantify the outcomes in terms of jobs created and business attracted.

Energy Generated from Wind Farms

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of MW/H of energy generated from each wind farm in each of the last five years; and (ii) the projected energy generation for each wind farm for each of the next four years.

(AQW 6243/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department does not hold existing or forecast generation data for individual wind farms. However, total wind power¹ generation for the period 2006/07 to 2010/11 is provided in the table below:

	Electricity generated from onshore wind (GWh ²)
2010/11	675.4
2009/10	709.8
2008/09	583.9
2007/08	431.7
2006/07	335

Source: NIE

Notes:

- ¹ Onshore wind figure includes electricity generated by wind farms and individual wind turbines.
- ² GWh – Gigawatt hour. One gigawatt equals one thousand megawatts

Benefits to Communities of having a Windfarm

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps her Department has taken to maximise the potential benefits to communities of having a windfarm nearby.

(AQW 6244/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Last year, my Department established a group on Planning & Renewable Energy with a remit to work together to ensure that renewable energy projects and installations are delivered in time to meet Executive renewable energy targets. It has been set up as a sub-group of the Sustainable Energy Inter Departmental Working Group (SEIDWG) and includes representatives from DETI and DOE.

I am aware that an industry group and a community group are both currently developing community benefit protocols. The sub-group will consider these documents when published and determine if additional government guidance is required.

Impact of Hydraulic Fracturing on Water Pollution

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has read the recent report by the United States Environmental Protection Agency on the impact of hydraulic fracturing on water pollution; and if so, for her assessment of the findings of the report.

(AQW 6245/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Officials in my Department have read the report and apprised me of the contents and implications. The report presents the findings of an investigation into reports of groundwater contamination in water wells above the Pavillion gas field, Wyoming. In their press release of 8th December 2011 the EPA makes it clear that the findings are specific to that field and not applicable to hydraulic fracturing operations elsewhere in the USA.

The results indicate that gas production activities have enhanced upward gas migration into domestic wells but that chemicals associated with hydraulic fracturing have contaminated ground water at and below the depth used for domestic water supply.

The investigation supports recent recommendations made by the U.S. Department of Energy Panel on the need for collection of baseline data, greater transparency on chemical composition of hydraulic fracturing fluids, and greater emphasis on well construction and integrity requirements and testing. As stated by the panel, implementation of these recommendations would decrease the likelihood of impact to ground water and increase public confidence in the technology.

All these recommendations will be included in the regulatory controls placed on any future hydraulic fracturing operations in Northern Ireland. In addition, Tamboran Resources have restated their commitment not to use chemical additives in their fracturing fluids.

The Pavillion field hydraulic fracturing has been carried out at very shallow depths in the Wind River Formation, which consists of a lithologically variable sandstone-shale sequence and is also the main source of ground water in the area. Poor gas production well design and construction, in combination with natural migration pathways through highly permeable sandstone lenses, has resulted in upward vertical gas and fluid migration.

In Fermanagh, by contrast, the Bundoran Shale Formation is a low permeability shale unit which is separated from the shallow Dartry Limestone Formation aquifer and the surface by the thick very low permeability Mullaghmore Sandstone and Benbulbin Shale Formations.

Link Between Hydraulic Fracturing and Water Pollution

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the link between hydraulic fracturing and water pollution.

(AQW 6246/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The evidence from the US indicates that hydraulic fracturing operations can be carried out without causing any pollution of either surface waters or shallow groundwater aquifers, provided that wells are designed, constructed and operated to the required standards, and that there are sufficiently thick low permeability rock layers between the fractured shale zone and the shallow aquifer rocks.

If, on the other hand, wells are not constructed properly – e.g. near surface aquifers are not completely isolated from the well bore by intermediate steel casing and effective cement programmes - and the local geology contains potential migration pathways, or the surface storage and disposal of produced waters is not adequate, then there will be the potential for hydraulic fracturing to cause water pollution. The key to reducing the risks and preventing pollution is the implementation and effective application of appropriate regulatory controls, such as will be applied to any future hydraulic fracturing operations in Northern Ireland.

Switching Electricity Suppliers

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many people have switched electricity suppliers in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6255/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department does not hold the information requested. The Utility Regulator has advised that 6,367 customers switched their electricity supplier in 2009. For 2010 and 2011, the Utility Regulator holds only aggregated information covering new connections and switches; this will change later this year when a new switching system is put in place.

Switching Electricity Suppliers

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of domestic customers who have attempted to switch electricity suppliers in the last three years; (ii) the number of domestic customers who have been stopped from changing supplier; (iii) the reasons that domestic customers can be blocked from switching suppliers; and (iv) the number of times each reason was used to block domestic customers from switching during this period.

(AQW 6256/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department does not hold the data requested in parts (i), (ii) and (iv) of the question.

In relation to part (iii), a switch can be cancelled or rejected for a number of reasons. These include: a request by the customer; where the data provided (for example meter number or address) is incorrect; where there are issues of a debt to be resolved; and where another switching process is already in place.

Links Between Hydraulic Fracturing and Water Pollution

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has any plans to investigate the links between hydraulic fracturing and water pollution, apart from awaiting the outcome of the Department of the Environment's Environmental Impact Assessment.

(AQW 6257/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department will continue to review the findings of studies from areas with active shale gas and hydraulic fracturing operations in the USA where incidents of water pollution have been reported, and assess the relevance of these to any future shale gas exploration and production in Northern Ireland. The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency also intend to participate in a geochemical survey of well waters in Northern Ireland as part of a wider baseline study of UK groundwater being undertaken by the British Geological Survey.

Links Between Hydraulic Fracturing and Water Pollution

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has any plans to meet with the Environment Agency to discuss the link between hydraulic fracturing and water pollution.

(AQW 6258/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Officials in my Department have discussed many aspects of shale gas operations, including the potential risks of water pollution, with their counterparts in the Department of Environment and other Government agencies. These discussions form part of an ongoing assessment of regulatory controls specific to shale gas exploration and production in Northern Ireland. My officials will be keeping me fully informed about the outcomes of this assessment process.

Land for Industrial Use in the Magherafelt District Council Area

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 6024/11-15, how much of the land which is allocated or leased at (i) Station Road; and (ii) Creagh is currently occupied.

(AQW 6300/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below provides details on the occupancy of Invest NI's Station Road and Creagh Industrial Estates.

Industrial Estate	Land Allocated/Leased (Acres)	Land Occupied* (Acres)
Station Road	14.9	14.9
Creagh	13.2	5.5**
Total	28.1	20.4

* Occupied is defined as the land leased by a company where their development has been completed

**This includes 0.8 acres occupied by a NIE substation and a NI Water pumping station

People Holidayed in Northern Ireland

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many people from (i) the Republic of Ireland; (ii) mainland UK; (iii) elsewhere in the EU; (iv) North America; and (v) the rest of the world holidayed in Northern Ireland in 2011; and how this compares to the previous three years.

(AQW 6302/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Visitor estimates for the full period from January – December 2011 are not yet available. January – September 2011 estimates for overseas visitors to NI are available to view on the Department Website: http://www.detini.gov.uk/jan-sept_2011_tourism_estimates.pdf

Visitor estimates for overseas markets for 2011 will be available from April 2012.

Estimates for visitors from the Republic of Ireland are sourced from the Central Statistics Office Ireland. A date has not yet been published for the release of 2011 estimates.

Hotel Occupancy Rates

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what was the hotel occupancy rate during 2011; and how this compares to the previous three years.

(AQW 6303/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Hotel occupancy rates are collected through the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) monthly Hotel Occupancy Survey. The annual report for 2011 will not be available until April 2012. For information, estimates for the first three quarters of the year (January-September) have been provided, for 2008-2011.

HOTEL ROOM AND BED OCCUPANCY RATES, JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 2008 - 2011

Year	Hotel Room Occupancy (January-September)	Hotel Bed Occupancy (January-September)
2008	65%	45%
2009	60%	43%
2010	60%	44%
2011	60%	43%

Please note that in 2010 the methodology for producing these estimates changed, so estimates are presented here for information, but 2008 and 2009 estimates are not directly comparable to 2010 onwards.

Top 10 Tourist Destinations: Visitors

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps her Department has taken to increase the number of visitors to each of the top 10 tourist destinations; and for her assessment of the success of these initiatives.

(AQW 6306/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Northern Ireland's top visitor attractions feature prominently in the promotional campaigns of Tourism Ireland Limited (TIL) overseas and of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) on the Island of Ireland. Both organisations run a range of promotional and tactical campaigns each year. The products and regions featured are based on what motivates our best prospects, identified through research and align to key priorities such as NI 2012, Titanic, the Giants Causeway Visitor Centre and other Signature Projects.

The latest projections for 2011 indicate that 1.51 million overseas visitors will visit Northern Ireland, representing a +6% increase over 2010. Revenue generated by overseas visitors is expected to be approximately £340 million, a +16% increase over 2010. Latest figures on domestic tourism indicate that during January to September 2011 a total of 1.5million overnight trips were taken within NI by local residents with revenue generated of £121million. Comparable domestic tourism data is not available for 2010 due to a change in survey methodology. Figures for the Republic of Ireland market are not yet available.

NI 2012 represents an unprecedented opportunity to put Northern Ireland on the global stage in a completely new way. The superb programme of new attractions, events and historic anniversaries taking place in 2012 and 2013 will stimulate interest in Northern Ireland and help define what makes it different and why tourists should choose to visit.

TIL's 2012 strategy will see the roll-out of a new three-year global advertising campaign comprising TV, radio, print, cinema and online advertisements featuring locations such as the new Titanic Belfast building, the music scene in Belfast, as well as iconic tourist spots like the Giant's Causeway. The campaign has been developed to be flexible and adaptable and will evolve over its three-year lifespan to capitalise on events such as Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013, golfing opportunities available and promote other key attractions in Northern Ireland. The brand new suite of ads will reach over 200 million consumers in 2012 alone

With the introduction of the nine key tourism areas, NITB will be working closely with local councils and other key partners to ensure key relevant local tourism products are developed and promoted to potential visitors.

Export Decline

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, with businesses having entered their fifth year of export decline, what strategy she has to arrest and reverse this decline.

(AQW 6312/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The most recent available Regional Trade Statistics, published by HMRC, indicate that exports from NI in the first three quarters of 2011 were 10.0% higher than for the same period in 2010.

The draft Economic Strategy sets out how the Executive plans to support the growth of a prosperous local economy through a focus on export-led economic growth.

The strategy aims to increase the number of Northern Ireland firms which are exporting and encourage existing exporters to diversify into new markets. By selling our goods and services outside of Northern Ireland we will be able to rebalance the local economy towards higher value added private sector activity and rebuild the local labour market in the aftermath of the recession. This export based approach has been followed by many successful small open economies internationally.

Decline in Exports to the Republic of Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given the 19 percent decline in exports to the Republic of Ireland in 2010/11, what steps she has taken to reverse the trend towards an all-Ireland focus within the economy.

(AQW 6313/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The draft Economic Strategy sets out how the Executive plans to support the growth of a prosperous local economy through a focus on export-led economic growth.

The strategy aims to increase the number of Northern Ireland firms which are exporting and encourage existing exporters to diversify into new markets.

The large majority of sales outside Northern Ireland are presently destined for either Great Britain or the Republic of Ireland. The draft Economic Strategy recognises the need to build trade links to the world's emerging economies if we are to deliver the Executive's economic priorities.

To this end, Invest NI has increased its representation in Brazil, Canada, Russia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa to help companies develop export opportunities in those markets. This builds on the existing representation in China, Germany, India, United Arab Emirates and the USA.

Spend on Hospitality by InvestNI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what has been the total spend on hospitality by InvestNI in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6314/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI supports and hosts a number of marketing and promotional events each year that form a very important element of Invest NI's agreed sales strategy. The provision of hospitality at such events forms part of this and provides an essential means of interacting with key global decision makers in order to attract new investment.

The total spend on hospitality over the last five financial years is as follows:

Financial Year	Amount
2011/12 (April to December 2011)	262,465
2010/11	487,026
2009/10	562,318
2008/9	481,759
2007/8	300,130

Hospitality: Spend

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what has been the total spend on hospitality by her Department in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6316/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The amount spent by DETI on hospitality in each of the last 5 years is as follows:

10/11	£24,818
09/10	£19,868
08/09	£18,777
07/08	£17,026
06/07	£22,818

Tourism: Angling

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 5422/11-15, for her assessment of the downturn in the estimated spend by direct Great Britain and overseas visitors who participated in angling during their stay in Northern Ireland from £6.2 million in 2008 to £3.6 million in 2009.

(AQW 6334/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The downturn in estimated spend by direct Great Britain and overseas visitors who participated in angling during their stay in Northern Ireland, from £6.2 million in 2008 to £3.6 million in 2009, is due to fewer people participating in angling, as well as a reduction in the average spend per trip in 2009 compared with 2008. The number of direct visitors who participated in angling in 2009 was one third less compared with 2008. Those who participated in angling during their stay in 2009 spent on average 11% or £43 less per trip compared with 2008.

The total number of direct GB and overseas visitors who came to Northern Ireland in 2009 (as opposed to those who specifically participated in angling during their stay) fell significantly (-16%) compared with 2008 and spend per trip also declined by approximately 10% during the same period. Large reductions were evident for the number of direct Great Britain and overseas visitors participating in other activities in 2009 compared with 2008, e.g. approximately -20% for both golf and cycling, which negatively impacts on spend.

The figures provided relate only to 'direct' Great Britain and overseas visitors, i.e. those who exited via a Northern Ireland air or sea port and stayed at least one night in Northern Ireland. They exclude Great Britain and overseas visitors who stayed at least one night in Northern Ireland but exited via a port in the Republic of Ireland ('via ROI' visitors). ROI residents are also excluded.

Tourism: Angling

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant AQW 5422/11-15, to specify the changes in methodology which means that the estimated spend by direct GB and overseas visitors who participated in angling during their stay in Northern Ireland, cannot be directly compared to the spend prior to 2010.

(AQW 6335/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Following a review of the Northern Ireland Passenger Survey, the methodology was revised in 2010. Changes were made to the sampling frame, definitions, weighting and grossing, collection and production of survey estimates.

The survey and analysis methodology is outlined on the Department website:

<http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/tourism-statistics/stats-overseas-visitors/stats-nips-methodology.htm>

A document outlining the benefits and implications of the change in methodology in 2010 is available to view on this webpage.

Businesses Operating in Northern Ireland

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether there are any targets for the proportion of businesses operating in Northern Ireland to be locally owned.

(AQW 6344/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The draft Economic Strategy does not contain any targets relating to the proportion of businesses operating in Northern Ireland to be locally owned.

The strategy aims to create wealth and employment through export-led economic growth. This will be delivered by both locally owned businesses and foreign direct investors.

Proposed Expansion of the Gas Network

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she expects the cost of the proposed expansion of the gas network to be repaid.

(AQW 6347/11-15)

Mrs Foster: New gas infrastructure would be funded initially by the company licensed to develop the network, with costs recovered from consumers over a defined licence period in agreement with the Utility Regulator.

These issues are part of ongoing consideration and discussion between the Department and the Utility Regulator.

Community Renewable Energy

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what (i) targets; and (ii) policies are in place to encourage community renewable energy or to involve communities in renewable energy development.

(AQW 6351/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There are no specific targets and policies directed at encouraging renewable energy development at community level. The Strategic Energy Framework includes a target to achieve 40% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020 and a level of 10% renewable heat. The draft Programme for Government 2011 – 2015 includes interim targets of 12% renewable electricity and 2% renewable heat in 2012/13, 15% renewable electricity and 3% renewable heat in 2013/14 and 20% renewable electricity and 4% renewable heat by 2014/15.

The Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation and the proposed Renewable Heat Incentive are the main policy mechanisms for incentivising renewable electricity and heat across a wide range of sectors, including at a community level.

Economic Downturn

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many businesses in the North Down area have closed as a result of the economic downturn.

(AQW 6352/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The latest Business Demography 2010 publication by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) provides details on the number of enterprises that have closed, broken down by district council area. In addition data is available on the number of enterprises which have opened in North Down over the same period, and thus the net change in the number of businesses.

These statistics are published annually and are available to download from the DETI website at http://www.detini.gov.uk/2._business-demography_2010.xls .

The figures for North Down DCA are presented in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: BUSINESS CLOSURES, OPENINGS AND NET CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES IN NORTH DOWN DCA

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Business closures	170	155	175	170	220	225	250
Business openings	240	255	200	255	235	145	220
Net change	70	100	25	85	15	-80	-30

While these statistics do not provide any indication of the reasons behind a business closure, the challenging economic climate over the last number of years will undoubtedly have been a factor. There

can be many underlying reasons for any individual business ceasing trading, however, the heightened figures between 2008 and 2010 would indicate that the downturn has had a material impact.

Jobs in the Mid-Ulster area

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, for each of the last five years, to detail how many (i) jobs have been lost; and (ii) business have closed or gone into liquidation in the Mid-Ulster area, broken down by district council area.

(AQW 6368/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- i Although the number of jobs lost is not specifically covered by statistics in Northern Ireland there are a number of information sources that do provide an indication of jobs lost. Firstly, there are two alternating surveys which estimate the number of employee jobs at a point in time. These are the Business Register and Employment Survey and the Census of Employment. Data is available for 2010, 2009, 2007 and 2005 and it indicates the net change in the number of jobs for each District Council Area (DCA). You should note that these surveys underwent some methodological changes during the period outlined below which can compromise some of the comparisons over time.

TABLE 1: CHANGE IN EMPLOYEE JOBS BY DCA

	Net change			Percentage change		
	2005 - 2007	2007 - 2009	2009 - 2010	2005 - 2007	2007 - 2009	2009 - 2010
Cookstown	1,279	-484	672	12.2%	-4.1%	5.9%
Dungannon	2,355	-1,219	-428	12.2%	-5.6%	-2.1%
Magherafelt	738	-1,110	-75	5.3%	-7.5%	-0.5%

The information can also be accessed from the DETI website as follow:

BRES <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-census-of-employment-2.htm>

Census <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-census-of-employment.htm>

Secondly, a further indicator of the number of jobs lost is provided by the level of confirmed redundancies reported to the Department and this is set out in Table 2 below. Again you will wish to note that employers are only required to report redundancies of 20 or more. The data is available at <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/stats-surveys/stats-redundancies.htm>

TABLE 2: CONFIRMED REDUNDANCIES BY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Cookstown	2	81	37	33	45
Dungannon	0	96	223	42	2
Magherafelt	67	24	47	23	36

- ii. The latest Business Demography 2010 publication by the Office for National Statistics provides details on the number of enterprises that have closed, that have opened and the overall net change – and all at a district council level. The figures for the Mid-Ulster area, by DCA, are presented in Table 3 below while the data underlying this publication is published on the DETI website at http://www.detini.gov.uk/2._business-demography_2010.xls .

TABLE 3: BUSINESS CLOSURES, OPENINGS AND NET CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF BUSINESSES IN THE MID-ULSTER AREA

		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Business Closures	Cookstown	90	85	85	75	100	140	150
	Dungannon	135	125	160	130	125	195	170
	Magherafelt	110	100	110	110	135	165	155
Business Openings	Cookstown	135	155	170	165	135	100	95
	Dungannon	210	230	210	225	200	165	160
	Magherafelt	190	180	195	190	170	105	145
Net change	Cookstown	45	70	85	90	35	-40	-55
	Dungannon	75	105	50	95	75	-30	-10
	Magherafelt	80	80	85	80	35	-60	-10

While these ONS statistics do not provide any indication of the reasons behind a business closure, the challenging economic climate over the last number of years will undoubtedly have been a factor. Data on the number of businesses which have been placed into liquidation is only published at a Northern Ireland level and is available to download from my Department's website at <http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-insolvency-index/insolvency-statistics.htm>

Renewable Energy Projects

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what support, financial or otherwise, is available to help communities to develop renewable energy projects.

(AQW 6389/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Renewable electricity generation is supported by the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) and community groups can avail of this. Once accredited as a generator under the NIRO, communities which develop renewable electricity projects can receive Renewables Obligation Certificates which can be sold to electricity suppliers.

My Department has also consulted on the proposed introduction of the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). The RHI has been designed to support the uptake of a range of renewable heat technologies; following the consultation process further analysis is underway to inform the final design of the scheme. The RHI will be available to non-domestic customers, including community groups.

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, 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 6399/11-15)

Mrs Foster: No functions have been transferred from my Department to local councils in the last five years and no additional funding has been offered.

In 2008 it was agreed that the following functions would be transferred when the new councils are established on foot of the Review of Local Administration (RPA):-

- Start a Business Programme and Enterprise Shows;
- Youth Entrepreneurship (such as Princes Trust and Shell Livewire);
- Social Entrepreneurship;
- Investing For Women;
- Neighbourhood Renewal funding relating to enterprise initiatives;
- Small scale tourism accommodation development;
- Local tourism marketing;
- Local Tourism product development;
- Visitor servicing;
- Providing business support including business start up advice along with training and delivery of customer care schemes;
- Providing advice to developers on tourism policies and related issues.

I am discussing with the Environment Minister the extent to which this list of functions needs to be revisited in light of developments since 2008 and what the budgetary implications of the final transfer of functions will be.

Take Over of British Midlands

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact on routes from Northern Ireland and local jobs of the take over of British Midlands.

(AQW 6404/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The sale of British Midland International (BMI) to the International Airlines Group (IAG) is due to be completed in the first quarter of 2012. BMI currently operates a service from Belfast City Airport to Heathrow and I welcome the confirmation provided by Willie Walsh, Chief Executive of IAG, in December 2011 that this route is to be retained.

The Belfast-Heathrow link is vital for business and tourism and confirmation that it is to continue is good news for the many people who depend on direct and quick access to and from London.

There are other issues which still require clarification as a result of the sale of BMI and I will be keeping in close touch with IAG.

InvestNI

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the circumstances in which InvestNI has returned £21.6 million to the Department, including for what the money had originally been allocated.

(AQW 6413/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In the current volatile economic climate, particularly across Europe and the USA, declining demand, tighter funding conditions and reduced business confidence means many companies continue to postpone or slow down investment plans to preserve cash. As a provider of matched funding, this has a clear knock-on effect on Invest NI's budget, a high percentage of which is allocated to such projects. As these funds cannot be carried over to future years Invest NI is required to return any amounts to the Executive for reallocation to other departments through Monitoring rounds, along with income realised and efficiency savings made.

Of the £21.6 million that has been returned to DFP £8.9 million related to a slowdown of projects and a further £5 million is for the development of two industrial estates. Contractors' have aggressively tendered for these projects and development costs have been some 60% less than the Central Procurement Directorate forecast, which has saved £5 million of capital budget in this year.

Also included is £1.5 million relating to additional receipts that have been generated for the NI block from loan and shares repayments, land sales and grant clawback. An amount of £0.6 million relates to a technical adjustment for non-cash budgets.

In addition to the above Invest NI has agreed with DFP to make available £5.6 million for two projects which are planned to complete either in this financial year or very early next year.

InvestNI

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what reviews have taken place of the functions and management of InvestNI to ensure that full job creation and growth potential are realised during the recession.

(AQW 6417/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's performance is the subject of formal quarterly review by my Department and the agency's performance against key indicators, such as its commitment to promote over 25,000 new jobs and increase the value of manufacturing exports by 15% , will be reported on as part of the monitoring of the implementation of the 2012-2015 Programme for Government.

Investment in the Electricity Generating Infrastructure

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of whether investment in the electricity generating infrastructure is beneficial to economic growth.

(AQW 6423/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Investment in electricity generating infrastructure is necessary to ensure security of electricity supply, and to provide for existing economic activity in Northern Ireland. Such investment will help deliver the lowest possible electricity costs and also provide for economic growth. In particular investment in more renewable generation offers the ability to reduce Northern Ireland's exposure to the fluctuation of wholesale fossil fuel prices over the longer term and offers job creation potential in the associated supply chain as has already been seen with Belfast Harbour and the decision of DONG Energy to assemble wind turbines there.

Low Carbon Communities Challenge

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department is involved in any other projects similar to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge.

(AQW 6429/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Low Carbon Communities Challenge (LCCC) was a two-year programme launched and administered by the Department of Energy and Climate Change to support the development of sustainable energy projects in UK communities. The scheme will complete this year with all funding for the programme already committed to successful projects. My Department was involved with the scheme in respect of Northern Ireland applicants, with one local project receiving funding.

DETI is not currently involved in any other similar projects to that of the LCCC. The Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation and the proposed Renewable Heat Incentive are the main policy mechanisms for incentivising renewable electricity and heat across a wide range of sectors, including at a community level.

Energy Prices

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what actions she has taken to ensure that energy prices are fair and affordable since the Assembly debate on energy prices on 26 September 2011.

(AQW 6431/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Whilst my Department has no statutory role in setting energy prices, my officials continue to maintain close contact with the Utility Regulator regarding energy prices given its important role in electricity and gas regulation. The Department has been advised that the Utility Regulator is keeping regulated electricity and natural gas tariffs under monthly review.

My officials have also continued to engage with new energy suppliers in support of increased competition in the energy supply market in Northern Ireland.

Funding for Trade Unions

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the level of funding her Department allocated to each trade union in the (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11 financial years.

(AQW 6497/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Details of the funding provided by DETI to the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance to cover the salary of seconded full-time trade union officials, for each of the years requested, is provided below. Given the small number of staff involved, it would be a breach of Section 40 (2), Personal Information, of the FOI Act to provide exact salary costs, therefore the minimum and maximum points of the relevant salary scales have been provided instead.

