

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 2 March 2012

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Suggested amendments or corrections will be considered by the Editor.
They should be sent to:

The Editor of Debates, Room 248, Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX.
Tel: 028 9052 1135 · e-mail: simon.burrowes@niassembly.gov.uk

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

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Allister, Jim (North Antrim)
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Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)
Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 2 March 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Play and Leisure Policy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Play and Leisure Policy. (AQW 7219/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Play and Leisure Policy is being taken forward through an Implementation Plan which was published initially in March 2011.

To date we have engaged with fourteen councils to establish play and leisure strategic partnerships to ensure a joined-up approach to the planning and commissioning of play and leisure service and we are currently engaging with the other twelve councils. The Department has delivered seminars on risk-taking in play and on shaping communities to be play and child friendly, and invested in exemplar projects across council areas on new and innovative play areas.

Social Protection Fund

Mr Durkan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister if they will extend the Social Protection Fund beyond one year to help mitigate the adverse impact on the most vulnerable should welfare reform proposals be implemented.

(AQW 7224/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This year the Executive agreed to prioritise fuel poverty through the Social Protection Fund and agreed that the entire £20 million budget would contribute towards a Winter Fuel Poverty Payment Scheme, delivered through DSD and DHSSPS, under the Financial Assistance Act.

While funding for the programme was only secured for this financial year, the Budget document outlined our intention to seek additional money in years 2, 3 and 4 of this budget period from additional revenue streams identified by Executive Ministers that are coming into operation and delivering new resources for deployment.

After Schools Clubs in the North Antrim Area

Mr Storey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many after schools clubs in the North Antrim area their Department has funded in each of the last three years; and the total amount allocated to each club.

(AQW 7323/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: From 1 April 2011, while work progresses to develop the Childcare Strategy, OFMDFM has provided interim funding to support the PlayBoard After School Childcare Project. The PlayBoard Project administers funding to 48 after school projects, including one in the North Antrim Constituency area. In 2011/12, Rasharkin Women's Group received a grant from PlayBoard £10,858.

In the two preceding years, DHSSPS administered funding to the PlayBoard After School Childcare Project.

Inventory of Works of Art

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) to provide an inventory of the works of art currently held by their Department; and (ii) to detail the location of each work of art.

(AQW 7340/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: NICS artworks currently on loan to OFMDFM from DFP are detailed in this list below. This list also includes works of art held by some Arms Length Bodies for which we have responsibility.

Title	Location	Artist
Sunlight and Shadow	Stormont Castle	D Long
Belfast Lough from Co Antrim	Stormont Castle	J Turner
Mournes	Stormont Castle	J Hynes
Donegal	Stormont Castle	J Hynes
Upstream	Stormont Castle	R D Bottom
King George VI	Stormont Castle	W Conor
Going to the Races	Stormont Castle	W Conor
Crevinishaughey, Grey Morning	Stormont Castle	C Middleton
Irish Landscape	Stormont Castle	A Webb
Portaferry from Strangford	Stormont Castle	T Carr
Portbradden	Stormont Castle	C DeBurgh
Down the Lane	Stormont Castle	J Craig
Misty Light Horn Head	Stormont Castle	K Webb
The Yacht Club	Stormont Castle	C Dearden
Derry's Walls	Stormont Castle	J MacDonald
Flowers in Green Jar	Stormont Castle	B Ballard
Behind Open Doors	Stormont Castle	C Wilson
Reflections 2	Stormont Castle	S Aghajanian
Hayfield and Field, Cushendall	Stormont Castle	C McWilliams
Waiting Game	Stormont Castle	J Lawson
Daniel	Stormont Castle	J Vallely
Mourne Country 1	Stormont Castle	M Blair
Houses	Stormont Castle	M Robinson
House and Boats	Stormont Castle	M Robinson
Fishing Boats	Stormont Castle	N McCaig
Evening, Belfast Lough	Stormont Castle	N McCaig

Title	Location	Artist
Golf Links Antrim	Stormont Castle	J Turner
Glenelly Valley Sperrins	Stormont Castle	H Sloan
Port Bradden	Stormont Castle	S McLarnon
Trawlers at Low Tide	Stormont Castle	N McCaig
Hillsborough Lake	Stormont Castle	N McCaig
Garron Point, Antrim Coast	Stormont Castle	G Gillespie
Shipquay St, L'Derry	Stormont Castle	J Campbell
Still Life with Coffee Perculator	Stormont Castle	J O'Connell
View In Donegal	Stormont Castle	M Young
Antrim Coast Road	Stormont Castle	J Stanley Prossot
Annalong Harbour	Stormont Castle	W Conor
A Walk in the Mournes	Stormont Castle	A Nicholl
Whitepark Bay and Portbradden	Stormont Castle	D long
Country Man	Stormont Castle	M Sterling
Untitled	Stormont Castle	J McCorry
The Mournes	Stormont Castle	R Hewes
Green Field, Cavehill	Stormont Castle	C McWilliams
Green Wave	Stormont Castle	R Harvey
Coastal Scene	Stormont Castle	R Harvey
Still Life with Blue oil lamp	Stormont Castle	R J Croft
McCarroll's Bar	Stormont Castle	H McDonnell
Royal Portrush	Stormont Castle	D Mulholland
Red Chard	Stormont Castle	J McWilliams
Murlough in Spring	Stormont Castle	C Graham
Parting 2	Stormont Castle	H McIlpatrick
Parting 1	Stormont Castle	H McIlpatrick
The Wild North 2	Stormont Castle	H McIlpatrick
Soft Day -Sea Shore	Stormont Castle	J Duncan
Yellow	Stormont Castle	J Kelly
Small Holding	Stormont Castle	J Kelly
Keem, Achill	Stormont Castle	G McCandless
CS Lewis	Stormont Castle	R Wilson
Flight of Birds	Stormont Castle	J Behan
T18 The Family	Stormont Castle	R Downey

Title	Location	Artist
Still Waters Run Deep	Stormont Castle	G McKnight
The History Man Explains	Stormont Castle	G Gingles
Digory Kirk, CS Lewis	Stormont Castle	R Wilson
Trassey Bridge	Parliament Buildings	D J McDowell
River at Glynn	Parliament Buildings	T Stephenson
Children on Beach, Newcastle	Parliament Buildings	T Kerr
Whiterocks, Co Antrim	Parliament Buildings	D Long
Mountains and Lakes	Parliament Buildings	T McElnea
Near Ballymena	Parliament Buildings	L Nesbitt
Lake Connemara	Parliament Buildings	G Gillespie
Cushendall	Parliament Buildings	J Turner
Whitepark Bay and Portbradden	Parliament Buildings	R Hill
Fair, Co Galway	Parliament Buildings	A McKenna
Along the Antrim Coast	Parliament Buildings	P Knuttel
Untitled	Parliament Buildings	T P Flanagan
Clougher	Parliament Buildings	B Allen
Substance and Shadow	Parliament Buildings	L Turner
Memory Lane	Parliament Buildings	J Patton
Thoor Ballylee, Co Galway	Parliament Buildings	C Lucas
Blarney Castle	Parliament Buildings	C Lucas
Classibawn, Co Sligo	Parliament Buildings	S Langham
Cliffs	Parliament Buildings	P Watson
Curragh Men	Parliament Buildings	H Sloan
Palm House Raining	Parliament Buildings	S McWilliams
Anchored in the Past	Parliament Buildings	A Gardner
The River Lagan Belfast	Washington, USA	G Morrison
Mournes at Annalong	Washington, USA	JS Haggan
The Opera House Belfast	Washington, USA	J Crabtree
Thompson Memorial Fountain	Washington, USA	B Allen
Anderson and McAuley	Washington, USA	B Allen
Untitled	Washington, USA	D Munroe
When Day is Done Lough Neagh	Washington, USA	N J McCaig
Coast Road Near Glenarm Co. Antrim	Washington, USA	R Hill
Strangford	Washington, USA	L Boal

Title	Location	Artist
Blue House in Snow	Washington, USA	P Cunningham
The Hedges of my Youth Beneath Cavehill	Washington, USA	D Kelly
Tin Whistler	Brussels	Vallely
Breffey Series	Castle Buildings	T P Flanagan
Rockpool	Castle Buildings	T Carr OBE
Ballycastle Head	Castle Buildings	D Ferran
Near Dungloe	Castle Buildings	P McCoy
Port II	Castle Buildings	S McClean
The Lough Foyle	Castle Buildings	D Ferran
Forest Stream Tollymore	Castle Buildings	D Mulholland
Irish Cottage	Castle Buildings	D Mulholland
Donaghadee	Castle Buildings	R J Croft
Linen Hall Library	Castle Buildings	Michael D
Spot the Dog	Armagh	R Wilson
The Bann at Portadown	Armagh	T McElnea
Lurgan Station	Armagh	P Stothers
Tree of Life	Armagh	O Henry
Flowers on a Red Table	Armagh	N Shawcross
Red Cow	Armagh	S McWilliams
The Boats	Armagh	O Henry
The Builder	Armagh	S McWilliams
Figure on Ground 2	Armagh	D Crone
Figure on Ground 1	Armagh	D Crone
On the Way Home	Armagh	K Wilson
The Kitchen Dresser	Armagh	R Davidson
Plants 2008	Armagh	D Crone
Hum Dream	Armagh	P Doherty
She Thought She Was Alone	Armagh	R McGurran
Washed Away	Armagh	R McGuigan
Fish Market, Portadown	Annex B Dundonald House	R D Beattie
Saturday Shopping, Portadown	Annex B Dundonald House	R D Beattie
Market Day Portadown 1898	Annex B Dundonald House	R D Beattie
Rock Formation 3	Annex B Dundonald House	M Thompson

Title	Location	Artist
Rock Formation 4	Annex B Dundonald House	M Thompson
Along the Coast	Annex B Dundonald House	C McAleer
Still Life	Annex B Dundonald House	R Wilson
Capall Glass	Annex B Dundonald House	R Watton
Capall Ruada	Annex B Dundonald House	R Watton
Dallways Bawn	Annex B Dundonald House	L McWha
The Roses	Annex B Dundonald House	J Crooks
Celtic Angel 3	Annex B Dundonald House	R Wilson
Celtic Angel 2	Annex B Dundonald House	R Wilson
Over Moorland to Black	Annex B Dundonald House	S Magee
Lily and Tall Tree Vase 1	Annex B Dundonald House	J McCart
Tulips and Fireplace	Annex B Dundonald House	J McCart
Lily and Tall Tree Vase 2	Annex B Dundonald House	J McCart
Night Garden 3	Annex B Dundonald House	A-M Keaveney
Teaset, Incomplete	Annex B Dundonald House	L Turner
Two Trees	Annex B Dundonald House	D Crone
Man Leaving	Annex B Dundonald House	M Gale
Gold and Ochre Shore	Annex B Dundonald House	C Lynch
Stormy Hillside	Annex B Dundonald House	J Conway
Smithfield Market	Park House, Belfast	R J Beattie
Winter Evening on the River Lagan	Park House, Belfast	F W Hull
Working in the Bog, Achill	Park House, Belfast	A McKenna

District Council Community Relations Programme

Mr Spratt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the level of funding, made available through the District Council Community Relations Programme, allocated to each council area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 7604/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The following table details the level of funding provided to each district council in each of the last three years.

Council	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	3-Year Total £
Antrim	46,051	42,157	51,089	139,297
Ards	91,297	89,963	106,643	287,903
Armagh	87,990	92,390	121,867	302,247
Ballymena	71,730	81,828	92,414	245,972

Council	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	3-Year Total £
Ballymoney	78,819	59,096	72,532	210,447
Banbridge	98,986	103,667	108,048	310,701
Belfast	451,614	477,708	586,348	1,515,670
Carrickfergus	49,498	52,754	64,974	167,226
Castlereagh	54,717	59,684	47,270	161,671
Coleraine	76,240	83,861	90,033	250,134
Cookstown	55,028	75,833	78,286	209,147
Craigavon	54,782	109,345	116,656	280,783
Derry City Council	239,291	318,520	323,523	881,334
Down	91,901	96,357	112,149	300,407
Dungannon And South Tyrone	100,797	127,670	134,514	362,981
Fermanagh	85,361	100,431	99,144	284,936
Larne	54,647	57,380	55,158	167,185
Limavady	64,923	68,840	80,873	214,636
Lisburn	50,258	50,834	62,686	163,778
Magherafelt	60,564	79,930	87,759	228,253
Moyle	49,665	48,986	36,694	135,345
Newry And Mourne	130,187	132,816	158,140	421,143
Newtownabbey	71,111	71,285	100,067	242,463
North Down	49,833	57,180	61,744	168,757
Omagh	52,273	50,589	60,203	163,065
Strabane	89,126	105,067	111,005	305,198
Total	2,406,689	2,694,171	3,019,819	8,120,679

Irish language

Mr McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action their Department is taking to promote a better understanding of the Irish language and to address any intolerance and prejudice against the language and those who speak it.

(AQW 7869/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We provide representation to an Interdepartmental Charter Implementation Group (ICIG) chaired by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. The ICIG is responsible for co-ordinating work to implement, monitor and report on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Our department complies with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of the Irish Language and Ulster Scots. We subscribe to the Guidance and Codes of Courtesy for Irish and Ulster Scots developed to assist staff in applying the principles of the Charter

In addition, we published a number of documents in Irish. These include the “Super Six” comic for primary school children on the subject of bullying and the North South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat Joint Communiqués for the Council’s Plenary and Language Sectoral meetings.

Total Spend on Hospitality

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 6358/11-15, whether the figures provided include their Department’s arm’s-length bodies; and if not, to provide this information for each of the last five years.

(AQW 7894/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The figures provided in response to AQW 6358/11-15 did not include hospitality costs for OFMDFM’s arms-length bodies.

The following table sets out the total spend on hospitality by each of the arms-length bodies of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in each of the last five financial years:

Arms Length Body	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
The Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland	£12,254	£16,534	£12,459	£13,726	£3,798
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	£1,013	£Nil	£Nil	£488	£193
Community Relations Council for Northern Ireland	£10,101	£9,970	£8,725	£6,282	£9,351
Strategic Investment Board	£11,704	£19,574	£5,838	£5,091	£6,108
Ilex Urban Regeneration Company	£2,715	£7,334	£3,652	£8,517	£6,579
The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland	£6,463	£5,107	£3,520	£3,302	£1,062
The Commissioner for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland	N/A	N/A	£416	£1,809	£1,492
The Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£1,385
The Northern Ireland Memorial Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£369

Opening of the Regenerated Ebrington Barracks, Foyle

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide a breakdown of the cost of the opening of the regenerated Ebrington Barracks, Foyle.

(AQW 7923/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A breakdown of the cost of the opening of the regenerated Ebrington Barracks is provided below:

Service	Cost (£)	VAT @ 20%	Total (£)
Project Management	16,666.67	3,333.33	20,000.00
Welcome Reception	750.00	150.00	900.00

Service	Cost (£)	VAT @ 20%	Total (£)
Welcome tea / coffee for public	3,000.00	600.00	3,600.00
Site preparation / event dressing	5,000.00	1,000.00	6,000.00
Design and Print	7,000.00	1,400.00	8,400.00
Temporary Structures	4,000.00	800.00	4,800.00
Production Equipment	16,000.00	3,200.00	19,200.00
Creative Design and Execution	25,000.00	5,000.00	30,000.00
Performers	12,150.00	2,430.00	14,580.00
Photographer	240.00	48.00	288.00
Security	9,000.00	1,800.00	10,800.00
Health and Safety Management	5,000.00	1,000.00	6,000.00
Site Services	8,000.00	1,600.00	9,600.00
Marketing	2,200.00	440.00	2,640.00
Event Management	7,500.00	1,500.00	9,000.00
On-site Contingency	2,000.00	400.00	2,400.00
Sub Total			148,208.00
December Cunningham Sq. Event			900.00
Total			149,108.00

Contracts by Ilex

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many businesses, based in Foyle, have been awarded contracts by Ilex in each of the last three years.

(AQW 7924/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In each of the last three financial years Ilex has awarded the following number of contracts to businesses based in the Foyle constituency:

2008/09	52 contracts
2009/10	91 contracts
2010/11	106 contracts
2011/12 (year to date)	105 contracts

Opening of the Regenerated Ebrington Barracks, Foyle

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many Derry based companies will be providing services for the opening of the Ebrington Barracks site, Foyle, including details of the services and the cost.

(AQW 7927/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Ilex is keen to ensure that local organisations are given every opportunity to tender for goods and services. Within the Terms of Reference for the procurement of the Event Management of the Parade Ground Opening contract, there was a requirement that the

successful company had to source as many goods and services locally as possible. As a result, almost 70% of the goods and services for the opening event are being provided by local organisations, which equates to over £96,000 to the local economy.

Forthcoming Trade Missions

Mr Moutray asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline their Department's objectives in relation to any forthcoming trade missions during 2012.

(AQW 7986/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Growing the economy and tackling disadvantage are at the heart of our Programme for Government. Attracting and maintaining high quality foreign economic investors is a key component in this work.

The United States offers a very good example of why our involvement in trade missions is such an important aspect of our work. Approximately 14,000 people are employed by US-owned companies. Our visits to the US over recent years have played a vital part in securing a wide range of investments. We have built up important personal relationships with senior executives in a range of companies that are providing significant numbers of jobs here, including NYSE, Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Citi, HBO and Universal Studios.

We visited the NYSE's Belfast operation on 17 February 2012 to meet its Global CEO Duncan Niederauer. Three hundred people are employed in the heart of Belfast and Mr Niederauer reaffirmed the positive working relationship with us and his company's ongoing commitment to Belfast.

We also met with the Vice Premier of China at an official dinner in Dublin Castle on Sunday 19 February. This is a very important relationship we will want to develop further in the coming months and years, so it is vital we continue this important work, building relationships and delivering jobs.

Next month we will travel to the US and Canada over St Patrick's Day, when we will continue to promote our economic strategy at the highest levels of the Obama Administration. We plan to meet Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper to build on our strong historical, cultural and economic links.

Our activities are not restricted to North America. We also have plans to travel to the economic powerhouses of India and the United Arab Emirates in April. We will meet with existing and potential investors to build trade links and to help local firms develop their export markets. We are also actively considering a visit to China later in the year.

Working closely with other departments, we are acutely conscious of the importance of putting our economy on the global stage. We plan to do all in our power to harness all opportunities.

Commissioner for Public Appointments

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they (i) have considered extending the powers of the Commissioner for Public Appointments to include the staff and board members of Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships; and (ii) will ask the Commissioner for Public Appointments to ensure that the staff and board members of Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships are required to complete political activity forms, which is the practice for other public boards.

(AQW 8026/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The statutory remit of the Commissioner for Public Bodies covers Ministerial appointments to the Boards of public bodies. As Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships are not public bodies they sit outside the Commissioner's remit.

The appointment of staff to public bodies also falls outside the Commissioner's remit.

Former Ballykelly Army Base

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 7435/11 -15, to provide an estimate of the annual on-going overheads at the former Ballykelly Army Base, broken down by (i) security; (ii) utilities; (iii) maintenance; and (iv) all other associated costs.

(AQW 8222/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As OFMDFM acquired the site on 7 October 2011 and does not have a full breakdown of previous costs from MOD, the following costs are an estimate based on experience to date and known commitments. They may change as management of the site develops and further experience is gained.

Security	£250,000
Utilities	£120,000
Maintenance	£100,000
Other costs	£68,000
Total	£538,000

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they have had with the UK Border Agency in relation to the security clearance issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees who are trying to secure employment, but whose home countries will not supply the necessary paperwork, such as proof of address.

(AQW 8341/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have not had any discussions with UK Border Agency (UKBA) in relation to this matter. However, as you will be aware, this issue was discussed at the most recent All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities meeting.

We have asked officials to discuss and explore this issue further with UKBA and other parties involved and to write to you about the results of their discussions in due course.

Money Generated in Capital Realisations

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how much money was generated in capital realisations by 2011; (ii) what high level projects this encompassed; and (iii) how much money was generated in each project.

(AQW 8406/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM has generated £4.64 million in capital realisations by selling the former army barracks at Malone Road Belfast and Magherafelt. The money generated in each project was £3.77 million for Malone Road and £870k for Magherafelt.

Race Relations (NI) Order 1997

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will introduce legislation to rectify the deficiencies of the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997.

(AQW 8535/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are committed to developing a Racial Equality Strategy and, through a public consultation on the Strategy, will be seeking views on how best to ensure a society where racism in any of its forms is not tolerated and where we live together as a society and enjoy equality of opportunity and equal protection. This may include the consideration of legislative options.

In the shorter term however, we will be bringing forward legislation, in order to meet EU obligations, to amend the Race Relations Order to prescribe the circumstances in which unlawful discrimination in relation to employment under that Order applies to seafarers on ships and hovercraft.

Danish Model of Flexible Working Conditions and Affordable Childcare

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what consideration their Department has given to the Danish model of flexible working conditions and affordable childcare to increase the level of female employees.

(AQW 8669/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In developing the strategy for integrated, accessible and affordable childcare, OFMDFM will consider other successful systems of childcare and labour market interventions. The policy and options appraisal of childcare provision recently published by OFMDFM includes a benchmarking analysis of systems across four jurisdictions, of which one was Denmark.

Historical Institutional Abuse Taskforce

Mr A Maskey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the work of the Historical Institutional Abuse Taskforce.

(AQO 1363/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The report and recommendations of the Taskforce were considered by the Executive last July.

Following a period of further information gathering, headed by Junior Minister Bell and Junior Minister Anderson over the summer recess, we announced the Executive's decision to establish an inquiry and investigation into historical institutional abuse.

As we reported to the Assembly last month, we have started to prepare the legislation that will give the inquiry panel the necessary powers to compel people and documents.

Work is underway to establish an acknowledgement forum, through which victims and survivors will have the opportunity to recount their individual experiences to the inquiry, within a sensitive and confidential environment. We will shortly be appointing the members to the panel.

The inquiry will have premises in Belfast City Centre and in Derry.

We are also committed to establishing an advocacy service that will provide support to victims and survivors before, during and after the inquiry. We have arranged for interim support to be provided to victims and survivors, whilst this service is established, through Lifeline, which can be contacted on 0808 808 8000. Further information on support available to victims and survivors is detailed on the NI Direct website.

We intend that the inquiry and investigation will conclude within two and a half years of its commencement. The chairperson will then be required to provide a report to the Executive within six months.

We are considering potential candidates for the inquiry panel, acknowledgement forum and inquiry secretariat.

Budget Review Group

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Budget Review Group.
(AQO 1367/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: During this Assembly term, the Budget Review Group has met three times. At its most recent meeting on 31 January, it agreed a future work programme to meet on a quarterly basis to report and review progress on key priorities. The next meeting is scheduled for 1 March. The priorities identified by the Group are considered to have the greatest potential and most strategic significance during the current Budget period. They typically include alternative options for

accessing finance, such as European funding; realising the value of surplus and under-utilised assets; and examining the potential for generating efficiencies through, for example, the ongoing review of arms length bodies. Specific pieces of work have been commissioned on each of the priority areas and progress on a number of these will be reported at the next meeting. Recommendations will be made to the Executive on the full range of issues in due course.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Dunne asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the implementation process for the Social Investment Fund.

(AQO 1368/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Public consultation on the implementation of the Social Investment Fund ended on 23 December 2011. During the consultation period, six public events were held with some 250 people attending. We also received over 300 responses via the consultation questionnaire.

We are currently considering all responses and feedback. We hope to be in a position to publish a consultation report in the coming weeks. 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.

Social Investment Fund

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

(AQO 1369/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Public consultation on the implementation of the Social Investment Fund ended on 23 December 2011. During the consultation period, 6 public events were held with some 250 people attending. We also received over 300 responses via the consultation questionnaire.

We are currently considering all responses and feedback. We hope to be in a position to publish a consultation report in the coming weeks. 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.

OFMDFM: Funding Allocations

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the extent of the funding which has been allocated by their Department, without evidence of Ministerial approval, over the last two years.

(AQO 1370/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Departmental Accounting Officer commissioned Internal Audit to review sponsor control of the Departments directly funded bodies for 2010/11. This report highlighted eight cases where funding was allocated prior to Ministerial approval being given.

Procedures have now been put in place to ensure that Ministerial approval is obtained before letters of offer are made in all cases. A follow-up exercise on the 2010/11 report will provide evidence of compliance with the new procedures in 2011/12.

Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly

Mr G Robinson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the future of the former Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly.

(AQO 1371/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Consideration is being given to the future of Shackleton Barracks in the short, medium and long term, with a number of options being explored which could generate monetary or social benefit pending disposal of the site.

Investigations are also being carried out on the hydrological and contamination aspects of the site to ensure that it is being responsibly managed and that any proposed use does not create health and safety risks.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Amount Paid to Recruitment Agencies

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the amount paid to recruitment agencies for (i) full-time; and (ii) part-time posts in her Department, and its arm's-length bodies, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 7741/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The total amount paid to recruitment agencies by my Department and its arms-length bodies in each of the last three financial years is provided on the attached Annex. The expenditure by arms-length bodies includes a substantial proportion in respect of seasonal workers required annually by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute. A breakdown between full-time and part-time posts is not available.