Year	Grade of TU Official		Salary Scale
2000/01	* Staff Officer	1/4/00 – 16/7/00	£17358 - £23793
	Deputy Principal	17/7/00 – 5/11/00	£21491 - £33617
	Typist		£9080 - £11902
2005/06	Executive Officer 1		£16851 - £24581
	Typist		£11209 - £13453
2010/11	Administrative Officer		£15038 - £22180

* The seconded Staff Officer was promoted to Deputy Principal in July 2000 and remained on secondment with NIPSA.

0845 Numbers

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much revenue has been raised by her Department in each of the last three financial years by the usage of 0845 numbers.

(AQW 6511/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI has not raised any revenue from the usage of 0845 numbers in the period stated.

Introduction of Social Tariffs

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether he intends to introduce a social tariff.

(AQW 6538/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am already on record as stating that the introduction of a social tariff would be extremely complex and unlikely to solve the hardships caused by fuel poverty.

Renewable Energy Group

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with the Renewable Energy Group aimed at improving the benefits to local communities of having a wind farm nearby.

(AQW 6542/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am aware that the Northern Ireland Renewable Industry Group (NIRIG) is at an advanced stage in the development of community benefit protocols. They have not asked to meet to discuss the potential benefits to local communities of nearby wind farms.

Inter-Departmental Working Group on Sustainable Energy

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the work of the Inter-departmental Working Group on Sustainable Energy.

(AQW 6545/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Pursuant to AQW 5283/11-15, the Sustainable Energy Inter-departmental Working Group (SE IDWG) continues to work towards the implementation of the recommendations agreed by the Executive in February 2011.

In particular, a cost benefit analysis on the consolidation of energy vires was discussed at the SEIDWG meeting on 9 January 2012 and has been sent to the Sustainable Development Champions Group, chaired by OFMDFM, for consideration. Also, a draft Executive-wide Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP), including a statement of leadership for the Executive on sustainable energy, was also discussed at the January meeting and is progressing well.

Both of these issues will be referred to the Executive for consideration as soon as agreement is reached.

Properties Connected to the Gas Network

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many properties have been connected to the gas network in each of the towns in the ten towns/cities licence area; and what percentage of households in each of these towns is now connected to the gas network.

(AQW 6551/11-15)

Mrs Foster: firmus energy has provided information as detailed below on the number of properties currently connected in each of the towns in their ten towns/cities licence area. The Department does not hold data on the percentage of households in each of these towns connected to the gas network.

Town/ City	Natural Gas Connections
Antrim	2,090
Armagh	230
Ballymena	1,490
Ballymoney	530
Banbridge	540
Coleraine	1,130
Craigavon	1,830
Londonderry	3,930
Limavady	430
Newry	800
Total	13,000

Renewable Heat Incentive

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 3328/11-15, to outline the work undertaken by her Department in the review of the public consultation on the potential design and implementation of a Renewable Heat Incentive, with particular reference to the introduction of a renewable heat initiative for domestic properties.

(AQW 6558/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Following on from the consultation on the design and implementation of the Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) my Department has been carrying out further research and analysis to address some of the issues raised by stakeholders. This further analysis has included assessment of tariff levels and banding, consideration of eligible technologies and the treatment of large industrial sites. This work will complete shortly and will inform the final policy position.

The consultation proposed that a phased approach would be taken, with the non-domestic sector able to avail of the RHI from the outset, with a scheme for the domestic sector being introduced at a later date. In the interim, it was proposed to introduce Renewable Heat Premium Payments for the domestic market. The majority of those responding to the consultation agreed with this course of action. The arrangements for such premium payments will be considered once the RHI policy has been finalised.

Broadband Facilities in Ringsend, Coleraine

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has to address the limited broadband facilities in Ringsend, Coleraine.

(AQW 6583/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As I have stated in response to a number of Assembly Questions in recent months, over the past eight years my Department has taken forward a number of initiatives aimed at improving broadband access for consumers across Northern Ireland, particularly those located in rural areas. This includes the £51m Next Generation Broadband Project which has facilitated the roll-out of the highest level of fibre-to-the-cabinet technology in the UK. Under this project cabinet upgrades have been completed in three locations across the telephone exchange area from which premises in Ringsend are served i.e. the Aghadowey exchange, with the potential to deliver fixed-line broadband services of up to 40 megabits per second (Mbps).

In addition, my Department has also run the £1.9m Northern Ireland Broadband Fund through which there has been significant deployment of fixed-wireless broadband networks across many parts of Northern Ireland. One of the companies supported under the Fund i.e. North West Electronics is currently delivering fixed-wireless broadband services in the Ringsend area which can offer download speeds of between 10 Mbps and 100 Mbps.

Furthermore through DETI's contract with Onwave Ltd, which was announced on 6 January, satellite broadband services offering download speeds of between 6 Mbps per second and 10 Mbps are available across all areas of Northern Ireland where the provision of fixed-line services is not economically viable. This contract replaces the previous contract with Avanti Communications which ran from 6 January 2009 to 5 January 2012.

Looking forward, my Department has secured £4.4m under the UK Coalition Government's Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) initiative which, together with its Budget allocations for 2011-2015, will be used to extend the delivery of higher speed services into those areas of Northern Ireland where, despite previous investments, a minimum download speed of 2Mbps via fixed-line technology cannot currently be attained. DETI officials are also in discussion with BDUK to source additional funds to deliver an innovative project aimed at improving mobile broadband coverage across Northern Ireland. Work on scoping both projects is underway.

January 2012 Monitoring Round

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, as a result of the January 2012 Monitoring Round, (i) how many jobs she expects to be created; (ii) in what sectors will these jobs be created; and (iii) how this figure will be monitored.

(AQW 6619/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There will be no impact on Invest NI's 2011 - 2015 job promotion targets as a result of the outcome of the January Monitoring Round. By 31 March 2015, Invest NI aims to have promoted over 25,000 new jobs. These will be drawn from a wide range of sectors and will include local SMEs, new and existing foreign-owned businesses and new business starts. Invest NI's progress against its job promotion targets will be monitored quarterly and reported on annually as part of the agency's formal annual reporting process.

Meetings with Mobile Phone Operators

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the dates of the meetings she has held with representatives of (i) O2; (ii) Vodafone; (iii) Orange; (iv) T-Mobile; (v) 3; and (vi) the Mobile Operators Association; and what matters were discussed.

(AQW 6671/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In relation to the objective to bring about improvements in mobile voice and data services as set out in my Department's Telecommunications Action Plan for the period 2011-2015, officials are in early discussions with the four main MNOs i.e. Everything Everywhere (Orange/T-Mobile), O2, Three UK and Vodafone to highlight coverage issues and to ascertain what their investment plans might be going forward.

Department of the Environment

Driver and Vehicle Agency Testing Centres

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 3773/11 - 15, whether he will undertake a study to establish if there are reasons for the significant differences in the percentage changes in the number of vehicles being re-tested in each of the testing centres, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4866/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Between the financial years 2005/06 and 2010/11, the Driver & Vehicle Agency saw an increase in the numbers of vehicle tests carried out from 698,843 to 950,035, or 35.94%. The numbers of vehicles retested increased from 141,929 in 2005/06 to 167,667 in 2010/11. In the same period the percentage of vehicles retested reduced from 20.31% to 17.65%.

The retest percentages for the requested period are shown in the table below.

Test Centre	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Armagh	22.53	22.23	21.56	18.60	17.90	17.18
Ballymena	17.83	18.36	18.23	17.76	17.68	17.78
Belfast	20.81	18.54	18.60	17.29	17.52	18.17
Coleraine	19.01	16.97	16.70	16.40	17.01	17.01
Cookstown	24.25	22.88	21.82	19.05	19.25	19.66
Craigavon	22.06	20.59	20.22	19.03	19.39	18.25

Test Centre	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Downpatrick	17.69	17.20	16.08	15.19	15.84	15.69
Enniskillen	18.74	17.87	18.23	17.61	17.78	18.78
Larne	14.66	13.64	13.92	14.88	17.61	15.97
Lisburn	20.81	16.19	15.21	14.86	14.25	14.30
Londonderry	20.79	19.63	19.11	18.72	19.57	19.19
Mallusk	21.65	19.45	19.00	17.40	16.97	17.36
Newry	19.78	16.79	16.18	15.75	16.92	18.26
Newtownards	19.82	19.22	19.88	19.82	18.06	16.90
Omagh	22.63	18.90	19.23	19.38	18.91	19.48
Overall	20.31	18.66	18.38	17.57	17.66	17.65

For the period 2010-11 the average percentage of re-tests was 17.65%. 13 out of 15 test centres fall within 2% of this average, eight within 1%.

It is recognised that there are differences between test centres in terms of the percentages of re-tests over the last five years. There are a number of factors that impact on pass/fail rates including the age and mileage of the vehicles tested and the quality of the preparatory work carried out in advance. However, prima facie, differentials in pass rate could give rise to questions being raised.

A key issue is the quality and integrity of the test and test process. DVA has put in place a range of measures to ensure that tests are conducted to high and consistent standards including initial training of new entrants, refresher training for existing staff, regular audits of operational procedures, regular audit inspections of each vehicle examiner's work, monitoring of pass/fail statistics and reasons for failure at test centre and individual level, and application of ISO 9001 quality control standards.

The Agency currently captures the top 12 reasons for test failure for all test centres, and publishes the data on a monthly basis at <http://www.dvtani.gov.uk/home/index.asp>. I would welcome hearing further views on this matter.

Human Waste Sludge Site on the A37 Broad Road, Limavady

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment what tests are carried out by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency on the site neighbouring site the human waste sludge site on the A37 Broad Road, Limavady, to establish if there is any contamination as a result of leachate.

(AQW 5012/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency 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. This licence has been revoked and ceased to exist from the 4 January 2012.

The licence included a range of conditions to ensure the sludge was managed

properly and fully complied with waste legislation. The operator installed a fully contained drainage system for runoff and this was conditioned in the waste management licence.

The mobile plant licence for the site did not require tests to be carried out on

any neighbouring site. At no time did NIEA staff record a breach of this condition or receive evidence or complaints of pollution off site. If reports arose of pollution off site, these would be investigated.

Illegal Car Parks in the Vicinity of Belfast International Airport

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQO 867/11-15, in relation to the illegal car parks in the vicinity of Belfast International Airport, to detail (i) the total number of car parking spaces; (ii) the location of each car park; and (iii) how long each car park has been in operation.

(AQW 5505/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) Advice provided to DOE from the airport and others confirms there are a number of unauthorised car parks, with six currently under investigation. It is not possible to be precise on the number of spaces but the six sites cover 4.5 hectares. The number of spaces varies with the seasons and the numbers vary depending on the manner of parking. However, 1100+ above places may be available. In planning terms the number of parking spaces is not relevant to the investigation as the key issue is that the unauthorised use exists and on that basis formal enforcement action is being taken.
- (ii) & (iii) My officials can only give details of the enforcement investigations that are in the public domain. The following table gives the location of sites currently the subject of investigation, the dates when these were reported to the Department and the initial date enforcement action was instigated (in all cases enforcement investigations remain open):

10 Crookedstone Road, Aldergrove	Breach of planning control reported to the Department 09/02/2005 Enforcement Notice Served 20/07/2007
	Enforcement Notice Served on adjacent lands 24/05/2011
108 Ballyrobin Road, Aldergrove	Breach of planning control reported to the Department 27/05/2005 Enforcement notice Served 07/11/2005
	Enforcement Notice Served on additional lands 04/01/2011
26 Killead Road, Aldergrove	Breach of planning control reported to the Department 02/12/2004 Enforcement Notice Served 07/05/2005
	Enforcement Notice Served on additional lands 04/01/2011
92 Old Ballyrobin Road, Aldergrove	Breach of planning control reported to the Department 09/07/2007 Enforcement Notice Served 08/07/2011
6 Antrim Rd, Aldergrove	Breach of planning control reported to the Department 11/05/2011 Planning Application submitted for proposed car storage compound incorporating existing shed and hardstanding for off site car hire business 31/08/2011
5 Seacash Road, Glenavy	Breach of planning control reported to the Department 15/08/2011 Planning Application submitted for a car park 18/10/2011

Debt in Local Councils

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the current strategies that are in place to reduce the level of debt in local councils.

(AQW 5553/11-15)

Mr Attwood: District Councils are bodies corporate as defined in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 and as such are independent of the Executive and the department and directly responsible for decisions regarding their own financial affairs.

You will be aware of recent information published on debt levels. This confirms another element in the complexity of RPA, particularly on management of assets and debts. Councils are and need to be mindful of debt profile and I am looking at what powers central government may or may not need in this regard. That said, I acknowledge the work of Belfast City Council in times of need gathering together a package of monies to provide a stimulus in the City area. Monies, including borrowed monies, wisely deployed in advance of RPA can be important to help come through the downturn.

I again enclose a Schedule of Council Debt across all heads of council borrowing. I have asked officials to conduct an audit of Northern Ireland council debt levels compared with other jurisdictions.

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	
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	59,113,760
Coleraine	28,508,954	
Limavady	12,395,920	
Moyle	8,754,809	
Cookstown	1,487,123	4,968,563
Dungannon	3,481,440	
Magherafelt	0	
Castlereagh *	18,612,585	37,138,466
Lisburn	18,525,881	
Derry	26,149,594	28,459,326
Strabane	2,309,732	

Council	Total	11 Model Structure
Down	23,928,145	42,728,419
Newry & Mourne	18,800,274	
Fermanagh	3,505,713	13,719,690
Omagh	10,213,977	
Belfast	25,852,530	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.

Independent Environmental Impact Assessment of the Fracking Process

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of his Department's ability to carry out an independent environmental impact assessment of the fracking process; and (ii) whether he would consider commencing such an assessment.

(AQW 5791/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department's powers under the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 1999 relate to the requirement to undertake Environmental Impact Assessment only where development proposals are the subject of a planning application. I am assessing if, under EU requirements, I have greater authority in relation to PDRs. The Department has no general power to seek an environmental impact statement where development proposals have not been submitted, although I am seeking legal advice in this regard. If a planning application to carry out hydraulic fracturing is submitted to the Department for consideration, it is likely to be accompanied by an environmental statement. The environmental statement is produced by the applicant and would contain such information as is reasonably required for the Department and its consultees to assess the environmental effects of the development.

I am fully aware of the widespread concerns in relation to the process and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is continuing to supplement its knowledge of the process through reviewing emerging research, studying case studies from other parts of the world and liaising with counterparts in other Environment Agencies in Britain and Ireland, and other countries where fracking is currently proposed or taking place. That is why I will ensure that, at both Ministerial and official level, liaison with counterparts in the RoI will continue to allow a better understanding of the environmental risks resulting from this process for the mutual benefit of both jurisdictions as the current area of exploration straddles both sides of the border.

In terms of the current exploration process there are certain permitted development rights (i.e. where planning permission is not required) for limited activity such as drilling bore holes, carrying out seismic surveys and other evacuations for a period of up to four months. These rights are subject to conditions including pre-commencement notification to the Department giving details of the location, target mineral, details of plant and operations and anticipated timescale. I will ensure that all requirements in this regard are strictly honoured. I must stress they do not in any way extend to the extraction of shale gas which constitutes development requiring planning permission and relate solely to exploration. If the exploration works themselves are considered to require Environmental Impact Assessment the current legislation makes it clear that in such circumstances permitted development rights do not apply. Should any pre-commencement notifications be submitted the Department will carefully consider this issue in consultation with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the Restoration Orders imposed since 1 April 2000, following damage to Areas of Special Scientific Interest.

(AQW 6098/11-15)

Mr Attwood: One Restoration Order has been imposed since 1 April 2000. The restoration requirements referred to Knockninny Hill ASSI and was requested by the Department in the case of DOE - V - Foster on 23 May 2006.

I have asked officials to advise on the future scope for use of Restoration Orders, mindful of the answer to AQW 6098, 6099 and 6102 respectively.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment to provide details of all cases where prosecutions have been initiated for damage to Areas of Special Scientific Interest from 1 April 2008 to 31 December 2011.

(AQW 6099/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As a result of damage caused to Moneystaghan Bog Area of Special Scientific Interest in June 2009 the Department instigated proceedings against Mr P McErlean. The defendant pleaded guilty before the court on 7 March 2011 and was given an Absolute Discharge.

PPS 21

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for single dwellings in the countryside have been approved since the introduction of PPS 21.

(AQW 6101/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since the introduction of the finalised version of PPS 21 on 1st June 2010 the Department has approved 3116 planning applications for single dwellings in the countryside.

This data has been extracted from the Department's published Development Management Statistics which provides data up to 30th September. The next quarterly statistics are due for publication in March 2012.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment how many Areas of Special Scientific Interest have been declared in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6102/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has declared 25 Areas of Special Scientific Interest in each of the last three years.

Discharge Consents Issued to Companies for the Glynn River, and its Tributaries

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 5761/11-15, to provide details of when discharges were permitted under each of the two discharge consents that were issued.

(AQW 6149/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has issued 2 consents to Bord Gáis Energy (Northern Ireland) for discharges of site drainage from an exploratory borehole site into the Raloo Water, a tributary of the Glynn River, near Glenoe.

Both consents (consent nos. 106/11 and 107/11) permitting the discharges were issued by the Department on 19 July 2011. These consents authorise the discharge of site drainage from the premises at any time, providing all conditions of consent are complied with.

Motorists Approaching Horse-Riders on Roads

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the obligations on motorists when approaching horse-riders on roads; and what action can be taken against those motorists who wilfully cause distress or agitation to horses by the way in which they drive.

(AQW 6186/11-15)

Mr Attwood: There is a general obligation on all motorists to drive safely in accordance with the law and the Highway Code and to be aware of all potential hazards.

While there are no legal obligations dealing specifically with how drivers should approach horse-riders on roads, the Highway Code highlights the extra care that is required in relation to vulnerable road users including horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles especially when over-taking. Rule 215 advises drivers to always pass wide and slowly, to heed any request to slow down or stop and to take great care and treat all horses as potential hazards as they can be unpredictable despite the efforts of their riders or drivers.

Any motorist wilfully causing distress or agitation to horses by the way they drive can be charged with 'careless or inconsiderate driving' and if convicted would be liable to 3-9 penalty points and a maximum fine of up to £5,000.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the changes proposed for the Driver and Vehicle Agency.

(AQW 6481/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Driver and Vehicle Agency is part of the Department of the Environment and fulfils a vital role in the licensing, testing and enforcement of legislation concerning drivers, vehicles and operators. It also completes work with regard to the excepted matter of vehicle licensing under an agreement between the Secretary of State for Transport and the Department.

A range of changes to relevant policy and legislation are currently being made. These include the implementation of the Goods Vehicles Act 2010, the Taxis Act 2008 and changes to the MOT test in line with changes to European legislation.

The Agency is proceeding with careful planning for the implementation of all of these changes, to ensure continuing high levels of customer service and operational efficiency in this developing environment.

As I have previously outlined and confirmed, I have and continue to make robust representation to the London Government on the services of DVA, its future work, protection of jobs and the particular circumstances in NI including a land border.

Single Wind Turbine

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment what is the average timescale for getting planning approval for a single wind turbine in a rural area.

(AQO 1053/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the 2010/11 Business Year the average time taken to reach approval for a single wind turbine in the rural area was 115 days (23 weeks).

It is important to note that Planning is currently engaged in an exercise to cleanse and quality assure data relating to renewable energy applications, including wind turbines, prior to April 2011. As such the data provided in this response may differ from that previously published and it may in itself be subject to revision.

Local Councils

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment for an estimate of the savings that could be achieved if local councils were to be reorganised.

(AQO 1062/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) economic appraisal, which covered local government service delivery in its entirety, identified a number of efficiency opportunities as part of the implementation of the reform programme. In total, the appraisal detailed projected savings of £438 million over a 25-year period, for an upfront investment of £118 million.

In addition, the sector's own Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency (ICE) programme has put forward a number of specific efficiencies covering customer-facing services, information and communication technologies, human resources, payroll and procurement for detailed analysis. Their report anticipates that the implementation of this programme will achieve savings in the range of £257 million to £570 million, also over 25-years. These figures are to be treated as indicative but the sector is confident that savings will be at the higher end of these projections.

However, the PwC economic appraisal for local government reform was undertaken in 2009. A refresh of the appraisal, to take account of the sector's work on ICE, will be carried out soon to further refine the costs and benefits of local government reform.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Software Development Industry

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people are employed in the software development industry, broken down by (i) constituency; and (ii) council area.

(AQW 6134/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Estimates at this level of detail are only available from the Census of Employment on a biennial basis. The most up-to-date figures relate to September 2009 and are produced on the 1992 Parliamentary Constituency boundaries that were current at the time.

The number of employee jobs in the software development industry by Parliamentary Constituency is shown in Table 1 and the number of employee jobs by District Council is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEE JOBS IN THE 'SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY' BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY¹

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of Employee Jobs
Belfast East	642
Belfast North	325
Belfast South	2403
Belfast West	*
East Antrim	39
East Londonderry	43
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	*
Foyle	508
Lagan Valley	100

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of Employee Jobs
Mid Ulster	48
Newry And Armagh	72
North Antrim	27
North Down	45
South Antrim	166
South Down	30
Strangford	73
Upper Bann	47
West Tyrone	*
Total	5020

* Not shown due to confidentiality constraints.

1 Based on 1992 Parliamentary Constituency boundaries

Source: Census of Employment, 2009

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF EMPLOYEE JOBS IN THE 'SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY' BY DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Council	Number of Employee Jobs
Antrim	166
Ards	*
Armagh	36
Ballymena	*
Ballymoney	*
Banbridge	*
Belfast	3410
Carrickfergus	14
Castlereagh	70
Coleraine	43
Cookstown	31
Craigavon	43
Derry	508
Down	13
Dungannon	*
Fermanagh	*
Larne	*
Lisburn	97

District Council	Number of Employee Jobs
Magherafelt	12
Moyle	16
Newry & Mourne	52
Newtownabbey	*
North Down	44
Omagh	*
Strabane	*
Total	5020

* Not shown due to confidentiality constraints.

Source: Census of Employment, 2009

Retired Civil Servants

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) how many civil servants have retired in each of the last five years; and (ii) the average annual pension received, broken down by grade 1, 2 and 3.

(AQW 6143/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The number of civil servants that have retired in each of the last five years is set out in the table below.

	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	12010/2011
No of retired Civil Servants	668	622	445	405	602

Note:

1 The Department of Justice retirement figures have been included from 12 April 2010.

The average annual pension received, broken down by grade 1, 2, and 3 is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Vacant Properties

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 5740/11-15, to provide a breakdown of the types of vacant properties.

(AQW 6150/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf lists the number of vacant properties as at 11th December 2011 split by Sector (Domestic and Non-Domestic) and the Class of the property.

Number of Vacant Properties as at 11th December 2011 split by Sector and Class of Property

Primary Property Class	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Grand Total
Privately Built Housing	36,150	194	36,344
Public Built Housing	5,367	1	5,368
Warehouses, Stores, Workshops, (Non-IND) Garages	1	4,478	4,479

Primary Property Class	Domestic	Non-Domestic	Grand Total
Offices (Includes Banks and Post Offices)	0	3,894	3,894
Shops, Showrooms, Supermarkets etc	0	3,415	3,415
Primary Property Class Not Available	97	1,730	1,827
Car Parks	0	842	842
Manufactories	0	469	469
Non Sporting Recreational Facility	0	262	262
Sites and Yards	0	148	148
Commercial Unclassified	0	127	127
Advertising Stations and Signs	0	122	122
Closed Hereditaments	41	69	110
Schools etc	0	110	110
Hospitals, Clinics, Surgeries, Homes	0	80	80
Licensed Premises	0	71	71
Sporting Recreational	0	55	55
Hotels etc Unlicensed	0	52	52
Filling Stations	0	40	40
Law and Order Establishments	0	36	36
Miscellaneous Public Service Properties	0	15	15
Churches, Church Halls etc	0	14	14
Defence Hereditaments and Coast Guard	0	14	14
Nurseries and Garden Centres	0	13	13
Others	6	58	64
Total	41,662	16,309	57,971

Notes: Primary Property Class not Validated

Non-domestic properties, as presented in this table, include mixed properties

Motor Vehicle Fleet Policy

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether someone who is not directly employed by the Civil Service, but who uses a motor vehicle which is in the custody or control of the Northern Ireland Public Service, is covered under the terms of the current motor vehicle fleet policy.

(AQW 6180/11-15)

Mr Wilson: A person who is not directly employed by the Civil Service, but who uses a motor vehicle which is in the custody or control of the Northern Ireland Public Service is covered under the terms of the current motor vehicle fleet policy.

The Persons or classes of persons entitled to drive are any person on the order or with the permission of the policyholder (NI Public Service), provided that the person driving holds a licence to drive the vehicle or has held and is not disqualified from holding or obtaining such a licence.

Devolution of Corporation Tax Powers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the discussions with Treasury in relation to the devolution of powers to alter the rate of corporation tax.

(AQW 6315/11-15)

Mr Wilson: We continue to work with UK Government Ministers to move this work forward as quickly as possible and I am pleased to say that we had a useful first meeting of the Ministerial Working Group (MWG) in December. The Group agreed a Terms of Reference and work programme aimed at examining in detail the issues raised during the course of the recent Government consultation, particularly those in relation to the cost and practical implications of devolving corporation tax powers.

My officials and their colleagues in OFMDFM and DETI have been following up on these issues with their counterparts in the Treasury and the MWG hopes to meet towards the end of February / early March to consider the progress that has been achieved by then. Overall, the MWG aims to produce a report in summer 2012 and a decision will be taken by the Government on whether it will agree to the devolution of these powers following this.

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, 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 6321/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department has not transferred any functions in the last five years and is not planning to transfer any functions to local councils in the foreseeable future.

Corporation Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what additional measures he intends to put in place to ensure that any change in the rate of corporation tax, paid for by cuts to the public sector, will lead to a fairer and more equal society.

(AQW 6343/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Executive's objective in seeking the power to set the rate of Corporation Tax is aimed at securing a policy lever that could potentially offer the Executive a major opportunity to bring about a step change in Northern Ireland's economic performance. The draft Programme for Government and Economic Strategy set out the broad range of measures that the Executive will take in terms of promoting jobs, increasing skills, supporting innovation, and developing our infrastructure to increase competitiveness and productivity and ensure that the local business base can exploit the opportunities that might be presented by any reduced rate of Corporation Tax. Together these actions will help generate employment and wealth, and ensure that everyone in Northern Ireland will have an opportunity to contribute to and benefit from increased prosperity and living standards.

0845 Numbers

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much revenue has been raised by his Department in each of the last three financial years by the usage of 0845 numbers,
(AQW 6373/11-15)

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

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the devolution of Air Passenger Duty powers will cover the duty on private jets; and whether he will consider increasing the duty.
(AQW 6446/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The draft Programme for Government has committed the Executive to eliminating Air Passenger Duty on direct long haul flights. While the precise arrangements for the devolution of these powers are still under discussion it is not anticipated that we will have powers beyond the ability to set the rate of duty for such flights. For example, powers to define the type of aircraft that are subject to duty or how the different Bands are defined are not expected to be devolved.

The Chancellor's 2011 Autumn Statement confirmed the Government's plans to extend APD to business jets of 5.7 tonnes or more, effective from 1 April 2013. Any such direct long haul flights from Northern Ireland

will therefore be subject to the rate set by the Assembly. I would not expect us to have the power to set a different rate for different types of aircraft.

Funding for Trade Unions

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the level of funding his Department allocated to each trade union in the (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11 financial years.
(AQW 6467/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department did not allocate funding to any of the trade unions in 2005-06 or 2010-11.

In line with its Records Management Policy my Department retains only those financial records which relate to the current and six previous financial years. Consequently it is not possible to provide information relating to the 2000-01 financial year.

Waiting Time for an Occupational Health Assessment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the average waiting time for an occupational health assessment; (ii) how long it takes to complete an assessment, following an initial consultation; (iii) how many people are awaiting an assessment; and (iv) what procedures are in place to speed up the process for priority cases.
(AQW 6596/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Northern Ireland Civil Service Occupational Health Service (OHS) carries out occupational health assessments on behalf of NICS departments. These are undertaken in their Belfast centre (75% of cases) Monday to Friday and in two external centres (25% of cases), Ballykelly and Craigavon on one day per week in each location.

There are two main types of assessment – sickness absence and general fitness. For the period 1st April 2011 – 31st December 2011, the average waiting time for a sickness absence assessment in Belfast was: 11 working days and for a general fitness assessment: 12 working days. In the external assessment centres, the average waiting time for a sickness absence assessment was: 17 working days and for a general fitness assessment: 15 working days

For those assessments that do not require further information or external independent assessment (over 95% of all referrals), the assessments are completed within 24 hours of the initial consultation. Cases requiring further information from eg general practitioners or hospital consultants (less than 5%) will have a preliminary report issued within 24 hours and a follow-up report issued when additional information is received, usually within three weeks of requesting the information.

As of 19th January 2012, there are 129 cases waiting with appointments scheduled and 62 cases waiting to be given appointments.

If NICS Departments require a priority assessment, a procedure is in place whereby the referring body makes telephone contact with the OHS and a suitable appointment is arranged – this can be the same day or within 24 hours if necessary.

Civil Service

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the total number of people employed in the Civil Service in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6741/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information requested is set out in the table overleaf.

NICS PERMANENT STAFF IN POST (HEADCOUNT)

1 JANUARY 2007 - 1 JANUARY 2011

Year	Total Staff
2007	30,366
2008	28,257
2009	27,349
2010	27,399
2011	27,701

Notes

Data sourced from HRMS, HR Connect and additional DOJ data sources.

Figures are based on 1st January each year. Figures are staff Headcount.

Includes all Permanent NICS staff.

Data excludes uniformed staff in the NI Prison Service.

The table found in Annex 1 (page 31) of the publication 'Equality Statistics for the Northern Ireland Civil Service' (link below) details status changes resulting in movement of staff into or out of the NICS as well as the years in which these changes occurred, and the approximate number of staff involved.

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/NICS_Equality_Stats_2011.html

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Health Service Patients in Care Homes

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of Health Service patients presently being looked after in (i) residential care homes; and (ii) nursing care homes, and the average cost of each.

(AQW 6214/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): At 31 December 2011 (latest information available), 4,137 patients were receiving residential care packages and 8,147 patients were receiving nursing care home packages.

The average weekly cost per person per week is:

- Residential Care Homes (children and adults) - £727
- Nursing Care Homes (adults only) - £591

Revenue Gained from Hospital Car Parks

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the annual revenue gained from hospital car parks in each of the last five years, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 6216/11-15)

Mr Poots: Where it is available, gross annual revenue from car parking is provided in the attached table. No data is available for 2006/2007 as it has not been possible to extract this from legacy Trust records.

Trust	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Northern	0	0	0	0
Southern	0	0	£200,042	£442,608
Western	Data unavailable	£131,259	£123,029	£116,049
* Belfast	£977,000	£952,430	£949,564	£1,000,998
South Eastern	£839,993	£1,049,901	£1,070,984	£1,081,609
Total	£1,816,993	£2,133,590.00	£2,343,619.00	£2,641,264.00

* The main car park on the Royal Group of Hospitals site is run under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract on a 20 year licence (ending in 2016) to build and operate a car park. Income from that car park goes to the contractor.

Forster Green Hospital Site, Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the planned use of the site at Forster Green Hospital, Belfast.

(AQW 6269/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Forster Green Hospital site in Belfast is approximately 38 acres in size.

A number of health facilities are currently planned to remain on the Forster Green site, namely the Knockbreda Health & Wellbeing Centre, Beechcroft House Adolescent Mental Health Unit and Child and Family Centre, the Regional Medical Physics Agency and a number of administration services.

Patients will transfer from the main Forster Green Hospital building to the new Neurology ward at Musgrave Park by February 2012.

The Belfast HSC Trust is currently considering the future strategic need for this part of the Forster Green hospital site for health use. If it is not required for health use it will be declared surplus and made available for disposal.

Approximately 26 acres of land on the Forster Green is located either outside the development limit or within the designated Local Landscape Policy Areas proposed under BMAP i.e. "green land" unavailable for development. My Department has had some discussions with Castlereagh Borough Council regarding their interest in acquiring part of this site for a playpark.

Forster Green Hospital Site, Belfast

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the acreage of the site at Forster Green Hospital, Belfast.

(AQW 6270/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Forster Green Hospital site in Belfast is approximately 38 acres in size.

A number of health facilities are currently planned to remain on the Forster Green site, namely the Knockbreda Health & Wellbeing Centre, Beechcroft House Adolescent Mental Health Unit and Child and Family Centre, the Regional Medical Physics Agency and a number of administration services.

Patients will transfer from the main Forster Green Hospital building to the new Neurology ward at Musgrave Park by February 2012.

The Belfast HSC Trust is currently considering the future strategic need for this part of the Forster Green hospital site for health use. If it is not required for health use it will be declared surplus and made available for disposal.

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Cross-Departmental Funding for Health Promotion/Preventative Spending Programmes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether cross-departmental funding for health promotion/preventative spending programmes will be made available during this mandate; and (ii) to outline the areas under his remit where there is potential for greater cross-departmental working and joined up thinking.

(AQW 6284/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health Promotion activity is inherent across health and social care provision, and I am committed to increasing the percentage of my Department’s overall budget that is spent on health promotion.

In addition I have secured the agreement of Executive colleagues to the development of a new Public Health Strategic framework, based on most recent evidence, which will strengthen the cross government and cross – sectoral drive to improve health and reduce health inequalities. This work is underway with a view to publishing a consultation document in Spring 2012 and a final framework by the end of the year. This development work will identify further areas for greater collaboration and potential investment across departments.

Payment of Invoices to Small Businesses

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 5626/11-15, how many invoices have been paid within ten days in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6297/11-15)

Mr Poots: Pursuant to AQW 5626/11-15, the table below shows the number of non-HSC invoices paid within ten days by the Northern Trust for 2009/10, 2010/11 and the eight months ended 30 November 2011.

	Number of invoices paid within 10 days
2009/10	51,254
2010/11	51,729
April – November 2011	30,585

Temporary Nursing Staff

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much has been spent on temporary nursing staff in each of the last five years, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 6298/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is attached at Tab A which provides a breakdown of the expenditure on agency, bank and temporary nursing staff for the four years 2007/08 to 2010/11. Information is only available for the last 4 years in the format requested as the Health Service was restructured as a result of RPA and prior to April 2007 the Trusts did not exist in their current format.

TAB A

The figures in the table below have been provided by the Health and Social Care Trusts and represent Nurses and Midwives.

Trust Name	Cost of Agency Nurses				Cost of Bank Nurses				Cost of Temporary Nurses			
	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
	£000k	£000k	£000k	£000k	£000k	£000k	£000k	£000k	£000k	£000k	£000k	£000k
Northern Trust	766,407	1,071,311	540,222	611,403	3,315,756	4,489,956	4,167,913	5,137,518	450,084	1,499,386	1,975,319	1,933,648
Western Trust	456,676	901,552	1,821,762	1,425,521	Unable to provide	3,050,000	2,970,000	3,910,000	Unable to provide this information as temporary nursing contracts are not coded separately.			
Belfast Trust	9,032,098	8,828,841	6,066,594	2,910,296	3,880,000	7,103,000	11,032,000	12,834,000	6,599,000	3,779,000	3,220,000	3,015,000
Southern Trust	881,491	1,288,152	1,185,709	452,733	1,029,000	2,286,000	4,916,000	5,628,000	n/a	3,981,000	3,751,000	2,189,000
South Eastern Trust	2,000,740	2,930,934	3,097,697	1,491,884	1,570,507	1,980,635	2,610,671	3,763,870	Unable to provide this information as temporary nursing contracts are not coded separately.			
Total	13,137,412	15,020,790	12,711,984	6,891,837	9,795,263	18,909,591	25,696,584	31,273,388	7,049,084	9,259,386	8,946,319	7,137,648

* The Ambulance service is the 6th Trust but provided a NIL return as they do not employ nursing staff.

Nursing Rotas

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, for each of the last three years, to detail the number of gaps, each month, in the nursing rota (i) at the Antrim Area Hospital; and (b) in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 6299/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested would only be available at a disproportionate cost to Trusts to extract this information.

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 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 6322/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has not transferred any functions to local councils in the past five years and there are no current plans to transfer any of its functions to local councils in the future.

The collaborative working arrangements that are already in place between the Public Health Agency and local councils should also support the proposed community planning and well-being role envisaged for local government.

Local Pharmacies

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department intends to take, following the judgement in favour of local pharmacies.

(AQW 6341/11-15)

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 full written judgement was not issued until 10 January 2012 and a date for a remedies hearing is still to be set.

However, I have already indicated to CPNI that once I had 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. I remain committed to this and I look forward to moving the situation forward.

Local Pharmacies

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what immediate measures he intends to put in place to support local pharmacies that are under financial pressure, as a result of his Department's changes to funding.

(AQW 6342/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am currently considering the implications of the judgement made by Mr Justice Treacy on the Judicial Review brought by CPNI against the changes to pharmacy remuneration and will meet with CPNI in due course to discuss the way forward. However, 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. The Board has been working with CPNI to establish the extent of the financial pressures that some pharmacies may be facing and considering ways in which some further alleviation may be provided to them if necessary.

Timescale for a Tobacco Advertising Ban

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the timescale for a tobacco advertising ban.

(AQW 6371/11-15)

Mr Poots: In keeping with the rest of the UK, I will be adopting a two-phased approach to the introduction of a display ban on tobacco products in retail outlets. It is intended, in Northern Ireland, that the ban will apply to large shops from October 2012, and for small shops, from 6 April 2015. A large shop is defined as having an internal sales area greater than 280 square metres.

Institutions Operated by the Sisters of Nazareth

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the funding allocated to institutions operated by the Sisters of Nazareth, broken down by constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6380/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is not possible to provide funding information by constituency area. However, the funding allocated to institutions operated by the Sisters of Nazareth in each of the last three years, by HSC Trust, is as per the following table:

HSC Trust	2011/2012 *(YTD) £	2010/2011 £	2009/2010 £
Belfast	634,389	725,992	775,461
Western	593,957	869,506	913,065
Southern	46,160	77,247	74,746
Total	1,274,506	1,672,745	1,763,272

* 31 December 2011

X-ray Results for Patients at the Banbridge Poly Clinic

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what is the target for the return of x-ray results for patients at the Banbridge Poly Clinic; and (ii) the average time it took for patients to receive the results in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6387/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) I have not currently set a Ministerial target relating specifically to the reporting time for x-ray results. The Southern HSC Trust have, however, informed me that they are currently working towards an internal HSC Trust target where they aim to report, verify and dispatch the results of x-rays to the source of the referral within 28 days of the test being performed.
- (ii) Reporting times for x-ray results at the Banbridge Poly Clinic are available from 2010/11. The waiting times, which are collected in aggregate time bands, for 2010/11 and 2011/12 (to the end of December 2011) are outlined in the table below.

Year	No. of x-ray results received by the referrer at the Banbridge Poly Clinic (by length of time waiting, in days, from test being performed to results being reported, verified and dispatched)						Total
	0-2	3-7	8-14	15-21	22-28	>28	
2010/11	1,444	1,039	597	189	129	1,373	4,771
2011/121	796	498	504	931	884	78	3,691

Source: Southern HSC Trust

1 Relates to the period 01/04/11 to 31/12/11

Given that these data are collected by aggregate time band, it is not possible to calculate the average waiting time for results to be reported, verified and dispatched. It is however possible to calculate median waiting time band, a similar statistical measure. The median waiting time band for 2010/11 was '3 to 7 days' and the median waiting timeband for 2011/121 was '15 to 21 days'.

0845 Numbers

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much revenue has been raised by his Department in each of the last three financial years by the usage of 0845 numbers, **(AQW 6394/11-15)**

Mr Poots: No revenue has been raised by my Department or its Arms Length Bodies in each of the last three financial years through the usage of 0845 numbers.

Proposed Model on Shared Services

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the potential savings that could be made if the proposed model on shared services is implemented in its current form.

(AQW 6412/11-15)

Mr Poots: The shared services element of the health and social care Business Services Transformation Programme is projected to both improve delivery of the services in question (notably financial transactions, payroll, HR and procurement) and save money.

The financial savings are projected to amount to some £119m over the 10 years of the Programme to 2019-20, and will allow a greater concentration of HSC resources on front line care.

Business Services Transformation Programme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the number of jobs that may be lost as a result of the Business Services Transformation Programme. **(AQW 6414/11-15)**

Mr Poots: The purpose of the Business Services Transformation Programme (BSTP) is to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the health and social care sector. Since the HSC, like all public services, must live within its means, failure to achieve such gains in support services would increase the pressure on front line services and jobs.

That is the context in which the BSTP is being taken forward. Viewed in isolation, however, this element of the Programme is projected to lead to a reduction of approximately 100 posts, in line with its phased implementation in the latter half of 2012 in such back-office functions as financial transactions, payroll, HR and procurement.

Payments for Category M Prescriptions

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total cost incurred by his Department in relation to the 2010 judicial review that was initiated by Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland, on payments for category M prescriptions.

(AQW 6458/11-15)

Mr Poots: The legal costs incurred by my Department in relation to the 2010 judicial review initiated by Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland on payments for category M prescriptions totalled £151,379.99 including VAT.

Civil Servants from the Foyle Constituency who Work in Greater Belfast

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total number of civil servants in his Department who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area; and the total cost to his Department for subsidising the travel.

(AQW 6472/11-15)

Mr Poots: Three DHSSPS staff live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area.

The total cost to DHSSPS for subsidising the travel costs of civil servants who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to Greater Belfast between 1 January and 30 November 2011 was £105.84.

Breast Implants

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an estimate of the number of women who have had breast implants in each of the last five years; and what medical advice his Department is currently offering to these women.

(AQW 6480/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of breast implant operations carried out in HSC Hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years is detailed below.

Year	Operations
2006/07	76
2007/08	121
2008/09	103
2009/10	87
2010/11	117

It is not known how many women have received breast implants outside HSC hospitals.

Information for women considering breast implants has been produced by the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency. <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/home/groups/dts-bi/documents/websiteresources/con2022634.pdf>

The Department issued guidance for General Practitioners and hospital doctors who may be consulted by patients with breast implants on 13 January 2012.

General Dental Services

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 4877/11-15, to detail the public engagement and consultation which will be carried with those people affected by the changes in dental services, as a result of the proposals for the dental services budget.

(AQW 6486/11-15)

Mr Poots: Proposals for changes to the General Dental Services which could potentially affect the treatments available to patients will be the subject of consultation with patients groups and the dental profession. The consultation will also be open to the public. My Department is also engaged with the British Dental Association (NI) on the proposals and has meetings planned in January and February to discuss them further.

My Department will also engage with the Assembly Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety on proposals which would involve regulatory changes, following the consultation and meetings with the British Dental Association (NI).

Gastric Band Surgery

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what provision is available for people who wish to undergo gastric band surgery; (ii) if provision is not available, where patients could receive this service; and (iii) what assistance is available for patients who would need to travel to receive this service.

(AQW 6488/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board does not currently routinely commission bariatric surgery, including gastric band surgery. However, if a patient's consultant considers there is a clinical need for a patient to undergo gastric band surgery, they can make an Individual Funding Request (IFR) to the Health and Social Care Board requesting that the patient receives the treatment. Approval is generally only granted by the Board where the consultant can demonstrate that there are exceptional circumstances applying to the individual patient.

Where the Health and Social Care Board approves an IFR for gastric band surgery, the procedure is carried out in Great Britain. The Board will meet the costs associated with the referral in such cases, including the patient's travel costs.

Business Services Transformation Programme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has met with MLAs to discuss the Business Services Transformation Programme.

(AQW 6489/11-15)

Mr Poots: The latest phase of the Business Services Transformation Programme concerns the model and location of shared support services, public consultation on which began on 7 December and runs until 29 February. The consultation process affords full opportunity for views to be expressed and information obtained. Apart from inviting responses to the detailed consultation document itself, it includes public meetings in each of the five HSC Trust areas. Everyone is free to attend, but the local MLAs are among those specifically invited to do so. I am happy for officials to brief those MLAs who specifically request such briefing, and have arranged for officials to brief the Health, Social Services & Public Safety Committee on the matter.

In the circumstances outlined above, I have felt it inappropriate to engage in separate dialogue while the formal consultation is running its course. I shall make my decisions on HSC shared services in light of the views expressed in the consultation by those affected and those with an interest in the matter.

Consultants

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 3346/11-15, to detail the type of work undertaken by consultants employed by the (i) South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 6560/11-15)

Mr Poots: Consultants in the Southern and South Eastern Trusts provide services across a wide range of specialties. The consultant contract provides an effective system of planning and timetabling consultants' duties and activities and enables employers to manage consultants' time in ways that

best meet local service needs and priorities. For consultants, this means greater transparency about the commitments expected of them by their employers and greater clarity over the support that they need from employers to make the maximum effective contribution to improving patient services.

The Contract sets out the contractual and consequential services that a consultant is expected to carry out including Direct Clinical Care; Supporting Professional Activities including participation in training and formal teaching of other staff, clinical management and local clinical governance activities, etc; Additional HSC Responsibilities including managerial and teaching roles e.g. undergraduate or postgraduate dean; External Duties such as undertaking work for the Royal Colleges or General Medical Council etc; and Emergency Work and fee paying services (other than private practice).

Reparative/Conversion Therapy

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether medical research has been carried out to show that reparative/conversion therapy works; and (ii) whether reparative/conversion therapy has been used or prescribed by the Health Service, and if so, to provide details.

(AQW 6567/11-15)

Mr Poots: There has been no medical research in Northern Ireland within the Health Service into reparative/conversion therapy. Statutory Services within the HPSS have not used or prescribed reparative/conversion therapy.

Child Internet Safety

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the strategic development within his Department on child internet safety.

(AQW 6613/11-15)

Mr Poots: Ensuring that children are kept safe on the Internet requires cross-Departmental support. As a consequence, my Department works with relevant Departments and other Agencies as part of the Safeguarding sub-group of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People which, among other issues, promotes child Internet safety.

Officials from my Department represent Northern Ireland on the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) and the Executive Board. UKCCIS is currently finalising industry good practice guidance in relation to social networking, search technology, instant messaging and interactive services for children.

To coincide with Safer Internet Day on 7 February 2012, my Department, in co-operation with the UK Safer Internet Centre, will raise awareness of this year's key message to encourage users young and old to "discover the digital world together safely".

My Department is preparing to establish the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) this year. The SBNI will play a key role in setting the strategic direction for child safeguarding in Northern Ireland. Given the continuously evolving challenges to the safety of children generated by the Internet, it is my expectation that child Internet safety will be central to SBNI strategy.

Finally, under the auspices of the North South Ministerial Council, my Department is part of a cross-border group of officials, who have co-operated on a range of child protection matters, including internet safety. Officials routinely keep each other apprised of developments in Internet safety on both sides of the border.

Public Consultation on a UK Plan for Rare Diseases

Mr B McCreagh asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the public consultation on the UK Plan for Rare Diseases will be launched in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 6654/11-15)

Mr Poots: Development of the UK Plan for Rare Diseases is being lead by Department of Health, London in consultation with the devolved administrations.

I have been advised that work is progressing on refining the consultation and finalising questions. No decisions have been taken about when the consultation will be launched.

Care Matters in Northern Ireland Strategy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on his Department's Care Matters in Northern Ireland Strategy.

(AQW 6660/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Care Matters Strategy is cross-departmental and, as such, was endorsed by the Northern Ireland Executive in 2009. My Department continues to support a number of initiatives developed under the Strategy. A review exercise, led by my Department, is currently underway to assess the extent to which recommendations made under Care Matters have been acted upon and to identify any action outstanding.

Families Matter Strategy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on his Department's Families Matter Strategy.

(AQW 6666/11-15)

Mr Poots: Families Matter sets out my Department's vision for improving support and services for families and children.

My Department is currently gathering information for the 2010/11 monitoring report on the Families Matter Implementation Plan 2009/11.

The information provided by the monitoring report will assist in the drafting of an evaluation report on the implementation of Families Matter for the period 2009 -2011. This will inform a future review and/or future implementation plan for the strategy.

Health and Social Care Mental Health and Learning Disability Task Force

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the work of the Health and Social Care Mental Health and Learning Disability Task Force.

(AQW 6668/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Task Force has made a significant contribution to the reform and modernisation of mental health and learning disability services in line with the Bamford Action Plan 2009-2011. Over 60% of actions in the plan fell to my Department or HSC bodies to take forward. The Task Force has led or contributed to much of the work involved.

An evaluation of the 2009-2011 Action Plan indicates that, overall, 80% of actions committed to were achieved. I hope to publish this evaluation in due course.

Work is progressing on the development of the Bamford Action Plan 2012-2015. The Bamford Task Force will be responsible for the delivery of HSC actions in the 2012-2015 Plan and are contributing fully to the Plan's development.

Clinician

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety at what stage of a pregnancy should a women be seen by a clinician.

(AQW 6670/11-15)

Mr Poots: The care of each pregnant woman will depend on her individual needs. Ideally women should see a clinician as soon as they are planning a pregnancy. All women should make contact with their GP or midwife as soon as they know they are pregnant so that they can receive early advice and assessment and a discussion about which clinicians will be most appropriate to provide their care during pregnancy. The most appropriate clinician for each contact will depend on the woman's individual needs and risks, and may be their midwife, obstetrician or GP.

In addition to this early contact, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommend that women with a straightforward pregnancy are seen at around 10 weeks for assessment of their needs and for antenatal screening, and around 20 weeks for an anomaly scan. They should have regular contact with an appropriate clinician at 16, 28, 34, 36, 38, 41 and 42 weeks for all women and additional assessments at 31 and 40 weeks for women in their first pregnancy.

Women who have a multiple pregnancy, existing medical conditions, those who develop complications during pregnancy or have other added needs, may be seen more often.

Missed Hospital Appointments

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number; and (ii) the cost, of missed hospital appointments in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6672/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The number of hospital appointments missed in each of the last three years is outlined in the table below. These figures represent the number of outpatient appointments where a patient did not attend (DNA) and failed to give advance warning to the hospital.

When assessing the level of missed appointments, it is more appropriate to consider these in the context of the total number of outpatient attendances, each year, in order to provide a more comparative trend analysis. This involves the calculation of a standardised measure of missed appointments, which is called a DNA rate. DNA rates for each of the last three years are also presented in the table below.

Year	Number of missed hospital appointments (DNAs)	Missed appointment (DNA) rate ¹
2008/09	184,792	10.8
2009/10	172,877	10.3
2010/11	171,740	10.3

Source: Departmental Quarterly Outpatient Activity Return (Part 1)

- 1 The DNA rate is calculated as follows: (Number of missed appointments/(Number of outpatient attendances + Number of missed appointments))*100
- (ii) Given that hospitals over book appointments in the knowledge that some patients will not attend, it is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the cost of missed hospital appointments.