Export Opportunities for Producers of Pedigree Pig Stock

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department intends to grow the export opportunities for producers of pedigree pig stock whilst offering assistance with exorbitant transport and veterinary inspection costs.

(AQW 7992/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am supportive of all opportunities to grow exports of pedigree pig stock. As a measure of this support, my officials in Trade Branch provide export health certificates, veterinary support certificates, notes for guidance and advice to potential exporters. This documentation and supporting information is provided at no cost to the exporter. In addition, my officials provide training to private veterinarians who facilitate these live exports as part of their rural business. Again this training is currently provided free of charge by officials within my Department.

My officials have also been working closely with the industry over a number of years to control Aujeszky's disease (AD). As I am sure you are aware that work allowed us to have our eradication programme formally recognised by the EU in 2009. Since that time my officials and the industry have continued to work together and as a result DARD will submit an application to the EU to be formally recognised as AD free at the same time as the south of Ireland. When we do gain disease free status that will open up new trade opportunities for pig keepers.

The issue of transport and veterinary costs is a commercial matter between the exporter and the private sector who carry out these activities as part of their business.

InterTradeIreland's 'Agri-Food: A Study for Cross-Border Cooperation'

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will recommend that the Food Strategy Board considers the adoption of the recommendations in InterTradeIreland's 'Agri-Food: A Study for Cross-Border Cooperation'.

(AQW 8045/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The role of the Agri-Food Strategy Board (AFSB) will be to develop the current Focus on Food document into a longer strategic vision for the sector.

In doing so I have no doubt that the AFSB will explore all avenues that can assist the local sector to grow and secure new markets. I am sure that InterTrade Ireland's Agri-food study will be one of a range of source materials that the Board will consider in developing the way forward for the industry.

The InterTrade Ireland Report identifies initiatives within strategic themes similar to those outlined in Focus on Food and both documents recognise the importance of industry involvement in policy development.

Whilst the industry in the South remains a competitor for our industry, we also share many of the same challenges and opportunities. The new AFSB will no doubt explore if there are areas that might benefit from a cross border approach and the InterTrade Ireland report will be a very helpful document in that regard.

Agri-Food Sector

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has sent all reports and relevant information on the agri-food sector to her Department so that the sector can be developed and achieve increased competitiveness.

(AQW 8080/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My officials have a strong working relationship with their DETI and Invest NI counterparts, particularly in relation to the agri-food sector. We worked together previously on a partnership strategy for the agri-food sector – Focus on Food.

This close working relationship will continue through the new Agri-Food Strategy Board (AFSB), which will have representation from the appropriate Departments and agencies alongside industry members under the independent Chairmanship of Tony O'Neill. The AFSB will be tasked with developing a longer term strategy for the sector moving forward. This will no doubt involve the continued exchange of relevant reports and other information to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting this important sector.

Department Spend on Fuel

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department, and its agencies, have spent on fuel in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8093/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The expenditure incurred is as follows:

	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
Core Department	87,392	81,508	117,899	110,426	159,963
Forest Service	258,102	282,333	338,140	280,670	316,532
Rivers Agency	429,814	411,713	555,465	491,829	591,087
Total	775,308	775,554	1,011,504	882,925	1,067,582

Department Spend on Conferences, Away-days and Team Building Exercises

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department has spent on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8099/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The spend is as follows:

	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 (to Jan 2012) £
Conferences	56,064	35,879	26,136

	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 (to Jan 2012) £
Away-days	5,559	8,859	2,019
Team Building	936	2,137	1,968
Total	62,559	46,875	30,123

Strangford Lough Horse Mussel Reefs

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to ensure that European Commission infraction fines are not levied on her Department in relation to the Strangford Lough Horse Mussel reefs matter.

(AQW 8134/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Officials in my Department have worked closely with those in the Department of the Environment to co-fund the three year Modiolus Restoration Research Project which concluded in the summer of 2011. Both Departments have examined the recommendations in the project report and prepared draft proposals which the Commission are currently examining. At this stage we await the response of the Commission which we will carefully consider before commenting on future actions.

Horse Mussels in Strangford Lough

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will create a taskforce, in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, to manage the habitat of horse mussels in Strangford Lough.

(AQW 8135/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Officials from the Department of the Environment and my Department have been working together on this issue for some time, co-funding the three year Modiolus Restoration Research Project and building on the report recommendations. Each Department brought their respective responsibilities to a draft proposal prepared recently for the Commission. We await the Commission response to this proposal and will continue work together and keep implementation arrangements under review to deliver future requirements.

Dogs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Dogs (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 applies to hunt clubs and the ability of their handlers to exercise control of their dogs.

(AQW 8164/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act") amends the Dogs Order 1983 ("the 1983 Order") which provides for licensing of dogs and offences in relation to straying, attacking livestock and certain other pets as well as enforcement of dog control legislation by Council dog wardens.

In general terms, the provisions of the 1983 Order, as amended, apply to all dogs and their owners unless specifically stated otherwise. However, there are some provisions which are only applicable to dogs held under a dog licence and others which are only applicable to dogs held under a block licence. There are also provisions which exempt certain types of dogs from specific aspects. For example, Article 5 of the 1983 Order exempts assistance dogs and police dogs from the licensing provisions. In light of this, each provision of the 1983 Order would have to be considered individually in order to confirm whether or not it applies to particular dogs in a particular situation.

The only Article in which hunt packs are specifically referred to as being exempt from a provision is Article 25. Article 25(1) makes it an offence for a dog to be off the lead on certain lands e.g. land on

which livestock are present. However, paragraph (2) then goes on to exempt some dogs including police dogs, sheepdogs and dogs being used in a pack of hounds. This means that keepers of those dogs would not be committing an offence if they allow their dog to go on to the particular land without the dog being on a lead. This exemption is necessary in that it would be impractical to expect police dogs on police business, sheep dogs tending sheep or a whole pack of hounds on a hunt to be put on a lead as this would interfere with the very purpose of the dog.

Rural Payment Agency

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) why the work, which was previously carried out by the Rural Payment Agency, has been put out to tender; (ii) what is the estimated cost of transferring the responsibilities for this work, including the software used, from the Rural Payment Agency; and (iii) whether Rural Payment Agency staff have been, or will be, redeployed.
(AQW 8180/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am not responsible for the work of the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), which is responsible for direct payments to farmers in England.

While my Department is the Paying Agency for the north of Ireland and performs many similar functions to the RPA, it is not involved in the RPA's tendering processes.

Identification Tags

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the potential for stolen livestock entering the food chain with different identification tags; and what action her Department is taking to address this issue.
(AQW 8200/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD have responsibility for the authorisation of livestock identification and registered keepers may only obtain tags from authorised suppliers. Food business operators at slaughterhouses have a responsibility to check the identify and description of animals presented for slaughter against data held within the APHIS system. My officials supervise this process in meat plants, on behalf of the Food Standards Agency (FSA), to ensure that only animals fit for human consumption enter the food-chain. This process is regularly audited by both the FSA and external auditors from the EU and third countries.

Stolen livestock is a matter for the PSNI with whom my officials within the VS Central Enforcement team cooperate closely. If anyone has any information on stolen livestock, I would ask that they provide this information to the PSNI at the earliest possible opportunity.

Phantom Identification Tags

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the prevalence of phantom identification tags that are in circulation which could be used on stolen livestock; and what action her Department is taking to address this issue.
(AQW 8202/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: DARD have a process in place, for the authorisation of ear-tag suppliers, to order tags on behalf of named clients. Clients must write to the supplier confirming their authority to access his data via the APHIS Portal. All tags must be registered before use & can only be obtained from an authorised supplier. Any tag number that is registered as dead, slaughtered, exported or lost is marked as such on the APHIS system and cannot be reactivated unless in very exceptional circumstances and after detailed investigation of the provenance of the animal. Animals may not move from the farm of origin into a market, meat plant or export assembly centre without validation of their identity against the presenters herd list. Furthermore, in the north, the validity of the animal identification is subject to an extremely high level of checking, not only through cattle and sheep identity inspections, but also at every TB and Brucellosis test.

Badger Vaccination Trials and Studies

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department is monitoring badger vaccination trials and studies in England and the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 8231/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My officials are monitoring closely the badger vaccination trials and studies in England and in the south of Ireland.

DARD officials formally meet twice-yearly with their counterparts from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) in the south of Ireland at North-South TB and Brucellosis Working Group meetings. Additional joint Sub-Group meetings take place to discuss opportunities for collaborative TB research and studies.

A recent output of these discussions is the agreement to jointly organise an international vaccination experts' scientific workshop pre-summer 2012 to consider badger vaccination issues on the island of Ireland.

DARD officials also participate in monthly TB Liaison Group meetings led by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which include representatives from England, Scotland and Wales as well as from the north of Ireland. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss relevant TB issues, including updates relating to badger vaccination trials and studies.

In addition, DARD officials attend, as observers, the Defra-led Vaccines Programme Advisory Group, where TB vaccine development in both badgers and cattle are discussed. Further monitoring of badger vaccination research is conducted through the Defra-led Epidemiology and Wildlife Risks Programme Advisory Group. Both these groups are cognisant of the international developments in this field.

Key experts in the field of badger vaccination from England and the south of Ireland have delivered presentations on their badger vaccination trials and studies to relevant DARD staff.

Dog Attacks on Livestock

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how many dog attacks which resulted in (a) the loss of livestock; and (b) serious injury to livestock, have been reported by farmers in each of the last five years; and (ii) how many dog owners have been prosecuted in relation to these incidents.

(AQW 8358/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Dog control here is legislated for by the Dogs Order 1983, as amended by the Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011. The local Councils enforce this legislation and provide statistics to my Department regarding its operation.

The table below details the number of investigations of dog attacks on livestock and the number of prosecutions that resulted from these investigations for each of the past 5 years. My Department does not hold information regarding the severity of the attacks.

Year	Number of Livestock Attacks Investigated	Number of Prosecutions
2007	330	7
2008	412	5
2009	291	11
2010	466	1
2011	386	7

Surrendered EU Funding

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what EU funding has been surrendered by her Department in each of the last two financial years.

(AQW 8363/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department has not surrendered any EU funds in each of the last 2 financial years.

EU expenditure is matched by EU funding and the process for adjusting requirements is by internal reallocations in the in-year monitoring rounds. This means that where there is a decrease in EU expenditure there is an equal and opposite decrease in EU funds (income), and the budget changes net to zero. As a consequence, EU funds are not “surrendered” or declared as reduced requirements.

ANNEX A

TABLE 1: OPENING BUDGET, FINAL BUDGET AND PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2009/10 AND 2010/11

							£'000
EU Schemes - Receipts	2009/10			2010/11			
	Opening Budget	Final Budget (Feb Monit-oring)	Provisional Outturn	Opening Budget	Final Budget (Feb Monit-oring)	Provisional Outturn	
METS	0	0	0	0	-1,250	0	
Fisheries e-log books	0	0	0	0	-200	0	
Agri Food Waste Challenge	-1,000	0	0	-1,500	-300	-26	
EU Fisheries	-2,041	0	0	0	0	0	
European Fisheries Fund	-1,000	-300	-123	-2,075	-1,497	-1,019	
Interreg (Resource)	-150	0	0	0	-19	0	
Interreg (Capital Grant)	-150	0	0	-375	0	0	
CAP Schemes	-255,651	-307,645	-306,648	-256,635	-280,619	-279,336	
NIRDP	-12,280	-28,268	-23,214	-13,690	-30,804	-25,532	
Total	-272,272	-336,213	-329,985	-274,275	-314,689	-305,913	

							£'000
EU Schemes - Expenditure	2009/10			2010/11			
	Opening Budget	Final Budget (Feb Monit-oring)	Provisional Outturn	Opening Budget	Final Budget (Feb Monit-oring)	Provisional Outturn	
METS	0	0	0	0	1,250	0	

						£'000
EU Schemes - Expenditure	2009/10			2010/11		
	Opening Budget	Final Budget (Feb Monitoring)	Provisional Outturn	Opening Budget	Final Budget (Feb Monitoring)	Provisional Outturn
Fisheries e-log books	0	0	0	0	200	0
Agri Food Waste Challenge	1,000	0	0	1,500	300	26
EU Fisheries	2,041	0	0	0	0	0
European Fisheries Fund	1,000	300	123	2,075	1,497	1,019
Interreg (Resource)	150	0	0	0	19	0
Interreg (Capital Grant)	150	0	0	375	0	0
CAP Schemes	255,651	307,645	306,648	256,635	280,619	279,336
NIRDP	12,280	28,268	23,214	13,690	30,804	25,532
Total	272,272	336,213	329,985	274,275	314,689	305,913

Capacity Building Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 6006/11-15, when the invitation to tender for the provision of support services for Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist rural communities will be issued.

(AQW 8367/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: An Economic Appraisal on the provision of local rural community development services which includes specific proposals for services for protestant/unionist/loyalist rural communities has been approved by the Department of Finance and Personnel. Invitations to tender have been issued in February 2012 with the aim of having contracts in place by April 2012.

Lease on Sperrin House, Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) when the lease on Sperrin House, Omagh, is due to end; (ii) the annual cost of the lease to her Department; (iii) how much her Department intends to spend on upgrading the House; (iv) what works are proposed; and (v) when work is due to commence.

(AQW 8410/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) is bound to a lease on Sperrin House until 31 January 2015. DFP manage the office estate and notionally charge Departments for the occupancy of the building, therefore there is no annual lease cost to DARD. The notional costs to DARD for Sperrin House are approximately £243,000 per year.

Sperrin House has 4 storeys, comprising of mainly small cellular offices. We intend to create open plan layouts where possible, allowing DARD to make better use of the available space and create additional

capacity, in line with current workplace planning. DFP estimate the work will cost £270,000. Work began on 10th February and is due to complete in April this year.

Land Leased from the Forestry Service

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to list (i) the organisations which lease property or land from the Forestry Service; (ii) the locations of the property or land; and (iii) the time remaining on these leases.

(AQW 8461/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The table below provides the information requested in respect of Forest Service leases with organisations:-

(I) Organisation	(li) Location	(lii)Time Remaining On Lease
Land & Buildings		
Cloverly Hall Ltd.	Castlewellan Forest Park	12 yrs 4 mths
Speedwell Trust	Parkanaur Forest	9 yrs 4 mths
Antrim Borough Council	Randalstown Forest	11 yrs 11 mths
Workspace Ltd	Derrynoyd Forest	82 years
The Girl Guides Association	Gosford Forest Park	9yrs 10 mths
Scout Association Trust Corporation	Parkanaur Forest	1 yr 5 mths
Rathcoole Self Help Group	Breen Forest	9 yrs 8 mths
Clanrye Employment & and Training Services	Slieve Gullion Forest Park	7 yrs 2 mths
Heart Revolving Fund	Gosford Forest Park	183yrs 2mths
Restore Ireland Ltd.	Gosford Forest Park	89 yrs 9 mths
Slieve Gullion Courtyard Development Group Ltd.	Slieve Gullion Forest Park	84 yrs 3 mths
Buildings Only		
RSPB	Belvoir Park Forest	6yrs
Highpoint	Castlewellan Forest Park	17 yrs 3 mths
Land Only		
Arqiva	Donard Forest	60 yrs 5 mths
Arqiva	Derrynoyd Forest	12 yrs 10 mths
Arqiva	Kesh Forest	19 yrs 10 mths
Arqiva	Camlough Forest	3 yrs 5 mths
Arqiva	Rostrevor Forest	66 yrs 6 mths
Arqiva	Grange Park Forest	57 yrs 2 mths
Arqiva	Glenariff Forest Park	13 yrs 8 mths
Arqiva	Ballypatrick Forest	13 yrs 8 mths

(I) Organisation	(II) Location	(III) Time Remaining On Lease
NIE	Tardree Forest	3 yrs 4 mths
NIE	Loughermore Forest	5 yrs 5 mths
NIE	Grange Park Forest	8 yrs
Orange Personal Communications Services Ltd.	Gortin Glen Forest	11 yrs 6 mths
Patterson Electronics	Springwell Forest	6 months
PSNI	Slieveanorra Forest	62 yrs 1 mth
PSNI	The Fews Forest	62 yrs 1 mth
PSNI	Gortin Glen Forest	62 yrs 1 mth
PSNI	Lough Navar Forest	62 yrs 1 mth
PSNI	Grange Park Forest	62 yrs 1 mth
PSNI	Dunmoyle Forest	14 yrs 10 mths
PSNI	Carnmore Forest	14 yrs 10 mths
PSNI	Goles Forest	18 yrs 1 mth
PSNI	Slieve Gullion For. Pk	14yrs 4mths
Derry City Council	Learmount Forest	21 yrs 10 mths
Down District Council	Tollymore Forest Park	16 yrs 10 mths
Banbridge District Council	Castlewellan Forest Park	16 yrs 7 mths
Larne Bor. Council	Ballyboley Forest	13yrs 1 mth
Rossigh Angling Club	C'Archdale Forest	1yr 4mths
Ministry of Defence	Ballypatrick Forest	19 years
Defence Estates	Slieveanorra Forest	8 months
Defence Estates	Ballypatrick Forest	4 yrs 2 mths
Fermanagh District Council	Florencecourt Forest	10 yrs 10 mths
Bulrush Horticulture Ltd.	Portglenone Forest	2 yrs 2 mths
The Sports Council for NI	Tollymore Forest Park	21 yrs 11 mths
Woodland Trust	Gosford Forest Park	14 yrs 2 mths
Armagh City Council	Loughgall Forest	15 yrs 10 mths
St. Marys Church Trustees	Portglenone Forest	85 yrs 7 mths
Newry & Mourne District Council	Rostrevor Forest	Expired under review
St. Genevieve's	Tollymore Forest Park	Expired under review
Arqiva	Gortin Glen Forest	Expired under review

Agri-Food Strategy Board

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the criteria that will be used to appoint members to the Agri-food Strategy Board; (ii) the completion date for the appointment process; (iii) whether the positions will be remunerated; (iv) the proposed remuneration scale; and (v) if the posts are not to be remunerated, why this decision was taken, given that remuneration is offered for positions on similar bodies such as the Livestock Meat Commission.

(AQW 8500/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: i) The criteria used to appoint members will be:

A proven track record of contributing successfully at Board level to the strategic direction of a complex organisation;

A proven ability to work at a strategic level with stakeholders from different perspectives to agree a common strategy and evaluate and monitor progress against agreed targets; and

A good knowledge of the issues facing the local economy and a good understanding of the strategic issues facing the local agri-food industry.

- ii) We are aiming to have the Agri-food Strategy Board (AFSB) up and running by April 2012.
- iii) Members will receive no remuneration but will be entitled to claim reasonable travelling expenses at current Civil Service rates for attending meetings.
- iv) See above.
- v) Members will not be remunerated as the AFSB is an advisory body with no executive functions.

Schmallenberg Virus

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) when she consulted departmental vets about the threat of the Schmallenberg Virus; (ii) when her Department alerted sheep and cattle farmers about the threat; and (iii) to outline the threat posed by the Virus.

(AQW 8505/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) Policy and Veterinary Service officials from my Department met with representatives of the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute on 12 January 2012 to discuss our response to reported cases of Schmallenberg Virus in Northern Europe. My officials briefed me on 17 January 2012 on proposed action by the Department in relation to additional surveillance for the disease and communication with stakeholders.
- (ii) On 19 January 2012 my officials invited key stakeholders to a meeting to discuss the Department's proposed response and alerted them to information regarding the disease on the Department's website. On 20 January 2012, my officials wrote to all importers of ruminant animals from mainland Europe (from 01 June 2011) advising them of the threat.
- (iii) Veterinary risk assessment has indicated that the risk posed by Schmallenberg virus is considered to be low to medium with a high degree of uncertainty. Animals, particularly pregnant animals, imported from regions where Schmallenberg virus has been actively circulating pose the highest risk of introduction of the infection to north of Ireland. Incursion by infected midges is considered as a negligible risk unless the virus becomes widespread in the west of Britain. The high degree of uncertainty is due to the limited amount of knowledge so far accrued about this new emerging virus.

The threat to humans is considered negligible.

Private Veterinary Work

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given her proposal to reduce private veterinary work on farms, thereby reducing the number of practising vets and their ability to

respond to an outbreak, what plans are in place to deal with a major outbreak of animal or poultry disease or infection.

(AQW 8507/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have no proposal to reduce private veterinary work on farms. I greatly value the role played by private vets and have recently met with the veterinary associations to reassure them of this. However in line with a Public Accounts Committee (PAC) recommendation, my officials are currently exploring the use of lay TB testers which the PAC suggested might offer significant cost savings over current testing arrangements. The European Commission has now clarified that lay testers can be used for TB testing.

With regard to epizootic outbreak contingency plans my officials are currently reviewing arrangements for obtaining private veterinary assistance during an outbreak. As part of this process my veterinary officials will be in discussions with the veterinary organisations.

Private Veterinary Work

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she intends to reduce private veterinary work, such as Tuberculosis testing on farms; and for her assessment of the impact a reduction would have on the number of vets and on overall veterinary surveillance and animal health.

(AQW 8508/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I greatly value the role played by private vets and have recently met with the veterinary associations to reassure them of this. However in line with a Public Accounts Committee (PAC) recommendation, my officials are currently exploring the use of lay TB testers which the PAC suggested might offer significant cost savings over current testing arrangements. The European Commission has now clarified that lay testers can be used for TB testing.

The DARD draft Budget published on 15 December 2010 included a proposed savings measure relating to lay TB testing. A lay testing pilot was completed in December 2011 and is currently being evaluated. I am mindful of the important wider role played by private vets and confident that veterinary surveillance and animal health will not suffer under current plans.

Schmallenberg Virus

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the (i) recognisable symptoms of the Schmallenberg Virus; and (ii) its possible impact on (a) breeding livestock; (b) consumer confidence in the lamb or beef industry; and (iii) possible mutations to livestock affecting farmers' income and personal health.

(AQW 8509/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: (i) Schmallenberg virus infection has been associated with fever, milk drop and transient diarrhoea in adult cattle. Due to the ability of the virus to cross the placenta and infect the foetus, it has been identified as causing deformities in new-born lambs, calves and goat kids. These deformities are mainly caused by severe central nervous system lesions and limb abnormalities such as contracted joints (cannot straighten legs). Nervous signs range from 'dummy' type animals, to those showing marked paralysis or blindness. Abortions have been also attributed to the virus.

- (ii) (a) The impact on adult animals appears to be transient and the subclinical effect of schmallenberg virus infection on longer term milk yield has not yet been evaluated. The biggest impact is linked to neonatal losses, particularly in sheep, where case reports have indicated that up to 50% of off-spring have been affected, although provisionally a level of 8-10% appears to be more likely from affected sheep farms on continental Europe. Cattle herds seem to be affected to a lesser extent but many factors will impact on the frequency and clinical signs of infection with Schmallenberg virus.
- (ii) (b) Current advice is that human health risks are negligible and thus consumer confidence in lamb and beef should remain high.

- (iii) Clearly livestock losses through neonatal mortality or reduced productivity in adult livestock will impact on farmers' income, and the impact will depend on the extent of clinical infection in the herd. Current advice is that the risks to farmers' health are negligible.

People Employed in the Agricultural, Hunting and Fishing Industries

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given that around 75 percent of the people employed in the agricultural, hunting and fishing industries are self-employed, what advice and support her Department provides in relation to accounting and management.

(AQW 8518/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department, through the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) is providing advice and support to the agricultural industries through development planning, industry training and benchmarking programmes. For the 2010/11 year, 1765 farmers and growers had a development plan prepared, 3030 people participated in management training and 897 businesses were benchmarked.

In addition, as part of the NI Rural Development Programme, Farm Family Options scheme, 58 trainees were provided with support for courses related to accounting and management. The programme is currently closed for review but should reopen soon.

Postage and Printing Costs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department, and its arm's-length bodies, give elected representatives the choice of receiving reports and all other correspondence by email to minimise postage and printing costs.

(AQW 8522/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department and its arm's length bodies do not formally offer elected representatives a choice in every specific piece of correspondence. However, queries from individual MLAs are answered in accordance with the wishes of the MLA by either email or in hard-copy.

With regard to responses on specific Assembly-related business (such as Assembly Questions and Statements), the Department adheres to Assembly guidance and protocol.

Funding for Líofo 2012

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what (i) funding; and (ii) support her Department has provided to the Líofo 2012 initiative to date; and what plans she has to support the initiative in the future.

(AQW 8544/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As part of the commitment given by this Assembly to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, all public bodies in the north of Ireland are required to encourage the use of Irish and Ulster-Scots. As a large public service provider, DARD is also expected to take some steps to raise awareness levels too.

The DCAL Líofo initiative provides a vehicle for my Department to raise awareness of the Irish language and culture. The Council of Europe Charter on Regional or Minority Languages is designed to protect and promote regional or minority languages. At present, the Charter obligations apply to each language differently, as Part II of the Charter applies to Irish and Ulster-Scots and Part III applies only to Irish.

DARD will help further promote and develop the Líofo initiative in rural areas by organising three further localised Líofo launches outside of Belfast and Derry in the coming months. In addition to these, the Líofo initiative will be promoted at this year's Balmoral Show and also across the DARD Direct offices.

No direct funding has been provided by DARD in support of the Líofo initiative.