People Who Care for Relatives in the Community

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to acknowledge the role of those who care for relatives in the community.

(AQW 6676/11-15)

Mr Poots: Carers are a vital part of my Department's vision of providing support for people to live more independent lives. The contribution that carers make towards helping people to remain in their own homes and to live independently cannot be overstated.

I will continue to demonstrate my support for, and recognition of, the important role of carers by ensuring that the needs and rights of carers remain at the centre of my Department's policies. I believe that the work of carers is at the core of strong families and unified communities and continue to demonstrate my support for carers by my ongoing attendance and participation at carer celebration and recognition events.

In addition my Department provides annual core funding to Carers NI, the Northern Ireland branch of Carers UK, a membership organisation of carers involved in campaigning for carers; providing information and advice to carers about their rights; carrying out research; mobilising supporters; and acting against discrimination.

Glanree House, Newry

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that Glanree House, Newry is full to and has a waiting list, whether there are any plans for additional supported living facilities in the Newry area in the next five years.

(AQW 6719/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is for Trusts to plan and deliver services to its own populations taking account of assessment of individual need, the availability of resources and other priority demands for services. I am advised by the Southern Health and Social Care Trust that it is not currently developing plans for additional supported living facilities within the Newry and Mourne locality.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for 15-17 year olds in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which statutory body is responsible for the budget for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for 15-17 year olds in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre.

(AQW 6731/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the member to the answers I provided to AQWs 5785/11-15 and 5697/11-15.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for 15-17 year olds in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which statutory body is responsible for the commissioning of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for 15-17 year olds in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre.

(AQW 6732/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the member to the answers I provided to AQWs 5785/11-15 and 5697/11-15.

Grovetree House in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Area

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his plans for Grovetree House in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area, following the 'Excellence and Choice' document published in 2009.

(AQW 6745/11-15)

Mr Poots: In 2009 the residents of Grovetree House were given an undertaking that the home would remain open for as long as they needed it. This position has not changed and Trust officials have advised that there are no plans to close Grovetree House.

At present Grovetree House has nine permanent residents and 15 intermediate care beds, and continues to facilitate respite care. The Trust, in the interests of efficiency, proposes to centralise the location of intermediate care beds at Chestnut Grove residential home on the Somerton Road, Belfast. Meetings have been held with residents, relatives, staff, trade unions and local political representatives to apprise them of the plans.

Appointment Reminder System in the Health Service

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on plans to introduce an SMS based appointment reminder system in the Health Service.

(AQW 6761/11-15)

Mr Poots: At present HSC Trusts do not routinely telephone to remind patients of an appointment. However I am advised that each Trust is currently considering the potential value of an SMS based appointment reminder system. Some have already introduced a text reminder system for specific areas and are evaluating the impact of this prior to making further decisions on a possible wider application.

Service Framework for Older People's Health and Well Being and the Dementia Strategy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on (i) the service framework for older people's health and well being; and (ii) the Dementia Strategy.

(AQW 6772/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following detailed evidence gathering and analysis over the last year, a project team comprised of a wide range of stakeholders, including patient and carer representatives, has completed a draft of the Older People's Service Framework which was submitted to my Department on 6th January 2012. This will now be subject to quality assurance by senior policy and professional officials before being published for public consultation in the next few months.

I made a statement to the Assembly on 8 November 2011 announcing the publication of the Dementia Strategy which aims to improve the services provided to people living with dementia and their carers. The Strategy contains an action plan with timescales and details the lead agency responsible for delivery of each action.

The Strategy also tasked the HSC Board and Public Health Agency with establishing and jointly leading a regional group to oversee implementation of the Dementia Strategy and its actions. Work is progressing on establishing this group, which will report to my Department on progress against the actions on a 6-monthly basis.

Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy.

(AQW 6775/11-15)

Mr Poots: Publication of the Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy was approved by the NI Executive on 15 December 2011. It is my intention to officially launch the Strategy on 22 February 2012.

Dalriada Hospital, Ballycastle

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the services provided at Dalriada Hospital, Ballycastle.

(AQW 6776/11-15)

Mr Poots: The delivery of services at the Dalriada Hospital is a matter for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. I am advised that there are 32 inpatient beds available in the hospital which accommodate a number of patients including those requiring rehabilitation following fracture/orthopaedic surgery, Multiple Sclerosis respite service users, GP admissions and, if required, 2 beds can be utilised for palliative care.

The Northern Trust has been reviewing its complement of intermediate beds across the Trust area and as a result of this, new referral mechanisms are being developed. The Trust is also exploring ways of facilitating safe admissions at weekends and during bank holidays.

Glanree House, Newry

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are on the waiting list for supported living accommodation at Glanree House, Newry.

(AQW 6778/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not available centrally, and the Southern Trust's response to my Department's request for relevant figures is detailed below for your information.

There is no waiting list in operation for Glanree House. For a person to be considered for supported living accommodation, they must be on the Common Housing Selection Scheme list, which is held by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

When a vacancy comes up within any supported living scheme, the Common Housing Selection Scheme list is scrutinised to identify the most appropriate person for that placement. As part of this screening process, compatibility issues with existing residents are a high priority. NIHE always seek our guidance and recommendations when considering the filling of a vacant place.

There are a number of people in all localities that would benefit from supported living, and they are currently on the Common Housing Selection Scheme list. Glanree and all other supported living schemes are seen as a home for life, and a vacancy would only become available upon the death of a resident, or if a resident moves into another tenancy.

Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre: Child Protection Register

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many 15-17 year olds in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre are on the Child Protection Register.

(AQW 6779/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not available centrally, and on request the Probation Board for Northern Ireland advised my Department that there are no 15-17 year olds in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre on the Child Protection Register.

Tristel Product

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) which Health and Social Care Trusts currently use the Tristel product; (ii) which Trusts have used it in the past and for how long; and (iii) the reasons why Trusts stopped using Tristel.

(AQW 6801/11-15)

Mr Poots: Tristel has a suite of products. Tristel Duo and Tristel Foam are used in some Trusts for decontaminating instruments and specialist equipment. The table below indicates Tristel's usage as a general cleaning agent.

Trust	Currently use Tristel?	Has the Trust used it in the past and for how long?	Reason for stopping use of Tristel
Belfast HSCT	No	Never used	N/A
Northern HSCT	No	Feb 2008 – Oct 2009	Fewer health and safety concerns for staff by using an alternative product.
South Eastern HSCT	No	Never used	N/A
Southern HSCT	No	Never used	N/A
Western HSCT	No	Never used	N/A

Adopted Children

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children have been adopted in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6807/11-15)

Mr Poots: The figures requested are not available centrally.

The nearest available figures are produced annually by the Northern Ireland Guardian ad Litem Agency in their Annual Report, in which they record the number of Adoption Orders granted by courts in Northern Ireland between 1st April and 31st March. These figures are detailed in Table 1 below for your information.

TABLE 1 ADOPTION ORDERS GRANTED IN NORTHERN IRELAND (2009 – 2011)

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
No. of Adoption Orders Granted	102	91	98

Source: NIGALA Annual Reports

Note: These figures have not been validated by DHSSPS. Adoption Orders include: Adoption Placement, Adoption Step Parent, Adoption Abroad, Adoption Relative & Inter Country Adoption.

Fostered Children

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children have been fostered in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6808/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not centrally available, and could only be provided at disproportionate costs.

The nearest figures available to those requested, relate to the number of looked after children in foster care placements at 31 March in each of the last three years. These are detailed in Table 1 below for your information.

TABLE 1 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS AT 31 MARCH (2009 – 2011)

	2009	2010	2011
No. of Children in Foster Care	1,607	1,687	1,862

Source: Children Order Return LA2 (2009, 2010) & Health and Social Care Board Corporate Parenting Returns (2011). Excludes private fostering arrangements.

Children Adopted from Outside the UK

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children have been adopted from outside the UK, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6809/11-15)

Mr Poots: Table 1 below details the numbers of children adopted from outside the United Kingdom, by Health and Social Care Trust for the last three years for which data are available.

TABLE 1**NUMBER OF CHILDREN FROM COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE UNITED KINGDOM ADOPTED BY PARENTS OR FAMILIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND DURING THE YEARS FROM 2008/09 TO 2010/11 BY HSC TRUST**

HSC Trust	2008/093	2009/102	2010/112
Belfast	-	-	-
Northern	-	-	-
South Eastern	-	-	-
Southern	-	-	9
Western	-	-	-
Northern Ireland	23	8	13

- 1 Inter-country adoption figures are not available centrally, and for 2008/09 were obtained from regional figures provided in reply to Assembly Question AQW 3650/10, and from the HSC Board for 2009/10 and 2010/11. Figures detailed in Table 1 have not been validated by the DHSSPS.
- 2 Some HSC Trusts figures have been suppressed due to small numbers and to avoid personal disclosure.
- 3 Excludes children adopted from the Republic of Ireland.

Information detailing the countries from which children have been adopted from outside the United Kingdom in each of the last three years is not available centrally, and could only be provided at disproportion costs. However, similar information was provided in reply to AQW 3650/10, which is detailed in Table 2 below for your information.

TABLE 2**NUMBER OF CHILDREN FROM COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE UNITED KINGDOM OR IRELAND ADOPTED BY PARENTS OR FAMILIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND FOR THE FIVE YEAR PERIOD FROM 2004/05 TO 2008/09 BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

Country of Origin	Children Adopted 2004/05-2008/09
Thailand	28
China	13
Russia	11
Guatemala	6
Other Countries	12
Total	70

Notes: The five year period refers to 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2009. Children refer to those younger than 18 years. 'Other Countries' includes, Brazil, Bulgaria Mexico, Philippines, Cambodia, Latvia, Kosovo, and Belarus. The information reported in Table 2 was provided by Health and Social Care Trusts and has not been validated by the DHSSPS.

Countries from which Children have been Adopted

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the countries from which children have been adopted in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6810/11-15)

Mr Poots: Table 1 below details the numbers of children adopted from outside the United Kingdom, by Health and Social Care Trust for the last three years for which data are available.

TABLE 1

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Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have been diagnosed with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6855/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not available on the number of people that have been diagnosed with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis in each of the last five years, however information is available on the number of admissions to HSC Hospitals in Northern Ireland where a diagnosis of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis was recorded.

Year	Admissions
2006/07	49
2007/08	37
2008/09	76
2009/10	79
2010/11	113

Source:- Hospital Inpatient System

Deaths and discharges are used as an approximation of admissions. It should be noted that these figures do not represent individuals as a person may be admitted to hospital more than once in a year or across a number of years.

Illness Caused by Being or Living Close to a Wind Turbine

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have been treated for an illness caused by being, or living, close to a wind turbine in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6857/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is not available on the number of people who have been treated for an illness caused by being, or living, close to a wind turbine in each of the last five years.

Intensive Care Ventilators

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 4461/11-15, in relation to the late payment by Maquet Limited on the buy back of equipment, to detail any financial recovery by his Department, following the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, as extended by the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002.

(AQW 6873/11-15)

Mr Poots: In relation to the late payment by Maquet Limited on the buyback of equipment, there was no financial recovery by either the Department or Belfast HSC Trust under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, as extended by the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2002.

Intensive Care Ventilators

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 4461/11-15, why, in the purchase of the 100 ventilators there was a buy-back arrangement for only 10 ventilators, when is it anticipated that the surplus ventilators will be put to use.

(AQW 6874/11-15)

Mr Poots: Pursuant to AQW 4461/11-15, the buy-back option was based on planning assumptions in place at that time for response to the H1N1 pandemic. This option was negotiated to allow flexibility in planning and response and to inform decisions about future critical care capacity requirements in Northern Ireland.

Even though the buy-back option was exercised, a further 11 paediatric intensive care ventilators remain available in the system for use by Trusts to enable them to meet any future surge demands. These ventilators can also be used to expand adult critical care capacity if needed.

Nazareth House, Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the concerns of elderly residents, and their families, and in the event of Nazareth House, Derry, failing to meet Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority standards, to detail (i) to where residents will be moved; (ii) when they will be moved; and (iii) when they will be informed of any such move.

(AQW 6959/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following the issuing of a Failure to Comply notice by the Regional Quality Improvement Authority in respect of the level of care being provided in Nazareth House Residential Home, the Western Health & Social Care Trust have taken a number of steps to support the management of the home to respond to, and address, the issues identified by RQIA by the required deadline of 10th February.

A review and full assessment of residents' needs is currently under way, and priority will be given to the placement of those residents who needs can only be met in a nursing home. The placement of any resident who is found to be in need of nursing care will take place only after consultation with the individual and their families.

Department of Justice

Attempt by a Prisoner in Maghaberry Prison to Escape from Custody

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the circumstances surrounding the recent attempt(s) by a prisoner in Maghaberry Prison to escape from custody whilst being taken for an external hospital appointment; (ii) whether staff were injured, including how many and to what degree; (iii) whether he will order an investigation into this matter; and (iv) whether he will make a statement on this matter to the Assembly.

(AQW 6103/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): An attempted escape occurred on 3 January 2012 whilst a prisoner was under escort by Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service staff at Belfast City Hospital. The circumstances surrounding the attempted escape are currently subject to a full investigation by a senior Governor from Prison Service Headquarters. I am assured that this investigation is nearing conclusion. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the circumstances until the investigation is completed.

I can confirm that three staff have been suspended from duty under the Code of Conduct and Discipline and that, post incident, one staff member reported injuries to his hand and received medical treatment.

Prisoners Granted Leave for Christmas

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in respect of prisoners who were granted leave for Christmas (i) how many did not return to custody on the stipulated date; (ii) how many did not abide by the terms of their release without incident; and (iii) how many had to be returned to prison prior to their stipulated date and for what reason(s).

(AQW 6105/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Of the prisoners who were granted Christmas leave, one young offender and two prisoners failed to return on the stipulated date. Two returned one day late and one three days late.
- (ii) Four prisoners failed to abide by their home leave conditions.
- (iii) Of these four, three were returned to custody prior to their stipulated date.

They were returned for the following reasons:-

- Breach of curfew and missing PBNl appointment;
- Consuming alcohol; and
- Discovered in possession of alcohol at his hostel.

People Convicted of Obstructing Lawful Activity in a Public Place

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, of the 26 people convicted of obstructing lawful activity in a public place, and additional offences, on 12 July 2010; (i) how many were granted Legal Aid; (ii) the total cost of the Legal Aid; (iii) how many legal firms were instructed; and (iv) in how many cases counsel was employed.

(AQW 6106/11-15)

Mr Ford: There were a total of 27 defendants who were granted legal aid. Of these, 26 were convicted of charges relating to this incident. One defendant was not convicted, the charges having been dismissed.

Nine firms of solicitors represented the defendants. Eleven defendants were granted legal aid to cover representation of junior counsel. No fees have been paid in respect of counsel to date.

Payment has issued for advice given under both the Green Form Scheme and PACE, (the Police and Criminal Evidence Act), in the sum of £807.49 (inc VAT of £128.49).

To date, payment has issued for claims in relation to only two of the defendants in respect of solicitors' fees in the sum of £2842.46 (inc VAT of £464.58).

It is estimated that further fees for proceedings in the Magistrates' Court are likely to amount to approximately £23,000.

Investigation into the Prisoner Assessment Unit's Failings

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the investigation into the Prisoner Assessment Unit's failings and the concerns which led to its closure, whether the investigation has concluded, and if so, when the report will be published.

(AQW 6107/11-15)

Mr Ford: The investigation into the Prisoner Assessment Unit (PAU) has been concluded and the disciplinary recommendations arising from the investigation have been implemented. The remaining recommendations relate to the running of the PAU and as yet no decision has been taken on the future of the unit. No date has yet been fixed for publication of the report.

Coroner's Inquest into the Death of Pearce Jordan

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost, to date, of the coroner's inquest into the death of Pearce Jordan.

(AQW 6126/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the identifiable costs to date and includes legal aid costs and other legal expenses incurred for the various challenges and satellite litigation associated with this case.

The court (judiciary, staff and overhead) costs associated with this case are not known and to retrieve them would require a manual trawl of records at disproportionate cost.

Cost Type	Amount
Legal and other costs incurred by the Coroner's Office	£92,740.84
Legal challenges and other satellite litigation – Legal Costs*	£232,632.48
Legal Aid Costs*	£304,724.00
Total	£630,097.32

* Relates to actual payments made to date, full and final settlement of these costs is still under consideration.

Prison Diversionary Projects

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the prison diversionary projects his Department sponsors which (i) involve charities or constituted groups; and (ii) do not involve charities or constituted groups. **(AQW 6163/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The selection of the appropriate sentence in individual cases, taking into account all relevant considerations, is quite rightly, an independent matter for the judiciary. Whilst custody should be the ultimate sanction for those who commit serious offences, imprisonment needs to be a last resort and to be used with restraint. For many offenders, supervision in the community may be the most appropriate and effective response.

The importance of redirecting people from offending behaviour is widely recognised and my Department and its agencies, in particular the Probation Board, PSNI and the Youth Justice Agency, support many preventative and diversionary projects to redirect offenders away from more serious offending behaviour. It is important for relevant agencies, including those based in the community, to work together to connect those who have offended into the appropriate mainstream and specialist provision that can help them.

Two projects that directly divert people from prison are electronic monitoring and supervised activity orders.

Since April 2009 courts have had the ability to impose a curfew with an electronic monitoring requirement. This has enabled judges to impose the requirement that the suspect wear an electronic tag and be subject to a curfew of up to 12 hours per day as a condition of bail in circumstances where they might otherwise have considered custodial remand to be the only suitable alternative. The monitoring services are provided to my Department under tendered contract by a private sector contractor.

My Department is currently conducting a pilot programme for Supervised Activity Orders which provide Courts with an alternative to the current automatic default to imprisonment for those defaulting on court imposed fines. The pilot is being managed by Probation Board for Northern Ireland and is operating in the Newry Court district.

My Department sponsors the Inspire Women's Project which delivers an enhanced range of women-specific services for women on statutory supervision orders and women whose court cases have been adjourned for Pre-Sentence Reports. This project is directly contributing to reducing women's offending through targeted community-based interventions. A key element of this project is its partnership arrangements involving Probation, NIACRO and the Women's Support Network. This links women offenders attending Inspire into the services of over 50 community-based women's centres, women's projects and so on across Northern Ireland, providing a diverse range of services that support women in the resettlement process.

The Department also directly sponsors NIACRO and Extern which deliver a wide range of diversionary programmes, with offenders in custody and in the community to reduce re-offending and help them to deal with problems that have contributed to their offending. Both bodies work in collaboration with NIPS, PBNI and the Youth Justice Agency, as well as other government departments and Agencies.

Preventative or Diversionary Alternatives to Prison

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice (i) what percentage of his Department's budget is allocated to preventative or diversionary alternatives to prison; and (ii) how much his Department has spent on preventative or diversionary alternatives to prison in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6165/11-15)

Mr Ford: £15.1m or 1.1% of the total Department of Justice consolidated operating cost was spent on preventative or diversionary alternatives to prison in 2010/11. This excludes the wide range of community based preventative and diversionary programmes which are directed at reducing offending but are not a direct alternative to prison. It also excludes the preventative and diversionary work of the Youth Justice Agency.

The table below gives a breakdown of the amounts spent on preventative or diversionary alternatives to prison in each of the past 5 years:-

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Probation Board for Northern Ireland	£15.94m	£15.91m	£16.74m	£18.89m	£13.12m#
<i>*Includes Community development funding of:</i>	<i>£1.21m</i>	<i>£1.32m</i>	<i>£1.17m</i>	<i>£1.26m</i>	<i>£1.32m</i>
Extern (core funding)	£0.39m	£0.33m	£0.34m	£0.34m	£0.35m
NIACRO (core funding)	£0.47m	£0.47m	£0.48m	£0.50m	£0.50m
Electronic Monitoring				£0.03m	£1.17m
Total	£16.80m	£16.71m	£17.56m	£19.76m	£15.14m

The net expenditure for Probation Board for Northern Ireland in 2010/11 includes a pension credit which is why it is lower than in previous years

Diversionary Activities from Prison

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what new initiatives, in relation to diversionary activities from prison, his Department has supported in the last year.

(AQW 6167/11-15)

Mr Ford: The department is currently conducting a pilot programme for Supervised Activity Orders which provide Courts with an alternative to the current automatic default to imprisonment for those defaulting on court imposed fines. The pilot is being managed by Probation Board for Northern Ireland and is operating in the Newry Court District.

Prison Custody Officers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of Prison Custody Officers employed, broken down by prison, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6174/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below shows the number of Prisoner Custody Officers and Senior Prisoner Custody Officers employed in the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) since 1 April 2007.

	01.04.07	01.04.08	01.04.09	01.04.10	01.04.11
SPCO	7	6	15	15	17
PCO	93	143	174	174	159
Total	100	149	189	189	176

PECCS staff are allocated from a central source to service the transportation of prisoners to and from the three establishments and the management of prisoners attending court.

Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total number of staff employed by the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6175/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the total number of staff employed by the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service in each of the last five years.

Date	01.04.07	01.04.08	01.04.09	01.04.10	01.04.11
Total Staff	186	190	199	200	187

Prison Service Pre-Christmas Event at Maghaberry Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to outline the purpose of the Prison Service pre-Christmas event on 22 December 2011 which was held at Maghaberry Prison; and to detail (i) the cost of the event; (ii) the budget from which the cost was met; and (iii) the number of guests who were (a) invited; and (b) attended.

(AQW 6185/11-15)

Mr Ford: Archbishop Harper and Cardinal Brady visited Maghaberry Prison on 22 December 2011. Their request to visit was made directly to NIPS Headquarters with the purpose of seeing the work of the prison Chaplaincy service at first hand as well as other important services to prisoners. In order to provide the visitors with an opportunity to meet as many functional managers and staff as possible a lunchtime event was organised. Prison chaplains, representatives from the Independent Monitoring Board and managers and staff from key functional areas such as Offender Management, Healthcare and Prisoner Safety and Support were invited to attend.

- (i) The total cost of catering for the event was £235.
- (ii) The cost for catering was paid for from the Maghaberry Governor's budget
- (iii) (a)Forty participants were invited to attend.
- (b) All those invited attended.

Barry Johnston

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how the situation arose whereby Barry Johnston was able to rape an older person in Ballymena two days after serving a sentence for breaching a Sex Offenders Prevention Order, despite being monitored by a number of agencies; and why the community was not alerted to the presence of a sex offender in the area and the potential risk that he posed.

(AQW 6188/11-15)

Mr Ford: Barry Johnston was released from prison at the end of his sentence. A sexual offences prevention order was made by the court for the purpose of protecting the public from serious sexual harm. Despite this, the offender chose to reoffend. A serious case review by an independent person concluded that the agencies had fully discharged their responsibilities under the PPANI arrangements. An executive summary of this report has been published on the PPANI website.

Routine public disclosure of information about offenders is unlawful under current Data Protection legislation and is only undertaken when it is the combined view of the agencies that evidence suggests there is a need to disclose an offender's identity in order to protect the public.

Closure of Courthouses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice (i) for a breakdown of (a) the projected operating costs; and (b) the necessary capital spend in respect of each of the five courthouses which are targeted for closure; (ii) to detail the estimated annual maintenance and other costs associated with the upkeep of the courthouses if they are not used until they are sold; (iii) when it is anticipated that the sales would take place; and (iv) the anticipated level of receipt from the sales.

(AQW 6191/11-15)

Mr Ford: The projected annual operating cost of each Hearing Centre, based on the current opening schedule, is set out in Table 1 below. These costs include utility charges, premises related costs, service charges and general administrative costs (excluding salaries):

TABLE 1 – PROJECTED OPERATING COSTS

Hearing Centre	Projected Annual Operating Cost
Larne	£99,000
Bangor	£143,000
Strabane	£208,000
Limavady	£97,000
Magherafelt	£125,000

The estimated capital expenditure required to ensure each of the five Hearing Centres is fit for purpose in future years is set out in Table 2 below:

TABLE 2 – ESTIMATED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Hearing Centre	DDA Expenditure	Condition Survey	Total
Larne	£225,000	£325,000	£550,000
Bangor	£91,000	£453,000	£544,000
Strabane	£47,500	£396,000	£443,500
Limavady	£20,500	£308,000	£328,500
Magherafelt	£65,000	£1,076,000	£1,141,000
Total	£449,000	£2,558,000	£3,007,000

Following any decision to close a Hearing Centre a reduced planned maintenance programme would be established. Each building would be surveyed prior to closure to agree the necessary maintenance works and the associated cost. Aside from these planned maintenance works, any budget allocation would also include on-going premises costs such as rates charges, utilities and minor reactive maintenance works. Table 3 sets out these estimated premises costs for each Hearing Centre.

TABLE 3 – ESTIMATED ANNUAL PREMISES COSTS FOLLOWING CLOSURE

Hearing Centre	Estimated Annual Premises Costs
Larne	£3,700
Bangor	£5,500
Strabane	£9,500
Limavady	£3,300
Magherafelt	£7,300

It is recognised that there may be a need for further expenditure to respond to particular maintenance issues that may arise.

My Department has no plans to make alternative use of the Hearing Centres should they be permanently closed. In the first instance each venue would be offered to other Departments to utilise and, if not required, may be placed on the open market. Approval for the sale of any of the Hearing Centres would be subject to a business case approved by the Department of Finance & Personnel and would reflect the market price at that time.

Establishment of a Public Defence Service

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice what consideration he has given to the establishment of a public defence service in order to reduce the legal aid bill.

(AQW 6195/11-15)

Mr Ford: As part of the Access to Justice Review initiated by me in September 2010, consideration was given to the establishment of a public defence service in Northern Ireland. That Review concluded that there are particular benefits for this jurisdiction in relying on criminal defence services provided by the independent private sector legal profession with both real and perceived independence from the state. However, the Review did not rule out the possibility of establishing a public defence service at some point in the future as a means of ensuring the supply of criminal legal services. With regard to reducing legal aid costs, the Review Team concluded that establishing a public defence service capable of meeting our human rights obligations may lead to increased cost to the legal aid fund.

Alternative to Prison

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to outline the readiness of his Department to support new projects that are aimed at providing an alternative to prison.

(AQW 6213/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to the reply I gave to AQW/6164/11-15 and AQW/6166/11-15.

Injury on Duty Appeals

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how do rulings, that indicate that Injury on Duty appeals for former police officers who are over the age of 65 are automatically valued at 0 percent, comply with police regulations.

(AQW 6217/11-15)

Mr Ford: Regulation 6(5) of The PSNI and PSNI Reserve (Injury Benefit) Regulations 2006 refers to the degree of a person's disablement as being determined by reference to the degree to which earning capacity has been affected as a result of injury. The entitlement to awards is considered in light of the state retirement age, at which an individual's anticipated earning capacity may expect to be minimised. An award is still made to those placed in Band 1, at 0%, commensurate with the degree to which earning capacity has been affected.

Injury on Duty Appeals

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what legal advice has been given, or sought, on the rulings that Injury on Duty appeals for former police officers who are over the age of 65 should be valued at 0 percent.

(AQW 6218/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been a number of recent rulings in respect of individual cases of over-65 year olds in England and Wales. I expect that the Home Office will seek legal advice on the impact of these rulings on their guidance before it is finalised and put to the Police Negotiating Board for approval. No such cases have been brought against the guidance in Northern Ireland, but we will seek to reflect the updated guidance in due course in order to ensure parity of treatment as far as is appropriate for Northern Ireland.

Review Team on Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what plans his Department has to reconvene the review team on Injury on Duty awards so that it can reconsider the position of appeals from police officers who are over the age of 65.

(AQW 6219/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Terms of Reference of the Review Panel allowed wider issues about the guidance on legislation to be considered. The Review Team took the decision that it would not address issues which were subject to litigation and which had a UK-wide implication. The Review Team submitted its report in September 2010 on that basis and has concluded its work. There are no plans for it to be reconstituted.

Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether Injury on Duty awards are processed in an identical manner across all the police forces in the UK.

(AQW 6220/11-15)

Mr Ford: Home Office Guidance is provided to all the Police Authorities in England and Wales. The Department of Justice has provided guidance to the Northern Ireland Policing Board which reflects that issued by the Home Office but is specifically for Northern Ireland.

These guidance documents are not legally binding. It would therefore be impossible to confirm if the Injury on Duty awards are processed in an identical manner by all the Police Authorities and the Policing Board.

Nor am I, as Minister of Justice in Northern Ireland, accountable for the application of the Injury on Duty scheme in other jurisdictions.

Prisoners: Rehabilitated

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of whether a prisoner, who has served a sentence for a violent crime such as rape, can be classed as rehabilitated, and fit to return to society, if they have refused to engage with counselling or other programmes aimed at addressing offending behaviour and identifying victim awareness.

(AQW 6267/11-15)

Mr Ford: No-one can ever be in a position to state as fact that someone is rehabilitated; rather, the justice system has in place rigorous risk assessment procedures which are intended to identify an individual's criminogenic behaviours. There is also a wide range of interventions which can be delivered to address an individual's offending behaviour.

Those who refuse to engage with counselling or other programmes are provided with one-to-one support, where practical, so as to address their denial. This particularly applies to those in prison custody.

Whether someone chooses to engage constructively with any intervention, including one-to-one counselling, is entirely an individual decision. For those who do not engage, their risk may remain unchanged.

For those sentenced to an indeterminate or public protection sentence, decisions on release rest with the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland.

Prisoners Granted Leave for Christmas

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many prisoners who were granted leave over the recent Christmas period were sex offenders; (ii) in what category were these prisoners; and (iii) whether their victims were informed of their release.

(AQW 6268/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Six sex offenders, two of whom are young offenders, were granted leave over the Christmas period.
- (ii) Of the six sex offenders; two were Category "B" and four were Category "C".
- (iii) Of the six sex offenders released on temporary release three of the victims were registered with the Prisoner Release Victim Information (Northern Ireland) Scheme 2003. In two cases the victims opted to receive details of temporary release under the scheme and were advised that a period of release had been granted.

Sex Offenders

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Justice to detail the process by which a local community is alerted to the presence of a sex offender in the area; and what notification is provided of the degree of risk posed by the individual.

(AQW 6308/11-15)

Mr Ford: Agencies can disclose information about offenders in a controlled way when, on the basis of evidence and, as part of the risk management process, it is considered necessary to provide better protection to an individual, a community or the public in general. Each case is considered on its own merits. Detail of the disclosure process is given in the PPANI Manual of Practice published on the PPANI website.

Legal Aid Budget

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much has been paid from the legal aid budget on the travel or mileage costs of legal representatives in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6318/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out legal aid expenditure on travel and mileage paid to legal representatives in the last three financial years.

The figures include expenditure for both solicitors and counsel across all legal aid schemes - Civil, Criminal, Children Order, Assistance by Way of Representation and Legal Advice and Assistance.

Information regarding total expenditure on air travel and accommodation is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Travel Time	£1.89m	£1.76m	£2.12m
Mileage	£1.10m	£0.98m	£1.17m

Hospitality: Spend

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what has been the total spend on hospitality by his Department in each year since its establishment.

(AQW 6361/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice came into existence on 12th April 2010.

Expenditure on hospitality for the 2010/11 financial year by the Department, excluding agencies and non departmental public bodies, was £37,666.40.

Prisoners: Leave Over Christmas

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many of the prisoners who were granted leave over the Christmas period are serving sentences for (a) murder; (b) manslaughter and (c) attempted murder; and (ii) whether the victim(s) were informed of their temporary release.

(AQW 6372/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) (a) 26 of the prisoners who were granted home leave over the Christmas period are serving a sentence for murder
- (b) Four of the prisoners who were granted home leave over the Christmas period are serving a sentence for manslaughter.
- (c) One prisoner who was granted home leave over the Christmas period is serving a sentence for attempted murder.
- (ii) In each case, where victims' family members are registered with the Prisoner Release Victim Information (Northern Ireland) Scheme 2003 (PRVIS) and where they have opted to receive details of temporary release, each registered person was advised in advance that the prisoner had been granted a period of leave over Christmas 2011.

Double Yellow Lines Outside Enniskillen Court House

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the double yellow lines outside Enniskillen Court House (i) on what recommendation the lines were applied; (ii) what prior consultation took place and with whom; (iii) when the lines were raised as a concern and by whom; and (iv) when the decision was taken to (a) apply the lines; and (b) remove the lines.

(AQW 6390/11-15)

Mr Ford: Double yellow lines were introduced outside and opposite Enniskillen Courthouse on the advice of the Centre for Protection of the National Infrastructure (CPNI) as part of a number of measures to enhance the physical security of the courthouse.

Consultation took place with a Roads Service official and local traders. This included visits by an NICTS official to business premises in East Bridge Street in April 2011. Letters were also issued to business owners explaining the need to introduce parking restrictions in East Bridge Street.

In late September 2011 concerns about the double yellow lines were first raised with me by Arlene Foster MLA. Tom Elliott MLA, Phil Flanagan MLA and Cllr Alison Brimstone also expressed concerns. On 27 September media queries were received.

The decision to apply the lines was taken in November 2010 and to remove them in November 2011.

District Policing Partnerships

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice to detail the MLAs who have served as members of District Policing Partnerships in each of the last three years; and the remuneration received.

(AQW 6407/11-15)

Mr Ford: I attach a list of all those who as MLAs also served as members of District Policing Partnerships in each of the last three years and the remuneration received by each member:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Trevor Clarke	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Pam Lewis	£4,410.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Jim Shannon	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Jonathan Bell	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Michelle McIlveen	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Declan O'Loan	£4,200.00	£2,520.00	£2,730.00
Nelson McCausland	£1,935.00	£3,450.00	£287.50
Wallace Browne	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	n/a
William Humphrey	n/a	n/a	£497.50
Naomi Long	£2,520.00	£630.00	n/a
Chris Lyttle	n/a	n/a	£1,378.55
David Hilditch	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Jimmy Spratt	£630.00	n/a	n/a
Roy Beggs	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
John Dallat	£4,830.00	£420.00	n/a
Adrian McQuillan	£2,730.00	£4,830.00	£2,520.00
Ian McCrea	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£630.00
Sydney Anderson	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Samuel Gardiner	£5,040.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Stephen Moutray	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Pat Ramsay	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£1,099.00
William Clarke	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Francie Molloy	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Trevor Lunn	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£3,353.22
Paul Givan	n/a	n/a	£70.00
Paul Girvan	£2,520.00	£2,520.00	£2,520.00
Alex Easton	£5,040.00	£5,040.00	£2,520.00
Allan Bresland	£2,400.00	£2,400.00	£2,400.00
Claire McGill	£2,400.00	£2,400.00	£2,400.00

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice whether MLAs will be entitled to serve on the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, and if so, to detail the remuneration they will receive.

(AQW 6408/11-15)

Mr Ford: Where an MLA is also a district councillor, he/she will be entitled to serve on the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) as a political member, nominated by their District Council.

Alternatively, there is no legal impediment to prevent a MLA being appointed as an independent member by the Northern Ireland Policing Board. However, MLAs who are members of the Policing Board are, under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, disqualified from being a member of a PCSP. In addition, MLAs who sit on the Justice Committee would, by virtue of their membership, be unable to participate on a PCSP.

Regarding remuneration, all members of the PCSP will be entitled to claim a meeting expense payment of £60 per meeting for up to 20 meetings per year, plus travel and subsistence.

Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the 15 people who appeared at Craigavon Magistrates Court on 10 January 2012, to contest charges connected to an unlawful parade on 23 January 2011, (i) how many were granted legal aid; (ii) what is the cost of the legal aid in these cases to date; and (iii) how many (a) legal firms; and (b) counsel were instructed.

(AQW 6425/11-15)

Mr Ford: Of the 15 defendants summoned to court, 13 were granted legal aid to defend the charges at the Magistrates' Court. The case has been adjourned until 8 March.

To date claims of £538.56 (inc VAT of £85.48) have been received in respect of advice given to five of the defendants, under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

Seven firms of solicitors represented the defendants.

None of the defendants were granted legal aid to cover the instruction of counsel.

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice, 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 6426/11-15)

Mr Ford: I can confirm that no functions have been transferred from my Department to local councils since the Department of Justice was established in April 2010, nor are there plans to transfer any functions.

For information on the transfer of functions relating to justice prior to devolution, you may wish to contact the Northern Ireland Office.

Invitations to Cardinal Sean Brady and Archbishop Alan Harper for a Visit to HMP Maghaberry

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the invitations to Cardinal Sean Brady and Archbishop Alan Harper, for a pre-Christmas visit to HMP Maghaberry, were issued on behalf of the Prison Service or in a private capacity.

(AQW 6428/11-15)

Mr Ford: Archbishop Harper and Cardinal Brady requested a visit to Maghaberry Prison. The purpose of the visit was to see the work of the prison Chaplaincy Service at first hand as well as other important services to prisoners. The request was made directly to NIPS Headquarters.

Written Answer to AQW 5983/11-15

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Justice why he published the background notes as well as his written answer to question AQW 5983/11-15.

(AQW 6442/11-15)

Mr Ford: The answer, including the background notes, to AQW/5983/11-15 was forwarded to the Northern Ireland Assembly Business Office on Wednesday 4 January 2012.

The Weekly Answer Booklet was prepared and printed on Friday 6 January and published on the Assembly website on Monday 9 January.

It was at this point that the administrative error of including the background notes was identified and steps were immediately taken to correct this. The background notes were removed from the Assembly website later on Monday 9 January, and this was confirmed to my office on the morning of Tuesday 10 January 2012.

Prison Officers: Training

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what training is given to prison officers in respect of the exercise of their powers under Section 8 of the Prisons Act (NI) 1953.

(AQW 6453/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prison Officers receive appropriate instruction during induction training in respect of the exercise of their powers under Section 8 of the Prisons Act (Northern Ireland) 1953. Officers also receive on the job training depending on the specific task being undertaken.

Prisoner Assessment Unit Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6083-11-15, on which dates did each of the two members of Prison Service staff return to work following their suspension.

(AQW 6457/11-15)

Mr Ford: Following separate disciplinary hearings the suspensions were lifted on 2 December and 6 December. Both members of staff subsequently returned to work on 5 December and 12 December respectively.

Death in Custody of John Deery

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the death in custody of John Deery on 27 August 2009 in temporary healthcare accommodation at Bush House, HMP Maghaberry to detail (i) the number of staff currently suspended from duty, and the date of their suspensions; (ii) the date on which the Investigating Governor submitted the disciplinary report; (iii) the date on which each staff member was in receipt of formal disciplinary charges; (iv) the dates that each staff member appeared before the Adjudicating Governors; (v) the date the staff members were notified of the outcomes and recommended penalties; (vi) the date that the staff members concerned submitted appeals to Prison Service Headquarters; and (vii) the current status of these appeals.

(AQW 6476/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) Two staff are currently suspended from duty; they were suspended on 1 and 2 of October 2009 respectively.
- (ii) The Investigating Governor submitted his investigation report on 8 February 2010.
- (iii) Both staff members were charged on 11 February 2010.
- (iv) One nursing officer appeared before the Adjudicating Governor on 12 April 2010.

One nursing officer appeared before the Adjudicating Governor on 20 September 2011.

- (v) The first nursing officer was notified of the outcome of their disciplinary hearing on 15 April 2010. The recommended penalty was dismissal.

The second nursing officer was notified of the outcome of their disciplinary hearing on 03 November 2011. The recommended penalty was dismissal.

- (vi) The first officer submitted an appeal to Prison Service Headquarters on 21 April 2010

The second officer submitted an appeal to Prison Service Headquarters on 15 November 2011

- (vii) The appeals of the two nursing officers are currently being processed. A third officer who was dismissed on 10 October has appealed this decision to the Northern Ireland Prison Service Human Resource Director.

Death in Custody of John Deery

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether Her Majesty's Coroner will hold preliminary hearings in 2012, into the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr John Deery in prison custody, prior to the formal inquest; (ii) whether it is the intention of the Prison Service that the members of staff, who are, currently suspended from duty will appear and give evidence at the inquest; and (iii) whether interviews have been conducted with these members of staff by the PSNI.

(AQW 6477/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Coroner intends to hold a preliminary hearing in order to resolve any procedural issues prior to the listing of the inquest. The date of the preliminary hearing is a matter for the Coroner.

It is for the Coroner to determine who will be called to give evidence at an inquest. Should a suspended member of Prison staff be required to attend the hearing, they will be instructed to do so by the Coroner. Being suspended would not preclude any staff member from giving evidence at an inquest where a Coroner requires their attendance.

The PSNI have provided statements from relevant persons for the purposes of the Coroner's investigation into the death.

Donagh Abuse Inquiry

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how the issues, concerning the treatment of survivors and victims of crime, that arose from the Donagh abuse inquiry have been addressed; and whether any members of the Donagh community were included in the discussions that determined how these issues would be addressed.

(AQW 6505/11-15)

Mr Ford: I invited the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice to review the circumstances surrounding the McDermott case, and Dr Maguire published his findings in November 2010. Dr Maguire's report recommended that the Department of Justice should undertake a study to look at the feasibility of introducing community impact assessments to Northern Ireland. This work has now been completed and I published the feasibility study report on 12 January 2012. I can confirm that discussions were held with members of the Donagh community, both in the course of Dr Maguire's inspection and during the development of the feasibility study report.

Robert Black

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 61874/11-15, whether Robert Black has returned to his original prison in England; and if so, by what means did he return, and at what cost.

(AQW 6506/11-15)

Mr Ford: Mr Robert Black remains in custody in Northern Ireland. As the Northern Ireland Life Sentence Tariff of 25 years is now his dominant sentence, Robert Black will remain in custody in Northern Ireland unless he requests, and is accepted for, a transfer to prison elsewhere in the UK.

Prisoners Sentenced for Violent or Sex Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he will amend legislation so that prisoners, particularly those sentenced for violent or sex offences, cannot be considered for release if they have wilfully refused to take part in the counselling and behaviour programmes designed to address their offending behaviour, on the grounds that their lack of rehabilitation would pose a risk to the public.

(AQW 6508/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, which introduced indeterminate or extended public protection sentences for offenders convicted of serious or specified violent and sexual offences, already provides for rigorous risk assessment prior to consideration of release. The legislation requires that independent Parole Commissioners must, before directing an offender's release from custody, be satisfied that the offender no longer poses a significant risk of serious harm to the public. Participation in offending behaviour programmes or engagement with other rehabilitative services, and the degree to which this has minimised the risk to the public, are already important considerations in Parole Commissioners' assessment of an offender's suitability for release on licence.

The legislation also introduced determinate custodial sentences which can be imposed for other sexual and violent offences. Offenders are released on the completion of the custodial period of their sentence and are subject to post-release community supervision, remaining subject to recall to custody if they fail to satisfy licence conditions which are aimed at minimising their risk of reoffending.

Revenue Raised: 0845 Numbers

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Justice how much revenue has been raised by his Department in each financial year since 2010 by the usage of 0845 numbers.

(AQW 6509/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since 12 April 2010, no revenue has been raised by the Department of Justice (excluding agencies and non departmental bodies) by the usage of 0845 numbers.

Alternative Dispute Resolution in Small Claims Courts

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many cases have been resolved by alternative dispute resolution in small claims courts in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6523/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Small Claims Court provides a simple and straightforward system for resolving certain low value disputes, usually without the need for a solicitor or barrister.

Value for money is an important consideration and the small claims system is designed so that only those cases where a notice of intention to dispute is lodged proceed to a court hearing.

The table below sets out the information sought in respect of small claims cases for each of the last five years.

Year	Settled without being heard ¹	Total Cases Dealt With ²	% of cases settled
2006	8,158	9,845	83%
2007	8,972	10,866	83%
2008	8,995	10,649	84%
2009	10,142	12,167	83%
2010	9,887	12,248	81%

- 1 Small claims that are settled without being heard include default judgments, office disposals and withdrawn cases dealt with during the period. These cases may have had a notice of dispute lodged, however the case has since been settled or withdrawn out of court.
- 2 Includes all small claims cases dealt with during the period.

As I indicated in my response to AQW1708-1710/11-15, the Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service reviewed the feasibility of introducing a court-based Small Claims Mediation Scheme, similar to that which exists in England and Wales. For the reasons outlined in that answer, the NICTS concluded that such a scheme would not deliver the same level of benefits, in particular in relation to reduced listing times, as realised in England.

It is open to parties in small claims proceedings to have recourse to third-party mediation where they wish to do so. However, information on the use of alternative dispute resolution in the Small Claims Court in this jurisdiction is not available.

Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to outline the rationale behind the way in which the small claims court operates.

(AQW 6524/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Small Claims Court provides a simple and straightforward system for resolving certain low value disputes, usually without the need for a solicitor or barrister.

Value for money is an important consideration and the small claims system is designed so that only those cases where a notice of intention to dispute is lodged proceed to a court hearing.

The table below sets out the information sought in respect of small claims cases for each of the last five years.

Year	Settled without being heard 1	Total Cases Dealt With 2	% of cases settled
2006	8,158	9,845	83%
2007	8,972	10,866	83%
2008	8,995	10,649	84%
2009	10,142	12,167	83%
2010	9,887	12,248	81%

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It is open to parties in small claims proceedings to have recourse to third-party mediation where they wish to do so. However, information on the use of alternative dispute resolution in the Small Claims Court in this jurisdiction is not available.

Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what percentage of cases in the small claims court were settled rather than being contested in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6525/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Small Claims Court provides a simple and straightforward system for resolving certain low value disputes, usually without the need for a solicitor or barrister.

Value for money is an important consideration and the small claims system is designed so that only those cases where a notice of intention to dispute is lodged proceed to a court hearing.

The table below sets out the information sought in respect of small claims cases for each of the last five years.

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It is open to parties in small claims proceedings to have recourse to third-party mediation where they wish to do so. However, information on the use of alternative dispute resolution in the Small Claims Court in this jurisdiction is not available.

Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what account is taken of value for money in the thinking behind the operation of the small claims court.

(AQW 6530/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Small Claims Court provides a simple and straightforward system for resolving certain low value disputes, usually without the need for a solicitor or barrister.

Value for money is an important consideration and the small claims system is designed so that only those cases where a notice of intention to dispute is lodged proceed to a court hearing.

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It is open to parties in small claims proceedings to have recourse to third-party mediation where they wish to do so. However, information on the use of alternative dispute resolution in the Small Claims Court in this jurisdiction is not available.

Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice who made the decision not to implement the same changes to our small claims court that were introduced in England and Wales.
(AQW 6532/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Small Claims Court provides a simple and straightforward system for resolving certain low value disputes, usually without the need for a solicitor or barrister.

Value for money is an important consideration and the small claims system is designed so that only those cases where a notice of intention to dispute is lodged proceed to a court hearing.

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Year	Settled without being heard 1	Total Cases Dealt With 2	% of cases settled
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It is open to parties in small claims proceedings to have recourse to third-party mediation where they wish to do so. However, information on the use of alternative dispute resolution in the Small Claims Court in this jurisdiction is not available.

Category 3 Sex-Offender Released from Custody

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to outline the circumstances of how a Category 3 sex-offender (i) was released from custody, at the end of his sentence in 2006, to reside in the same area (a) as that of the victim of his offence; and (b) in which the offence occurred; (ii) was able to breach a Sexual Offences Prevention Order on numerous occasions without arrest; and (iii) was able to sexually assault another woman on 1 February 2011.

(AQW 6576/11-15)

Mr Ford: I cannot comment on the detail of any individual case or alleged case.

Offenders who have reached the end of their custodial sentence have to be released. Sex offenders and certain violent offenders who meet the criteria for risk assessment under the public protection arrangements will be assessed to determine if management of risk through the public protection arrangements is required. If the risk posed by the offender is assessed as requiring multi agency management, a risk management plan will be put in place. As part of the risk management plan, and prior to release, the agencies concerned will input to any conditions of release or other court orders. If not already in place, and if necessary to protect the public, an application will be made to the courts for a sexual offences prevention order, which will place prohibitions on what the offender can do. As part of the risk management plan, the question of appropriate accommodation will be addressed.

Prohibitions placed on the offender by a SOPO will be enforced by the police and the sentencing framework for breach of an order provides for a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment, including, in the most serious cases, an extended sentence for public protection.

These complex and sophisticated arrangements aim to reduce as much as possible the risk posed by such offenders. They cannot, however, eradicate all risk.

Prisoners Amenity Fund

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice who contributes to the Prisoners Amenity Fund.

(AQW 6578/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prisoner Amenity Fund (PAF) exists to deliver projects related to the welfare and benefit of all categories of prisoner. It also facilitates events for prisoners and their families.

The PAF is financed from a range of sources, including tuck shop profits, recycling initiatives, uncollected inmate cash account balances, profit from sales of goods made in workshops, the prisoner telephone system and prisoner television rental fees.

In this way, prisoners' cash spent in prisons is channelled back towards providing benefits, for prisoners, which would not normally be funded by the public purse.

Solicitors of Clients who have been Granted Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the solicitors of clients who have been granted legal aid at a magistrates' court are paid per court appearance.

(AQW 6580/11-15)

Mr Ford: Criminal legal aid in the Magistrates' Court is paid under a standard fee regime. The standard fees cover all preparation and attendances at court by the solicitor. In certain circumstances further additional fees are available for solicitors. These include certain prescribed application fees, representation at contests and committal hearings exceeding one day.

Standard fees cover the majority of cases in the Magistrates' Courts but separate provision is also available for special rates of payment for a very small number of very high cost proceedings which cannot be covered by the standard fees. The special rates include a fixed fee per day for solicitors at representation in these proceedings.

Solicitors of clients who have been granted criminal legal aid at the Magistrates' Courts prior to 30 September 2009 are paid via the old remuneration system of hourly rates or composite fees for preparation, advocacy and attendance at court where counsel is assigned.

Civil legal aid may also be granted at a Magistrates' Court, although the number of instances on which this power is exercised is very small. The remuneration arrangements under civil legal aid vary according to the nature of the proceedings, and whether or not payment is made per court appearance depends on the precise circumstances of the case.

Records of Interviews with Terrorists

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what assistance and support his Department has given to the PSNI in its quest for access to the records of interviews with terrorists which are held by Boston College; and whether, in the interest of tackling unsolved terrorist crimes, he will declare support for the release of the entire records archive to the PSNI.

(AQW 6588/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department does not, and should not, have a role in the investigation of crime by the PSNI and has not been involved in this issue. I am committed to upholding the independence of the Chief Constable in such matters. For that reason I do not intend to offer comment on evidence the PSNI might seek in this or other cases.

Illegal Parades

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) charged; and (ii) convicted in relation to illegal parades in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6593/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) has provided the following information. It relates to charges and convictions of individuals in relation to illegal parades and protests which took place between 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2011:

	Charged	Convicted	Ongoing
2009	5	2	2
2010	42	29	6
2011	46	3	43

Prisoners

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Justice how many people, who have been released from prison in each of the last five years after serving a sentence for rape or sexual assault, have since reoffended.