Welfare Practices in Slaughter Houses

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the current welfare practices in slaughter houses; and for her assessment of the benefits of a mandatory CCTV scheme for slaughter houses.

(AQW 8547/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The welfare of animals at slaughterhouses here is subject to the requirements the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1996, which set out the basic requirements for the operation of slaughterhouses in order to prevent any unnecessary suffering for animals prior to and during the slaughter process.

Veterinary Officers from my Department are present in all approved slaughterhouses during times of slaughter each day and as part of regular audits. Their role includes verification that the slaughterhouse operator fulfils their obligations under the legislation.

To ensure that animals are killed humanely, no person can slaughter animals in a slaughterhouse here without going through an assessment and licensing process. Slaughtermen are licensed by my Department under the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1996, which ensures that anyone who handles animals in a slaughterhouse has an adequate level of knowledge, training and competence.

As well as Departmental monitoring and licensing systems, most establishments here have designated Animal Welfare Officers. These systems ensure a high level of welfare protection in slaughterhouses.

Late last year I met Kate Fowler, Animal Aid's Campaign Manager, to discuss CCTV in slaughterhouses. I made the point that my officials have a constant presence at point of slaughter.

There is no evidence in the north of Ireland to suggest that mandatory CCTV is necessary to prevent acts of animal cruelty in slaughterhouses. In one of the highly publicised cases of animal cruelty in a slaughterhouse in Britain, the plant had CCTV installed and this did not prevent the welfare incident occurring. I would argue that CCTV is not the perfect solution that some advocates maintain.

When considering the introduction of mandatory CCTV we should be mindful that thirteen of the twenty slaughterhouses here have already installed CCTV voluntarily. Two further plants have CCTV in place but not in the stunning area. The five remaining slaughterhouses are relatively small plants.

Given the high level of welfare protection currently in place, I would prefer to try and secure agreement from the five remaining plants to install CCTV voluntarily rather than introduce legislation. I intend to approach the slaughterhouses directly on this matter.

My Department is currently considering the role CCTV might play in helping ensure business operators comply with their obligations under EC Regulation 1099/2009 concerning the welfare of animals at the time of killing, which comes into effect on 1 January 2013. At my request, my veterinary officials have alerted the red meat industry to the potential benefits of CCTV in meat plants and have encouraged them to use it on a voluntary basis.

If I feel that it is necessary to consider the introduction of compulsory monitoring using CCTV, I would want to assess the available evidence and also to examine developments in Britain and the south with input from stakeholders, including animal welfare groups and slaughterhouse operators, before making my decision.

I would also inform you that my Veterinarians are currently carrying out a week-long, comprehensive animal welfare survey in all abattoirs across the North of Ireland. This survey is being carried out in addition to the daily checks and audits carried out in all abattoirs here. The results will enable DARD to assess welfare standards in each establishment and to target any follow-up action which may be required.

River Designation

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the process and criteria for designating a river; and whether she will give consideration to designating the River Cloughfin and the River Altamuskin in County Tyrone.

(AQW 8625/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Designation of watercourses in the north of Ireland is the responsibility of the Drainage Council for NI which operates as an independent advisory Non Departmental Public Body. It is therefore not within my remit to make decisions on designations of watercourses although my officials can make recommendations to the Drainage Council. Likewise the criteria set for watercourses being considered for designation are also identified by the Drainage Council. I can advise that there are two overriding criteria which must be met. That the cost of the proposed works resulting from designation would satisfy appropriate appraisal criteria, either in quantifiable cost/benefit terms (as in the case of flood defence and drainage schemes) or qualitative terms such as a reduction in the risk to life or damage to property from flooding (as in the case of repair and maintenance). The second overriding criteria is that the works meet the conditions for prioritisation to be included in my Rivers Agency programme of works and that they have a satisfactory priority assessment. Whilst the overriding criteria must be met if designation is to be considered, it is worth noting that assuming these are met one condition that qualifies a watercourse to be considered for designation is where the works required are outside the capability of the riparians to organise and carry out at their own expense. In respect of the Cloughfin and Altamuskin rivers, a section of the Cloughfin is already designated. Those undesignated areas of the Cloughfin and the whole of the Altamuskin are unlikely to ever meet the existing designation criteria given the very few properties affected when considering the materiality of any works required.

Attendance at Agricultural Shows

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many agricultural shows she has attended since May 2011; and how many she plans to attend in the next twelve months.

(AQW 8626/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I welcome the opportunity to emphasize the importance I attach to Agricultural Shows. I consider these to be an integral part of rural life, giving rural communities a focal point and encouraging interest in farming amongst potential farmers of the future and the wider general public.

I have attended seven agricultural shows since May 2011. These were the International and National Ploughing Championships, the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) Winter Fair and four local agricultural shows. Diary commitments permitting, I would hope to attend a similar

number of agricultural shows in the next twelve months in addition to the RUAS Balmoral Show in May 2012.

Attendance at Agricultural Shows

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how she decides which agricultural shows she will attend.

(AQW 8627/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Agricultural shows make an important contribution to the development of the Agri-food industry and rural communities.

I plan to demonstrate my commitment to these events by attending all the major agricultural shows and local shows held in the north during my time as Minister. The order in which I will attend these events is very much dependant on balancing diary commitments with my desire to visit events at locations spread across the north in any single year.

Development of Stewardship Areas

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans she has to develop Stewardship areas which are funded by her Department.

(AQW 8653/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department provides already provides funding to manage stewardship areas under Measure 2.2 of the Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013. These stewardship areas, such as Environmentally Sensitive Areas, are managed under agri-environment scheme agreement. Farmers and landowners received funding in return for managing their land for environmental benefit. The schemes aim to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, enhance the landscape and help reduce the impact of climate change.

Scheme participants have agreed plans which identify habitats and provide management requirements which ensure that habitats are managed to benefit wildlife, plants and landscape features. There are currently 12,100 scheme participants and over 440,000 hectares of farmland being managed to bring environmental benefit to our countryside. I expect this area to increase in 2012 with the signing of around 1000 new agreements.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the application for Rural Development Programme funding, under Measure 3.6, by the Crossmaglen Memorial and Heritage Committee (i) on what date the application was lodged with Southern Organisation for Action in Rural Areas; (ii) by what process officials deemed the application to be eligible; and (iii) whether she had any involvement in the decision making process.

(AQW 8686/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The application from Crossmaglen Memorial and Heritage Committee was lodged with Southern Organisation for Action in Rural Areas (SOAR) on 28 September 2010.

Advice on eligibility was relayed to the Chair of the SOAR Joint Council Committee by my officials on 26 January 2012, following a request by the previous Chair to review earlier advice.

I have had no involvement in the decision making process.

Republican Monument in Crossmaglen

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the basis on which the decision was made that the republican monument in Crossmaglen was eligible for funding under Measure 3.6 of the Rural Development Programme.

(AQW 8704/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Recommendations about eligibility of projects, including this one, are determined by the Lead Council and the Local Action Group and referred to the Joint Council Committee (JCC) for a decision. Advice was sought from the Department about this project and was relayed to the Chair of the SOAR JCC on 26 January 2012.

Republican Monument in Crossmaglen

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when the Department first received an application to fund the Crossmaglen republican monument under Measure 3.6 of the Rural Development Programme.

(AQW 8706/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Applications to Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme are not received directly by my Department but by the Lead Council in the cluster contracted by my Department to deliver the programme – in this case Southern Organisation for Action in Rural Areas (SOAR).

An application from Crossmaglen Memorial & Heritage Committee was received by SOAR under Measure 3.6 of Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme on 28 September 2010.

Flooding in South and East Belfast

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on any investigative work being carried out, and any subsequent remedial action planned, to address problems in flooding hotspots in South and East Belfast.

(AQW 8741/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Rivers Agency has completed 2 major Feasibility Studies associated with watercourses in East Belfast, the Loop River Feasibility Study and the East Belfast Watercourse Feasibility Study Stage 3 and is currently in partnership with Belfast City Council in the construction of river flood alleviation works on the Loop and Knock Rivers and the Connswater in East Belfast. One major culvert on the Loop River at Castlereagh has also been constructed. In order to reduce flood risk in East Belfast, further projects falling out of these Feasibility Studies will be developed; progress will of course depend on available funding and priority against other such schemes proposed in the Province. My Rivers Agency also conducts routine weekly inspections and clearing of grilles in south and east Belfast which are also inspected and cleared on receipt of any extreme rainfall weather warnings. The Rivers Agency is also responsible for a network of culverts and open watercourses throughout south and east Belfast which have been designated under the terms of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973. This network is routinely inspected and various maintenance and upgrade works are carried out on an on-going basis.

Tuberculosis

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to list (i) the number of cattle taken to slaughterhouses following a positive TB herd inspection; and (ii) the number which subsequently tested negative for TB, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8787/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: i)

8390 TB reactors were slaughtered during 2008.

8198 TB reactors were slaughtered during 2009.

6404 TB reactors were slaughtered during 2010.

4548 TB reactors were slaughtered up to August 2011.

ii)

5092 TB reactors were not confirmed TB positive during 2008.

4843 TB reactors were not confirmed TB positive during 2009.

3576 TB reactors were not confirmed TB positive during 2010.

2507 TB reactors slaughtered up to August 2011 were not confirmed TB positive.

A confirmed TB positive is defined as the presence of visible evidence of TB at slaughter and/or TB positive laboratory tests. Reference is made only to reactors up to August 2011 because of the lag time to fully complete confirmatory procedures and include the results in official statistics.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Total Spend on Hospitality

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

(AQW 8073/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): In the financial years 2006-07 to 2010-11 inclusive, the Department's spending on hospitality was as follows:

2006-07	£32,493
2007-08	£41,117
2008-09	£64,452
2009-10	£44,930
2010-11	£37,027

Department Spend on Conferences, Away-days and Team Building Exercises

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much her Department has spent on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8098/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the financial years 2008-09 to 2010-11 inclusive, the Department's spending on conferences, away-days and team building exercises was as follows:

2008-09	£23,197
2009-10	£25,380
2010-11	£15,830

Department Spend on Fuel

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much her Department, and its agencies, have spent on fuel in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8235/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The table below indicates the spend that the Department and its agencies have incurred over the last 5 years.

Year	Cost £
2006/07	32,074
2007/08	32,270
2008/09	32,809
2009/10	41,901
2010/11	40,213

Equality Impact Assessments and Consultations

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much her Department has spent on (i) Equality Impact Assessments; and (ii) consultations in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8441/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) There were no Equality Impact Assessments undertaken by my Department in the last three financial years.
- (ii) The total spend on consultations in the last three financial years was £ 4,817.00.

Water Bailiffs

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of (i) water bailiffs employed; and (ii) voluntary water bailiffs licensed, by her Department.

(AQW 8449/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) There are currently 11 Fishery Protection Officers employed by the Department.
- (ii) Voluntary water bailiffs are not licensed by DCAL, but warranted by the Courts (through an Angling Club) under Part 9 the 1966 Fisheries Act. There are currently 289 Private Water Bailiffs warranted.

Licensed Voluntary Water Bailiffs

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what training and support her Department provides for licensed voluntary water bailiffs.

(AQW 8450/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department organised training seminars for Private Water Bailiffs at three locations in 2010, which were well attended and covered all aspects of enforcement regulations. There was also a question and answer session where further issues were clarified for Private Water Bailiffs.

The Department encourages, where possible, contact between DCAL Fishery Protection Officers, Senior Fisheries Officers and Private Water Bailiffs and their respective angling clubs. This can take the form of organising joint enforcement operations and attending Angling Club AGM's to discuss angling related issues including enforcement.

The Department also provides practical advice and guidance to Private Water Bailiffs on the preparation and processing of prosecution cases.

Líofa 2012 Scheme

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) how much funding her Department is providing for the Líofa 2012 scheme; (ii) how much funding other Departments are providing to the scheme; (iii) how much the overall marketing and launch costs for the scheme have been to date; and (iv) whether she plans to introduce an equivalent scheme to promote the development and learning of Ulster-Scots.

(AQW 8466/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) I am in the process of appointing a Líofa Development Officer who will be in post for a period of one year however, this may be extended for a further year subject to the agreement of all parties. The salary scale will be £27,115 to £30,520 and will be paid by DCAL.

I will be allocating further funds to the Líofa 2015 project as appropriate.

- (ii) I am not aware of the level of funding assigned to the Líofa initiative by other Departments.

The breakdown of cost for the Líofo 2015 initiative launch is as follows:

(iii) -

	Cost
Interpreters	£251.90
Website	£1217.16
Banners	£ 178.00
Hospitality	£ 694.80
Total	£2341.86

(iv) I have already met with the Chief Executive of the Ulster-Scots Agency and also with the Ministerial Advisory Group on the Ulster-Scots Academy to discuss how best to promote Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture effectively. I will be meeting with the Chief Executive of the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Minister for Education soon to progress this issue.

Cultural Infrastructure

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the expenditure by her Department on cultural infrastructure through capital projects in the Programme for Government period 2008-2011; and to detail the reasons behind any underspend on the projected £119 million investment.

(AQW 8472/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Detail of the Department's total expenditure on cultural infrastructure in the period 2008-2011 is detailed below:

	Total Budget 2008-11 £'000	Total Spend 2008-11 £'000	Variance £'000
Arts	31,547	30,309	1,238
Museums	22,915	21,793	1,122
Libraries	31,600	12,345	19,255
Fisheries	954	864	90
N/S Languages	-	43	43
Waterways Ireland	5,450	5,295	155
PRONI	28,625	27,939	686
Cultural Total	121,091 *	98,588	22,503

* Post agreement of 2008-11 PSA targets a further £2m was allocated to Capital

As illustrated in the table above the outcome was a total underspend of approximately £22m on the £121 million investment.

The two main contributing factors to the underspend were as follows:

- In ISNI2 £25m was set aside for library capital. This figure was based upon the ELBs high level plans for an extensive capital build programme. Unfortunately these plans were not sufficiently developed and the ELBs did not have sufficient capacity to spend the capital allocation and slippage of approximately £19m occurred.

- Slippage in Arts projects of around £1.2m, mainly due to Year 1 delays in the three main projects (Crescent Arts Centre, Lyric Theatre, Metropolitan Arts Centre), which have since been largely made up.
- A further £1.1m was not spent in Museums. This was because the plans for a new library at the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium could not be progressed within the 2008-11 CSR period.

Ministerial Advisory Group for the Ulster-Scots Academy

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the progress of the Ministerial Advisory Group for the Ulster-Scots Academy.

(AQW 8517/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Ministerial Advisory Group for the Ulster Scots Academy was established in March 2011 to advise on the development of an Ulster Scots Academy. The Group is committed to funding projects that fall under three main streams of activity: Language and Literature; Heritage and Culture and Education and Research.

Examples of projects which have already received such funding are the refurbishment of the existing gallery room in the Andrew Jackson Cottage, an inventory of all materials relating to Ulster-Scots that exist in various collections held in local libraries and museums and the digital interpretation of the Raven Maps in North Down Museum.

The Group is currently considering a variety of projects which include an archaeological survey of the plantation period, development of educational materials on Ulster Scots history, heritage and literature to curriculum standard as well as support to the development of the Ulster Scots tourism product.

A draft research and development strategy has been prepared and they also plan to launch a grant scheme in the near future. Postage and Printing Costs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department, and its arm's-length bodies, give elected representatives the choice of receiving reports and all other correspondence by email to minimise postage and printing costs.

(AQW 8523/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department follows OFMDFM's 'Guidance on the Distribution of Departmental Publications and Consultation Documents' (July 2011) in the dissemination of reports and consultation documents.

Where appropriate my Department, and its arm's length bodies (ALBs), provide copies of reports and correspondence in the requested format. Furthermore, copies of ALBs annual reports are available on the organisations websites.

River Bush

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of salmon fry or smolts that have been released into the River Bush as part of a restocking programme in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 8548/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Details of the numbers of salmon fry, parr and smolts released into the River Bush are contained in the table below.

	Fry	Parr	Smolts
2010	0	0	74,451
2009	200,000	101,300	48,754
2008	582,000	108,500	45,867

	Fry	Parr	Smolts
2007	0	31,000	49,366
2006	150,000	59,500	71,484
2005	150,000	138,800	46,898
2004	128,000	280,695	53,596
2003	440,000	175,524	17,398
2002	401,000	167,000	46,163
2001	368,000	0	79,174

Commemoration Project Steering Group

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the membership and the work carried out to date by the Commemoration Project Steering Group.

(AQW 8571/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am supportive of an inclusive and strategic approach to commemorations and creative ways that the arts and cultural sectors can help to tell the stories behind such events.

Previous Departmental approaches, before my time in office, examined ways to approach significant anniversaries. This included a Commemoration Project Steering Group which met twice in 2010. In 2011 the Community Relations Council and Heritage Lottery Fund developed a set of principles to remember the past in the context of an inclusive and accepting society. The key issue is not whether these events are remembered but how they are remembered.

I endorse these principles. They provide a more inclusive, non triumphalist and strategic basis to guide Departmental activities and can inform a wider body of work and a joined-up approach across government, and by other stakeholders, to remember significant events from the distant and more recent past.

Civil Service Posts

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 7692/11-15, and given Derry's City of Culture celebrations in 2013 and the ongoing development of Derry's creative industries, why her Department does not have any civil servants based in Derry; and what plans she has to address this regional disparity.

(AQW 8606/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My officials are working closely with colleagues across government and the partners in Derry to progress funding and support for the City of Culture but there are no plans to decentralise any posts within my Department and at this time there are no plans to do so in the immediate future.

Lisburn Road Library

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will consider restoring the opening hours of the Lisburn Road library to two evenings per week.

(AQW 8699/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Following Libraries NI's public consultation into its review of Library Opening Hours, I was pleased to be able to provide £2.39m of additional funding in order to minimise the impact of the reduction in library opening hours.

The additional money has eased the financial pressure on Libraries NI. However, Libraries NI is still faced with making savings.

Decisions regarding individual library opening hours are an operational matter for the Libraries NI Board, however I understand that discussions will take place with each community about when they would like to see their library open.

Inland Fisheries Staff

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many staff within Inland Fisheries have (i) been suspended; or (ii) taken unpaid or paid leave for a period of more than three months in the last 2 years.

(AQW 8701/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) I am unable to supply information in relation to part one of this question as the information relates to living individuals who could be identified from the data. This would be a breach of Principle I of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- (ii) Within Inland Fisheries, no staff have taken unpaid or paid leave for a period of more than 3 months in the last 2 years.

Sale of Nets to Fishermen

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether licences are always checked during the sale of nets to fishermen.

(AQW 8702/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There is nothing in the current fisheries legislation which requires those selling nets to seek evidence of a licence from purchasers.

Many nets used by fishermen here would be purchased outside the DCAL jurisdiction and sellers would have no interest in the legality of their use.

Board of NI Screen

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why she appointed a convicted terrorist to the Board of NI Screen.

(AQW 8736/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The competition to appoint members to the Board of NI Screen was carried out in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointment NI's Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments.

Appointments to the Board were made on the basis of merit and only those judged to meet the requirements of the post were considered by me for appointment.

I am confident that the new members will provide the Board with the necessary range of skills and experience to build on the success of NI Screen in developing our local screen industries.

Capital Investment in Soccer Facilities

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) when she will make an announcement regarding the second tranche of the £36 million capital investment in soccer facilities; and (ii) how much will be available for the redevelopment of the Brandywell Stadium, Derry; and when the funding will be available.

(AQW 8754/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Executive have endorsed c. £36m funding for sub-regional development within association football "as a priority area of spend in the next CSR period" (2015 onwards). While a strong endorsement it is not the same as agreeing to fund sub-regional stadium development. Funding for this purpose still needs to be secured as part of the normal budgetary process for CSR 2015. Given this position, I have no plans to make an announcement regarding funding for sub - regional football.

In anticipation of making a bid for this funding in the next CSR period my Department has asked the IFA, (with the help of Sport NI) to develop a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) setting out at a high level the needs to be addressed. Thereafter Business cases will need to be developed for individual projects to inform the CSR bid. This work has not yet been completed and therefore no specific projects or grounds have as yet been identified.

Creative Industries Apprenticeships

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many creative industries apprenticeships have been awarded by the BBC and UTV in each year since 2008.

(AQW 8772/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department and NI Screen do not hold information regarding creative industries apprenticeships awarded by the BBC and UTV. This would be a matter for the BBC and UTV.

I can confirm that NI Screen in partnership with the BBC and Skillset initiated a training scheme in 2011 called AIM HIGH. The scheme revolves around the placement of 15 new entrants in a variety of roles within the media sector in the North of Ireland. However, NI Screen have clarified that they would not consider these placements to fall into the legal definition of apprenticeships.

Success of Rory McIlroy in the WGC Match Play Golf Event in Arizona

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what promotional activity and actions were undertaken by her Department to take advantage of the success of Rory McIlroy in the WGC Match Play Golf event in Arizona.

(AQW 8914/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) does not undertake promotional activity and actions directly in relation to the performance of individual athletes or teams whilst they are participating in sporting competitions including competitions such as the WGC Match Play Golf event in Arizona. I do, however, seek to promote sporting excellence generally in the north by regularly celebrating sporting success publicly. In the case of Rory McIlroy I publicly acknowledged his success in winning the US Open Golf Tournament in June 2011. I also invited Rory to my Sports Reception held at Parliament Buildings in January 2012. This reception is organised annually by my Department as a means of promoting and publicly recognising sporting successes of local athletes in national and international competitions.

Department of Education

Consultations on the Proposed Area Plans

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education what timescale each Education and Library Board is working towards in relation to launching consultations on the proposed area plans.

(AQW 8169/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Terms of Reference for area planning, published on 15 December 2011, asked Education and Library Boards to submit plans by the end of March and end of June for the post-primary and primary phases respectively. In view of the scale and complexity of the work involved, however, these timescales are necessarily indicative.

Once received, the Department will consider the draft plans and, when satisfied that they meet the requirements of the Terms of Reference and the Departmental policy framework, will authorise the Boards to proceed to public consultation.

Grants

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail all grants, for any purpose, that are currently available through his Department.

(AQW 8277/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are a number of different types of grants allocated through my Department and these are listed below.

Grant-in-aid to provide general support to each of the Department's Arms Length Bodies. Paid to:-

- The Belfast Education and Library Board
- The North-Eastern Education and Library Board
- The South-Eastern Education and Library Board
- The Southern Education and Library Board
- The Western Education and Library Board
- The Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
- The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
- The Staff Commission
- The Youth Council for NI
- The General Teaching Council for NI
- Middletown Centre for Autism Limited
- Middletown Centre for Autism (Holdings) Limited
- Boards of Governors of Grant Maintained Integrated Schools
- Boards of Governors of Voluntary Grammar Schools
- Boards of Governors of Irish Medium Schools

Boards of Governors of Catholic Maintained Schools Current grant provided for specific purposes. Paid to:-

- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta
- Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta Accommodation Fund
- NI Council for Integrated Education
- British Council
- Women's Aid Federation
- National Children's Bureau (NIABF), previously Save the Children
- Childline (Helpline Expansion)
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- The Gaelic Athletic Association
- The Irish Football Association
- Music for Youth
- The Queen's University, Belfast
- The University of Ulster
- Early Years, The Organisation for Young Children
- NI Childminding Association

- The Health & Social Care Board (for Sure Start and related services)
- Early Years Fund (administered on behalf of DE by the Early Years Organisation)
- Charter Work Experience
- School Employer Connections
- NI Centre for Information & Language Teaching
- An Gaelaras
- BT Young Scientist
- Irish Science Olympiads
- Stock Market Challenge
- Business Education Partnerships
- Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS)
- Sentinus
- Stranmillis University College
- St Mary's University College
- Young Enterprise NI

Public Health Agency Capital Grants for approved Capital Works. Paid to:-

- Trustees of Voluntary Grammar Schools
- Trustees of Grant Maintained Integrated Schools
- Trustees of Irish Medium Schools

Trustees of Catholic Maintained Schools Voluntary Youth Projects – Capital Grants. Paid to:-

- Trustees of Voluntary Youth Centres

The Department also provides financial support for the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy through the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and the Youth Council (YCNI). A minimum of 20% of this funding must be used to support meaningful interaction between young people with different social, cultural or religious backgrounds. ELBs distribute this funding through the CRED Enhancement Scheme to which schools apply. YCNI provide funding to three strategic projects that support implementation of the policy.

Speech and Language Services

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education who, in each Education and Library Board, is responsible for undertaking initial needs assessments for children who may require access to speech and language services.

(AQW 8290/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have advised that initial needs assessments are carried out by the ELBs' Educational Psychology Services (EPS). The EPS will refer any child assessed as requiring speech and language support to the Speech and Language Services in the relevant Health and Social Care Trust.

Educational Underachievement of Children with Disabilities

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking in relation to the educational underachievement of children with disabilities compared with children without disabilities.

(AQW 8300/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am committed to tackling underachievement and promoting the raising of standards for all our young people.

Pupils with disabilities must not be discriminated against in any way by a school, an education and library board or any other body responsible for a school. Schools and ELBs are required to put in place strategies to improve access for pupils with disabilities to the curriculum, the physical environment of the school, and the written information, education and associated services offered by the school.

Schools themselves, including through rigorous self-evaluation, are best placed to identify areas for improvement and to drive changes that can bring about better outcomes for all their pupils. The school improvement policy aims to support schools and teachers in their work to raise standards and overcome the barriers to learning many young people face. It is supported by a range of policies aimed at raising standards, including the literacy and numeracy strategy, the revised curriculum and Entitlement Framework, the Extended and Full Service Schools Programmes and work to finalise strategies on early years and special educational needs and inclusion.

Expenditure on Conferences, Away-days and Team Building Exercises

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how much his Department has spent on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8336/11-15)

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

Financial Year	Conferences (£)	Away Days (£)	Team Building Exercises (£)	Total (£)
2008/09	157,015.21	38,134.50	0	195,149.71
2009/10	58,580.47	30,284.83	0	88,865.30
2010/11	26,221.43	13,171.00	0	39,392.43

Spend on Fuel

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 7971/11-15, how much his Department, and its arm's-length bodies have spent on all other types of fuel in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8463/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

Fuel Costs					£'000
Financial Years	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
BELB	2,916	2,377	3,110	2,325	2,384
NEELB	2,453	2,448	3,483	2,940	3,466
SEELB	1,979	2,150	2,687	2,560	2,335
SELB	2,384	2,944	3,190	3,215	3,972
WELB	2,150	2,356	2,806	2,683	3,168
CCEA	24	35	31	37	44
CCMS	18	20	30	19	30
Staff Commission	1	1	1	1	1
YCNI	2	2	2	2	2

Fuel Costs					£'000
Financial Years	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
GTC	1	1	1	2	2
Exceptional Circumstances Body	-	-	-	-	-
DE	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	11,929	12,333	15,341	13,785	15,403

Notes:

- 1 The above figures relate to gas and oil costs only as confirmed by your office.
- 2 Figures provided by the ELBs include costs, if applicable, associated with the Public Library Service up to and including 2008/09.
- 3 DE costs will be included in the DFP return as these are paid centrally by DFP on behalf of my Department.

Front-Line Services in Schools

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the percentage of annual spending directed towards front-line services in schools; and (ii) how this compares to other regions in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 8476/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) It is not possible to accurately disaggregate the funding for frontline services in schools. In 2011/12 the Aggregated Schools Budget of £1,126m – which is distributed directly to schools under the Common Funding Scheme arrangements – represents 59.4% of the Department's total Resource Budget. However a number of budgets are held and managed by the Education and Library Boards on behalf of schools in their area, for which funding is not delegated to schools. This includes provision for special educational needs in mainstream, pupil support, e.g. educational psychologists, school library service, Curriculum Advisory Support Service and a range of other services.
- (ii) I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 7997/11-15, tabled by Peter Weir MLA, and published in the Official Report on 17 February 2012.

Nursery Schools

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Education what discussions he held prior to making his recent decision on the development proposals for nursery schools.

(AQW 8538/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I recently approved development proposals for the establishment of part-time nursery units at Drumadonnell Primary School, Ballyrone and St Patrick's Primary School, Mayobridge. I also turned down a proposal to establish a nursery unit at Cranmore Integrated Primary School.

I did not receive any requests for meetings during the statutory consultation period following publication of each proposal. I therefore had no discussions with representatives of any of the schools or other interested parties prior to making my recent decisions.

My decisions were reached taking account of all the pertinent information submitted by the proposers and additional information and advice compiled by my officials, including the views of the Education and Training Inspectorate.

Nursery Provision: St Patrick's Primary School, Mayobridge.

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Education, to detail (i) what information he has received in the last three months in relation to the development proposal for nursery provision at St Patrick's Primary School, Mayobridge; (ii) from where this information came; and (iii) whether he will make a public statement in relation to this matter.

(AQW 8549/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: (i) & (ii) During the last three months I received two letters in support of the proposal, from Caitríona Ruane, MLA and the Principal of the St Patrick's Primary School.

(iii) At the conclusion of the development proposal process a press release was issued, on 16 February, advising of my decision.

General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how many Beginning Teachers have registered with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and, of these, how many were trained in (i) Northern Ireland; and (ii) Great Britain.

(AQW 8562/11-15)

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

Registration Year	Total Registered	North of Ireland Trained Teachers	Britain Trained Teachers
2010/11	849	578	266
2009/10	850	593	244
2008/09	920	615	290
2007/08	958	656	287
2006/07	1037	657	363

Source: General Teaching Council

Notes:

- 1 The registration year is regarded as the year in which the teacher was awarded their qualification.
- 2 A number of Beginning Teachers who qualified outside the north of Ireland and Britain have also registered with the GTC over the past five years.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education for an update on the legislative process for establishing the Education and Skills Authority. [R]

(AQW 8591/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Drafting of the Bill is almost complete and, subject to Executive agreement, I intend to introduce it in the Assembly in the very near future.

Literacy and Numeracy Co-Ordinators

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education whether he intends to review the qualification requirements for Literacy and Numeracy Co-Ordinators in primary and post-primary schools.

(AQW 8637/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There is no requirement for literacy or numeracy co-ordinators in primary or post-primary schools to have specific qualifications beyond the requisite teaching qualifications. I have no plans to review this.

The Report of the Literacy and Numeracy Taskforce 2010/11 (May 2011) recommended that literacy or numeracy co-ordinators in primary schools should demonstrate a strong background in English and maths respectively and ideally be specialists in the respective areas.

The appointment of literacy or numeracy co-ordinators is a matter for a school's Board of Governors. While it may be possible that a graduate of English or mathematics becomes the co-ordinator for literacy or numeracy respectively, it is likely that the Board of Governors would seek to appoint a teacher who could demonstrate a number of attributes and competencies which might include: a sufficient breadth of teaching experience, a specific interest or competence in literacy or numeracy, proven leadership skills, effective communication and co-ordination skills, effective motivational skills.

Count, read: succeed - the Department's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy sets out the role of literacy and numeracy co-ordinators and stresses the importance of them being given time, authority and support to fulfil their role.

Stationery Costs in Replying to Assembly Written Questions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how much the paper and envelopes used in providing answers to Assembly Written Questions cost per item, per box or per hundred units.

(AQW 8639/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current cost to the Department for a box of paper containing 2500 sheets is £11.37 and the cost of a box of envelopes containing 500 is £5.56.

St Patrick's Primary School, Aghagallon

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education (i) for an update on the formal intervention process at St Patrick's Primary School, Aghagallon, Craigavon; and (ii) for his assessment of when the school might expect to have the formal intervention status removed.

(AQW 8664/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: St Patrick's Primary School, Aghagallon entered the Formal Intervention Process on 26 October 2010 following an inspection which resulted in the quality of education being provided by the school being evaluated as inadequate.

Since then the school has been working closely with the Southern Education and Library Board and CCMS to implement an agreed action plan aimed at addressing the areas of improvement identified in the inspection report. This work is ongoing and currently includes a particular emphasis on ensuring an improvement in the standards attained by the children in English and mathematics and bringing about improvements in the school's leadership, standards, and learning and teaching.

The Education and Training Inspectorate is monitoring the school's progress in addressing the areas of improvement and will undertake a follow-up inspection within a timescale of 12 to 18 months of the original inspection. Taking account of the findings of the follow-up inspection the Department will consider whether the school should exit the Formal Intervention Process.

Speech and Language Centre at Knockavoe School and Resource Centre, Strabane

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education (i) how many students are currently attending the Speech and Language Centre at Knockavoe School and Resource Centre, Strabane; and (ii) how many have been statemented.

(AQW 8665/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Figures recorded in the 2011/12 school census show that there are 93 pupils enrolled in Knockavoe School and Resource centre. Fewer than 5 of these pupils are recorded as being at stages 1 – 4 of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The other pupils are statemented, i.e., at Stage 5 of the Special Education Needs Code of practice.

Home To School Transport Scheme

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) the number of (a) primary school pupils; and (b) post-primary school pupils; and (ii) as a proportion of each total, how many pupils were eligible for free travel on existing Translink routes through the Home to School Transport scheme, excluding private buses provided for students on un-serviced routes.

(AQW 8679/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The following figures as supplied by the Education and Library Boards confirm that the total number of primary and post-primary pupils in each of the last three years for which figures are available, the proportion of each total eligible for assistance with travel on Translink services (Ulsterbus, Metro), and the sum paid to Translink in each year are as follows:-

Year	Primary	Proportion eligible using Translink	Post-Primary	Proportion eligible using Translink	Annual cost
2008/09	164,811	0.96%	147,986	31.43%	£30,424,855
2009/10	163,771	0.87%	147,759	33.27%	£32,072,243
2010/11	163,451	0.77%	147,902	33.19%	£32,350,735

Home To School Transport Scheme

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education to detail the sum paid to Translink for providing travel on existing Translink routes through the Home to School Transport scheme in each of the last three years, excluding private buses provided for students on un-serviced routes.

(AQW 8680/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The following figures as supplied by the Education and Library Boards confirm that the total number of primary and post-primary pupils in each of the last three years for which figures are available, the proportion of each total eligible for assistance with travel on Translink services (Ulsterbus, Metro), and the sum paid to Translink in each year are as follows:-

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2010/11	163,451	0.77%	147,902	33.19%	£32,350,735

Un-Serviced Routes

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost to his Department of providing private buses for students on un-serviced routes, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8682/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The cost of providing privately operated buses for eligible pupils, including those with special education needs, in each of the last three years is given in the table below.

Year	Cost of Private Operators (buses)
2008/09	£5,886,616
2009/10	£6,204,556

Year	Cost of Private Operators (buses)
2010/11	£5,033,806

Special Educational Needs Transport Provision

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost to his Department of Special Educational Needs transport provision, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8683/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The cost of transport provision for pupils with Special Education Needs for each of the last three years is provided in the table below.

Year	Cost of Taxi Element	Cost of Private Operator bus element	Total Cost of Special Needs Transport
2008/09	£4,918,036	£1,815,214	£6,733,250
2009/10	£4,901,030	£1,774,336	£6,675,366
2010/11	£5,030,674	£1,404,712	£6,435,386

Children Being Statemented

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what percentage children, who have been statemented, have attended mainstream schools in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8756/11-15)

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

PERCENTAGE PUPILS WHO HAVE A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ENROLLED IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS, 2007/08 – 2011/12

Year	% statemented pupils enrolled in mainstream schools
2007/08	67.6
2008/09	68.2
2009/10	69.3
2010/11	69.6
2011/12	69.7

Source: School census

Note:

- Figures relate to pupils in mainstream classes and special units in nursery schools, primary (including nursery classes, reception and Year 1 - 7) and post primary schools.
- Pupils with a statement are at Stage 5 on the Special Education Needs Code of Practice.

Department for Employment and Learning

Stranmillis University College, Belfast

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the current financial position of Stranmillis University College, Belfast.

(AQW 7771/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The last audited financial statements for Stranmillis University College, Belfast were for academic year 2010/11. These declared a surplus of £403k compared with a surplus of £870k in the previous year. During the year the College's income declined by 3.8% whilst its expenditure reduced by just 1.2%. The College has also provided management accounts for the 2011/12 academic year which would indicate a surplus of £442k. However, the College has forecast that it will sustain a deficit in 2012/13 of £54k and that this will rise to £430k by 2014/15. The College also reports that there is a continuing deterioration in its estate and there is a total of some £6m of back-log maintenance and a further £3m is required for the Henry Garrett

Building. My Department is to supply a total of £1.6m of capital grant to the College by 2015.

Planned Major Capital Building Programmes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail his Department's planned major capital building programmes in each of the next three years.

(AQW 8051/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department has a capital budget allocation for the three years from 2012-13 of £79.1m. This allocation is for the further education sector, the higher education sector and the Department's own capital works.

Further education's share is £26.3m, £18.3m of which is committed to projects already delivered at Belfast Metropolitan College – at Titanic Quarter and Springvale. The remaining £8m has not been allocated at this stage but is intended to address minor works and statutory compliance issues within colleges. Colleges will be asked to bid for this funding in due course.

Higher education has a capital allocation of £49.5m for the three year period. At the commencement of each budget review period the Department informs the higher education institutions of the capital budget that is being made available and invites them to submit projects for funding consideration.

In addition, there is £3.3m of funding available for capital projects within the Department. It is likely to be used for IT projects and for minor works to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation. Business areas across the Department will be invited to bid to this fund in due course.

Grades Intake for Bachelor of Education Graduates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the grades intake for Bachelor of Education graduates compared with the rest of the UK in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8056/11-15)

Dr Farry: Average UCAS tariff points have been used as a proxy for information on grades intake.

On this basis, the average UCAS tariff points achieved on entry for first year first degree Bachelor of Education undergraduate enrolments at Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) compared with the rest of the UK (ie Great Britain HEIs) for each of the last three years is provided in the table below.

Year	NI HEIs	GB HEIs
2008/09	339	293
2009/10	344	292

Year	NI HEIs	GB HEIs
2010/11	359	309

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- 1 The latest available data are for 2010/11.
- 2 Enrolments with an unknown UCAS score are not included in the above table.

Employment of Law Graduates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many law graduates have been unable to secure permanent jobs in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8083/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information on the destinations of students is obtained from a survey carried out six months after graduation. As this information is derived from a survey rather than a census of the whole population, the figures in the tables below are displayed as percentages rather than numbers.

The tables overleaf display (i) the destinations of law graduates and (ii) the type of contract obtained by those law graduates in work. The tables provide details for each of the last five academic years for which data are available.

- (i) Destinations of law graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions six months after graduation

Destinations	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Work	64%	57%	64%	69%	68%
Further Study	28%	35%	24%	20%	21%
Unemployed	3%	4%	8%	7%	9%
Other destinations	5%	4%	4%	3%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- (ii) Type of contract obtained by law graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions who are in work six months after graduation.

Contract Type	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Permanent or open ended	69%	66%	51%	61%	70%
Fixed term: 12 months or longer	12%	13%	26%	13%	10%
Other contract types	20%	21%	23%	26%	20%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

- 1 The figures in the above tables are derived from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. The DLHE survey is issued to all students whose study was full-time or part-time and who obtained relevant qualifications reported to HESA for each reporting period. Response rates for the DLHE survey are

- generally around 80% for NI HEIs. The figures in the tables are therefore displayed as proportions as the actual number of graduates in each activity is unknown.
- 2 The figures above include graduates from both postgraduate and undergraduate courses.
 - 3 Work includes those in full-time work only, part-time work only, voluntary or unpaid work and those combining work and further study.
 - 4 'Other destinations' include those not seeking employment, further study or training.
 - 5 Table (ii) above only includes those for whom type of contract was known.
 - 6 'Other contract types' include fixed-term contracts shorter than 12 months, self-employed/freelance, temporarily through an agency and temporarily other than through an agency.
 - 7 The latest year for which destinations data are available is 2009/10.

Positive Discrimination at St Mary's University College

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of the 2009/10 Higher Education Statistics Agency figures which indicate that the religious breakdown of students attending St Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College is 65 percent Catholic and 35 percent Protestant, what steps he is taking to ensure that St Mary's pursues a policy of positive discrimination to recruit more than the 5 Protestant students who were registered in 2009/10.

(AQW 8085/11-15)

Dr Farry: Universities and University Colleges are responsible for their own policies and procedures, including admissions.

St. Mary's University College states that it welcomes applications from people of any faith and none. Applications are considered in accordance with the College's Admissions Policy, which is aligned with that of Queen's University. Furthermore, the College's website states that it promotes equality of opportunity for all applicants regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, political opinion, religious belief, marital status or whether or not they have dependants.

I am in the process of commissioning the first stage of a study of the Teacher Education infrastructure in Northern Ireland. This will complete in Spring 2012 and the second stage in Autumn 2012.

Engineering Graduates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many engineering graduates have been unable to secure permanent jobs in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8272/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information on the destinations of students is obtained from a survey carried out six months after graduation. As this information is derived from a survey rather than a census of the whole population, the figures in the tables below are displayed as percentages rather than numbers.

The tables below display (i) the destinations of engineering graduates and (ii) the type of contract obtained by those engineering graduates in work. The tables provide details for each of the last five academic years for which data are available.

- (i) Destinations of engineering graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions six months after graduation

Destinations	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Work	81%	82%	79%	68%	72%
Further Study	13%	10%	8%	19%	15%
Unemployed	2%	4%	8%	10%	9%
Other destinations	5%	3%	5%	4%	4%

Destinations	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

(ii) Type of contract obtained by engineering graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions who are in work six months after graduation.

Contract Type	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Permanent or open ended	80%	85%	82%	74%	75%
Fixed term: 12 months or longer	11%	8%	10%	12%	6%
Other contract types	9%	7%	8%	14%	19%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

- 8 The figures in the above tables are derived from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. The DLHE survey is issued to all students whose study was full-time or part-time and who obtained relevant qualifications reported to HESA for each reporting period. Response rates for the DLHE survey are generally around 80% for NI HEIs. The figures in the tables are therefore displayed as proportions as the actual number of graduates in each activity is unknown.
- 9 The figures above include graduates from both postgraduate and undergraduate courses.
10. Work includes those in full-time work only, part-time work only, voluntary or unpaid work and those combining work and further study.
11. 'Other destinations' include those not seeking employment, further study or training.
12. Table (ii) above only includes those for whom type of contract was known.
13. 'Other contract types' include fixed-term contracts shorter than 12 months, self-employed/freelance, temporarily through an agency and temporarily other than through an agency.
14. The latest year for which destinations data are available is 2009/10.

Maintenance Loans for Students with an Irish Passport

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the guidance issued to Education and Library Boards on providing maintenance loans for students who hold an Irish passport, and have applied to universities in Scotland where their student fees will be paid as EU applicants.

(AQW 8312/11-15)

Dr Farry: I can confirm that my Departmental officials have recently advised Student Finance staff in the Education and Library Boards that Northern Ireland domiciled students who qualify to have their tuition fees paid by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) as non-UK EU nationals are not eligible to apply to SAAS for maintenance support. These students can, however, apply as normal for maintenance support in the form of loans and grants through Student Finance Northern Ireland/via their local Education and Library Board.

Expenditure on Conferences, Away-days and Team Building Exercises

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much his Department has spent on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8338/11-15)

Dr Farry: The total cost incurred by the Department on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years is set out in the following table:

April 2009 to March 2010	Total: £61,730
April 2010 to March 2011	Total: £26,746
April 2011 to 17 February 2012	Total: £15,131

Degree Courses in Veterinary Medicine

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 7517/11-15, given the growth in the agri-foods industry, and the fact that of the 150 students who enrolled in courses in Britain only one third of qualified veterinary surgeons returned, why local universities do not offer degree courses in veterinary medicine.

(AQW 8347/11-15)

Dr Farry: 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.

Architecture Graduates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many architecture graduates have been unable to secure permanent jobs in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8359/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information on the destinations of students is obtained from a survey carried out six months after graduation. As this information is derived from a survey rather than a census of the whole population, the figures in the tables below are displayed as percentages rather than numbers.

The tables below display (i) the destinations of architecture graduates and (ii) the type of contract obtained by those architecture graduates in work. The tables provide details for each of the last five academic years for which data are available.

- (i) Destinations of architecture graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions six months after graduation

Destinations	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Work	84%	83%	69%	74%	69%
Further Study	11%	8%	14%	11%	12%
Unemployed	2%	5%	10%	12%	15%
Other destinations	3%	4%	6%	4%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- (ii) Type of contract obtained by architecture graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions who are in work six months after graduation.

Contract Type	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Permanent or open ended	59%	65%	67%	66%	58%

Contract Type	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Fixed term: 12 months or longer	13%	12%	15%	11%	9%
Other contract types	28%	22%	17%	24%	33%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

15. The figures in the above tables are derived from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. The DLHE survey is issued to all students whose study was full-time or part-time and who obtained relevant qualifications reported to HESA for each reporting period. Response rates for the DLHE survey are generally around 80% for NI HEIs. The figures in the tables are therefore displayed as proportions as the actual number of graduates in each activity is unknown.
16. The figures above include graduates from both postgraduate and undergraduate courses.
17. Work includes those in full-time work only, part-time work only, voluntary or unpaid work and those combining work and further study.
18. 'Other destinations' include those not seeking employment, further study or training.
19. Table (ii) above only includes those for whom type of contract was known.
20. 'Other contract types' include fixed-term contracts shorter than 12 months, self-employed/freelance, temporarily through an agency and temporarily other than through an agency.
21. The latest year for which destinations data are available is 2009/10.

Medical Graduates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many medical graduates have been unable to secure permanent jobs in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8361/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information on the destinations of students is obtained from a survey carried out six months after graduation. As this information is derived from a survey rather than a census of the whole population, the figures in the tables below are displayed as percentages rather than numbers.

The tables below display (i) the destinations of medical graduates and (ii) the type of contract obtained by those medical graduates in work. The tables provide details for each of the last five academic years for which data are available.

- (i) Destinations of medical graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions six months after graduation

Destinations	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Work	97%	99%	98%	99%	96%
Further Study	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%
Unemployed	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Other destinations	3%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- (ii) Type of contract obtained by medical graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions who are in work six months after graduation.

Contract Type	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Permanent or open ended	15%	19%	41%	79%	31%
Fixed term: 12 months or longer	82%	80%	57%	21%	66%
Other contract types	3%	2%	2%	0%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

22. The figures in the above tables are derived from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. The DLHE survey is issued to all students whose study was full-time or part-time and who obtained relevant qualifications reported to HESA for each reporting period. Response rates for the DLHE survey are generally around 80% for NI HEIs. The figures in the tables are therefore displayed as proportions as the actual number of graduates in each activity is unknown.
23. The figures above include graduates from both postgraduate and undergraduate courses.
24. Medical graduates include those students who studied clinical medicine or pre-clinical medicine courses.
25. Work includes those in full-time work only, part-time work only, voluntary or unpaid work and those combining work and further study.
26. 'Other destinations' include those not seeking employment, further study or training.
27. Table (ii) above only includes those for whom type of contract was known.
28. 'Other contract types' include fixed-term contracts shorter than 12 months, self-employed/freelance, temporarily through an agency and temporarily other than through an agency.
29. The latest year for which destinations data are available is 2009/10.

Surplus Land or Buildings

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the surplus land or buildings that his Department is currently considering to sell.

(AQW 8362/11-15)

Dr Farry: The only land or property owned by my Department is Felden House, Newtownabbey, which had been used by the Northern Regional College until new accommodation was constructed at its main campus. The college vacated Felden in March 2011, at which time it became surplus. A Public Sector Trawl was issued and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive is expressing an interest. It is anticipated that the property will be sold in the financial year 2012-13.

Nursing Graduates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many nursing graduates were unable to secure permanent jobs in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8435/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information on the destinations of students is obtained from a survey carried out six months after graduation. As this information is derived from a survey rather than a census of the whole population, the figures in the tables below are displayed as percentages rather than numbers.

The tables below display (i) the destinations of nursing graduates and (ii) the type of contract obtained by those nursing graduates in work. The tables provide details for each of the last five academic years for which data are available.

- (i) Destinations of nursing graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions six months after graduation

Destinations	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Work	94%	97%	95%	97%	94%
Further Study	3%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Unemployed	0%	0%	2%	1%	2%
Other destinations	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- (ii) Type of contract obtained by nursing graduates from Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions who are in work six months after graduation.

Contract Type	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Permanent or open ended	96%	88%	84%	84%	84%
Fixed term: 12 months or longer	2%	4%	5%	3%	3%
Other contract types	2%	8%	12%	13%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency

Notes:

30. The figures in the above tables are derived from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. The DLHE survey is issued to all students whose study was full-time or part-time and who obtained relevant qualifications reported to HESA for each reporting period. Response rates for the DLHE survey are generally around 80% for NI HEIs. The figures in the tables are therefore displayed as proportions as the actual number of graduates in each activity is unknown.
31. The figures above include graduates from both postgraduate and undergraduate courses.
32. Work includes those in full-time work only, part-time work only, voluntary or unpaid work and those combining work and further study.
33. 'Other destinations' include those not seeking employment, further study or training.
34. Table (ii) above only includes those for whom type of contract was known.
35. 'Other contract types' include fixed-term contracts shorter than 12 months, self-employed/freelance, temporarily through an agency and temporarily other than through an agency.
36. The latest year for which destinations data are available is 2009/10.

Catholic Certificate of Religious Education

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 7001/11-15, for an estimate of the savings that could be made if students of Stranmillis University College were able to access the Catholic Certificate of Religious Education at St Mary's University College.

(AQW 8516/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have provided the costs incurred over the last six years by Stranmillis University College in reimbursing students taking the Certificate in Religious Education at Glasgow University in AQW 7001/11-15. The Department has no estimate of the level of administrative and other costs associated with the establishing and running of such a facility were St Mary's to offer it.

Postage and Printing Costs

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department, and its arm's-length bodies, give elected representatives the choice of receiving reports and all other correspondence by email to minimise postage and printing costs.

(AQW 8525/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's green policy actively promotes electronic distribution of information for both internal and external communications, where possible. This approach is generally echoed in the arm's length bodies. Elected representatives normally receive a hard copy of Ministerial correspondence in addition to any e-mailed response, however, unless an electronic response has been specifically requested.