(AQW 6594/11-15)

Mr Ford: The measurement of reoffending requires a period of time to be allowed following release from custody during which any reoffending would be recorded; and then further time to allow for

prosecution and conviction. The most recent period for which reoffending figures are available for those released from immediate custody is 2007, the earliest period is 2004.

Individual offence details are not available for all of this cohort; however the overall offence classification is. Therefore the figures given cover people released from sentenced custody for the range of sexual offences.

Between 2004 and 2007 the number of those imprisoned where the primary offence was sexual, who committed a further offence within 12 months of release from custody and were convicted within 18 months, is shown below:

	Year of release			
	2004	2005	2006	2007
Released	61	47	67	59
Reoffended	3	2	9	9

Illegal Possession of Fireworks

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what is the sentencing range for the illegal possession of fireworks.

(AQW 6693/11-15)

Mr Ford: A number of pieces of legislation control the sale, acquisition, handing, carriage and storage of fireworks. The principal statute relevant to this question is the Explosives (Fireworks) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002. It makes it an offence to possess fireworks without a licence (regulation 4). Contravention of this requirement is an offence and a person is liable on summary conviction to a fine up to £5000 (regulation 13).

Schemes Aimed at Reducing Re-offending

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Justice whether he has implemented any money saving schemes aimed at reducing re-offending, apart from the Inspire Women's Project.

(AQW 6704/11-15)

Mr Ford: Reducing re-offending is one of my Department's key priorities and, through the development of a Reducing Offending Strategic Framework, should ultimately significantly lessen the cost of crime across Government and society.

While individual schemes to reduce offending could potentially contribute to making some savings, their immediate focus is on influencing offending behaviour rather than directly on saving money.

The time spent by offenders in custody and on supervision in the community offers a significant opportunity to work with them to tackle the causes of their offending. Consistent delivery of offender behaviour programmes, both in custody and in the community, together with other supportive interventions, can make a major contribution to reducing re-offending. Programmes available for offenders address various issues such as accommodation, debt, benefits, health, addictions, employment, education/training, and children/parenting issues.

Dedicated multi-disciplinary offender management teams in each prison establishment are responsible for the delivery of all risk assessment, sentence planning and interventions work, as well as for the preparation of offenders for release from custody. The teams consist of NIPS staff, Probation Officers, psychologists, voluntary and community sector (VCS) personnel and chaplains. The Service takes a robust multi-agency approach to resettlement, and prisoners are referred at an appropriate stage to those interventions best suited to address their risk and needs.

A multi agency resettlement agenda has been developed by NIPS which works in partnership with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement

of Offenders, Housing Rights and other partner agencies to assist offenders prepare for release and to make a successful transition from custody to the community.

The Department directly sponsors NIACRO and Extern which deliver a wide range of diversionary programmes, with offenders in custody and in the community, to reduce re-offending and help them to deal with problems that have contributed to their previous offending. Both bodies work in collaboration with NIPS, PBNI and the Youth Justice Agency, as well as other Government Departments and Agencies.

Reducing Offending in Partnership also brings together agencies in local areas to prioritise interventions with prolific offenders who cause crime in their locality, to reduce crime and reoffending. Organisations involved include PSNI, Court Service, Youth Justice Agency, Health and Social Care Trust, Probation Board and PPS.

Criminal Justice agencies also engage directly with accredited community-based restorative justice schemes on the delivery of restorative alternatives to traditional court prosecution. These can deal with minor offending in a timely and proportionate way assisting offenders in desisting from future offending whilst also enhancing victim satisfaction and community confidence.

Help for Offenders to Integrate into Society

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Justice what strategies his Department has in place, outside prisons, to help offenders integrate into society.

(AQW 6705/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department works with a wide range of partners in helping offenders integrate into the community following custody. While the justice system can do much to facilitate such integration, it is essential that offenders and ex-offenders receive support from a wide range of statutory bodies, in areas such as housing, drug and alcohol addictions, finance and benefits, mental health and employment and training, if they are to integrate effectively into society.

Both the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland offer programmes to address issues that may prevent offenders from fully resettling into their community. There must be a continuity of service provision between prison and the community. Release planning is recognised as a vital transition phase between custody and the community, allowing sufficient time to engage other service providers and plan any actions necessary prior to a prisoner's eventual release from custody. Once a prisoner is released, the community-based part of the through care takes on more prominence. Most (but not all) released prisoners will be subject to supervision on licence by PBNI, which has statutory responsibility for the oversight of licences. A range of voluntary and community providers work in partnership with PBNI to ensure that an offender resettles successfully in the community.

Some of the most successful and innovative projects involve cooperation between the voluntary, statutory and community sectors, for example, the Jobtrack project: a partnership between prison and probation services and NIACRO supports adult male and female prisoners and ex-offenders on probation in the community, to gain employment. This target group includes many who are excluded from society and face multiple barriers to joining the labour market.

PBNI also provides financial assistance to organisations offering services that seek to challenge and change attitudes and behaviour of offenders. Invitation for Applications for 2012-13 closed on 25th November 2011. Funding was available for activities to be provided for adjudicated offenders in the following areas:

- personal development/mentoring/interpersonal skills/healthy lifestyles;
- offending behaviour programmes; and
- supervision of offenders under a Community Service Order.

PBNI and NIPS work in partnership with NIACRO and the Women's Support Network (WSN) to link women offenders attending the Inspire Women's Project into the services of over 50 community-based

women's centres, women's projects and other provision across Northern Ireland. These centres provide a diverse range of services that support women in the resettlement process. For example, education, training and employability programmes; advice clinics; complementary therapies; life coaching; arts and crafts; cookery; counselling; and health and well-being programmes. By encouraging women offenders to engage with voluntary and community organisations during their sentence, it is expected that they will continue to avail of these services once contact with PBNi has ceased. This will mean that the women will be receiving ongoing support to help them to resettle and reintegrate back into their community, which should reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

Community Sentencing

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Justice what steps he is taking to make further use of alternatives to custody such as community sentencing.

(AQO 1109/11-15)

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.

Reducing offending is one of my priorities and the aim of my review was to determine how we can use community sentences to have the greatest impact on reoffending and on how we secure higher levels of victim and community confidence in them.

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 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.

Article 4 of the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1988

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, following the acquittal of Colin Duffy, for his assessment of the working and adequacy of Article 4 of the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1988.

(AQW 7002/11-15)

Mr Ford: Article 4 of the Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 permits a Court or jury to draw an adverse inference in defined circumstances if an accused person refuses to give evidence or to answer any question. It remains an important and useful part of the criminal law. Whilst I have no current plans to change Article 4 I am open to representations to changes to any aspect of criminal law.

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the increase in the number of breaches of Sex Offender Protection Orders, what proposals there are to review the terms of monitoring as well as the sentences given to persons who breach these orders.

(AQO 1116/11-15)

Mr Ford: Public protection arrangements in Northern Ireland are among the most sophisticated risk management systems for sex offenders anywhere in the world. Criminal Justice Inspection carried out its fourth review of the PPANI arrangements last year and reported in July 2011. The Chief Inspector commended developments and welcomed the attention which had been given to strengthening the arrangements.

Sentencing for breach offences is a matter for the courts. The sentencing framework is a stringent one – breach of a SOPO can attract a maximum sentence of imprisonment of 5 years and the court can make this an extended sentence under public protection sentencing.

Prison Review: Recommendation 21

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the establishment of the change management team as outlined in Recommendation 21 of the Prison Review Report.

(AQO 1117/11-15)

Mr Ford: Colin Bennett was appointed as Organisational Change Manager on 14 December 2011 and is currently supported by a Finance and Corporate Services Project Manager. The Offender Services Project Manager has been appointed and is expected to take up post shortly and NIPS is currently seeking to secure an individual with appropriate HR expertise to complete the Team.

PSNI: Terms and Conditions

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Justice whether terms and conditions of agency, consultant and associate staff in the PSNI require an oath and code of ethics, which is subject to scrutiny by the Policing Board and to investigation by the Police Ombudsman.

(AQO 1118/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires all police officers to take an oath, and requires the Policing Board to issue a Code of Ethics for police officers. A breach of the Code may result in a criminal or disciplinary investigation either by the Police Ombudsman or the PSNI.

The Police Act provisions do not extend to agency, consultancy or associate staff employed by the PSNI.

The terms and conditions of such staff, and the administrative arrangements in place in respect of conduct and accountability for such staff are operational matters for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board in place in respect of conduct and accountability of these staff.

Police: Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings Scheme

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Justice how many former members of the Part-Time Police Reserve have applied to be moved under the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings scheme since the payment of the gratuity.

(AQO 1119/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have been advised that one application for SPED has been received from a former Member of the Part Time Reserve since the issue of the gratuity payment letters.

Minister of Justice

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the outcome of the recent talks at Stormont Castle regarding the appointment of the Justice Minister.

(AQO 1120/11-15)

Mr Ford: I attended recent Party talks in relation to the appointment of the Minister of Justice on Tuesday 10 January as Leader of the Alliance Party. As Justice Minister my interest lies in the Department of Justice being able to continue functioning after 1 May 2012.

Maghaberry Prison: Protests

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the republican protest and associated disruption on 25 and 26 November 2011 at HMP Maghaberry, what plans he has to review arrangements to ensure that any future protest by any organisation will not prevent the normal operation of the prison.

(AQO 1121/11-15)

Mr Ford: The operation in response to the protest on 25 and 26 November by supporters of separated republican prisoners was a joint operation between NIPS and PSNI. It was neither lawful nor practical to prevent protesters coming on to NIPS land during the protest.

With the exception of visits, which were cancelled to prevent a breach of security or confrontation between protesters and visitors, the normal operation of the prison was not effected.

Department for Regional Development

Illegal Parking in Disabled Parking Bays

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Regional Development how many unauthorised drivers have been prosecuted for parking in disabled parking bays in public car parks in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 6207/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): Parking a vehicle in a designated disabled person's parking space without clearly displaying a valid Blue Badge is a decriminalised parking contravention, for which a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) may be issued by a Traffic Attendant.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not compile data for a specific contravention on a constituency or regional basis. However, since the commencement of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement in Northern Ireland, in November 2006, the numbers of PCNs issued to vehicles parked in a disabled person's space in Roads Service car-parks, without clearly displaying a valid badge, are as follows:

Time Period	Number of PCNs Issued
November 2006 – March 2007	420
April 2007 – March 2008	1473
April 2008 – March 2009	1019
April 2009 – March 2010	1095
April 2010 – March 2011	1571

Bus Shelters

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development what provision his Department has made to provide bus shelters now that the previous contract has expired.

(AQW 6227/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service officials have advised that the current contract for the provision and maintenance of bus shelters in Northern Ireland, between my Department and Adshel, has delivered over 1350 new bus shelters since 2001, at no cost to my Department. Whilst the contract does not expire until 2015, it does not make provision for any new shelters after 2010, as there is insufficient time left for Adshel to recoup its costs from advertising income.

My Department's Roads Service could provide shelters if necessary, before 2015 but this would require a separate procurement exercise.

To ensure the future development of bus shelters, my Department will establish new contractual arrangements to be in place for 2015.

I would further advise that local councils can also provide bus shelters, should they wish to do so.

Oil Spills on Roads

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of oil spills occurring on roads in the last three years; (ii) the cost of clearing up these oil spills; and (iii) the steps that have been taken to address the issue of oil spills on roads.

(AQW 6238/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the information requested for the first two parts of your question is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. However, it has provided details on the steps that are taken to address oil spills on roads.

Roads Service deals with oil spills, which includes road traffic accident collision site clean ups, on a reactive basis. When Roads Service receives a report of an oil spill during office hours, a Road Service Inspector is sent to investigate and establish the nature and extent of the problem. If remedial work is considered necessary, a Roads Service works squad is sent to the location and places signs warning drivers of the potential slippery road conditions. It will then undertake action to contain the oil, to prevent it entering any adjacent drains or watercourses, and appropriate treatment such as sand, oil absorbent granules or oil dispersing agents will then be applied to the affected area of road surface.

In other situations where treatment is requested by the PSNI, following a road traffic accident or if an emergency call is received out of office hours, a Roads Service works squad is sent directly to the location and treat the affected road surface in the same manner as previously described.

If the oil spill is very large a multi-organisational approach may be required. In such instances, the emergency services and/or the Environment Agency will undertake the clean-up operation, with Roads Service providing assistance as required.

Bus Contracts

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the value of the bus contracts his Department has placed with Wright Bus, Ballymena in the last five years.

(AQW 6240/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has not been involved directly in the tender for bus contracts as these are awarded by Translink.

Translink advises that they have not placed any contracts with Wrightbus in the last 5 years.

However, Wrightbus has produced bodies for the Translink vehicles, as part of their contractual arrangements with other tenderers, for a substantial number of bus replacement projects. The Department is not aware of the commercial arrangements between Wrightbus and main contractors.

Cars Parking on Kerbs or Footpaths

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to change the law on cars parking on kerbs or footpaths.

(AQW 6275/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there is currently no general prohibition on parking on footways, except for the parking of heavy commercial vehicles which is prohibited and is a matter for the PSNI to enforce.

However, where there are parking restrictions on the adjacent carriageway, indicated by road markings and/or traffic signs, the restrictions will generally also apply to the footway. These restrictions are enforceable by Roads Service traffic attendants. In areas where there are no marked or signed parking restrictions on the carriageway, and parking on footways is creating an obstruction, the matter can be referred to the PSNI, who have the powers to deal with it.

Roads Service officials have further advised that many of our streets can only function if footway parking is tolerated. In these streets, the widths are such that cars have to be parked on the footway

so that sufficient road space remains for other vehicles using the street. Therefore, a general ban on footway parking would require a complementary waiting restriction on one side of the street, which would severely reduce the availability of parking spaces.

Given the above, I currently have no plans to change the law on cars parking on footways.

Layout of Northway, Portadown

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development what assessment he has made of the danger to road users arising from the current layout of Northway, Portadown.

(AQW 6283/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is currently investigating safety concerns at this location in conjunction with the PSNI and Translink. Once the outcome of this investigation is known, I will arrange to have the Member advised accordingly.

Building a Bus Station in Banbridge

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the timetable for the commencement of work on building a bus station in Banbridge.

(AQW 6285/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Construction of a bus station and off-street bus facilities in Banbridge is a matter that has been under consideration for some time. However, my Department's Roads Service has advised that difficulties have arisen over land issues and identification of a suitable site for such a facility. These issues have still to be resolved. Discussions between Road Service officials and Translink are currently ongoing regarding this matter.

There is no provision for a project to improve this facility in Translink's current Corporate Plan but this is reviewed annually in light of funding available. This will be discussed with my Department.

Resurfacing of the Kilmaine and Perry Roads in Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the resurfacing of the Kilmaine and Perry Roads in Bangor.

(AQW 6310/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the footways on Kilmaine Road, Bangor were reconstructed in August 2011. The resurfacing of the carriageway is currently at construction stage and it is anticipated that it will be completed by the end of January 2012.

The resurfacing of Perry Road, Bangor from Ballycrochan Road to Perry Drive was completed in July 2011.

The remaining section of Perry Road from Perry Drive to Albany Road is not scheduled for resurfacing. Roads Service will continue to carry out periodic inspections on Perry Road in accordance with its Maintenance Standards for Safety and any surface defects identified as being hazardous to the public will be programmed for repair.

Response times specified for the repair of defects are dependent on the severity of the defect and range from one calendar day to inclusion in the next work programme for that particular route.

Surface defects which are identified outside of these inspection regimes, that is, those reported by members of the public or as the result of ad-hoc inspections are also dealt with according to the above standards and remedial work arranged as necessary.

Grit Boxes in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many new grit boxes have been provided in the North Down area for this winter period.

(AQW 6311/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: During the current winter period, to date, my Department's Roads Service has provided 16 new salt bins in the North Down area for this winter period.

Growth in Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development, given that the Department of the Environment has forecast a significant growth in greenhouse gas emissions as a result of transportation and that, in the last 15 years, traffic volume has grown by 43 percent, what targets his Department has for the overall levels of road traffic.

(AQW 6345/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is committed to reducing the impact of road transport on the environment. Through the Cross-Departmental Working Group on Greenhouse Gas Emissions, DRD have worked closely with other departments to develop an action plan to meet the Executive's climate change target.

That action plan, published in February 2011, highlights the steps DRD and other Departments are currently taking and recommends the areas in which we need to step up our commitment.

The action plan provides for a particular focus on driving modal shift from the private car to public transport and active travel. This reflects the direction established in the Regional Transportation Strategy which originally covered the 10 year period from 2002 through to 2012. The strategy set out a significant programme of investment in public transport in particular as a result of which the historic decline of public transport passenger numbers was reversed. This enabled the Department to revise upwards our PSA target of 70 million passenger journeys per annum to an ambitious target of 77 million.

While recognising that success, emissions from transport have continued to rise reflecting the growth of the local economy and car ownership over the last decade. It is clear more needs to be done and that is why the revised Regional Transportation Strategy, which was published for consultation in March 2011, has proposed the use of a Policy Prioritisation Framework to direct Strategic Transport Interventions. These interventions will be assessed for their ability to contribute to a Strategic Objective before they are included in a Delivery Plan. As the costed Delivery Plan is developed, specific targets for achievement will be set, including targets for greenhouse gas emissions. These targets will assume full implementation of the Strategic Transportation Interventions in the Delivery Plans and will be both challenging and realistic.

Plugged-In Places Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of electric cars purchased under the Plugged-In Places scheme; and (ii) the cost of the scheme to date.

(AQW 6348/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) The Northern Ireland 'Plugged In Places' scheme is a joint initiative with the Department of the Environment and a range of Consortium Partners. The scheme aims to pilot electric vehicle infrastructure in 6 Council locations across Northern Ireland in Year 1, with further expansion to approx. 10 new Council areas across the region in Year 2. The scheme does not provide support for the purchase of electric cars. Support for the purchase of electric vehicles is, however, provided through the Whitehall 'Plug-In Grant' initiative, and, to date 7 electric vehicles have been purchased in Northern Ireland with support of this programme. This number is expected to increase over the coming years as the number of available electric vehicles increases and as public charge points are installed across Northern Ireland.

- (ii) In total, an investment of over £2 million is being made in the Northern Ireland 'Plugged In Places' scheme. My Department is contributing £250,000 over the course of the project with the remainder coming from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles and the consortium. It is expected that my Department will contribute £150,000 this year.

Road Access to Kilcooley Primary School

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department intends to take to improve the road access to Kilcooley Primary School.

(AQW 6355/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are currently no plans to alter the existing access arrangements at Kilcooley Primary School.

Cove Close, Ballyronan

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 4558/11-15, to provide an update on Roads Service's position on enforcement in relation to Cove Close, Ballyronan.

(AQW 6419/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that having served the requisite Article 11 notice on the developer in February 2011, in respect of the completion of outstanding infrastructure works in Cove Close, Ballyronan and the developer's continued lack of commitment to complete the works, it has now instructed its contractor to undertake the work.

I understand that work commenced on site during the week commencing 16 January 2012 and it is anticipated that it will take three weeks to complete. Roads Service will be recovering the costs from the Developer's road bond.

Reservoirs in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many reservoirs in the North Down area are surplus to requirements.

(AQW 6420/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that there are seven reservoirs in the North Down area which are considered surplus to requirements. The reservoirs are Ballysallagh Upper and Lower, Conlig Upper and Lower, Creightons Green, Church Road and Portavo.

Footpath from Cloughmills Village to the Local GAA Pitch on the Ballyveeley Road

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development when Roads Service will provide a footpath from Cloughmills village to the local GAA pitch on the Ballyveeley Road.

(AQW 6421/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a scheme proposal to provide a footway on Ballyveeley Road has met the criteria to progress for further more detailed appraisal. This proposal has been added to a list of similar schemes in the Ballymoney Borough Council area that will be developed, in accordance with current policy and procedures.

Subject to gaining approval at the various stages of the development process, a scheme proposal may then progress through to prioritisation, within a future year's programme. Prioritisation will take account of a number of other key issues, including future funding availability.

Motorway and Trunk Road Network

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the distance as a total, and as a percentage, of the motorway and trunk road network that is deemed to be in a satisfactory condition.

(AQW 6432/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that regular inspections are carried out to ensure the entire road network, including motorways and trunk roads, is maintained in a safe condition for road users.

There is, however, an ongoing resurfacing programme which aims to address issues of riding quality and structural integrity on motorways and trunk roads, as well as on the remainder of the road network.

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Regional Development, 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 6433/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Executive agreed in September 2009 that the following public realm aspects of local roads functions should transfer from Roads Service to Local Government:

- Pedestrian permits;
- Permitting local events to be held on roads;
- Alleygating; and
- Off-street parking/on-street parking enforcement (although, the policy responsibility for parking would remain within the Department).

It had been planned that these functions would transfer to Local Government by May 2011. However, the Executive agreed in June 2010 to re-frame the timetable for the reform of Local Government, which would see these functions transfer by 2015. The Environment Minister is currently consulting with his Executive colleagues on the range of functions that could transfer to Local Government.

In the interim period, my Department has introduced legislation which will enable local Councils to close roads for special events (apart from cycle races, road races and parades). Officials from my Department and Local Government are developing guidance that will enable Councils to undertake this function later this year. There are no costs associated with this work and consequently there is no need to transfer resources to local Councils.

I understand that the Department of the Environment has introduced legislation which will enable Councils to make orders for the erection of Alleygates on relevant roads. This is due to come into operation in April 2012. Again, there are no costs associated with this work and consequently there is no need to transfer resources to local Councils.

0845 Numbers

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

(AQW 6437/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department operates six 0845 numbers. Two more are provided through an external contractor and a further two operated by Northern Ireland Water.

There is no revenue generated for DRD from any of these numbers.

Free All-Ireland Travel on the Derry to Dublin Bus Route

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any charge has ever been applied to passengers who were entitled to free all-Ireland travel on the Derry to Dublin bus route.

(AQW 6498/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am aware that the X33 bus service which operated on the Londonderry to Dublin/Dublin Airport route during the summer of 2011 did not participate in Irish Free Travel Scheme and also that travel on this express service did not come within the Northern Ireland concessionary fares scheme.

However, if the Member has a particular case in mind where a person was improperly charged, he should bring it to my attention.

Londonderry to Coleraine Railway Line

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the relaying of the Derry to Coleraine railway line.

(AQW 6500/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Subsequent to my decision to bring forward the Coleraine to Londonderry project, officials in my Department issued a Letter of Offer to Translink in October 2011 so that work on the project could start. Invitations to Tender for the contract for phase one of the project were issued in December 2011 and the tendering process continues. Translink expects that detailed design works will begin in March and, subject to commercial arrangements being agreed, work will start on site in July 2012. The track will be closed from this point onward until phase one of the project is completed in April 2013. Bus substitution is being considered currently. Phase one involves the re-laying of the end sections of the line and completing essential bridge works on those parts with costs estimated to be £27m.

The second phase, to be completed during 2015, involves re-signalling works and construction of a new passing loop. The cost of this phase is estimated at around £20m.

The third phase is the full relay of the track. This will be completed in 2021 and the cost is estimated at £31m.

Direct Bus Route Between Enniskillen and Derry

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on a direct bus route between Enniskillen and Derry.

(AQW 6544/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that it has had some initial discussions with relevant community groups and is actively working towards putting in place a timetable that will enhance current Ulsterbus services from Enniskillen enabling passengers to enjoy better integration with the Goldline network at Omagh which allows for onward travel to Londonderry/Altnagelvin.

Translink has committed to contacting Community Transport representatives in Enniskillen/Omagh and Departmental officials in the near future to discuss how a partnership approach could work to provide the best possible service for the public but is still cost effective.

Given that this is a very rural area, there will inevitably be limitations in relation to geographical coverage of the proposed service.

NI Water Contracts

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how many NI Water contracts are currently going through the procurement process; and when each of procurement process began.

(AQW 6555/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that at 31 December 2011, 23 contracts were going through the procurement process. Details of the contracts and the commencement dates are set out in the table below.

Tender Title	Date Procurement Process Began
Standby Generators	26 February 2010
Compressors and Blowers	26 February 2010
Instrumentation, Control, Automation Framework	2 April 2010
Professional Services Support Framework	11 May 2010
Rotation Biological Contactors	15 June 2010
Water Efficiency and Base Maintenance Programme	1 February 2011
Reservoir Refurbishment Framework	6 June 2011
Castor Bay To Belfast Trunk Main	4 July 2011
Supply and delivery of sludge press cloths to water treatment works	10 October 2011
High Volume Call Application	14 October 2011
Provision of Cleaning Services	18 October 2011
Supply, replacement & regeneration of granular activated carbon	20 October 2011
Strule Abstraction Project	21 October 2011
Supply & Delivery of Filter Media	25 October 2011
Catering at Antrim Training Centre	11 November 2011
Vehicle Plant and Street Works	17 November 2011
Professional Services Support Framework 2	21 November 2011
Monaclogh Service Reservoir	29 November 2011
Valve Tower Refurbishment Works Package 3	6 December 2011
Valve Tower Refurbishment Works Package 2	7 December 2011
Capital Delivery Framework	7 December 2011
Unmetered Electricity	8 December 2011
Provision of Counselling and Welfare Services	21 December 2011

NI WATER CONTRACTS

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how many contracts NI Water has awarded in the last twelve months; and how long the procurement process took for each of these contracts. **(AQW 6557/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that in the period from 1 January 2011 to the end of December 2011 it awarded 473 contracts. The table below details the duration of the procurement process for these contracts.

Total Number of Contracts	Duration of Procurement Process			
	0 – 3 months	3 – 6 months	6 – 12 months	> 12 months
473	421	30	20	2

Sewerage Infrastructure in the Millisle Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what improvements are required to allow the sewerage infrastructure in the Millisle area to meet EU standards.