Apprenticeships

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many apprenticeships have been created in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8601/11-15)

Dr Farry: The ApprenticeshipsNI programme is an employer-led provision and, as such, it is employers and not my Department that create apprenticeship positions. The following data provides ApprenticeshipsNI occupancy figures in each of the last five years.

At 31st December 2007	7,281
At 31st December 2008	9,872
At 31st December 2009	10,681
At 31st December 2010	10,522
At 31st December 2011	11,916

Hospitality Sector: Skills

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what emphasis his Department is placing on the development of skills for the hospitality sector.

(AQO 1388/11-15)

Dr Farry: Over the next two years, Northern Ireland will host an impressive series of events, celebrations and the launch of many exciting new visitor attractions. These events offer Northern Ireland an opportunity to showcase what our region has to offer.

I recognise the opportunities for the Tourism and Hospitality industry over this period and am determined to make the most of them to provide employment for the local labour market and to boost the local economy. Obviously the skills of staff are fundamental to success. Consequently, I have designated tourism and hospitality as a priority area.

In addition, my Department's Skills Solutions Team has been working with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and People 1st, the Sector Skills Council for hospitality. They have developed and put in place a customised training programme for customer service known as WorldHost. In this financial year I have allocated £255,000 to assist 1500 staff in hospitality and tourism to achieve this level 2 qualification and have committed to finance for future training of staff over the next two years.

We are delighted that the North Coast will host the Irish Open later this year and, in anticipation of this, my officials have developed a further short training programme with the Northern Regional College to assist the hospitality and tourism sector in this area to up-skill their staff.

My Department has recognised the importance of tourism to Northern Ireland and has, for some time, been working with People First, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the colleges through a Future

Skills Action Group. This put in place specific provision aimed at addressing skills issues within the sector, including the Fast Track Chef Conversion Course and the ThinkTourismNI resource for teachers. The additional initiatives which I have instigated build on this good platform.

Academic Underachievement

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the measures his Department is taking to tackle academic under-achievement in socially deprived areas.

(AQO 1393/11-15)

Dr Farry: Addressing the underachievement of children in schools is the responsibility of the Minister of Education. However, my Department's Success through Skills Strategy – 'Transforming Futures' outlines measures that are in place to raise the qualification levels of the workforce and to address underachievement across Northern Ireland.

Level 2, the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at A* - C, is the benchmark for the workplace. While I recognise the work that the Department of Education is doing to improve standards, too many young people leave school without 5 GCSEs including English and maths. I have, therefore, set very challenging targets to increase the proportion of people in employment with qualifications and skills at level 2 and above from around 71% in 2008 to 90% by 2020. Many adults also have significant weaknesses in literacy and numeracy.

In order to address underachievement and help individuals achieve their potential, my Department funds an extensive range of programmes through further education and work-based learning.

Further education has a vital role to play in helping people gain at least a level 2 qualification and around 24% of all the enrolments in further education are from the 20% most deprived areas in N. Ireland.

The Department also provides a guarantee of a training place through the Training for Success programme for unemployed 16 and 17 year olds, with extended eligibility for those with a disability or in care.

Essential Skills provision is embedded across all my Department's programmes, and over 133,000 Essential Skills qualifications have been achieved by almost 74,000 individuals. It is encouraging that 30% of enrolments are from the 20% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland.

Finally, I am very aware that some young people have not engaged in education, employment or training, and in April I plan to bring a cross-departmental strategy to the Executive to address this issue.

Queen's University Belfast and Stranmillis University College: Merger

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, following the suspension of talks and negotiations around the merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast, whether he can confirm that all payments for these talks and negotiations have been discontinued from the date of the suspension of the talks.

(AQO 1394/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have commissioned a two-stage study of the teacher education infrastructure in Northern Ireland. The first stage of this will complete in the spring, and the second stage by the autumn of this year. Other than the costs associated with this study, my Department is not incurring any direct expenditure on the merger.

Investors in People: East Londonderry

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many small and medium sized enterprises in the East Londonderry Constituency applied for the Investor in People accreditation in 2010.

(AQO 1395/11-15)

Dr Farry: Information on Investors in People is not collected by Assembly or parliamentary constituency. However, the Northern Ireland Investors in People Delivery Centre carried out an exercise to provide this information by mapping their data to East Londonderry constituency postcodes.

That exercise showed that during 2010 two small and medium sized enterprises in the East Londonderry Constituency committed to and achieved Investors in People recognition. One other small and medium sized enterprise committed to Investors in People during 2010 and subsequently achieved recognition in 2011. A fourth, public sector organisation committed to and achieved Investors in People recognition in 2010.

Tourism and Hospitality: Vocational Courses

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what assessment has been made of the provision of vocational and academic courses available to young people seeking employment in the tourism and hospitality sector.

(AQO 1396/11-15)

Dr Farry: I am keenly aware of the importance of the hospitality and tourism sector to Northern Ireland especially, as over the next two years, we will host an impressive range of events and celebrations, including the launch of exciting new visitor attractions. Having a well skilled workforce is key to the success of these events. Consequently I have made this sector a priority within my Department.

In 2010/11, there were 5,479 enrolments on professional and technical courses relevant to hospitality and tourism in further education. In addition, in the hospitality and catering sectors, there are currently 1,624 apprentices and 138 programme-led apprenticeship programmes following the relevant areas. In the same year, there were 445 enrolments in the higher education sector.

In addition, my Department's Skills Solutions Team has been working with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and People 1st, the Sector Skills Council for hospitality. They have developed and put in place a customised training programme for customer service known as WorldHost. In this financial year I have allocated £255,000 to assist 1500 staff in hospitality and tourism to achieve this level 2 qualification and have committed to finance for future training of staff over the next two years.

My Department has recognised the importance of tourism to Northern Ireland and has, for some time, been working with People First, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the colleges through a Future Skills Action Group. This put in place specific provision aimed at addressing skills issues within the sector, including the Fast Track Chef Conversion Course and the ThinkTourismNI resource for teachers.

Universities: Applications

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of the recent figures released for UCAS applications, what action his Department is taking to address the fall in applications from Northern Ireland students to universities in the UK.

(AQO 1397/11-15)

Dr Farry: The recent figures released by UCAS indicate that the total number of Northern Ireland domiciled applicants to higher education institutions in the United Kingdom has decreased by 4.4% when compared to the number of applicants at the same point in the previous year. Most of this reduction is associated with application to universities in Great Britain. There was only a 1.5% reduction in application to Northern Ireland's universities which is broadly in line with the 1% reduction in the 18 year old population between 2010 and 2011. These statistics provide an interesting overview of the latest position but it should be noted that the full picture in relation to applicants will not be available until after the final deadline of 30 June 2012. Furthermore, the information on accepted applicants will not be available until December 2012.

I had anticipated that the changes to the fees regimes across the United Kingdom might lead to a reduction in applications to universities in Great Britain and increased demand from local students to remain at home. Therefore I negotiated for additional funding to enable an expansion of places. I

have recently announced that around 700 additional student places will be made available in Northern Ireland by 2015.

My officials will continue to monitor the relevant application and enrolment statistics and consider their implications once the new regime settles across the UK.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he can confirm that the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme will be retained and directed more towards young people in greatest need.

(AQO 1398/11-15)

Dr Farry: Both my Department and the Department of Education are committed to the retention of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme.

It is clear, however, that the funding needs to be better targeted. Findings from the joint review of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme in Northern Ireland by my Department and the Department of Education highlighted that the scheme is not as effectively targeted as it could be because a majority of Education Maintenance Allowance students indicated that they would have remained in education even if they had not received Education Maintenance Allowance.

However, in some cases it makes a real difference. I am determined that young people from lower income families, for whom these allowances make a real difference, continue to be assisted to stay in education and training. I would, however, agree with the Employment and Learning Committee's recommendation that the allowances could be better targeted.

My Department and the Department of Education are currently considering a range of options for the future of the scheme.

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

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

South Eastern Regional College: Applications

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many applications were received for courses at the South Eastern Regional College in each of the last three academic years.

(AQO 1399/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not hold the information requested by the Member, as the number of applications received for courses is a matter for individual colleges.

I have passed this query to the Director of the South Eastern Regional College to respond to the Member directly.

Queen's University Belfast and Stranmillis University College: Merger

Ms Lewis asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the negotiations surrounding the merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University, Belfast.

(AQO 1400/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have commissioned a two-stage study of the teacher education infrastructure in Northern Ireland. The first stage of this will complete in the spring, and the second stage by the autumn of this year. Other than the costs associated with this study, my Department is not incurring any direct expenditure on the merger.

South West Regional College: Beacon Awards

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the South West Regional College's success in receiving three awards at the Association of Colleges Beacon Awards ceremony in Westminster on 8 February 2012.

(AQO 1401/11-15)

Dr Farry: I was delighted to attend and speak at the South West College's recent Celebration event on 22nd February, at which I extended my warmest congratulations on winning three UK Beacon Awards. The college received 2 awards for its effective Engagement with Employers and successful College and School partnerships, and the highly coveted President's Award, in recognition of the STEM Centre's innovative, collaborative work.

The achievement of these prestigious accolades has placed the college on the world stage, in terms of innovative methods of working within further education.

"Further Education Means Business", my Department's Strategy for the Northern Ireland further education sector, articulates that "further education should be at the heart of lifelong learning, in order to strengthen economic development, enhance social inclusion, and advance the individual's skills and learning" - these accolades are a testament to the strategy's successful implementation by colleges.

My Department has played its part, through the Employer Support Pilot Programme, which provided the financial support for the South West College's InnoTech and STEM Centres, and the sector's Carbon Zero NI project.

I have recently approved further funding of over £6 million for the further education sector, through the Employer Support Programme, for the next 4 years. This funding will enable colleges to provide a wide range of support for local employers, through sectoral initiatives and projects, to encourage local businesses to engage with, and embrace innovation.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Go for It Programme

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why her Department is still advertising the Go For It programme; and what action she is taking to address the misleading information about the programme on the Go For It website.

(AQW 6996/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Invest NI is not currently advertising the Go For It programme due to the legal challenge from Enterprise Northern Ireland which prevents Invest NI from providing a business start programme.

The wider Go for It campaign aims to encourage more people to think about starting a business (including those from under-represented groups), inform them of the support available to assist their new business venture, provide signposting information to relevant support and make starting a business a real and viable possibility for potential entrepreneurs.

Invest NI considers that the promotion of this key entrepreneurial message remains valid and important in the current economic climate.

To ensure that those individuals with an interest in establishing their own business are able to access relevant advice and guidance, Invest NI is providing an interim service, delivered through Invest NI's five Regional Offices (Ballymena, Belfast, Londonderry, Omagh and Newry) by using existing staff already providing advice and guidance to businesses. The interim service may be accessed through the Go For It Helpline on 0800 027639, www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk and the www.goforitni.com websites. The service also refers individuals to Councils, LEAs and other sources of business advice in the area.

There are no specific references to the Go For It programme on the website, other than where they relate to historical case studies.

Domestic Electricity Prices

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she will publish the comparable Northern Ireland, Great Britain average and Republic of Ireland domestic electricity prices for each of the last ten years.

(AQW 7003/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not routinely collect comparative data on domestic electricity prices. However, both the Utility Regulator in Northern Ireland and the Department of Energy and Climate Change in GB publish electricity tariff comparison information on their websites.

Warm Homes Discount Scheme

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 3412/11-15, what research has been carried out into the proportion of customers who would benefit from a warm homes discount scheme; and which customers would pay more as a result of such a scheme.

(AQW 7037/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There has been no detailed research carried out in relation to introducing a warm homes discount scheme in Northern Ireland. However, what I can say is that, in Great Britain, the funding for the scheme comes from participating energy suppliers and these costs can be passed directly through to other customers. Given the small size of the domestic customer base in Northern Ireland and the proportion who are already defined as in fuel poverty, these additional costs would have to be borne by an even smaller number of customers and risks pushing more into fuel poverty. I do not think this is either fair or sustainable.

Broadband Access

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans are in place to ensure that the broadband contracts recently awarded by her Department are availed of by rural dwellers who are currently unable to access broadband.

(AQW 7103/11-15)

Mrs Foster: On 6 January 2012, I announced the award of a contract to deliver high-speed satellite broadband services to Onwave Ltd. The contract ensures that everyone in Northern Ireland continues to have access to broadband services. Onwave delivers services in areas where, due to commercial and technical reasons, broadband cannot be accessed via telephone lines.

Onwave has an extensive marketing strategy to promote its services across Northern Ireland, which includes radio advertising and printed material. I understand that the company has also engaged at a local level through, for example, open days held in Toomebridge on 18 and 19 January 2012, and planned participation in a series of broadband workshops in Fermanagh in February 2012, organised by Fermanagh District Council.

In October 2011, I announced a new investment of £215,432 to improve access to broadband in rural areas across Northern Ireland. The funding was awarded to North West Electronics through the NI Broadband Fund. North West Electronics has developed a marketing strategy to promote its services. I am also aware that the company has had considerable engagement with local representatives and community organisations across Northern Ireland.

Construction Industry

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she has taken to support and underpin the construction industry; and what progress she has made on the establishment of a taskforce for the construction industry.

(AQW 7107/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The overarching aim of the draft Northern Ireland Economic Strategy is to improve the competitiveness of the Northern Ireland economy through export led economic growth.

In developing the draft Economic Strategy, the Executive Sub-Committee on the Economy have recognised the need to take action to rebuild the local labour market in the aftermath of the recession and the need to include actions which will support the construction industry. The Strategy identifies a number of infrastructure projects which will support the rebuilding of the local labour market by creating employment in the local construction sector.

The Executive believes that a focus on export opportunities will be key to the future performance not only of the NI economy but also of the local construction sector.

In addition to the measures outlined in the draft economic strategy, Invest NI continues to work closely with companies in the sector to explore new market opportunities. This has included a number of 'Meet the Buyer' events focussed on major construction events; projects or sectors where there is still spend anticipated in the coming years and a series of events promoting renewable energy opportunities to the sector. Invest NI have also recruited a new Business Development Director for Construction based in London. This new role will support local construction related companies maximise opportunities within the GB market.

On 17 January I attended the all party working group on construction which had as its focus a discussion on how the construction industry can deliver the Executive's objectives set out in the PfG and Economic Strategy. The construction industry has identified 16 PfG commitments that they can assist the Executive in delivering.

I welcome this initiative by the industry and I will continue to work with my colleagues on the Executive Sub-committee on the Economy to ensure we collectively support the sector.

Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how she is using EU policies, networks and programmes to achieve the key objective to strengthen the targeted research performance and research base to create a stronger push towards knowledge transfer/exchange, as detailed in 'Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12'.

(AQW 7110/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department contributes to the delivery of three of the four Thematic Priorities identified in "Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12". Specific activities undertaken over the period aimed at promoting research commercialisation include:

- Encouraging companies and research bodies to engage more fully with the 7th Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities. This has involved supporting the SME sector, Universities and other research bodies to prepare applications and find partners. In the period 31 October 2010 to 31 October 2011, Northern Ireland based researchers (in private companies, academia and other) secured €11.54million from this source.
- Engaging directly with EU counterparts through membership of networks such as the "European Regions Research and Innovation Network" (ERRIN) which facilitates knowledge exchange, joint action and project partnerships between its members with the aim of strengthening their research and innovation capacities.

- Participating in and hosting EU workshops to exchange best practice and identify learning/funding opportunities for Northern Ireland in areas such as Smart Specialisation and Horizon 2020.
- Imminent appointment of additional staff resource based in Brussels, to engage directly with the EU institutions on this agenda and identify new funding opportunities for NI.
- Separately, DEL has put in place a Higher Education EU Framework Support Fund, aimed at providing mentoring support to research institutions for the development of applications to the Framework Programme.

DETI continues to manage drawdown of the €306 million European Regional Development funds available to NI through the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme, 2007-2013. €160million of this is earmarked for R&D and innovation support activities.

InvestNI Start-Up Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to the start-up scheme being delivered by InvestNI staff, which has been advertised on television under the Go For It brand, (i) to detail the number of (a) Business advisory sessions that were completed; (b) training seminars that were held; (c) the number of attendees at the training seminars; (d) business clinics that were held; (e) hours of business planning advice; and (f) business start-up plans produced, in October, November and December 2011; and (ii) how this compares with the outputs for the Go for It strand of the Enterprise Development Programme in October, November & December 2010.

(AQW 7401/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI is not delivering a start up scheme in connection with Go For It but is responding to start up enquiries including those generated through the Go For It helpline. It is therefore important to recognise that a useful comparison cannot be made between the Enterprise Development Programme, (a structured programme delivered at a cost of approx £4 million p.a.) and an interim, reactive service that is part of Invest NI's standard response to enquiries.

Invest NI is prevented from delivering a fully functional business start programme as a direct result of the legal action undertaken by Enterprise Northern Ireland.

The following information should be considered in that context. Indeed, the differences in activity levels when not operating such a programme serve to underline the need for such a structured programme approach to business start provision.

As part of Invest NI's core service, through the Regional Office network, staff do provide advice and business plan support. Invest NI is also engaging with other stakeholders providing services in this area including DEL and Princes Trust NI, and where appropriate is signposting individuals to these organisations for support.

In the period October 2011 to December 2011 Invest NI responded to 1878 enquiries, held 24 clinics and met 347 individuals. 91 individuals completed business plans.

In October 2010 to December 2010 the Go For It strand of EDP delivered

- 1093 Business advisory sessions completed
- 394 Training seminars
- 1290 attendees at training seminars
- 69 Business clinics
- 541 hours of business planning advice
- 687 Business Plans
- 1391 hours of Financial business planning

InvestNI Start-Up Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many InvestNI staff are currently working on the delivery of the start-up scheme advertised under the Go For It brand.

(AQW 7402/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's wider Go for It campaign is not advertising, nor delivering a specific start up scheme, but aims to encourage more people to think about starting a business (including those from under-represented groups), inform them of the support available to assist their new business venture, provide signposting information to relevant support and make starting a business a real and viable possibility for potential entrepreneurs.

Those individuals with an interest in establishing their own business are able to access relevant advice and guidance through staff based within Invest NI's five Regional Offices (Ballymena, Belfast, Londonderry, Omagh and Newry). These offices are staffed by approximately 30 business-facing staff who provide a range of services to local businesses as part of a wider role, including advice on business start, business growth, and access to an extensive network of support. This wider role includes some elements of the Go For It campaign.

Tourism Ireland

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) for her assessment of whether the tourism sector receives equitable treatment and benefit from Tourism Ireland Limited compared with the tourism sector in the Republic of Ireland; and (ii) to detail the level of funding her Department has received from Tourism Ireland Limited in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8030/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) I am content currently that Northern Ireland receives equitable treatment and benefit from Tourism Ireland.
- (ii) Core funding received by Tourism Ireland from DETI in each of the last 3 years:

2010/11	£14.572million*
2009/10	£15.732million*
2008/09	£15.502million **

* excludes pension costs

** includes pension costs

Handling of Sectarian Harassment Cases

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact that the handling of sectarian harassment cases by major companies may have on the reputation of local business and potential investment.

(AQW 8078/11-15)

Mrs Foster: No assessment has been made.

Advertising 'NI 2012: Our Place Our Time'

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much was spent on advertising 'NI 2012: Our Place Our Time' in (i) Northern Ireland; (ii) the Republic of Ireland; and (iii) the rest of the world.

(AQW 8081/11-15)

Mrs Foster: NITB, which has responsibility for marketing Northern Ireland in the domestic market and the Republic of Ireland, has spent (i) £424,000 advertising “ni2012 our Time our place in the Northern Ireland market and (ii) £712,000 on marketing the initiative in the Republic of Ireland.

- (iii) Tourism Ireland, which markets Northern Ireland worldwide, will have spent £4.7m by the end of this financial year marketing this initiative with the majority of the money being spent in Great Britain, our most important market. This commitment also includes £1m which has been spent on co-operative marketing campaigns with air and sea carriers.

Prospective Owners who Wish to Open a Bed and Breakfast Establishment

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what incentives are in place for prospective owners who wish to open a bed and breakfast establishment.

(AQW 8092/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Whilst Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) does not offer any financial incentives for potential B&B accommodation providers, there is a range of advisory and support services available. These include guidance on the legal requirements involved when opening a B&B, operational matters, signage and advice on other statutory bodies' legislative requirements i.e. Environmental Health and Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service.

B&B providers can also avail of free marketing via NITB's consumer website www.discovernorthernireland.com and can also apply to participate in the quality grading scheme offering the opportunity to be star graded.

They will have access to NITB's Next Level Programme of Events which includes road shows, master classes, business insights and conferences. In addition, a range of ICT business support and customer service initiatives are also available to certified B&B providers.

NITB also works closely with the Accommodation Associations, including the Northern Ireland Bed & Breakfast Partnership, who can provide further guidance to potential B&B operators.

While support may be available for the establishment of a guesthouse, Invest NI does not provide financial support for new start B&B businesses.

Financial assistance may be available from other government bodies such as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Extraction of Shale Gas

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given her assurances that the extraction of shale gas will result in lower energy prices for consumers, for her assessment of how much lower gas prices would be for consumers, based on Tamboran's most optimistic supply estimate, at the current rate of consumption.

(AQW 8116/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Tamboran's recent announcement that initial studies have confirmed the presence of a substantial natural gas field in Co. Fermanagh has the potential to improve security of energy supply in Northern Ireland which is one of my Department's key energy priorities. Two out of our local three power stations are gas fired and both the business and domestic market for natural gas in Northern Ireland is increasing.

I am aware that significant shale gas finds in the United States have resulted in lower gas prices for US consumers. However, it is not yet possible to accurately predict to what degree the extraction of shale gas will result in lower energy prices for local consumers.

InvestNI's Go for It Programme

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much was spent on advertising InvestNI's 'Go for It' programme from October 2011 to January 2012; and how many people or companies accessed the programme during this period.

(AQW 8130/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) is not currently advertising a Business Start programme due to the legal challenge from Enterprise Northern Ireland (ENI), which prevents Invest NI from providing such a programme. However, Invest NI continues to advertise under the wider "Go For It" brand to stimulate public interest in enterprise, entrepreneurship and business start.

Invest NI responds directly to all enquiries generated as a result of the wider "Go For It" campaign. This helps ensure those individuals with an interest in establishing or growing their own business are able to access relevant advice and guidance, Invest NI provides advice and signposting through its five Regional Offices (Ballymena, Belfast, Londonderry, Omagh and Newry), using existing staff that would already be providing advice and guidance to businesses.

Invest NI is also engaging with other stakeholders, providing services in this area including the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) and Princes Trust NI, and where appropriate, signposting individuals needing additional support to these organisations, as well as Councils, Local Enterprise Agencies and other sources of business advice in the area.

During the period from 1 October 2011 to 31 January 2012, Invest NI responded to 2,572 enquiries, held 49 business clinics and met with 390 individuals, which in turn resulted in 167 completed business plans.

Advertising spend on the "Go For It" campaign from 1 October 2011 to 31 January 2012 has been £187,401 (inc. of VAT).

Fracking Process

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given her assertions in answer to previous Assembly Questions that Tamboran will not use any chemicals as part of the fracking process, whether (i) this commitment applies to the entire drilling and fracking process or just the fracturing of rocks; (ii) she has sought any assurances in writing from Tamboran in this regard; (iii) such a commitment is now part of Tamboran's licence; and (iv) any commitment of this nature from Tamboran would remain applicable in the event that Tamboran, or the licence, were to be taken over by an alternative company.

(AQW 8147/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (i) Tamboran have repeatedly stated that they do not intend to use any chemical additives during hydraulic fracturing. It is highly probable that the shallow section of any well (through the limestone formations) would be drilled using air and that at least some of the lower section would be drilled using a standard oil industry drilling mud.
- (ii) & (ii) The company's proposals for drilling are still far from finalised and consequently my Department has not either sought any written assurances or made this commitment a condition of the licence.
- (iv) As Tamboran's commitment not to use chemical additives during hydraulic fracturing has not yet been formalised by inclusion in a drilling application, the transfer of such a commitment to either a new owner or new licensee is hypothetical.

Any approval for activities undertaken under a petroleum licence would relate to the application submitted for that activity. Change of ownership would not affect this, although any new Operator would have to demonstrate both their capability and their commitment to carry out the activities as authorised.

Shale Gas Forum

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) to detail the membership of the recently constituted shale gas forum; (ii) to which organisation each member belongs; (iii) to outline the expertise in gas exploration, hydraulic fracturing, environmental protection, the agri-food sector or the tourism industry that each member brings to the forum; (iv) to detail the terms of reference of the forum; (v) to whom the forum provides advice or assistance; (vi) how often the forum has met to date; and (vii) to list the dates for any future meetings.

(AQW 8148/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The shale gas 'forum' is an informal mechanism which allows officials from the main agencies with a role in regulating shale gas in Northern Ireland to meet to share knowledge on shale gas and improve communications to facilitate co-ordinated regulation. Participants have included representatives from my Department (Minerals & Petroleum Branch, Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland), Northern Ireland Environment Agency (Environmental policy, Water management), Planning Service, DARD (Environmental Policy, Inland Fisheries) and NI Water. This includes both technical and policy representation. The purpose of this group, which has no formal terms of reference, is to consider the regulatory regime relating to shale gas exploration in Northern Ireland to ensure that all aspects of environmental protection, planning and public health and safety are fully covered, with reference both to previous experience worldwide and to specific local conditions. There have been two meetings of the forum to date; the dates for future meetings have not been finalised.

Shale Gas in Co Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, based on the figures released recently by Tamboran regarding the potential amount of shale gas in Co Fermanagh, to detail (i) the estimated total value of the gas at the current market price, should the estimated amount of shale gas be extracted; (ii) how much would be paid in royalties to the Treasury; and (iii) how much the Executive would be paid directly from Tamboran.

(AQW 8149/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has not yet studied the analysis supporting Tamboran's recently published figures of recoverable reserves of shale gas in Fermanagh and, therefore, it is not appropriate to make such estimates at this time. Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs is responsible for oil taxation in the UK. Royalties, levied at 7.5% of the value of gas produced, may be subject to claims from the former owners of the mineral rights of the ground surrounding the production wells. Any unclaimed royalties are passed to the H.M. Treasury.

Regional Pricing of Fuel

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has had any discussions with the large supermarket chains or the major fuel providers in relation to regional pricing of fuel.

(AQW 8151/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Retail prices for a range of filling station products, including petrol and diesel, are outside the control of my Department. The retail price of road fuels respond to fluctuating wholesale prices that are set internationally. Additionally, fuel duty and tax, which accounts for around 60% of the final pump price, is set by Her Majesty's Treasury.

People who Emigrated

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many people emigrated in (i) 2010; (ii) 2011; and (iii) 2012 to date; and how this is reflected in unemployment figures.

(AQW 8182/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Parts (i), (ii) & (iii)

Migration statistics for Northern Ireland are produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research agency (NISRA). The table below shows the latest available estimates of immigration, emigration and net in migration into Northern Ireland in the period July 2003 to June 2010.

TABLE 1: NORTHERN IRELAND MIGRATION STATISTICS

	Immigration	Emigration	Net In migration
Jul 2003 - Jun 2004	20,304	19,483	821
Jul 2004 - Jun 2005	26,901	20,230	6,671
Jul 2005 - Jun 2006	30,522	20,627	9,895
Jul 2006 - Jun 2007	32,266	22,460	9,806
Jul 2007 - Jun 2008	27,484	21,741	5,743
Jul 2008 - Jun 2009	23,547	21,427	2,120
Jul 2009 - Jun 2010	22,521	22,541	-20

Source: Migration Statistics, NISRA

Further information on migration is publically available at <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/demography/default.asp18.htm>.

Part (iv)

The figures on the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits, over broadly the same period, are presented in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF PEOPLE CLAIMING UNEMPLOYMENT RELATED BENEFITS

	Claimant Count
Jul 2003	34,600
Jul 2004	29,900
Jul 2005	28,600
Jul 2006	28,000
Jul 2007	23,700
Jul 2008	26,900
Jul 2009	51,000
Jul 2010	56,600
Jul 2011	60,300
Jan 2012	61,500

Source: Claimant Count, NISRA

Care should be taken to avoid establishing fixed relationships between one particular factor and any change in unemployment – there are a range of factors which influence unemployment. For example, the unemployment level in Northern Ireland could be affected by residents of the Republic of Ireland taking up jobs in Northern Ireland, and vice versa; and people who were previously inactive taking up employment (for example a graduate, a school leaver or perhaps a parent returning from a career break). Job creation rates and people losing their jobs will also affect the overall unemployment level.

Clearly inwards and outwards migration could also impact on unemployment but it would be very difficult to isolate this one issue from all the other factors at play.

Increases in Energy Prices

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of recent increases in energy prices and the publication of the Consumer Council's analysis of the McIlldoon report, how she, and the Utility Regulator, will ensure that energy policy coherently examines the issues of energy affordability, security of supply and sustainability.

(AQW 8209/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Strategic Energy Framework (SEF 2010) set out four key goals namely, building competitive markets, ensuring security of supply, enhancing sustainability and developing our energy infrastructure. The SEF, which has a ten year life span, also identified a number of actions aimed at delivering against these key goals and progress against these is monitored on a regular basis.

Energy Prices

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of recent increases in energy prices and the publication of the Consumer Council's recent analysis of the McIlldoon report, how she, and the Utility Regulator, will ensure that energy consumers are empowered and provided with price tariff structures that meet their needs, so that they can influence the type of energy they use, and how and when it is used.

(AQW 8278/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department and the Utility Regulator have helped put in place the conditions necessary for effective competition in the Northern Ireland energy market, and removed the barriers to market entry. The Utility Regulator also ensures that regulated tariffs are "cost reflective".

In the last two years three new electricity supply companies have begun offering domestic electricity supply, and firmus energy has begun offering supply to domestic gas customers in the Greater Belfast licensed area. The new suppliers have been offering discounted tariffs compared to the incumbent suppliers. All energy consumers are encouraged to seek out the best deals available from competing supply companies, and business customers are encouraged to use the energy buyers' guides which have been produced by the Utility Regulator and Manufacturing NI.

Energy Prices

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of recent increases in energy prices and the publication of the Consumer Council's recent analysis of the McIlldoon report, how she, and the Utility Regulator, will ensure that mechanisms are put in place to provide greater incentives, or penalties, for energy suppliers to supply consumers at the optimum price.

(AQW 8283/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Utility Regulator price regulates the gas and electricity retail markets for domestic consumers in Northern Ireland. This ensures that dominant suppliers cannot abuse their market power and that only efficient costs are passed onto consumers.

Increasing competition, particularly in the domestic energy supply market, is also helping to put downward pressure on prices and has led to competing companies offering discounted tariffs to consumers.

InvestNI

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of (i) jobs promoted by InvestNI; (ii) business start-ups created by InvestNI; and (iii) overseas companies attracted by InvestNI in each year between 2001 and 2011, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 8327/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As Invest NI was only established in 2002, the information contained in this answer relates to the financial years 2002-03 to 2010-11.

(i) Table 1 shows the number of jobs promoted by Invest NI between 2002-03 and 2010-11 broken down by Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA).

TABLE 1: JOBS PROMOTED BY INVEST NI BY PCA (2002-03 TO 2010-11)

PCA	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Belfast East	0	0	429	329	678	304	1,089	396	925
Belfast North	0	14	17	113	91	51	117	472	66
Belfast South	134	720	1,317	969	966	527	358	642	703
Belfast West	0	122	750	31	58	178	92	46	5
East Antrim	100	25	112	232	69	284	42	53	222
East Londonderry	0	24	0	51	56	389	58	73	63
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	350	202	0	129	722	250	397	149	198
Foyle	43	486	40	668	875	994	217	265	365
Lagan Valley	0	0	16	387	143	107	102	186	251
Mid Ulster	32	0	149	118	270	398	356	228	177
Newry & Armagh	25	0	0	633	424	427	928	135	613
North Antrim	0	0	23	98	246	95	191	42	106
North Down	41	200	140	56	255	60	91	172	25
South Antrim	5	0	304	141	48	65	212	134	715
South Down	0	0	0	275	93	61	569	148	115
Strangford	70	5	0	120	86	61	134	137	33
Upper Bann	16	110	13	298	147	102	269	713	116
West Tyrone	0	175	53	124	116	199	71	106	70
Not Yet Located	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	545
Total	816	2,083	3,363	4,772	5,343	4,552	5,293	4,113	5,312

Notes:

- The years 2002-03 to 2004-05 include external jobs only. Local job figures for the period 2002-03 to 2004-05 are not available; however, Invest NI estimates that almost 7,000 additional local jobs were promoted during this time (not included in the table above).
 - Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.
- (ii) Table 2 shows the number of local business start ups approved by Invest NI between 2002- 03 and 2010-11 by PCA.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF LOCAL BUSINESS START UPS APPROVED BY INVEST NI BY PCA (2002-03 TO 2010-11)

PCA	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Belfast East	61	109	128	106	101	142	116	102	162
Belfast North	71	93	115	145	95	132	108	135	178
Belfast South	94	150	206	148	138	153	132	134	214
Belfast West	79	98	158	148	134	146	106	105	131
East Antrim	113	143	212	162	175	163	107	97	116
East Londonderry	115	149	266	219	200	248	168	149	236
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	149	220	340	292	303	337	247	220	253
Foyle	129	196	330	233	212	273	168	135	152
Lagan Valley	123	110	145	149	136	131	90	98	158
Mid Ulster	181	219	270	278	233	283	182	212	322
Newry & Armagh	158	185	288	230	189	234	154	145	201
North Antrim	113	108	199	173	204	236	137	87	140
North Down	90	157	160	145	112	98	86	57	118
South Antrim	100	132	161	148	132	131	100	93	149
South Down	165	213	305	286	173	218	135	134	179
Strangford	108	160	190	180	132	120	80	72	126
Upper Bann	143	174	238	228	140	181	158	120	167
West Tyrone	103	133	187	194	203	252	186	191	238
Not Yet Located								5	11
Total	2,095	2,749	3,898	3,464	3,012	3,478	2,460	2,291	3,251

Notes:

- 3 Figures include 25,684 start ups delivered indirectly in partnership with Enterprise NI through the Enterprise Development Programme (formerly Start A Business).
- 4 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.
- (iii) Table 3 shows the number of new externally-owned businesses that were attracted (had an offer of support approved) by Invest NI between 2002-03 and 2010-11 by PCA.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF NEW EXTERNALLY-OWNED BUSINESSES SUPPORTED BY INVEST NI BY PCA (2002-03 TO 2010-11)

Pca	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Belfast East		1	3	2	2	1	4	5	2
Belfast North		1	1	1	1		1	4	1

Pca	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Belfast South	3	1	6	1	4	4	4	3	4
Belfast West		2	1					1	
East Antrim	2		1	1			1		1
East Londonderry									
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	1				3	2	3	1	1
Foyle		1		1	2			1	1
Lagan Valley							1	1	
Mid Ulster	1	2	2					1	
Newry & Armagh					1	1	2	1	
North Antrim								1	
North Down	1								
South Down								1	
Strangford							1	1	
Upper Bann				1		1	1		1
West Tyrone				1		1			1
Not Yet Located								1	4
Total	8	8	14	8	13	10	18	22	16

Notes:

- 5 A company can only be counted once in this table. For example, a new investor during the period that also undertakes an expansion project is only counted as one company.
- 6 Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.

In addition, Invest NI attracted reinvestment projects from 222 externally-owned businesses already established in Northern Ireland during the period under review.

Proposed North-South Electricity Interconnector

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the benefits of the proposed North-South electricity interconnector to the economy.

(AQW 8355/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A new interconnector will remove transmission capacity constraints that are costing consumers in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland some £18- £25 million a year. Currently, more expensive plant must be run than would otherwise be the case due to lack of capacity. To promote competition effectively it is important that suppliers can access electricity from the most efficient power plants. This will help drive down the cost of electricity for consumers and support economic growth; increase system resilience, support the growth of renewable electricity and help meet the target of 40% of electricity from renewable generation.

Strategic Energy Framework

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the implementation of the recommendation contained in the Strategic Energy Framework on smart energy metering.

(AQW 8374/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I refer you to my answer of 9 February 2012 to AQW 7065/11-15.

Broadband Speed

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what is the average broadband speed for (i) households; and (ii) businesses in each council area.

(AQW 8400/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not hold information of this nature. In July 2011 OFCOM produced its first Communications Infrastructure Report in which it included an assessment of broadband speeds across each of the UK Council areas. Following publication of the report I wrote to OFCOM expressing my disappointment that the analysis failed to take into consideration the impact of the £51m fibre to the cabinet investment in Northern Ireland. OFCOM indicated that when updating the report in January 2012 this issue would be addressed. However the updated report again fails to recognise the impact of the investment. My officials have been in contact with OFCOM to express ongoing dissatisfaction with this analysis. The OFCOM Infrastructure Report can be accessed at http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/broadband-research/Fixed_Broadband_June_2011.pdf

Proposed North-South Electricity Interconnector

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the proposed North-South electricity interconnector will improve the security of electricity supply to consumers and businesses.

(AQW 8407/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Interconnection plays a crucial role in supply security for the economy, especially for the manufacturing and IT sectors which rely on a constant electricity supply. The new second interconnector will greatly improve system resilience if either interconnector fails.

The importance of adequate interconnection for security of supply is shown by the latest forecast of electricity generation capacity. This shows that nearly 23% of Northern Ireland's conventional generation will be lost due to plant being decommissioned by 2016 at Ballylumford to meet EU environmental constraints under the Heavy Fuel Oil Directive.

Economic Activity in Derry

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 7055/11-15, in light of the latest figures which rank Derry as the District Council Area with the highest level of unemployment, what specific plans she has to increase economic activity in Derry.

(AQW 8409/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As I have outlined previously, my Department and Invest NI continues to work on a number of initiatives and programmes which will contribute to increasing employment in the Londonderry area and beyond.

These initiatives include the Jobs Fund where support for projects already approved such as Axa Insurance and One Stop Data will lead to the creation of over 140 jobs in the City. A number of other projects are currently at varying stages of negotiation and I am confident that there will be further positive job announcements in the near future.

Invest NI also continues to work in close collaboration with other key stakeholders including Londonderry City Council to optimise opportunities for economic growth. This will include seeking to

capitalise on the city's status as UK City of Culture in 2013, particularly in terms of attracting new inward investment and associated employment opportunities to the city and wider North West region.

Go For It Initiative

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to confirm that (i) the Go For It initiative was a business start-up programme; (ii) InvestNI terminated the Go For It programme on 30 September 2011; (iii) the programme allowed for two 1 year extensions to the contract which meant that it could have continued until 31 March 2013; and (iv) InvestNI was not prevented from delivering the programme due to the current legal challenge by Enterprise Northern Ireland, and that it could have continued to deliver the programme during the legal challenge period.

(AQW 8416/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's Go For It campaign is a wider initiative that aims to encourage more people to think about starting a business (including those from under-represented groups), inform them of the support available to assist their new business venture, provide signposting information to relevant support and make starting a business a real and viable possibility for potential entrepreneurs.

Invest NI's Go For It campaign is not a programme and did not terminate on 30th September 2011.

We assume from this question that you are referring to the Enterprise Development Programme (EDP). The original contract for the EDP was a two year contract to 31 March 2011 which did allow for two 1 year extensions.

The legal challenge prevents Invest NI from awarding the tender for the new BSP and therefore does prevent Invest NI from running a Business Start up Programme.

Costs to the Health & Safety Executive in the Failed Crown Court Prosecution of Trevor Bailie

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what were the total costs to the Health & Safety Executive in the failed Crown Court prosecution of Trevor Bailie which concluded in or about September 2011; and in respect of a second case which was dropped.

(AQW 8446/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The witness costs associated with taking prosecutions against Trevor Bailie, trading as Trevor Bailie Maintenance and Engineering, following the catastrophic failure of two tower cranes, breaks down as follows: Case 1 – Danesfort, Belfast £29,393.07 and Case 2 – Shane House, Larne £4,568.58. Associated legal fees for both cases have not yet been invoiced but are likely to be in the region of £15,000.

Signature Project Formula for Supporting Tourism Initiatives

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 7221/11-15, to detail the nine signature projects identified in the draft Tourism Strategy.

(AQW 8447/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 proposes nine key tourism areas/destinations which are:

- Armagh
- Belfast
- Causeway Coast and Glens
- Fermanagh Lakelands
- Londonderry
- Lough Neagh

- Mournes
- Sperrins & Tyrone
- Strangford Lough

My Department and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board continue to engage in consultations with key stakeholders including local authorities in each of the areas to facilitate the final definition of the key areas and development of destination management plans across Northern Ireland.

Access to Next Generation Broadband Speeds

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to clarify what percentage of businesses have access to next generation broadband speeds, given that in the Programme for Government Delivery Report 2008-2011, this has been allocated a green light but the report states that the target of 85 percent of businesses having access to next generation broadband speeds has not been achieved.

(AQW 8474/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As indicated elsewhere in the Programme for Government Delivery Report 2008-2011 the contract for the Next Generation Broadband project was awarded in December 2009 and was scheduled for completion by May 2011 when higher speed broadband services would be available to at least 85% of businesses across Northern Ireland. This was achieved on time and on budget. In addition, as a result of the recently announced contract with Onwave at the beginning of January 2012 broadband services of up to 10 Megabits per second are available to all businesses and homes across Northern Ireland.

Civil Service Posts

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 7691/11-15, and given that Derry has the highest unemployment rate and that the Programme for Government highlights 'recognising the importance of Belfast and Derry as key drivers of regional economic growth', why her Department does not have any civil servants based in Derry; and what plans she has to address this regional disparity.

(AQW 8602/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The answer to AQW 7691/11-15 related only to the specific administrative grades listed in that question. However the Department currently has two Trading Standards Enforcement Officers (equivalent to EO1) based in Londonderry. In addition to this Invest NI has a Regional Office in the City currently employing 16 public service staff. There are currently no plans to change this position.

Shale Gas Extracted in County Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what influence her Department will have on where the shale gas extracted in County Fermanagh will be sold and the price at which it will be sold; (ii) whether customers living on the island of Ireland will be given preference with regards to the purchase of this gas; and (iii) what impact this gas exploration will have on the price consumers here will pay.

(AQW 8617/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The energy industry in Northern Ireland is fully privatised, and the natural gas and electricity sectors are subject to regulation. However, it must be recognised that natural gas is a commodity and, as such, any shale gas extracted in County Fermanagh is likely to be traded in national and international gas markets. While my Department has no direct role in the price at which shale gas might be traded, there are significant security of supply benefits from a source of shale gas in Northern Ireland, which would reduce our dependence on imported gas supplies.

Tourism Strategy

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the Tourism Strategy.

(AQO 1408/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The draft Programme for Government includes a key commitment to grow visitor numbers and revenue in light of the opportunities presented by ni2012 and the investment in tourism product from the last Programme for Government which is now coming to fruition.

The draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 is currently being revised to align it with the draft Programme for Government and the draft Economic Strategy and I aim to seek Executive approval shortly.

Business Support

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what support her Department provides to companies that find themselves in difficult trading conditions.

(AQO 1409/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department and Invest NI are acutely aware of the difficult conditions being faced by our local business base. That is specifically why Invest NI launched the Boosting Business Initiative last year which is designed to support those companies which can continue to trade profitably and remain viable but are being constrained by the current difficult trading conditions.

Invest NI has also reviewed its existing products and services to make them more accessible to eligible businesses and to widen the scope of support to help the wider business base. This range of advice, guidance and support is available under five key themes: Jobs, R&D, Exports, Technology and Skills, and is designed to help businesses survive the impact of the economic downturn and secure their position for the future.

As at week commencing 20th February 2012, Invest NI had fielded approximately 4,300 enquiries from local businesses through its dedicated Boosting Business enquiry centre, generating over 550 projects which have the potential to create approximately 1,000 new jobs and lever £71m investment.

Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the new Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre.

(AQO 1410/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Giant's Causeway Visitor Experience is nearing completion and due to open to the public on 25 June 2012, 2 weeks ahead of schedule, to tie in with the Irish Open tee off on Wednesday 27 June 2012.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has identified the official opening of the world class Giant's Causeway Visitor Experience as a Tier 1 event within the ni2012: Our Time; Our Place showcase which will be complemented by FLAGS at the Giant's Causeway.

FLAGS is a large scale installation embedded in the dramatic landscape of the Causeway was created by internationally renowned artist Hans Peter Kuhn and will run from August to October 2012 to recognise the world heritage site and new visitor experience.

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: Credit Easing

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on her Department's policy on credit easing schemes for small and medium sized enterprises.

(AQO 1411/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that credit easing in the UK would take the form of a £20 billion National Loan Guarantee Scheme which will aim to relieve constraints on

the supply of bank lending and tackle the longstanding problems in the supply of finance to SMEs in the UK.

The Executive has previously highlighted the need to make credit available to SMEs and that any steps in this regard are implemented in a way that the benefits are felt in Northern Ireland. Treasury has confirmed that they are currently consulting with all UK bank headquarters, including the main banks in Northern Ireland, and a further announcement is expected on this in the forthcoming budget.

Tourism: Visa Waivers

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with the Dublin Government and the Secretary of State on a visa waiver scheme for tourists from Asia.

(AQO 1412/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I discussed this issue with Hugo Swire, NIO Minister of State last month.

The Republic of Ireland, ROI, introduced a visa waiver programme, operating for nationals of 16 countries for a trial period from July 2011 to October 2012, in order to seek to attract visitors to Ireland who hold a valid visa for entry into the UK. Under the programme, nationals of those countries arriving in the UK with a valid UK visa are able to enter the ROI without any further documentation. However, if they enter the ROI on an Irish visa they cannot then enter UK. They cannot therefore visit NI.

I have raised the issue of a reciprocal visa waiver scheme for those entering NI with a valid Irish visa. I understand there are security and resource implications which currently prevent the introduction of such a scheme. I will continue to raise this issue with both Governments.

Employment Opportunities

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact that inequalities of employment opportunities might have on the local economy.

(AQO 1413/11-15)

Mrs Foster: On the demand side we are now in an era where there are many safeguards in place to help ensure that employers award jobs opportunities to people on merit.

On the supply side there is still work to do to ensure that all sections of our society have the right qualifications, skills and ambitions to compete for jobs in today's economy. This is recognised in the Executive's draft Economic Strategy and its accompanying Integrated Impact Assessment. Clearly it is undesirable for an economy to have unfilled potential in any sections of its population.

Credit Unions

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with Credit Unions in relation to their concerns around the proposed changes to Financial Services Authority regulations.

(AQO 1414/11-15)

Mrs Foster: At their request, I have met with representatives of the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions to discuss some concerns, shared by the Irish League, especially in relation to the one year investment limit. Following our meeting, I wrote to both the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, FST, and the Chief Executive of the Financial Services Authority, FSA, setting out my views and seeking a review of the stated policy. As a result of my intervention, the FST has now offered to facilitate a meeting between the FSA and Northern Ireland MPs to discuss the issue directly. A number of credit unions have also had informal telephone contact with my officials to seek clarification on specific issues of future regulation.

HCL BPO Services: Job Losses

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on any discussions she has had in relation to the job losses at the HCL BPO Services call centre in Armagh.

(AQO 1415/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I have recently met with senior representatives from HCL BPO Services and throughout my discussions I have sought to retain and sustain as many jobs as possible for Northern Ireland. My officials in Invest NI are working closely with HCL in regards to the call centre in Armagh and have already proactively engaged with both existing and prospective investors to encourage them to consider the Armagh site and the associated infrastructure and skilled workforce as an excellent investment opportunity in the short term.

I am somewhat encouraged that the company plans are firmly focused on investing and growing in Northern Ireland and that HCL expects to find alternative employment for around 40% of staff affected by the announcement during the course of the 90 day consultation period.

All of the job losses announced are deeply regrettable and I can confirm that my Department have already engaged with colleagues in the Department for Employment and Learning and will leverage the support of all of our local partners to provide whatever support is necessary to limit the impact of any redundancies. This will include running redundancy clinics and offering training options and advisory support for any potential new business starts.

Banks: Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on any discussions her Department has had with local banks about providing reasonable liquidity to small and medium sized enterprises.

(AQO 1416/11-15)

Mrs Foster: While DETI has no statutory control of the banking sector, we have met with the main banks in Northern Ireland, most recently in December 2011, to emphasise the importance of supporting business development and growth. These discussions have included encouraging banks to promote, where appropriate, the Enterprise Finance Guarantee Scheme and also stressing the importance of communicating clearly to business customers in relation to lending decisions.

In addition, DETI, through Invest NI, continues to develop and implement an Access to Capital Strategy which supports the availability of capital within the local SME market.

Department of the Environment

Conservation of Archaeological Sites and Monuments

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment (i) to outline any planned cuts to (a) the Historic Monument Scheduling Programme; and (b) the Countryside Management Scheme; and (ii) for his assessment of how any cuts might impact upon the conservation of archaeological sites and monuments.

(AQW 740/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Following the Executive's budget outcome in March 2011, it was necessary to identify a range of savings measures to ensure the Department operated within the reduced budget approved by the Executive and to address a range of internal pressures, including the significant fall in planning income.

One such measure at that time was the suspension of the contract-based professional archaeological support to both the Historic Monuments Scheduling Programme and the Countryside Management Scheme.

However, during this financial year, I have taken the necessary steps to re-instate archaeological support in a number of these areas. Officials are presently working to achieve this for the remainder of this financial year.

In response to part (ii) of this question, the impact of this suspension of contract-based professional support for the Scheduling Programme in May 2011, along with the knock on effect of some other cuts and reprioritisation of work, was the temporary suspension of new schedulings, except on an ad-hoc or emergency basis. This has had a negative consequential impact on the future delivery of conservation works at archaeological sites and monuments. Officials will continue to prioritise works to ensure that the conservation of such sites is addressed on the basis of conservation need.

The Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme is the remit of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. Due to the loss of contracted professional support in my Department for a Countryside Management caseworker, Historic Monuments Unit suspended receipt of consultations from DARD seeking management specifications for historic monuments. I note the advice from officials that, subject to contractual provisions, and in the light of the steps that I took earlier in the year, it should be possible to re-instate archaeological support in some of these work areas for the remainder of the 2011/12 Financial Year, with provision for it to extend into the next Financial Year.