(AQW 6586/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it has identified upgrading work to the sewerage infrastructure in Millisle, which will ensure compliance with EU Bathing Water standards. The work, which will cost £2.2 million, is being undertaken in two stages. The first stage involves upgrading work in the Moss Road area and this is now nearing completion. The second stage will provide a new wastewater pumping station in Ballycopeland Presbyterian Church car park to replace the existing station on the Shore Road. Work is planned to commence in late 2012 subject to the completion of all statutory requirements and land acquisition.

Closing Roads for Special Events

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there is guidance in place to assist district councils and promoters to close roads for special events.

(AQW 6686/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is currently working closely with representatives from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) to finalise the guidance to assist district councils and promoters to close roads for special events.

Once the guidance has been agreed and SOLACE has indicated that Councils are content, a commencement order will be made and responsibility for road closures for special events will then rest with Councils.

Coleraine to Londonderry NIR

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) whether there is a £9 million shortfall in the budget for the Coleraine to Londonderry NIR 2013/14 relay, and if so, whether this will delay the renewal of the signalling system; and (iii) whether the Londonderry signal box will remain operational until the signalling renewal is completed.

(AQW 6751/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer you to my statement to the Assembly on 10 October. This refers to the re-phasing of the overall Coleraine to Londonderry re-lay. Specifically that phase 2 to complete by April 2012 would consist of a re-laying of the end sections of the line and completion of essential bridge works on those sections. The statement also refers to Phase 2 to involve completion of re-signalling works between Coleraine and Londonderry and construction of a new passing loop in 2015. The tendering process for phase 1 of the Coleraine to Londonderry track relay is currently underway and Translink expect to appoint a contractor in March 2012. A robust cost estimate will be available when the tender process is complete. I have secured the necessary funding for phase 1 from within my own capital budget and there is no shortfall.

The figure of £9m you refer to was an initial estimate of potential costs for re-signalling which now forms part of Phase 2, which is due to be complete during 2015. Translink has advised that while budgets for Phase 2 have yet to be finalised, a shortfall of £9 million has not been identified. Translink advise that the Londonderry signal box will remain operational until the signalling works are completed.

Property at 3 Belfast Road, Ballynure

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development why Roads Service has not taken steps to sell the property at 3 Belfast Road, Ballynure, despite having secured vacant possession from the tenant and the property's considerable development potential and open market value.

(AQW 6774/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that sale of the property at 3 Belfast Road, Ballynure has been agreed with the sitting tenant, in accordance with government disposal procedures, as laid down by Department of Finance and Personnel's Land and Property Services. Departmental Solicitor's Office is currently completing the legal formalities.

Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development how he is using EU policies, networks and programmes to achieve the key objective to source funding for key rail projects designed to reduce congestion and emissions, as detailed in 'Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12'.

(AQW 6784/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: On 10 January 2012, the European Commission launched the call for proposals under the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) annual programme, making €200 million available to co-finance projects in several specific priority areas. My Department intend to submit an application for funding for the Coleraine to Londonderry relay. If successful, the project would attract 10% funding towards the £46m project.

In addition, The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) issued a call on 3 January 2012, across all themes of the INTERREG IVA programme. Officials intend making an application for funding towards the planned £3.6m redevelopment of Portadown Railway Station.

Transport: North Coast

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to improve the transport infrastructure around the North Coast in preparation for the Irish Open Golf Competition, and to help encourage the British Open Golf Competition to come to the resort.

(AQO 1130/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I welcome the award of the Irish Open Golf Competition to Portrush and acknowledge the important role that infrastructure plays in facilitating such a tournament.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that recent infrastructure improvements, such as the A26 Ballee scheme at Ballymena and the A2 Broadbridge dualling at Londonderry, have provided improved links to Portrush.

Unfortunately, due to the lengthy development period required for major road projects, Members will appreciate that major interventions at this point would not impact on this summer's tournament.

However, I can assure Members that officials from my Department will be involved in the off-course event delivery as part of a Steering Group that has been established to ensure effective co-ordination of the wider event planning, and will include members from relevant Government Departments and Public Service Bodies, in addition to golf officials.

I have established a Traffic Management Group within my Department, led by Roads Service, to consider traffic management both around the course and on the main routes into the area. In addition, Translink will be reviewing its bus and train services in order to cater for the large number of people expected to be attending the event

The Irish Open will present an opportunity to assess how our current infrastructure meets the demands of a major spectator event of this nature and what improvements may be required if we are to host a tournament of the stature of the British Open Golf Championship.

A5: Reallocation of Funding

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Regional Development if he has made any plans, or has had any discussions, with other Departments regarding the reallocation of the funding for the A5 road scheme.

(AQO 1128/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As you are aware, the Irish Government has deferred the provision of further funding for progression of the A5 and A8 schemes, and in this regard will now provide £25 million per annum in 2015 and 2016 towards the projects. At the North South Ministerial Council Plenary (NSMC) Meeting held on 18 November 2011, the relevant Departments were tasked with preparing a new funding and implementation plan for the A5 and A8 projects to be agreed at the next NSMC Transport meeting, with endorsement at the next NSMC Plenary meeting.

This process is still on-going and has not yet reached a conclusion and in that regard, I have held discussions with the Minister of Finance and expect to have further discussions with Ministerial colleagues, with a view to reaching a conclusion as swiftly as possible. As Roads Minister, I am keen to give clarity to the Construction industry.

Park-and-Ride Facilities: East Antrim

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many park and ride facilities there are in East Antrim.

(AQO 1125/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are currently six Park and Ride facilities in the East Antrim area.

These are located at:

- Whitehead Railway Station (49 spaces)
- Greenisland Railway Station (79 spaces)
- Whiteabbey Railway Station (75 spaces)
- Carrickfergus Railway Station (294 spaces)
- Larne Railway Station (62 spaces)
- Larne Bus Station (18 spaces)

Translink is also planning to start construction of a Park & Ride facility at Jordanstown railway station before the end of March 2012.

Winter Weather

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on his Department's arrangements with councils for dealing with problems caused by adverse winter weather conditions.

(AQO 1129/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am pleased that weather conditions during the winter period to date have been considerably more favourable than those we experienced during the last two winters. However, there can be no grounds for complacency and my Department's Roads Service remains alert to the possibility of the onset of more adverse weather conditions and is ready to respond quickly to ensure our main routes remain open for all road users. I would also strongly encourage motorists to exercise caution and drive with due care and attention and be mindful of the prevailing road conditions.

In relation to establishing arrangements with Councils for dealing with problems caused by adverse winter weather conditions, I am content that a large number of Councils have engaged at a local level and I would hope that as we move forward this good relationship can be further enhanced.

Transport: North Coast

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has made every effort to avoid compulsory redundancies within Translink.

(AQO 1131/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink is required to operate commercially within the current difficult environment. Staffing levels is an operational matter for Translink management and I understand that Translink has

been successful in avoiding compulsory redundancies despite implementing measures to improve efficiency in recent years.

I met with Translink recently to discuss their Corporate Plan for the next 3 years. This considers the cost pressures on Translink including wage and pension costs and planned level of fares. Translink confirmed that small reductions in staff numbers in recent years have been managed by voluntary redundancy or by redeployment. Future plans are still to be finalised but will require a balance to be struck between cost efficiency and will essentially be an issue for Translink management to negotiate with staff representative groups. I understand that every effort will be made to avoid compulsory redundancies going forward.

Roads: North Down

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed construction of two roundabouts at the Craigtantlet Crossroads and the junction of Whinney Hill and Ballymiscaw Road in North Down.

(AQO 1132/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a planning application has been submitted for the proposed road improvement scheme. Details should be published in the normal manner, by the Planning Service, during early February 2012.

Roads Service officials have further advised that, while this project remains a high priority, the timescale for construction of this scheme will be dependent on the outcomes of the various statutory processes, land acquisition and the availability of the necessary finance.

Roads: Trans-European Transport Networks

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development what applications his Department is making for European funding for major Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) capital roads projects.

(AQO 1133/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service directly contributes to the achievement of the NI Executive's Action Plan, to increase the number and value of NI projects securing funding from competitive EU funding programmes, by identifying potential projects that could benefit from TEN-T funding.

Whilst Roads Service currently has no applications with the TEN-T Agency, there has just been a 'call' for applications advertised under the 2012 Annual Programme. Roads Service officials will assess the focus of the call, to ascertain what applications may be submitted under this Programme.

A4: Signage

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his proposals to upgrade the traffic signage on the A4 dual carriageway to the same standard as that of a motorway.

(AQO 1134/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As you will recall, you wrote to me in December 2011, asking me to install motorway standard signage on the A4 dual carriageway. At that time, I advised that a Stage 4 Road Safety Audit, giving particular consideration to the need for further safety improvements and provision of wig-wag flashing lights at junctions along the new dual carriageway, was underway.

My Department's Roads Service has advised me that the audit has been completed.

The audit suggested that the issue of 'wrong-way-travelling' on the dual carriageway could be satisfactorily addressed through provision of additional signage, white lining and coning with the objective of preventing, or at least reducing, the number of incidences of 'wrong way' driving on the dual carriageway.

As I am sure you will agree, this is an extremely serious matter. Although additional 'No Entry' and 'Left Turn Only,' signage has been provided, some drivers are continuing to ignore the signs and are travelling along the A4 in the wrong direction. These actions are highly dangerous and could have grave consequences.

Through the issue of a Press Release and a number of media interviews, I have been highlighting the absolutely essential requirement for drivers to pay attention to roads signage at junctions when joining the new A4 dual carriageway. My Department's message is a clear one - drivers in the vicinity of the A4 must set aside their previous driving habits when using the new road layout, and should not rely on Sat Nav's that have not been updated to reflect changes to the layout. The simple rule we want road users to remember is: right turns onto the dual carriageway are prohibited at all junctions.

In addition, I can advise you that the audit also recommended that monitoring of the situation should continue and, if the suggested measures do not effectively address the issue, wig-wag flashing lights should be considered again on a junction by junction basis.

NI Water: Governance

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the governance of NI Water. **(AQO 1135/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I have recently completed a number of briefings on governance issues with representatives from the water industry in Scotland, England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. I plan to continue discussions with stakeholders over the coming weeks. It remains my aim to bring options to the Executive in the coming months in response to the Public Accounts Committee's recommendation that we should look at ways of providing more certainty of funding for NI Water.

Park-and-Ride Facilities

Mr Cree asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline how he will improve park and ride facilities during this Assembly mandate. **(AQO 1136/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: Last year my Department published a Strategic review of Park and Ride. That report highlighted the importance of Park and Ride in promoting sustainable transport. In addition it set out a number of recommendations and identified those strategic locations at which the development of Park and Ride should be prioritised as available funding permits. Implementation of the Review will take place at a time when budgets are under considerable pressure. However, recognising the significant contribution of Park and Ride to a more sustainable and efficient transport infrastructure I have set a clear commitment to expand the availability of park and ride during this Assembly mandate, including increasing provision for traffic entering the Belfast Metropolitan Area by 55% over 2010 levels.

In line with that commitment, capacity has already been increased at a number of sites on our strategic road and rail network across Northern Ireland with work also under way at a number of sites. In addition, officials from my Department, Roads Service and Translink also continue to work together to ensure a coordinated approach while finalising details of additional key schemes to be delivered in the current budgetary period.

Department for Social Development

Social Security Agency Staff

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the religious background of staff working in the Social Security Agency, broken down by grade. **(AQW 5284/11-15)**

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): Recruitment and promotion exercises for General Service posts (i.e. administrators and managers) are managed on a corporate basis by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) through the HRConnect outsourced service. All Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) recruitment and promotion competitions are delivered in line with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code and Commissioners regulate all recruitment to and within the NICS, at all levels, to ensure that the 'merit principle' is adhered to. DFP also provides statutory monitoring returns to the Equality Commission on its workforce composition for the NICS.

The religion of NICS staff is not held. However, as required by the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 (FETO), information is collected on the perceived community background of staff and applicants for posts in the NICS annually at the 1 January. Using this data for 2011, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has provided the information requested, broken down by grade, in the table below.

Grade	Total Staffing Numbers	Protestant		Roman Catholic		Not Determined	
		Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%
Analogous G7 & above	38	18	47.4%	20	52.6%	0	0%
Deputy Principal	78	#		47	60.2%	*	
Staff Officer	215	#		114	53.0%	*	
Executive Officer I/ Executive Officer II	2032	809	39.8%	1199	59.0%	24	1.2%
Admin Officer	2608	1058	40.6%	1525	58.5%	25	0.9%
Admin Assistant	515	#		269	52.2%	#	
Total	5486	2247	41.0%	3174	57.8%	65	1.2%

Notes:

All figures relate to permanent staff within the Social Security Agency and includes both full & part time staff i.e. headcount.

Source: Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency (NISRA) - Extracted from HR Connect based on information relating to 1 January 2011

* Number of cases is too small to publish (below 10 in line with NISRA guidance).

Number has been suppressed to avoid disclosing another number that is too small to publish in line with * above.

Support for Mortgage Interest Applications

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development what is the (i) target processing time; and (ii) average actual processing time for Support for Mortgage Interest applications.

(AQW 6144/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There is no specific target processing time for Mortgage Interest applications and the information requested is not therefore available.

Support for Mortgage Interest Claims

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development how many Support for Mortgage Interest claims have been made in each of the last three years; and how many have been approved.

(AQW 6145/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Due to system limitations the information is not available in the format requested. The table below details the number of people who were receiving Support for Mortgage Interest by

benefit at August in each of the last three years. There is no equivalent data available for Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

Benefit	Aug-09	Aug-10	Aug-11
Jobseeker's Allowance	1,430	2,255	2,090
Pension Credit	5,600	5,800	5,520
Income Support	7,260	6,760	6,620
Total	14,290	14,815	14,230

Note. Data source Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit and Income Support IFD scans August 2009, August 2010 and August 2011

Mortgage Interest Run On Applications

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development how many Mortgage Interest Run On applications have been received in each of the last three years; and how many have been approved. **(AQW 6146/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Customers do not need to make a written application for Mortgage Interest Run On and the Social Security Agency is not therefore required to make decisions on eligibility. An extra four weeks money is automatically paid if Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income-related Employment and Support Allowance has ceased because the customer or their partner is returning to full time employment or earning or working more hours. AQW 6145/11-15 details the number of customers receiving mortgage interest payments by benefit in August of each of the last three years..

Appointment of the Current Chief Executive of HELM Housing

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the recruitment process for the appointment of the current Chief Executive of HELM Housing; (ii) how many people applied for the post; (iii) who was on the interview panel; and (iv) the terms and conditions relevant to the position. **(AQW 6237/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Given the significant failings within Helm the Department recognised that the Association needed a Chief Executive with specific knowledge, skills and expertise in managing troubled organisations. The Tenants Service Authority in England provided the Department with details of the arrangements they had in place to enable troubled associations to recruit such expertise. This information was passed to the Helm Board who used this process to appoint their current interim Chief Executive. The selection process is a matter for the Association.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the estimated number of families affected by fuel poverty in each of the last three years, broken down by constituency. **(AQW 6289/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested. The Housing Executive measures fuel poverty across all housing tenures through the House Condition Survey (HCS) which is carried out every two years. The results of the 2011 HCS are still being assessed and are not yet available. Therefore the last HCS for which results are available in the 2009 survey. Figures are also not available for the past three years. The 2009 HCS estimated that across Northern Ireland there were 302,310 households (44%) in fuel poverty. The Housing Executive breaks down fuel poverty by household size as shown in the figures below.

Household Size	No
Lone Adult	66,630
Two Adults	23,200
Small Family	21,490
Lone Parent	34,000
Large Family	10,130
Large Adult	10,520
Two Older	48,000
Lone Older	88,340
Total	302,310

The 2009 HCS reported figures based on the proposed new Council boundaries at that time under RPA. The table below outlines fuel poverty by proposed RPA area.

Proposed Council Location	No
Belfast	56,200
Londonderry/Strabane	23,080
Armagh & Bann	33,390
Lisburn/Castlereagh	27,680
Newry & Down	28,380
Antrim/N'Abbey	22,550
Causeway Coast	25,280
Ards & North Down	28,660
Fermanagh & Omagh	16,450
Mid Antrim	23,210
Mid Ulster	17,430
Total	302,310

Emergency Call-Outs for Repairs to Housing Executive Properties

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of emergency call-outs for repairs to Housing Executive properties over the Christmas period in the North Down area.

(AQW 6304/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested. However during the period from 23 December 2011 to 2 January 2012 the Housing Executive received a total of 68 repair requests that were categorised as an emergency repair (Immediate Call Out) for their Bangor District Office area.

Disability Living Allowance Appeals

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what measures he has put in place to deal with the volume of Disability Living Allowance appeals that might occur under the proposed Welfare Reform. **(AQW 6305/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The Welfare Reform Bill currently progressing through the Westminster Parliament contains provisions which will see a new benefit - Personal Independence Payment, replace Disability Living Allowance for all new claims for working age claimants between 16 and 64 from April 2013. In addition, all existing Disability Living Allowance claimants aged between 16 and 64 will be reassessed for Personal Independence Payment between April 2013 and March 2016. Business as usual will continue to apply for new and existing Disability Living Allowance claimants who are under 16 and the current over-65 claimant caseload.

It is likely that the number of appeals will increase during the Personal Independence Payment reassessment period. The Department for Work and Pensions is currently working up projections on the numbers of appeals expected as a result of the introduction of the new benefit and a detailed appeals strategy paper for Great Britain is expected to be finalised by the end of February.

The Social Security Agency will be developing equivalent Northern Ireland forecasts and projections with regard to appeal volumes arising from the introduction of Personal Independence Payment and the reassessment of existing Working Age Disability Living Allowance recipients.

There is ongoing work and engagement with the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service regarding the impact of Personal Independence Payment Appeals and the Courts and Tribunal Service is represented on the Personal Independence Payment Project Board. The consequential impacts for Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service arising from this change will be included in the Personal Independence Payment Business Case which is expected to be finalised by May of this year.

Transfer of Functions to Local Government

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development, 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 6323/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: No functions have been transferred from the Department for Social Development to local councils over the last five years.

Other than those functions which had originally been earmarked to transfer under the Reform of Public Administration proposals, no other functions were planned to transfer to councils. The DSD functions which had been earmarked to transfer from May 2011 were:

Urban Regeneration and Community Development Functions

- Tackling town and city regeneration (operational delivery of physical development projects including Comprehensive Development, Public Realm and Environmental Improvement Schemes;
- area-based regeneration including Neighbourhood Renewal; and
- Support for the voluntary and community sectors at local level e.g. the Community Support Programme and Community Investment Fund.

Housing Functions

- Regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)
- Housing Unfitness including repair and demolition notices;

- Living Over the Shops (LOTs); and
- Local Energy Conservation

As the overall list of functions to transfer to councils from central government was decided upon over 3 years ago it will be subject to review. Ultimately the Executive will decide the way forward and the package of functions to transfer.

Hospitality: Spend

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development what has been the total spend on hospitality by his Department in each of the last five years.

(AQW 6359/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below provides details of expenditure incurred on hospitality by the Department for Social Development in each of the last five years:

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT £K

2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
51,790	56,605	125,822	74,567	25,036

Social Security Appeals

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the volume and technicality of information issued at Social Security appeals; and whether better use could be made of plain English.

(AQW 6381/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information provided by the Social Security Agency for Social Security Appeals Tribunals is in a format that meets the requirements of the Appeal Tribunals, which are independent of the Department for Social Development. The Agency uses plain English wherever possible and ensures that the volume of information provided is fit for purpose. However, it is the complexity of the different benefits and associated legislation, as well as the circumstances of individual cases that dictates the volume and/or technicality of information required.

The Appeals Service also issues documentation throughout the appeal process. In consultation with the Office of the President of Appeal Tribunals this material will be subject to continuous review of both the volume and technicality of information provided.

0845 Numbers

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

(AQW 6434/11-15)

Mr McCausland: This Department does not raise revenue from any of the 0845 numbers used.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many cases of anti-social behaviour were reported to the Housing Executive in 2011.

(AQW 6450/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate this information by calendar year. However, the table below gives details of the number of anti social behaviour cases recorded in the financial year 2010/11 and also for the current year from April to December 2011.

	April 2010 to March 2011			April 2011 to December 2011	
District Office	Recorded Cases		District Office	Recorded Cases	
	Simple	Complex		Simple	Complex
North Belfast	162	108	North Belfast	119	6
South Belfast	213	17	South Belfast	213	0
East Belfast	87	5	East Belfast	65	12
West Belfast	293	35	West Belfast	190	25
Shankill	32	2	Shankill	27	1
Belfast Area Total	787	167	Area Total	614	44
Bangor	220	13	Bangor	175	5
Newtownards	172	16	Newtownards	159	12
Castlereagh	154	17	Castlereagh	67	3
Lisburn	207	9	Lisburn	169	13
Dairy Farm	106	2	Dairy Farm	114	2
Downpatrick	182	7	Downpatrick	125	5
S East Area Total	1041	64	S East Area Total	809	40
Banbridge	72	31	Banbridge	33	14
Newry	251	39	Newry	169	49
Armagh	95	25	Armagh	50	3
Lurgan	99	65	Lurgan	78	18
Portadown	58	29	Portadown	31	16
Dungannon	87	15	Dungannon	72	9
Fermanagh	170	63	Fermanagh	123	13
South Area Total	832	267	South Area Total	556	122
Ballymena	94	4	Ballymena	83	1
Antrim	158	15	Antrim	104	5
Newtownabbey 1	90	10	Newtownabbey 1	50	5
Newtownabbey 2	150	5	Newtownabbey 2	86	1
Carrickfergus	152	2	Carrickfergus	96	1
Larne	69	4	Larne	53	3
Ballycastle	24	3	Ballycastle	23	4
Ballymoney	48	9	Ballymoney	51	6

	April 2010 to March 2011			April 2011 to December 2011	
District Office	Recorded Cases		District Office	Recorded Cases	
	Simple	Complex		Simple	Complex
Coleraine	64	3	Coleraine	65	7
N East Area Total	849	55	N East Area Total	611	33
Waterloo	15	0	Waterloo	39	0
Waterside	51	7	Waterside	81	5
Collon Terrace	117	6	Collon Terrace	100	12
Limavady	67	18	Limavady	39	2
Magherafelt	44	4	Magherafelt	47	1
Strabane	116	5	Strabane	91	5
Omagh	84	7	Omagh	56	8
Cookstown	52	12	Cookstown	39	4
West Area Total	546	59	West Area Total	492	37
Grand Total	4055	612	Total to date	3082	276

A brief explanation of simple and complex cases is as follows:

Simple Cases

These cases generally reflect low level anti-social behaviour that can be resolved by the Housing Executive without the need for any inter-agency involvement. Examples of simple cases would be neighbour disputes over boundaries, noise, condition of gardens, pets, behaviour of children etc. Such cases take on average four to six weeks to resolve.

Complex Cases

These are cases which can take up to six months to resolve and can involve addressing alcohol/drug or mental health issues which are manifested in anti-social behaviour. These cases require detailed investigation and the involvement of other agencies (Social Services, Mental Health Teams, GPs, PSNI, local councils, Probation etc). Further examples would include lengthy patterns of anti-social activity, failure of early interventions to resolve issues, physical threats/ attacks etc. Complex cases can result in legal action being taken.

Funding for Trade Unions

Mr McCallister asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of funding his Department allocated to each trade union in the (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11 financial years.

(AQW 6469/11-15)

Mr McCausland: This Department provided funding to the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance in the three years requested as follows:

2000/01	2005/06	2010/11
£112,094	£135,465	£169,900

Civil Servants from the Foyle Constituency who Work in Greater Belfast

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total number of civil servants in his Department who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area; and the total cost to his Department for subsidising the travel.

(AQW 6473/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total number of civil servants in the Department for Social Development who live in the Foyle constituency and travel to work in the Greater Belfast area is 46. During the period 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011, 10 staff received support towards their travel to work costs through established policy and the total subsidised cost was £23,416.

Louisville Flats, Shaws Road, Belfast: Economy 7 Heating

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development how many complaints have been received from tenants of the Louisville Flats, Shaws Road, Belfast, in relation to Economy 7 heating, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 6528/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has no record of formal complaints in relation to heating in the Louisville flats in the last three years. However, they have confirmed that in that time 22 repairs were carried out to the 16 flats owned by them.

Louisville Flats, Shaws Road, Belfast: Economy 7 Heating

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development whether there are any plans to replace the Economy 7 heating in the Louisville Flats, Shaws Road, Belfast.

(AQW 6529/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive is in the process of prioritising the heating replacement scheme for Louisville flats. This work will be carried out in the next 12 months subject to the necessary funding being available.

Windows in the Louisville Flats, Shaws Road, Belfast

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development whether there are any plans to replace the windows in the Louisville Flats, Shaws Road, Belfast.

(AQW 6531/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is anticipated that the window replacement scheme for Louisville flats will begin in February 2012.

Association of Independent Volunteer Centres

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how funding for the Association of Independent Volunteer Centres will be allocated in the 2012/13 financial year.

(AQW 6561/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department is taking forward arrangements for the volunteering infrastructure model which will deliver Northern Ireland's first ever Volunteering Strategy. Having considered all reasonable options I have decided that the future volunteering infrastructure should comprise of a regional infrastructure partner and up to five local delivery partners who will be selected following an open and transparent commissioning process. Volunteering organisations, such as the Association of Independent Volunteer Centres can determine for themselves if they wish to tender for one or more of these opportunities. Commissioning is planned to be completed by summer 2012. Existing funding arrangements, which expire on 31 March 2012, will be extended to allow time for the commissioning process to be completed and will be consistent with Concordat principles. My officials met with representatives from

the independent volunteer centres and Volunteer Now on 25 January 2012 to update them on the new volunteering infrastructure arrangements and to explain the commissioning process.