Departmental Schemes, Projects or Initiatives

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

(AQW 904/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have detailed at Annex A, the wide and diverse range of schemes, projects or initiatives that have received co-operation from the Department. I do believe, however that there is much greater scope for co-operation and some of the potential examples are identified in Annex B.

ANNEX A**DETAILS OF DEPARTMENTAL SCHEMES, PROJECTS OR INITIATIVES SINCE 2007 THAT HAVE RECEIVED CO-OPERATION FROM:**

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
Environmental Policy Division (EPD)	<p>Euroscola 2007 - In Sept 2007, DOE Climate Change Unit part-funded a schools photographic competition to raise awareness about climate change. This was with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (now Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government); and the European Parliament Office in Ireland. Three winning schools were chosen to go to Strasbourg to take part in Euroscola 2007 – two from ROI and one from NI (St. Mary's, Derry).</p>	<p>Climate Change – Plugged in Places Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project - In 2010 DOE and DRD established a consortium and jointly bid for, and were successful in securing, match funding from the Office of Low Emission Vehicles for a pilot project to install infrastructure, undertake research and promote electric vehicles. The two year pilot project which runs until 31 March 2013 will investigate a number of areas which will help inform decisions on a roll-out of infrastructure on a regional and UK level.</p> <p>The £2.4m pilot project will receive £850,000 of funding from OLEV with the remainder coming from the other consortium partners. Among the consortium members is ESB the energy supplier for the Republic of Ireland who have significant technical experience in this area and are committed to rolling out an extensive network of charge points in ROI.</p>
	<p>Single Use Carrier Bag Levy - 2011: DoE officials met with officials from the Office of the Revenue Commissioner to discuss a range of operational issues in respect of the collection and enforcement of the Republic of Ireland Plastic Bag Tax and have held several discussions with relevant officials on this matter.</p> <p>DoE officials have also liaised with officials in the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government (DEHLG) on this issue.</p>	<p>North South Market Development Steering Group (NSMDSG) - The Department is represented on the North South Market Development Steering Group (NSMDSG) and is supported on this Group by the Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP). WRAP is a UK-wide resource efficiency body with a delivery programme in Northern Ireland that is supported, through Grant-in-Aid funding from DOE, to progress a range of initiatives to reduce waste to landfill and to increase recycling. As part of WRAP's work plan agreed with the</p>

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
Environmental Policy Division (EPD)		<p>Department, WRAP has partnered the Irish recycling market development body, rx3, (which works on behalf of DECLG in ROI) in the production of a case study (during 2011/12) detailing the recovery of gypsum from plasterboard waste, which involves cross-border partners. A proposal to assess options for bulky waste across the island of Ireland has also been agreed - rx3 will lead on this project which is at final tender stage. A co-funded all-island plastics waste arising/recycling research project, led by rx3, has been completed and is due to be published during 2011.</p>
	<p>Cross-Border Movements of Waste - In 2009 Environment Ministers approved a Framework Agreement setting out the roles of the relevant competent authorities in arranging the necessary contracts for the removal of the waste illegally deposited in Northern Ireland and the liability falling to each jurisdiction. It is set within the legal context provided by the EU Waste Shipments Regulation and follows on from the Road Map for tackling illegal movements of waste which was endorsed by Ministers from both jurisdictions in October 2007.</p> <p>The Framework Agreement which was signed by officials in DoE and DEHLG means that Ireland will pay for 80% of the costs of excavation, removal and remediation of the sites and 100% of the costs of disposal.</p>	
Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) – Environmental Protection	<p>Joint Irish Bathymetric Survey. (JIBS) - INTERREG IIIA funded project ran from 2007 to 2008 producing detailed marine maps 3 miles seaward of the North Coast from Malin Head to Fair Head.</p>	<p>Environmental Licensing of Marine Renewable Energy Devices - ESBI and Bord Gais are energy utilities partly owned by the Government in the south. Both have separately been involved in preliminary discussions re the environmental licensing of marine renewable energy devices in NI waters.</p>

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) – Environmental Protection	Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland HYDROgraphic Survey (INIS HYDRO). INTERREG IVA funded project running from 2011 to 2013 generating additional marine maps in selected areas.	
	Collaborative survey of intertidal areas in fulfilment of Water Framework Directive monitoring requirements	
	All Ireland Oil Spill Contractors Scheme - An all Ireland Oil Spill Response scheme has been established for Oil Spill Response Contractors to enhance and improve standards in the spill response industry. The scheme was introduced in 2006 following consultation with a wide range of government organisations throughout Ireland.	
	Cross Compliance Practitioners Group - NIEA and other Agencies across the UK (including the Isle of Man) along with colleagues from ROI (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Environmental Enforcement) participate in a Cross Compliance Practitioners forum. This Group considers Cross Compliance policy and operational issues to ensure commonality of approach, where appropriate, taking account differences in national legislation.	

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) – Environmental Protection	<p>Artificial Radioactivity in Carlingford Lough - The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) published a joint report in 1992 which detailed the results of the analysis of the levels of radioactivity in a wide range of environmental media including sea water, marine sediments, seafood and seaweed. During 2012 RPII will perform sample analysis and NIEA will write and publish the final report.</p> <p>NIEA will work closely with RPII throughout the duration of the project to ensure that agreed objectives are met.</p>	
	<p>North/South Radiation Contact Group - The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) meet periodically to discuss radiation issues particularly those of transboundary significance such as road transport, environmental monitoring, radon and response to overseas nuclear incidents.</p>	
	<p>The 4 Environment Agencies Meetings - The 4 UK and Ireland Environment Agencies, include, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), Environment Agency (EA) – England & Wales, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Ireland and meet on a bi-annual basis. Meeting are arranged to discuss areas of mutual interest, control and regulation, best practice and opportunities for collaboration.</p>	
	<p>The Environment Protection Agency Co-ordinates the monitoring of bathing waters in the South. NIEA do the same function in the North.</p>	<p>An Taisce administer the Blue Flag award scheme in the South. TidyNI deliver the same scheme in the North. In 2009 the awards were jointly presented at a single ceremony on Dollymount Strand.</p>

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) – Environmental Protection	INTERREG III funded project – NS SHARE; total cost €7.5m. Ran from 2004 – 2008. Project took forward the coordination of the implementation of Water Framework Directive on a North South basis. Rol Agencies involved: DEHLG, EPA, Monaghan and Donegal County Councils and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.	
NIEA – Natural Heritage	OrchidIreland. An Island of Ireland biological recording scheme jointly funded with National Parks and Wildlife Service	Waterbeetles of Ireland Atlas: An Island of Ireland biological data project with the National Biodiversity Data Centre, Waterford.
	Natural History of Ulster. A publication covering the nine counties of Ulster, explaining the natural history present. Co funded with Heritage Council	
	LichenIreland: An Island of Ireland biological recording scheme jointly funded with National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Office of Public Works	
	Publication of Irish Bryophyte Red Data Book: An Island of Ireland biological data project jointly funded with National Parks and Wildlife Service	
	Non-marine Mollusca: An Island of Ireland biological data project jointly funded with National Parks and Wildlife Service	
	ISCOPE II and III (Irish Scheme for Cetacean Observation and Public Education): An Island of Ireland biological recording/monitoring scheme jointly funded with National Parks and Wildlife Service	Irish Whale and Dolphin Group deliver the scheme
	Atlas of Breeding and Wintering Birds in GB and Ireland: a national project to produce a status atlas. NPWS involved in funding.	Birdwatch Ireland involved in delivery
	Greylag Geese census: a national project to produce an assessment of greylag geese numbers in Ireland.	Birdwatch Ireland involved in delivery
	All-Ireland Bat monitoring: An Island of Ireland biological recording/monitoring scheme jointly funded with National Parks and Wildlife Service	Bat Conservation Ireland involved in delivery

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
NIEA – Natural Heritage	Car-Based Bat monitoring: An Island of Ireland biological recording/monitoring scheme jointly funded with National Parks and Wildlife Service	Bat Conservation Ireland involved in delivery
	All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Monitoring: An Island of Ireland biological recording/monitoring scheme jointly funded with National Parks and Wildlife Service	Bat Conservation Ireland involved in delivery
	Invasive Species Ireland: A joint funded project with National Parks and Wildlife Service to deliver recommendations of all-Ireland invasive species strategy	
Human Resources and Organisational Change		<p>From December 2006 to March 2011 the Department's Communication Unit provided funding of £25k pa to ECO-UNESCO to run the Young Environmentalist Programme. This represents 25% of the total cost.</p> <p>The Young Environmentalist Awards has been run in Northern Ireland since 2001. It is an all-Ireland environmental awards scheme aimed at raising awareness in young people aged between 10 and 18. In Northern Ireland it has been promoted in post-Primary schools, of which there are approximately 350.</p>
EU Grants – INTERREG IIIA	<u>In conjunction with DEHLG Water Quality Monitoring Buoys</u> - Purchase and install four additional telemetry systems in the Foyle and Carlingford catchments to gather information on a number of environmental parameters.	
	<u>In conjunction with DEHLG Inshore Patrol vessel</u> –Provide an inshore patrol vessel to monitor, protect and conserve the fisheries and their environment in Carlingford Lough.	
	<u>In conjunction with DEHLG Tagging & Detection Units</u> - Purchase three coded wire tagging units and four detection units for the marking of juvenile salmon as they are migrating from the river to their feeding grounds as smolts	

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
EU Grants – INTERREG IIIA	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Combined Fishery Enhance & Management Programme</u> - Establish salmon spawning targets, locally, regionally and at national level and ensure that sufficient adult salmon are available to spawn and maximise the smolt output from freshwater sources</p>	
	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Fish Surveying echo-sounders</u> - Carry out quantitative acoustic (echo-sounder) survey of fish populations in Lough Erne using the latest portable computer based scientific equipment</p>	
	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Pilot Project to Track Shellfishery vessels</u> - The objectives were: Record the activities of shellfish fishing vessels, map shellfish habitats and collate spatial information digitally; Improve surveillance and policing by upgrading equipment; Support the development and implementation of shellfish management plans and improve knowledge of shellfish populations;</p>	
	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Waste Awareness Media Campaign</u> -A high profile TV and media advertising campaign to raise awareness at public and business levels of the need to reduce the volume of waste going to landfill and to treat waste as a resource which can be recycled into useful products</p>	
	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG NS SHARE</u> - Promote joint action on the management of the aquatic environment and strengthen the inter-regional capacity for environmental management, improve public awareness and participation in environmental issues and protect and enhance the environment.</p>	

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
EU Grants – INTERREG IIIA	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Lough Melvin Catchment Management Plan</u></p> <p>- Identify the amount of phosphorus currently entering Lough Melvin, and initiate engagement and incentives for reduction measures and the valuation of the presence of 3 rare trout subspecies threatened by the current upward trend in lake nutrients.</p>	
	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Blackwater TRACE</u></p> <p>- Define the multi-source nature of nutrient transfer in agricultural river catchments and implement mitigation measures under the terms of the Water Framework Directive.</p>	
	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Forest impacts on upland lakes</u></p> <p>- Investigate water quality and, by assessing changes in the composition of lake sediments check for a number of potentially deleterious biological impacts associated with tree planting, fertilisation and timber harvesting.</p>	
	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Research Regarding Waste Management Strategies</u></p> <p>- Undertake research to address the current lack of cross border waste management strategic planning.</p>	
	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Producer Waste Awareness</u></p> <p>- Deliver a series of one-day courses to waste producers in the border region, offering training in waste minimisation, safety and environmental concerns.</p>	
EU Grants – INTERREG IVA	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Agricultural Need for Sustainable Willow Effluent Recycling</u></p> <p>- To provide robust scientific data on the sustainability of Short Rotation Coppice Willow for biofiltration/ bioremediation technologies.</p>	
	<p><u>In conjunction with DEHLG Development of targeted ecological modelling tools for lake management</u></p> <p>- To define the main ecological relationships in large and small lakes in order to support the production of a targeted programme of measures.</p>	

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
EU Grants – INTERREG IVA	<u>In conjunction with DEHLG Controlling Priority Invasive Non-Native Riparian Plants And Restoring Native Biodiversity</u> - To control and if possible eradicate invasive alien plants in demonstration river catchments in Ireland and Western Scotland.	
	<u>In conjunction with DEHLG Geo-environmental survey of the North of Ireland</u> - To conduct geo-science surveys of the contiguous border counties of RoI, transfer the Tellus experience and expertise to organisations in the Republic, and undertake innovative environmental research.	
	<u>In conjunction with DEHLG Practical application of freshwater pearl mussel measures</u> - To support the restoration of the freshwater pearl mussel to favourable conservation status at designated sites in the eligible area.	
	<u>In conjunction with DEHLG Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland Hydrographic Survey project (INIS HYDRO)</u> - To develop a standardised seabed survey specification to be used to acquire accurate and high-resolution seabed mapping data.	
	<u>In conjunction with DEHLG Halting biodiversity loss</u> - To boost the population and range of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species across the eligible area.	

DOE Business Area	Republic of Ireland Government Department, or its agencies	any Republic of Ireland non-governmental organisation
Driver and Vehicle Agency	The Driver & Vehicle Agency carries out regular enforcement operations targeting goods vehicles, buses and taxis engaged on cross border activities. These operations are planned and carried out jointly with the Road Safety Authority on both sides of the border with the aim of scrutinising drivers and vehicles to ensure compliance with legal requirements. A number of brief updates have been provided to the NSMC by the Minister following enforcement exercises carried out to assess the standard of coaches and buses engaged in regular cross border journeys. EU regulation 2006/22 also requires cooperation between Member States to ensure that drivers hours compliance is promoted through concerted checks, joint training initiatives, the electronic exchange of information, and the exchange of intelligence and experience.	

ANNEX B

Departmental schemes, projects or initiatives for which the Minister of the Environment intends to seek co-operation from Republic of Ireland Government Departments, agencies or non-governmental organisations (not exhaustive)

Single use Carrier Bag levy

From the Office of the Revenue Commissioner and DEHLG in respect of the development of the Single Use Carrier Bag Levy in Northern Ireland in order to continue to draw out further issues of which the Department should be aware (including any “lessons learned.”).

Cross Border Movement of Waste

There may be a need, pending the infrastructure becoming operational, for the Waste Management Groups to seek interim solutions for specific waste streams in order to achieve compliance with EU landfill diversion targets.

If the Minister consents, it would be proposed to establish the scope for facilities in both jurisdictions to respond to tenders for specific waste streams in the context of compliance with the regulatory requirements governing transfrontier shipments of municipal waste in Ireland and the UK, and with application of the Waste Framework Directive obligations in respect of the principles of proximity and self-sufficiency.

This would require officials to:

- liaise with DOEHLG to identify the legislative framework within which specific waste streams are required to be addressed in each jurisdiction;
- identify any barriers to cross-border movements of waste for landfill diversion; and
- Determine the extent to which those barriers can be addressed.

Inter-Departmental Waste Service Procurement Forum

DOEHLG and DOENI have both been involved either directly or indirectly in substantial procurements across a range of waste services in order to meet legislative obligations. To date there has been minimal exchange in terms of lessons learned with regard to the administrative, financial, technical and legal issues that arise in the course of such procurements. Officials in both jurisdictions could benefit from having the opportunity to explore and review their respective experiences in this area, both through the forum and through short-term interchanges.

All Ireland Beach Awards

Co-operation in publishing the results of bathing waters monitoring. This is an opportunity to reinstate the beach awards into an all island event in order to promote joint cooperation and support the all island tourism effort.

An Taisce will participate in a Good Beach summit on 29 June 2011 hosted by Minister.

Priority Landscapes for Bats in Ireland

A joint funded project to model bat diversity and abundance with Bat Conservation Ireland and a range of local authorities in Rol.

Built heritage and canals

Re-watering of canals while preserving built heritage features.

World Heritage Status for the Royal Sites of Ireland

Cooperation with ROI (DEH&LG), in collaboration with District Councils, in an application to secure the addition of Navan Fort and the Historic Walls of Derry as part of this group of sites, to the World Heritage list.

An archaeological survey of the maritime cultural landscapes on Loughs Carlingford and Foyle

A new proposal to produce two collaborative projects with heritage information, protection of the maritime heritage, excellent published books, exhibitions and media profile.

Thatched Buildings at risk from dereliction

Maintain the skill base and growing (rather than importing) appropriate, sustainable, materials with co-operation and agreement with DEH&LG.

Climate Change

Collaboration to seek EU funding for research into the impact of Climate Change on Built Heritage.

FP 7/Life and and Future EU Funding

In addition to work which the Minister has requested in the remainder of the 2008-14 funding cycle, where opportunities exist, to also prepare for the 2011-20 funding cycle.

All Ireland Waste Strategy including Plastics

In addition to work which the Minister has requested on a number of waste issues, to identify if an all Ireland waste approach is permissible and feasible.

All Ireland Renewable Energy

To consider further opportunities for licensing/regulation of renewable energy and to join up cross Ireland, cross departmental work in this regard.

Pollution of Waterways as a Result of Fracking

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment if he can guarantee that enforcement action will be taken by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency against anyone responsible for the pollution of waterways as a result of fracking.

(AQO 483/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is responsible for investigating reports of water pollution, for regulating all discharges to waterways and underground strata, and for initiating enforcement action where appropriate.

NIEA will respond to every reported pollution incident with a view to:

- a) tracing the source of pollution;
- b) stopping the pollution at source;
- c) identifying the polluter;
- d) collecting sufficient evidence, if appropriate, to secure a prosecution;
- e) notifying persons who may be affected by a serious incident;
- f) organising/giving advice for clean-up operations (if required);
- g) preventing the continuation or the repetition of pollution; and
- h) enforcing the legislation and making the polluter pay.

Any company proposing to use a hydraulic fracturing process (Fracking) will, depending on the exact details of the operation, require a consent to discharge, under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order, and a licence to abstract under the Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

Other permissions and assessments may be required from NIEA depending upon the activities proposed by the company and their exact location in relation to sensitive environmental receptors.

I can assure you that NIEA will enforce the conditions of any consent or licence in line with NIEA's Enforcement and Prosecution Policy.

Council Debt

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 5494/11-15, whether guidance on how to reduce costs is being offered to councils with high levels of debt.

(AQW 6770/11-15)

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

Under the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 there is a duty on each council to determine and keep under review how much money it can afford to borrow. The Local Government Auditor has not raised any concerns to date about the levels of debt in any council.

However, in moving to an 11-Council model, all existing 26 councils will need to consider the impact of current and any future debt on the councils with which they will be merging. I will be monitoring this over the next three years and will be encouraging Councils not to increase their debt levels in that period without reference to their Voluntary Transition Committees. I am also considering the possibility of introducing legislation to limit capital expenditure and related aspects such as the use of reserves as we progress towards Reform.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the benefits of a public inquiry into the health and environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing before the practice is permitted. (AQW 7755/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has various powers to call a public inquiry or independent examination in public should it consider necessary to do so.

When a planning application or applications involving hydraulic fracturing are submitted the Department will be in a position to decide how best these proposals should be progressed.

Generally the need for a public inquiry or independent examination in public in relation to a planning application emerges through consultation responses and public representations where issues raised cannot be satisfactorily dealt with through the normal development management process.

I have now met Tamboran. I made it very clear that all appropriate environmental standards will be complied with. I am assessing what is the strongest basis on which to proceed and continue to liaise with the Dublin Government on the environmental issues in relation to fracking.

European Charter of Local Self-Government

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of (i) the (a) strengths; and (b) weaknesses of the European Charter of Local Self-Government; and (ii) whether it would be beneficial for Northern Ireland to sign up to the Charter. (AQW 7933/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Charter establishes standards for measuring and safeguarding the rights of local authorities and providing the citizen with the opportunity to participate effectively in decision-making on issues that affect their everyday environment. It commits governments to applying basic rules guaranteeing the political, administrative and financial independence of local authorities. For councils in Northern Ireland, these guarantees are enshrined in the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 and subsequent legislation.

The Charter also provides that local self-government should have the ability, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public functions under its own responsibility in the interests of the local population. Historically, this has not been the case in Northern Ireland, with councils having responsibility for a more limited range of functions than their counterparts in other jurisdictions. This does not, however, detract from the importance of our councils and the contribution they make to civic life.

The issue of whether the Charter should apply to Northern Ireland, through the London Government adding the region to its ratification of the Charter, will need to be considered, may be useful, but should be assessed in the context of the transfer of functions to councils under RPA. Of course, the more Departments are willing to transfer functions, and transfer more functions, the greater the relevance of the Charter.

Planning Applications: Area of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of planning applications submitted within an Area of Special Scientific Interest in each of the last five years; (ii) the number and percentage of applications approved; (iii) the number and percentage of applications refused; and (iv) the number and percentage of applications withdrawn. (AQW 8034/11-15)

Mr Attwood: DOE Planning has received 17 planning applications located wholly within an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) in the last five years. The table below sets out the details of these applications.

Application Reference	Status	Proposal
C/2008/0820/F	Granted	Dwelling house
C/2011/0117/F	Withdrawn	Temporary lifeguard unit with metal support base and storage container to be positioned in May and removed in September every year that RNLI holds the Lifeguard Service Agreement
C/2011/0134/F	Granted	Seasonal Placement (May - September) of Temporary Mobile Lifeguard Facility.
D/2009/0114/F	Granted	Erection of 15 m high 5S tower with 6 no DBDP antennas 4 no 600 mm microwave dish with supporting apparatus equipment cabinet etc within 12 m x 12 m compound with 1.8 m high fencing
E/2008/0061/RM	Granted	Proposal to provide farm workers dwelling & detached garage
E/2009/0063/O	Granted	Retention alteration and extension of existing dwelling.
E/2009/0267/O	Withdrawn	Single storey dwelling and workshop
E/2010/0003/A	Deferred	Free standing sign (sign has been erected for 17 years)
E/2010/0140/F	Granted	Retention alteration & extension of existing dwelling with amendment to condition no. 3 of outline planning approval (E/2009/0063/O)
E/2012/0021/F	Valid	Overhead commercial three phase line on wooden poles (11/06200)
G/2009/0072/O	Granted	Site of replacement dwelling and garage.
R/2007/0172/F	Granted	Proposed balcony
R/2011/0151/F	Council	New stretch/Length of pathway to complete route of Granite Trail Newcastle
S/2010/0414/F	Granted	2 storey extension of existing building to form new plant room.
S/2010/0716/F	Granted	Erection of 250kw wind turbine (hub height 30m) to serve electricity grid.
W/2009/0402/A	Granted	Interpretation panel on the North Down coastal path - Interpretation of flora/fauna & natural history.
W/2009/0685/F	Granted	The existing path is to be relocated over a length of 210m to allow for removal of steps and steep gradients on the route.

Source: DOE Planning

Notes:

- 1 Figures quoted may include applications that were submitted to the Department prior to the designation of an ASSI.
- 2 Figures quoted may differ from officially published statistics and may be subject to revision.

Expenditure on Conferences, Away-days and Team Building Exercises

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department has spent on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8110/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides details of expenditure by the Department on conferences over the period 2008/09 to 2010/11. Expenditure on away days and team building is not separately identifiable from the Department's accounting systems.

Business Area	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
Department (excluding agencies)	19,572	36,750	65,010
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	31,226	42,289	12,321
Planning Service	45,874	30,422	587
Driver and Vehicle Agency	5,969	1,556	2,433
Total	102,641	111,017	80,351

The breakdown of costs between the Department and its agencies is distorted in the final year due to the centralisation of corporate services. However, in overall terms, there has been almost a 28% reduction in the costs of conferences between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department will increase staffing levels or staff training in the Environment Agency to regulate hydraulic fracturing; and if so, how an increase in staff levels or staff training will be funded.

(AQW 8112/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The environmental regulation of Fracking by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) will be subject to the requirements and environmental standards set out in the relevant European Directives and local legislation.

NIEA is currently supplementing 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 EU countries where Fracking is currently proposed or taking place.

As studies, reports and assessments are completed a broader evidence base will emerge which will aid more effective decision making on the process should an application for an environmental permission be received for a Fracking operation. This will include an assessment of any additional resources, including staff training and numbers, required to regulate the process.

It is NIEA policy to recover costs on the polluter pays principle in accordance with government and treasury guidance. This is reflected in the NIEA schemes of fees and charges whereby all costs incurred in carrying out our regulatory functions, such as processing licence/permit applications and assessing the environmental impact of the proposal, are recovered from the applicant through application fees and annual charges.

Licensed Drivers Aged Over 70

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment how many licensed drivers there are aged (i) over 70; (ii) over 80; (iii) over 90; and (iv) over 100 years.

(AQW 8227/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The information requested is as follows:

Drivers between 70 and just under 80	73742
Drivers between 80 and just under 90	23452
Drivers between 90 and just under 100	1611
Drivers over 100	3

Road Freight Operator's Licences

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment how many road freight operator's licences have been issued in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8232/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The number of road freight operator licences issued in each of the last five years is as follows.

2010-11	387
2009-10	571
2008-09	542
2007-08	566
2006-07	335

Surveys of Historic Buildings

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department has given to increasing the number of targeted surveys of historic buildings which may be at risk.