Social and Affordable Homes

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to his commitment in the draft Programme for Government to deliver 8,000 social and affordable homes, to detail (i) the number of (a) social housing homes; and (b) affordable homes that will be delivered by 2014/15; (ii) the number of social housing homes that will be delivered in (a) 2012/13; (b) 2013/14; and (c) 2014/15, broken down by Housing Executive district office area; and (iii) the budget allocated to deliver social housing homes by 2014/15.

(AQW 6629/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested by the member is not currently available. The Housing Executive are currently finalising the Social Housing Development Programme for 2012-2015. I expect it to be with me for consideration by late February or early March and once approved it will be available on the Housing Executive website. (www.nihe.gov.uk)

As you are aware the Programme for Government contains a commitment to deliver 8,000 new social and affordable homes over the next four years and the Comprehensive Spending Review has already set aside over £564 million to deliver this objective.

Housing Executive Grants Scheme

Mr Molloy asked the Minister for Social Development whether a grant is available, through the Housing Executive Grants Scheme, to assist owner occupiers to raise their houses to prevent recurrent flooding.
(AQW 6631/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Due to the current funding situation the Housing Executive can only award Discretionary Grants (ie Renovation, Replacement, Home Repair Assistance, Living Over The Shops, and Houses in Multiple Occupation Grants) in exceptional circumstances. Mandatory grants (ie Disabled Facilities Grants) are not affected.

A Discretionary Renovation Grant may be available in cases of Exceptional Circumstances if severe dampness was considered to be a serious and imminent risk to the occupants. The availability of this grant would also depend on the cause of the damp and the work required to resolve the problem.

Community Care Grants

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have received Community Care Grants in each of the last three years.
(AQW 6643/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The number of Community Care Grants awarded in the last three years is outlined in the table below. The Social Security Agency only records statistical information in relation to the overall number of Community Care Grant applications and subsequent awards made, but this is not routinely recorded by individual applicant. As a person can make multiple applications, it is not therefore possible to answer the question in the form requested.

Year	No. of Community Care Grants Awarded
2008/09	26,797
2009/10	24,936
2010/11	24,110

Housing Executive Properties

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development whether there are any circumstances which allow tenants in Housing Executive properties with oil-fired central heating to (i) have a working solid fuel fire; or (ii) re-open a previously blocked fire place.

(AQW 6740/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive recently announced a heating policy review which considered their approach to all heating systems and controls. Whilst the rising cost of oil and heating fuels were considered within the review, the Housing Executive concluded that the renewed use of redundant open fires would not be a viable option. There are environmental, maintenance and funding issues which would constrain such an approach. This decision was only taken after consideration of issues such as initial and regular maintenance costs, effectiveness, ease of use, health and safety and environmental/sustainability issues. However, this policy does not include properties that currently have an existing open fire. Where the Housing Executive is installing a new central heating system in properties with an existing open fire they will consider retaining the open fire where it is technically feasible.

The Housing Executive installs heating systems with high efficiency boilers and controls to prevent overheating to ensure that annual running costs continue to remain lower than for solid fuels. These central heating systems are suitable for all tenants including elderly as it is not necessary to carry solid fuels and are safer than open fires. The existing Housing Executive policy is also designed to reduce carbon emissions from their properties.

In December I announced an exciting and innovative pay-as-you-go option for oil heating for vulnerable households. The technology could see significant savings for those who use drums rather than have oil delivered in larger quantities. I expect the new technology to be installed in pilot homes in mid February.

Housing Executive Rent

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development (i) for an estimate of the number of tenants who will be liable to pay full rental to the Housing Executive, once the recently announced rent increase is introduced; and (ii) what will be the average amount of rent.

(AQW 6803/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are currently 67,763 Housing Executive tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit, the remaining 19,229 tenants are required to pay full rental charge. The average Housing Executive rent will increase to £58.76 per week, excluding rates, with effect from 1 April 2012.

Legislative Programme

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 4123/11-15, when his Department will submit its legislative proposals to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

(AQW 6814/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have submitted my proposals for primary legislation to the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Rents for Small Businesses

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to encourage property owners to consider reducing their rents for small businesses that are struggling in the economic downturn.

(AQW 6830/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Member is referring to small businesses where the Housing Executive is the landlord. The Housing Executive has advised that their commercial property rents are based on

the size and location of the property and rent reviews are carried out every five years or when a lease comes to an end and a new lease term is negotiated.

On occasion the Housing Executive has been approached by tenants requesting a rent reduction. These requests are treated on an individual basis. Where possible they will offer advice and assistance to the tenant to allow them to continue trading and to ensure the long term viability of the unit.

When a tenant makes a formal request for a rent reduction, the tenant is required to provide documentary evidence to support their request. This can be done by either providing an up to date copy of their trading accounts, or if they are not available, a statement from their accountant giving their assessment of the business. Any proposed reduction in rent must be approved by the Chief Executive's Business Committee. Rent reductions are generally offered for one year and are then reassessed to determine if the reduction should continue. The tenant will be required to provide an up to date set of accounts for reassessment.

Tenants Rights

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the rights of a tenant; and (ii) the assistance available to a tenant, if their landlord's property is repossessed.

(AQW 6883/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) Every tenant living in the private rented sector has the right to:
- a rent book which must be provided by the landlord free of charge;
 - at least 4 weeks written notice to quit;
 - due process of law; and
 - freedom from harassment and illegal eviction.

If a tenancy commenced after 1 April 2007 a tenant has an additional right to receive a written statement of tenancy terms.

As well as the above, protected or statutory tenants have further protections in relation to greater security of tenure, succession rights and to have their rents controlled.

- (ii) Where a landlord takes out a mortgage and makes the lender fully aware that a tenancy exists in the accommodation, or will exist, the general rule is that the lender will also be bound by the lease. This means that if the lender later gains possession of the property they will have to let the lease run on until the end of the contractual period and accept rent from the tenant.

Once a lender has obtained a possession order from the Courts he must apply to the Enforcement of Judgements Office to have it enforced. The Enforcement of Judgements Office has protocols in place which aim to keep tenants involved in cases of repossession.

If a landlord's property is repossessed a tenant should seek advice from a solicitor or advice agency.

Land Purchased by Helm Housing on the Ormeau Embankment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the land purchased by Helm Housing on the Ormeau Embankment, to detail (i) when it purchased the land; and (ii) the date planning permission was granted, given that Helm Housing was suspended from the Social Housing Development Programme and not permitted to undertake any further development of new stock.

(AQW 6887/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Helm were not formally suspended until after approval to proceed with this site in question was granted. They were already contracted to the site when it was approved albeit the Department had previously considered the scheme and agreed it could proceed subject to a higher level of scrutiny and assurance to make sure it did not have any of the failings already identified

from earlier developments elsewhere. That increased scrutiny will continue throughout the remaining development of this scheme.

Planning permission for the site was granted in November 2010 and Helm completed their acquisition and handed it over to their developer to commence work in March 2011. Their suspension did not formally start until April 2011.

Housing Strategy

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 4851/11-15, when the Housing Strategy will be published; and what will be its main elements.

(AQW 6891/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have met a number of times with officials in my Department to discuss the need for a Housing Strategy for Northern Ireland. This is currently being developed and I hope to publish this around April 2012.

Employment and Support Allowance: Work Capability Assessment

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development how many Employment and Support Allowance claimants have failed the Work Capability Assessment, since ATOS Origin began conducting the assessments.

(AQO 1144/11-15)

Mr McCausland: 12,578 customers have completed the Work Capability Assessment since Atos Healthcare was appointed on 20 June 2011.

The decision on whether or not a customer is to be disallowed ESA is the responsibility of a Social Security Agency Decision Maker. It is not possible to provide detail on outcomes from the assessments as it is not held in the form requested.

Housing: Monkstown Estate

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Social Development what maintenance projects are planned for the Monkstown Estate in 2012.

(AQO 1141/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are two planned maintenance schemes for the Monkstown estates in the Housing Executive's 2012/13 programme:-

- Grange/Mossley/Monkstown External Cyclical Maintenance – 130 dwellings

External Cyclical Maintenance programmes ensure that the external fabric of homes is upgraded to meet modern day standards. For example, repairs to roofs, chimneys, porches, external doors and walls, repairs and servicing of windows, replacement of individual external doors and windows where required, repair or replacement of rainwater goods as necessary and external redecoration.

- Monkstown kitchen replacements – 131 dwellings

Glengormley Town Centre

Ms P Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the implementation of the Glengormley Town Centre Master Plan.

(AQO 1146/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Newtownabbey masterplan incorporates a regeneration strategy for Glengormley. It was finalised and launched in March 2011 and identifies a range of regeneration projects in the centre of Glengormley over the next fifteen years.

A regeneration strategy implementation team made up of the main public and private sector stakeholders in the town and my own Department is working effectively to deliver a number of projects. The work completed to date includes a shopfront repainting scheme and implementing a one-way traffic system with designated parking bays in Portland Avenue. Other regeneration works planned this year include a £600,000 public realm improvements scheme for Portland Avenue and a revitalisation programme to improve the appearance of the town. In addition some further analysis work is required to help inform what measures may be required to mitigate traffic congestion and provide additional car parking. A transport study is planned to commence later this year and will be used to examine the likely long term impact other potential major developments identified in the Strategy will have on future traffic flows in Glengormley.

Housing Benefit: Private Rented Sector

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of whether the changes to housing benefit will create further problems for tenants who are renting in the private sector.

(AQO 1147/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Changes to housing benefit in respect of the private rented sector are intended to manage expenditure and provide a fairer scheme by taking steps to ensure that people on benefit are not living in accommodation that would be out of reach of many people in work and to begin to deal with the disincentives to work in the current system. Some measures have already been introduced and other proposals will be taken forward in a Welfare Reform Bill.

Local housing allowance is the present means of determining the amount of housing benefit for rent which is payable to private rented sector tenants. Most local housing allowance cases will be affected by the changes which were announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Emergency Budget 2010 and the Spending Review 2010 and which will apply across the United Kingdom.

While some of the changes, such as the caps on each property size, will have a significant impact on high rent areas in Great Britain, the amounts specified will not impact on claimants in Northern Ireland.

Before the change to the method of calculating the weekly rate of local housing allowance, at least 50 per cent of private sector properties were available to people in receipt of housing benefit. It is estimated that the change will mean that at least 30 per cent of such properties will be available to housing benefit claimants. This reflects the constraint and the choice that many people in low-paid jobs already take. The average weekly reduction is about £7.50.

The Budget 2010 changes came into effect for new claims from April 2011 and will gradually take effect for about 45,000 existing claims. For existing claimants there is up to 9 months' transitional protection, in practice meaning many existing claimants are not affected until January 2012 and some will not be affected until December 2012.

The Spending Review 2010 change, which increased the age threshold for the shared accommodation rate, came into effect for new claims from January 2012 and could affect about 6,000 existing claims. For existing claimants this change will take effect at the same time as the Budget 2010 changes and the average overall weekly reduction is about £32.

It may become more difficult for some housing benefit claimants to find or maintain suitable accommodation, because the overall number of properties financially available will be reduced. However, around a third of properties will still be affordable to Housing Benefit claimants and the 9 months' transitional protection allows existing claimants further time to consider their housing options. The discretionary housing payments budget has received significant additional funding to meet increased requests for help for further financial assistance on top of housing benefit.

Housing Associations

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development whether he is considering carrying out a review of Housing Associations.

(AQO 1148/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As landlords of around 30,000 homes and developers of all new social homes, housing associations make a significant contribution here. Given this role and recent failings in some quarters, I believe it is appropriate to review the movement and will set out details in the coming months.

Neighbourhood Renewal: Omagh and Strabane

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the number and range of Neighbourhood Renewal projects that have been delivered in the Omagh and Strabane districts over the last four years.

(AQO 1149/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has been working with the Omagh and Strabane Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships to deliver a range of projects which have been identified as priorities for the Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in those towns. The range of projects includes health, education, community development, economic development and environmental improvement schemes.

In total, my Department has provided funding to 51 projects worth a total of £3,262,190.90 over the last four years in the Omagh Neighbourhood Renewal Area and 27 projects worth a total of £3,076,608.97 in Strabane NRA over the same period. Details of the projects are provided in the attached tables.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PROJECTS IN OMAGH DISTRICT

Equipment for MACCA	£1,074.00
Riverside Cycle Path	£74,185.98
Strathroy After School Club	£22,850.04
Strathroy After School And Homework Club - Continuation	£19,968.00
Strathroy Homework & Afterschools Club - Continuation - 11/14	£98,870.43
Omagh Area- Health And Wellbeing Project Phase I	£4,171.86
Omagh Area- Health And Wellbeing Project Phase II	£14,953.00
Environmental Improvements - Strathroy	£174,318.30
Disabled access at Multi-sport at Strathroy	£2,000.00
Support for After Schools Club at Strathroy	£26,500.00
Strathroy Enclosed Play Area	£26,800.00
Community Development For O'Kane Park	£19,731.40
Enniskillen & Omagh Health & Well Being Project Phase I	£14,953.00
Upgrade to play area at Campsie	£37,111.82
Railings at Campsie	£24,420.00
Refurbishment to Omagh British Legion at Campsie	£16,450.00
Personal Alarms at Gallows Hill, Johnston Park & Campsie	£11,300.00
Personal Alarms at O'Kane Park	£12,430.00
Personal Alarms at Strathroy	£14,690.00
O'Kane Park Neighbourhood Renewal Scheme - Footpaths and lighting	£37,500.00
Enjoying Learning And Achieving In Omagh	£14,944.00

Education Phase II 2008 - 2009 Homework Clubs	£124,264.62
Health & Wellbeing Programme In The Omagh NRA Phase 3 - Activities	£33,896.00
MACCA - Social Economy - Recommendations on Business Proposals	£7,100.00
Mullaghmore Environmental Improvement Scheme	£221,000.00
Omagh Female Alcohol Support - Health Project	£47,475.00
Omagh Female Alcohol Support Health Project - Continuation	£61,254.00
Omagh District Training Consortium- Inspiration For Life	£28,540.00
Omagh Education Mentor	£87,817.00
Omagh Education Mentor 11/14	£150,836.00
Outdoor Sensory Garden	£31,423.75
Environmental Improvements within the NRA	£12,000.00
Refurbishment of Omagh's Women's Refuge and Helping Hand Programme For Children From the Lammy Area	£19,937.00
Community Action Plan, Refurbishment of Community Venue and Youth Services Training for Lammy Omagh	£12,211.89
Minor Environmental Improvements and Upgrade of Street Lighting in Strathroy	£170,000.00
Street lighting and associated footway resurfacing in Strathroy Phase 2	£124,000.00
Community Development Worker for Mullaghmore	£68,787.75
Promotion of Social Economy and Employment Prospects in Omagh area	£64,282.03
Omagh NRA TA & Employment of co-ordinator	£30,269.64
Health & Wellbeing in Omagh NR - Continuation	£151,512.00
CKS New Community Centre	£475,845.00
Refurbishment of Gallows Hill Community House	£8,518.89
Exploring Enterprise Programme Omagh	£29,187.00
Mullaghmore EI - Upgrade Street Lighting	£30,539.00
MACCA Eco Centre	£125,167.50
EI Improvements to Roads, Footways & Street Lighting - Mullaghmore	£60,600.00
Strathroy Enclosed Play Area phase 2	£16,900.00
MACCA Resource Centre (Rebrand)	£4,500.00
O'Kane Park Environmental Improvements 10/11	£8,862.00
Omagh Health Project 2011- 2014	£322,643.00
O'Kane Park and Gallows Hill Environmental Improvements	£63,600.00
Total Expenditure	£3,262,190.90

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL PROJECTS IN THE STRABANE DISTRICT

Strabane Ethnic Community Association - Ethnic CD Worker Salary & Running Costs	£174,284.41
Lisnafin/Ardanlee CDA - Project Co-ordinator Salary & Running Costs	£142,341.68
Springhill Park CDA - Regeneration Project-	£280,204.74
Strabane Sigerson's GAA- Project Co-ordinator	£239,377.56
DRD Roads Service- EI Scheme 2	£200,000.00
ELB - Youth Intervention & Graffiti Art Programme	£6,754.00
Strabane Community Project - Salaries Full-Time Project Co-ordinator & Part-Time Finance/Admin worker	£71,587.33
Melmount EBE Community Association Forum - Uniting Communities	£106,611.43
HURT (Have Your Tomorrows) -	£31,010.55
Strabane Chamber of Commerce - Christmas Star Campaign	£10,000.00
Strabane District Council - Sustaining Physical Activity & Improving Wellbeing	£32,768.98
Fountain St Community Development Association - Head of the Town Rejuvenation Project	£96,685.22
Strabane 2000 - Strabane Bridge Economic Appraisal	£5,477.45
Strabane LGBT Group - Strabane LBGT Inclusion Project	£95,852.45
Strabane & District CAB - NR Benefit Uptake Project	£17,117.32
DRD Roads Service - EI Scheme	£73,025.00
Foyle Women's Aid- Rapid Response	£51,954.92
NW Play Resource Centre - Learning Through Arts	£81,379.56
Strabane 2000 Bridge Project (Capital)	£97,031.50
Strabane District Council Youth Multi Game Area (Capital)	£134,688.10
Strabane District Council Play park – Springhill Park (Capital)	£55,752.00
Strabane District Council Melvin Sports Hall (Capital)	£54,000.00
DRD Roads Service - E1 Scheme	£500,000.00
DSD Housing NIHE - Supply and installation of play equipment (TT)	£5,609.00
DSD Road Service- EI Scheme (TT)	£158,200.00
Strabane District CAB- Nr Benefits Update project (TT)	£83,535.88
Strabane LSP - Technical Assistance	£271,359.89
Total Expenditure	£3,076,608.97

Employment and Support Allowance: Work Capability Assessment

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Social Development how many Work Capability Assessments have been carried out since their introduction.

(AQO 1150/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I refer the member to the written answer given to AQW 5556/11-15 by Mark Durkan on 23 December 2011 and the written answer given to AQW 5881/11-15 by Michael Copeland on 10 January 2012.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Inventory of Works of Art

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission to publish an inventory of works of art which it holds identifying those items on display, and the location of those items that are not on display.

(AQW 6192/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): I can confirm that the following works of art are held by the Assembly:

Description	Current Location
Portrait of Rt. Hon JM Andrews by F McKelvey	Currently in offsite storage
Portrait of Rt. Hon, Sir Basil Brooke Bart Prime Minister for N.I 1943-63	On long term loan to Viscount Brookeborough
Portrait of Viscount Craigavon by N Becher	Currently in offsite storage
Portrait of Sir Henry Wilson by HW Gates	Currently in offsite storage
Portrait of Lord Armaghdale by Riviere	Currently in offsite storage
Portrait of Frederick Temple by C Williams	Currently in offsite storage
Portrait of HM the Queen by Lydia de Burgh	On loan to Hillsborough Castle
State opening of N.I Parliament (small version) by William Conor	On display in Room 41
State opening of NI. Parliament (large version) by William Conor	On display in the Senate Chamber
William III, The Duke of Schomberg and the Pope by Pieter Van der Meulen	On display in Room 40
Oil painting, an Obelisk at the Boyne by J Tudor	Currently in storage at Parliament Buildings
Print of Sydenham, Belmont & surrounding area	Currently in offsite storage
Print showing service for Queen Victoria's Jubilee	Currently in offsite storage
Photograph of Queen Victoria	Currently in storage
Print of Irish House of Commons	On display in Room 40
Large framed display of Historic Parliamentary Occasions 1945	Currently in offsite storage
Collection of framed photographs of former Speakers of the NI House of Commons	On display outside the Senate Chamber and Room 41
Framed sealed indenture of Stormont Estate	Currently in offsite storage
Collection of miscellaneous photographs of Parliament Buildings and historic events therein	Currently in offsite storage
Portrait of Mr Seamus Mallon MP by Rita Duffy (unveiled 25 March 2003).	On display on the 1st Floor

Description	Current Location
"The Assembly in Session" by Noel Murphy February 2003	On display in Room 41
"The House will divide" by Noel Murphy (unveiled 10th February 2003).	On display in the Senate Chamber
Portrait of Lord Alderdice by Carol Graham (unveiled on 11 March 2005).	On display in the Members Dining Room
Portrait of The Lord Bannside by David Nolan (unveiled 28th June 2010).	On display on the 1st Floor
46 Rowel Frier's drawings of Members of the Northern Ireland Parliament 1972	On display in the Members coffee lounge
Portrait of Eileen Bell by Conor Walton, oil on canvas (unveiled on 28th November 2011).	On display in the Members Dining Room.

Pension Contributions from MLAs

Mr Agnew asked the Assembly Commission what measures are in place to ensure that the pension contributions from MLAs are invested ethically.

(AQW 6197/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Members Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) is a trust-based occupational pension scheme. Five Members are appointed by resolution of the Assembly to act as Trustees. The Trustees are responsible for administering the Pension Fund in accordance with the scheme rules, the law as it relates to pensions, tax and trust matters and regulatory guidance. The Trustees appoint an Investment Manager to invest the pension fund on their behalf and in accordance with the Statement of Investment Principles. The Statement of Investment Principles is a matter for the Pension Trustees.

Presidential Election Campaign: Wages

Mrs D Kelly asked the Assembly Commission (i) whether the deputy First Minister received a wage from the Assembly during his presidential election campaign; (ii) whether John O'Dowd MLA, as Acting deputy First Minister, received an additional wage during this time, and if so, whether this was in addition to, or in place of, his Ministerial salary.

(AQW 6388/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The current provisions for Members' and Office Holders salaries are set out in the Northern Ireland Assembly (Members' Salaries) Determination 2000. Section 16A (11) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (the Act) makes provision for the First Minister or deputy First Minister to designate another Minister to exercise his or her functions in certain prescribed circumstances.

Should the First Minister or deputy First Minister choose to avail of the provisions of Section 16A (11) of the Act, the salaries due for each substantive Office held will remain payable i.e. the First Minister or deputy First Minister will continued to receive his or her Office Holder salary and the Minister will continue to receive his or her Ministerial salary.

However, AQW 2805/11-15 noted that the deputy First Minister notified the Assembly Commission that he did not wish to receive either his Member or Office Holder salary from 20 September 2011. Consequently, no salary was paid from that date until the end of the Presidential election campaign.

Members' salary payments are published annually as required by Standing Order 76 (2). Where an individual Member or Officeholder has voluntarily chosen to receive a reduced salary, this information is also published.

Obelisk Marking the Hillsborough Agreement

Mr Allister asked the Assembly Commission what was the cost of the obelisk marking the Hillsborough Agreement which has been placed in the Members' Lobby of Parliament Buildings; why the obelisk was considered necessary, and why it was placed in the Members' Lobby.

(AQW 6688/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The sculpture "Agreement" was not commissioned by the Assembly. It was gifted to the Assembly at no cost by local artist, Margaret M Madden. The sculpture was unveiled on 25 January 2011 in the Senate Rotunda and has been on display for the past year. The sculpture was moved to the Assembly Rotunda as it relates to the current Assembly. As with many of the features in the building, and other items on display, no mention of the sculpture is included in the official tour script.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 27 January 2012

(AQW 5782/11-15)

The table below sets out the number of cases processed at each court office and in the Civil Processing Centre across all business areas.

Processing office ^[1]	Cases Dealt With ^[2]					
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Antrim	2622	2966	2606	2901	3257	14352
Ballymena	4338	4728	4343	4180	3448	21037
Coleraine	4730	4408	3739	3784	3852	20513
Larne	1233	1001	925	896	757	4812
Bangor	2557	2298	2115	1795	1846	10611
Downpatrick	3330	2957	2689	2407	2315	13698
Newtownards	5402	5575	5431	5620	6317	28345
Armagh	2320	1947	2086	2249	2098	10700
Banbridge ^[3]	1627	1300	1180	1539	1274	6920
Newry	4850	5103	5490	5456	5705	26604
Belfast	27354	24745	23322	23547	25283	124251
Craigavon	4912	4751	4823	4450	5180	24116
Lisburn	4163	4260	3859	4379	4472	21133
Dungannon	5477	4765	4404	4686	4415	23747
Enniskillen	2801	2110	1986	2314	2542	11753
Omagh	4060	3789	3561	3485	3617	18512
Strabane	2082	1450	1165	1353	1226	7276
Limavady	1460	1425	1190	1363	1109	6547
Londonderry	7675	7065	5745	6701	6325	33511
Magherafelt	1282	1149	1146	1211	1204	5992
Civil Processing Centre	8270	11012	11464	12665	12475	55886
High Court	20752	20022	24365	20992	22965	109096
Total	123297	118826	117634	117973	121682	599412

[1] Court offices based on the processing office as recorded on ICOS for 2007-2010. In 2006 Crown Court, Magistrates' Court, family and Children Order business were recorded on manual forms and reflect the court office which disposed of/dealt with the case. The Civil Processing Centre is a centralised office for small claims and civil bill business. Cases may relate to any County Court division but be processed there. In 2006 civil County Court business was recorded on ICOS and therefore the court offices are based on the processing office as recorded on that system. A case may be processed at one venue and heard at another.

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- [2] Cases dealt with are based on criminal defendants, civil and family cases, Children Order cases and applications disposed of. 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.
- [3] Banbridge cases are processed and heard at Newry Courthouse.
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