(AQW 8257/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency responds quickly to information that potentially listable historic buildings may be at risk. The Planning Amendment Order of 2003 allows the Department to temporarily list buildings for six months while a full survey is carried out. A building must satisfy two criterion to be temporally listed in this way: In the view of the Department the building must be of special architectural and historic interest; and it must be in danger of demolition or of alteration in such a way as to affect its character as a building of such interest.

37 buildings have been protected using this power since 2003. This reached a peak in 2009 when 15 buildings were protected. Numbers have declined since in line with reduced overall redevelopment activity in Northern Ireland.

NIEA has clear procedures in place to allow its team to respond quickly to all listing queries highlighted by the public or from staff. However, because one off records cost more than twice as much as systematic area surveys (see answer AQW 8259 11-14) all potential surveys are 'risk assessed' before any detailed work is commissioned.

Budget changes in 2011 mean that funding for systematic area survey work is programmed to decline over the next few years. I will shortly coincide budget issues for 2012/13 and beyond and I will look at these issues. In that context, I am looking at how its remaining funds for this function can be deployed. Ensuring that unlisted buildings at risk can be protected is likely to form a key part of this review.

Listed Buildings in the North Down Constituency

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the names of the listed buildings in the North Down constituency.

(AQW 8279/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I refer to AQW 3542/11-15, answered on 3 November 2011. The detail remains the same, apart from the fact that the total number of listed buildings in the North Down Borough Council Area is now reduced by one, to 256 and the relative numbers in each electoral ward have changed as a result. I have appended an updated table for your information. This gives a total of 314 listed buildings in your constituency. It should be noted that North Down is currently being reviewed under the second survey process and this figure may change again when all records have been reviewed.

NUMBER OF LISTED BUILDINGS IN THE NORTH DOWN AND ARDS DISTRICT COUNCIL AREAS

HB23 - North Down			HB24 - Ards		
1	Groomsport	13	1	Portaferry	73
2	Churchill	1	2	Kircubbin	22
3	Ballyholme	1	3	Ballyhalbert	5
4	Ballymagee	1	4	Grey Abbey	62
5	Bangor Harbour	24	5	Carrowdore	6
6	Conlig	4	6	Donaghadee North	26
7	Bangor Castle	24	7	Donaghadee South	32
8	Whitehill	0	8	Loughries	10
9	Rathgael	0	9	Movilla	5
10	Clandeboyne	18	10	Glen	3
11	Silverstream	0	11	Scrabo	16
12	Spring Hill	0	12	Ulsterville	0
13	Bryansburn	1	13	Central	43
14	Princetown	12	14	Comber North	0
15	Crawfordsburn	23	15	Comber South	32
16	Craigavad	21	16	Ballygowan	13
17	Loughview	6	17	Killinchy	31
18	Cultra	29			
19	Hollywood Demesne	11			
20	Hollywood Priory	67			
	Total	256		Total	379

Review of PPS 21

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made on the review of PPS 21, or the interpretation and implementation of the policy.

(AQW 8302/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The review of the operation of PPS21 is now concluded. I am currently finalising the review report and will announce the outcome of the review in the near future.

In relation to the interpretation and implementation of the policy I can advise that training was rolled out to all planning staff in October 2011 to ensure consistency.

In addition a peer review of decided PPS21 cases has also been initiated. These cases are discussed at the monthly Development Management Working Group and an agreed position is confirmed by the group.

River Pollution

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what resources are deployed by his Department to combat river pollution.

(AQW 8337/11-15)

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

In respect of water pollution response, NIEA has 51 full-time staff across Northern Ireland dealing with water pollution incidents and associated activity. NIEA headquarters staff, based in Lisburn, consists of scientific and administrative personnel, who co-ordinate and manage a number of water pollution related work areas including; the response to water pollution reports, the associated enforcement processes, pollution prevention initiatives, information management and the response to correspondence from elected representatives, the general public and the press. The management of incidents can include mobilising staff and anti-pollution equipment and liaising with partner organisations such as the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure's Inland Fisheries or NI Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS).

For the purposes of incident investigation in the field, Northern Ireland is divided into 9 NIEA Pollution Control Areas with field staff based at various offices around the Province. Within the field staff resource, there are approximately 30 water quality inspectors who are professionally trained in pollution incident investigation techniques, response and pollution prevention processes. Additionally, there are 8 full-time sampling staff who carry out routine sampling at river monitoring sites and consented wastewater and industrial discharge sites.

NIEA maintains a stockpile of specialist equipment that can be deployed to carry out 'clean-up' operations following water pollution incidents in the freshwater or marine aquatic environment. Trailers carrying pollution 'clean up' and prevention equipment in respect of inland waterways are maintained at 13 sites across Northern Ireland and 3 trailers carrying specific marine incident equipment are located at Duncrue St in Belfast. NIEA also supply NIFRS with pollution prevention equipment which is carried on their incident response vehicles.

As well as reacting to and investigating water pollution incidents, NIEA also carries out a significant number of proactive regulatory activities under various legislation. These activities are on-going in nature and also act to prevent or regulate water pollutants in order to minimise impacts on the aquatic environment. Such activities include the production of localised action plans designed to deliver the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, regulation of discharges under the Water (NI) Order 1999 and the regulation of agricultural activities. Further to the NIEA's regulatory activities, inspection visits are carried out at a significant number of industrial, water utility and agricultural premises each year.

Pollution: Croft Burn

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to prevent further pollution incidents of the Croft Burn, Holywood.

(AQW 8339/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) leads in protecting, conserving and promoting the unique natural and built environment of Northern Ireland.

NIEA is responsible for investigating reports of water pollution, for regulating discharges to waterways and underground strata and for initiating enforcement action where appropriate under the terms of the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999.

A suspected water pollution incident was reported in the Croft Burn, Holywood by a member of the public on 15 February 2012. Following investigation the source of the Medium Severity incident was traced to a discharge from an Northern Ireland Water (NIW) sewage network Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO). The CSO discharge occurred as a result of a blockage within the sewerage network. NIEA requested NIW to take remedial action to prevent further discharge.

Blockages of this nature are generally caused by the flushing of inappropriate items into the sewerage system by the public and by commercial concerns. NIW has widely promoted the 'Bag It and Bin It' campaign to raise awareness of this issue and to minimise the number of sewer blockage related pollution incidents. As a result of this incident, NIEA will contact NIWL to discuss carrying out a targeted 'Bag It and Bin It' leaflet drop in the Croft Burn catchment.

As well as NIEA's regulatory activities, inspection visits are carried out at a significant number of industrial, water utility and agricultural premises each year. These activities act to prevent or regulate water pollutants in order to minimise impacts on the aquatic environment.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the article in the Blackpool Gazette on Thursday 9 February 2012, which reported a loophole in the law which enabled Cuadrilla Resources to begin hydraulic fracturing operations in England before a full Environmental Impact Assessment was conducted as the drilling area was smaller than one hectare, whether he can confirm that the same loophole does not exist in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 8352/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The extraction of natural gas from shale by means of hydraulic fracturing is development requiring planning permission. While the Department has not received any planning applications for such development an application, if submitted, would require screening as to the need for environmental impact assessment under the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 1999. In my view, an EIA would clearly be needed. Hydraulic fracturing falls within Schedule 2 (2) of the above regulations – Extractive Industry (d) Deep drillings where the applicable threshold for Environmental Assessment is where the area of the proposed works exceeds one hectare. It is also EIA development if it is in a sensitive area – for example an ASSI, AONB, or a European designated site.

In relation to the applicable thresholds in Schedule 2 noted above the Department has the power under regulation 3(a) of the EIA regulations to direct that development described in Schedule 2 which is not in a sensitive area or does not meet the applicable thresholds is still EIA development. Given the nature of the hydraulic fracturing process an environmental impact statement will be required whether or not the development exceeds the thresholds by virtue of regulation 3(a). There is therefore no loophole in the current legislation in Northern Ireland that will allow planning applications for hydraulic fracturing on sites less than one hectare to be submitted without an Environmental Impact Assessment.

I have recently met with Tamboran Resources, the company who are proposing to extract gas in Fermanagh and stressed the absolute need for the most rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out and submitted with any planning application or applications. The company have accepted my demands in this matter and agreed to provide such an assessment.

Moreover, I am currently considering the environmental requirements in advance of any planning application and in respect of any exploratory drilling that the company may wish to undertake. In addition, I am maintaining and deepening liaison with Dublin, given the shared character of the Lough Allen Basin, and there is ongoing consideration if shared opportunities exist in relation to assessments around fracking.

Landfill Site at Dargan Road in Belfast

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment whether, as part of its site selection process, ARC 21 assessed the landfill site at Dargan Road in Belfast for its suitability for a municipal waste incinerator. **(AQW 8384/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: During their competitive tendering process for waste treatment facilities arc21 established a site selection process designed to ensure a level playing field for bidders and to promote competitive tension in the interests of ratepayers.

arc21 identified public sector sites suitable for waste infrastructure facilities and the Group also trawled for available private sector sites. Bidders could forward their own proposed sites. All sites were subjected to the same site selection processes. The Dargan Road site was one of the public sector sites offered for consideration.

By 2009 arc21 had identified the Belfast City Council Dargan Road site as a preferred site that could accommodate both Energy from Waste (EfW) and Mechanical and Biological Treatment (MBT) infrastructure. However at a full Council meeting in June 2009, at which arc21 sought final endorsement of the Dargan Road site, the Council voted against the use of the site for EfW infrastructure though it was prepared to progress with an MBT proposal.

Subsequently arc21 set aside the Dargan site and progressed the competitive tender process on the basis of alternative sites.

Thermal Treatment or Gasification Facilities

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has identified the total annual waste tonnage capacity requirement for thermal treatment or gasification facilities, to meet EU waste management targets before 2020.

(AQW 8386/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below identifies the minimum treatment capacities which would be required in order to achieve compliance with District Councils NI Landfill Allowance Scheme obligations at 2020.

Treatment Technology	Efficiency of Diversion achieved	*Tonnage to Divert	Treatment Capacity Required(b) (c)
MBT + Landfill(a)	50%	128,674	451,488
MBT + Cement Kiln	75%	128,674	300,992
MBT + EfW	98%	128,674	230,351

* Based on amount landfilled in 2010/11

(a) denotes Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) capacity + landfill required for interim solution until Energy from Waste (EfW) and cement kiln facilities become operational

(b) the tonnage to be treated always exceeds the tonnage to be diverted as no technology is able to achieve 100% diversion

(c) assumes that the Biodegradable Municipal Waste content of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) remains stable; that MSW growth re-establishes towards 2020 as the economic environment improves; and that this growth is offset by increased recycling.

Registered Cars

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many cars are registered.

(AQW 8430/11-15)

Mr Attwood: At 31 December 2011 there were 926,514 cars licensed in Northern Ireland. This figure includes any car with either a current vehicle licence or where there is a current statutory off road notification (SORN) in force.

General Grant

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the level of general grant to be provided by his Department and the Department of Finance and Personnel to each council in the 2012/13 financial year.

(AQW 8448/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The General Grant is made up of two elements, the de-rating and resources elements. The payment of the General Grant is administered by the Department of the Environment; however, the policy responsibility for the de-rating element rests with the Department of Finance and Personnel. From 1 April 2012 there will be two separate grants called the rates support grant and the de-rating grant.

The levels of de-rating grant and rates support grant to be provided in the 2012/13 financial year are set out in the table below. The de-rating grant will be revised later in the 2012/13 financial year when updated valuation data is available.

District Council	De-rating Grant £	Rates Support Grant £	Total £
Antrim	1,123,924	0	1,123,924
Ards	515,346	845,001	1,360,347
Armagh	778,009	1,524,425	2,302,434
Ballymena	1,357,726	17,079	1,374,805
Ballymoney	277,744	1,060,048	1,337,792
Banbridge	463,278	1,057,247	1,520,525
Belfast	4,153,818	0	4,153,818
Carrickfergus	562,262	530,758	1,093,020
Castlereagh	675,538	0	675,538
Coleraine	618,583	0	618,583
Cookstown	844,190	511,868	1,356,058
Craigavon	2,128,450	1,003,046	3,131,496
Derry	1,520,045	1,321,823	2,841,868
Down	480,640	1,300,624	1,781,264
Dungannon & South Tyrone	1,656,632	842,054	2,498,686
Fermanagh	808,552	893,434	1,701,986
Larne	530,087	84,186	614,273
Limavady	214,395	1,215,115	1,429,510
Lisburn	1,737,465	0	1,737,465
Magherafelt	766,808	1,077,011	1,843,819
Moyle	169,436	503,874	673,310
Newry & Mourne	1,206,387	1,477,106	2,683,493

District Council	De-rating Grant £	Rates Support Grant £	Total £
Newtownabbey	1,365,215	0	1,365,215
North Down	557,581	0	557,581
Omagh	599,681	1,236,312	1,835,993
Strabane	292,679	1,825,989	2,118,668
Total	25,404,471	18,327,000	43,731,471

Domestic Local Rates and Non-Domestic Local Rates

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the (i) domestic local rate; and (ii) non-domestic local rate for each council in (a) each of the last five financial years; and (b) the 2012/13 financial year.

(AQW 8452/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The domestic and non-domestic local rates for each council in (a) each of the last five financial years and (b) the 2012/2013 financial year are set out in the tables below.

District Council	Domestic District Rates					
	2007/ 2008 Pence	2008/ 2009 Pence	2009/ 2010 Pence	2010/ 2011 Pence	2011/ 2012 Pence	2012/ 2013 Pence
Antrim	0.2875	0.3159	0.3404	0.3585	0.3637	0.3672
Ards	0.2409	0.2493	0.2617	0.2695	0.2721	0.2746
Armagh	0.3174	0.3393	0.3628	0.3878	0.3975	0.4052
Ballymena	0.2874	0.3157	0.3345	0.3576	0.3674	0.3758
Ballymoney	0.2768	0.2878	0.3097	0.3328	0.3421	0.3525
Banbridge	0.3003	0.3121	0.3244	0.3405	0.3524	0.3626
Belfast	0.2423	0.2540	0.2717	0.2929	0.3016	0.3094
Carrickfergus	0.2986	0.3195	0.3450	0.3645	0.3728	0.3810
Castlereagh	0.1871	0.1902	0.1902	0.1968	0.2017	0.2136
Coleraine	0.2506	0.2654	0.2812	0.2952	0.3058	0.3146
Cookstown	0.2444	0.2564	0.2663	0.2730	0.2758	0.2797
Craigavon	0.3395	0.3474	0.3576	0.3647	0.3771	0.3846
Derry	0.3365	0.3533	0.3730	0.3916	0.4004	0.4092
Down	0.2873	0.3065	0.3143	0.3356	0.3356	0.3423
Dungannon & South Tyrone	0.2284	0.2434	0.2542	0.2542	0.2542	0.2542
Fermanagh	0.2032	0.2172	0.2357	0.2448	0.2477	0.2501
Larne	0.3236	0.3318	0.3318	0.3448	0.3551	0.3694
Limavady	0.3335	0.3555	0.3750	0.4034	0.4005	0.4050

District Council	Domestic District Rates					
	2007/ 2008 Pence	2008/ 2009 Pence	2009/ 2010 Pence	2010/ 2011 Pence	2011/ 2012 Pence	2012/ 2013 Pence
Lisburn	0.2275	0.2314	0.2374	0.2421	0.2493	0.2592
Magherafelt	0.2214	0.2278	0.2344	0.2541	0.2590	0.2641
Moyle	0.3245	0.3550	0.3749	0.3749	0.3749	0.3832
Newry & Mourne	0.2672	0.2803	0.2992	0.3197	0.3197	0.3261
Newtownabbey	0.2832	0.2999	0.3057	0.3207	0.3286	0.3379
North Down	0.2235	0.2402	0.2598	0.2676	0.2756	0.2852
Omagh	0.3243	0.3400	0.3553	0.3659	0.3709	0.3772
Strabane	0.2937	0.3127	0.3361	0.3508	0.3445	0.3580

District Council	Non-Domestic District Rates					
	2007/ 2008 Pence	2008/ 2009 Pence	2009/ 2010 Pence	2010/ 2011 Pence	2011/ 2012 Pence	2012/ 2013 Pence
Antrim	21.5586	23.6886	25.5261	26.8813	27.2711	27.5346
Ards	19.8840	20.5819	21.6090	22.2510	22.4620	22.6693
Armagh	23.5527	25.1773	26.9256	28.7802	29.5002	30.0720
Ballymena	20.8049	22.8552	24.2151	25.8849	26.5986	27.2042
Ballymoney	21.5659	22.4239	24.1347	25.9322	26.6575	27.4720
Banbridge	22.5907	23.4803	24.4075	25.6152	26.5109	27.2767
Belfast	21.1641	22.1853	23.7325	25.5849	26.3395	27.0236
Carrickfergus	21.8348	23.3575	25.2222	26.6534	27.2572	27.8548
Castlereagh	15.5642	15.8224	15.8221	16.3702	16.7748	17.7629
Coleraine	18.9978	20.1177	21.3192	22.3804	23.1818	23.8497
Cookstown	19.3003	20.2480	21.0292	21.5550	21.7788	22.0894
Craigavon	21.8620	22.3757	23.0338	23.4874	24.2849	24.7682
Derry	23.2804	24.4336	25.8003	27.0869	27.6961	28.3045
Down	21.7020	23.1531	23.7441	25.3514	25.3529	25.8586
Dungannon & South Tyrone	18.7035	19.9338	20.8161	20.8151	20.8151	20.8151
Fermanagh	14.7191	15.7343	17.0713	17.7340	17.9443	18.1148
Larne	21.9370	22.4881	22.4881	23.3696	24.0730	25.0360
Limavady	22.8353	24.3376	25.6732	27.6182	27.4233	27.7302
Lisburn	17.3615	17.6598	18.1180	18.4770	19.0232	19.7825

District Council	Non-Domestic District Rates					
	2007/ 2008 Pence	2008/ 2009 Pence	2009/ 2010 Pence	2010/ 2011 Pence	2011/ 2012 Pence	2012/ 2013 Pence
Magherafelt	17.5397	18.0474	18.5751	20.1292	20.5199	20.9291
Moyle	26.2998	28.7678	30.3867	30.3867	30.3867	31.0552
Newry & Mourne	19.5449	20.5026	21.8891	23.3873	23.3873	23.8534
Newtownabbey	22.1185	23.4281	23.8808	25.0494	25.6629	26.3905
North Down	16.5433	17.7803	19.2253	19.8071	20.3988	21.1110
Omagh	19.9548	20.9199	21.8609	22.5142	22.8189	23.2063
Strabane	19.9891	21.2820	22.8741	23.8690	23.4406	24.3621

Road Safety for Cyclists

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department has taken to improve road safety for cyclists; and whether he has any future plans in relation to this issue.

(AQW 8454/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The DOE has a statutory duty to promote road safety under Article 52 of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The Department carries out this responsibility in several different ways. One of the ways it does this is through the Road Safety Education Service (RSES) which offers road safety advice and teaching materials to schools and young people. Although the Department has no specific remit to encourage cycle uptake through training and promotion or seek to improve cycling rates per se; the RSES does recognise the need to embed best practice in using the roads at this early stage as a road user. It is for this reason that the Cycling Proficiency Scheme (CPS), which is aimed mostly at children in Primary 7, although some schools do offer CPS to Primary 6 and occasionally Primary 5 children, is offered to all Primary schools in Northern Ireland. The scheme is active in approximately 580 primary schools with an average of 8,800 children trained each year at a cost of £84,000. CPS is regarded as part of the 'Life Long Learning' agenda in schools and equates to level 2 of the National Standards if on-road training is taken up by the school.

In October 2011 the Department launched the 'Be Cycle Aware' campaign, employing radio and bus rear advertising, in order to remind drivers and cyclists on the road to pay attention when sharing the road. The campaign consists of two radio adverts. One radio advert targets drivers as they travel in the car during daytime hours when they would be expected to share the road with cyclists. A second radio advert and bus rear advertising targets cyclists, reminding them of their vulnerability and the need to pay attention and stay safe on the roads.

Future plans in relation to road safety of cyclists include a review of the Cycling Proficiency Scheme. The focus of the review, which will be carried out by an independent body, will be on improving road safety as any programme delivered or supported by the RSES must have road safety as its main objective. It is anticipated that the independent review of CPS will be completed by the end of the year.

The Department will also continue to focus on cyclist in its future road safety campaigns as cyclists are considered to be in the vulnerable road user group.

Care of the Historic Government Estate

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what steps his Department has taken to improve the care of the historic Government Estate.

(AQW 8616/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Over the last two years, my Department has reviewed the 2003 UK-wide 'Protocol for the Care of the Government Historic Estate' and produced a new, Northern Ireland, version which has been updated to follow current best practice.

The document sets out 12 points which Government Departments and Agencies should follow when managing heritage assets in their care. It also puts in place new reporting requirements, because this function has now been devolved to Northern Ireland.

This received Executive approval in late February 2012.

The Protocol will be subject to a formal launch later this spring, after which Departments will be expected to put it into action, with DOE co-ordinating the reporting and arranging a seminar or seminars, to alert other Departments to what is required.

Marine Bill

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of the Environment how the provisions in the Marine Bill will address the issue of marine management.

(AQO 1423/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Marine Bill, which I introduced to the Assembly last week, provides for marine plans, marine conservation zones, and further provision in relation to marine licensing for certain electricity works in the Northern Ireland inshore region.

These provisions together will provide the basis for the future, sustainable management of the North's marine environment, so that current and future generations can enjoy its social, economic and environmental benefits.

I remain committed to ensuring that the Bill is implemented in an integrated way so that those benefits can be realised in full.

I will also continue my conversations with Executive colleagues that the Bill should legislate for a Marine Management Organisation (MMO) as the best vehicle to manage and reconcile the many interests and needs of marine management.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Acquisition of Energy Efficiency Certificates

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the level of funding spent on the acquisition of Energy Efficiency Certificates for all public buildings, since the requirement was introduced on 30 June 2008; (ii) which companies provide the service; and (iii) the process by which the companies were selected.

(AQW 6750/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Since June 2008 a total of £562,004.24 has been spent on Energy Performance Certificates and Display Energy Certificates for public buildings across Northern Ireland.

The following organisations provided this service:

- In-house, qualified public sector staff
- Morris Estate Agents Ltd
- Faithful and Gould Building Surveying
- Commercial Surveying Hereford
- SSH Chartered Surveyors

- Ember Energy
- H & J Martin
- White, Young and Green
- Team (Energy) Ltd
- FMC Services Ltd
- Energy Matters NI Ltd
- Syracuse Associates
- Watts, Belfast
- Graham Hamilton
- SDS Energy Ltd

The selection of an energy assessor to provide this service is a matter for each public body. Where the service has not been provided by qualified (in-house) public sector staff, Departments have advised the following selection methods:

- Company selected initially from an approved list of tenders and subsequently by public procurement;
- Provided under a PFI agreement;
- Competitive tendering;
- Appointed by Estate Agent on sale of property;
- OGC Construction and Property Professional Services Framework Agreement;
- EU tender procurement procedure;
- Provided under a Service Level Agreement; and
- No formal competition where spend was below the DHSSPS threshold for expenditure control limits of £2,000.

Amount Paid to Recruitment Agencies

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the amount paid to recruitment agencies for (i) full-time; and (ii) part-time posts in his Department, and its arm's-length bodies, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 7649/11-15)

Mr Wilson:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Full Time	£3,111,845	£2,344,541	£1,415,149
Part Time	£25,269	£29,059	£0

*Land and Property Services (LPS) were unable to break down their spend into full-time and part-time posts. The total spend for LPS has been provided as full-time posts.

Civil Service Posts

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many Civil Service posts existed in his Department at (i) Administrative Assistant; (ii) Administrative Officer; (iii) Executive Officer 2; (iv) Executive Officer 1; (v) Staff Officer; (vi) Deputy Principal; (vii) Grade 7; and (viii) Grade 6 levels, at the beginning of (a) 2007; and (b) 2012, broken down by local Council area.

(AQW 7801/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information requested is provided in the tables attached.

DFP STAFF IN POST (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT) GRADE 6 AND BELOW AT 1ST JANUARY 2007 BY WORK LOCATION DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Council	G6/G7	DP	SO	EOI/ EOII	AO	AA	Indus- trial	Total
Ballymena	1	3	4	11	24	2	0	45
Belfast	220	327	356	505	486	206	29	2129
Castlereagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Coleraine	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Craigavon	3	5	7	10	30	4	0	59
Derry	5	11	8	35	77	21	0	157
Lisburn	2	6	7	7	10	5	0	37
Newtownabbey	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
North Down	28	56	48	61	61	20	0	274
Omagh	1	5	5	10	22	5	0	48
Location Unknown	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	262	414	436	640	710	263	33	2758

Notes:

Data sourced from HRMS at 1st Jan 2007

Includes all DFP staff (Including staff on secondment)

Figures are Staff Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Excludes staff on Career Break

The Department shows 164 vacancies in DFP at January 2007 however this figure cannot be broken down by grade and location and may also include SCS vacancies.

DFP STAFF IN POST (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT) GRADE 6 AND BELOW AT 1ST JANUARY 2012 BY WORK LOCATION DISTRICT COUNCIL

District Council	G6	G7	DP	SO	E01	E02	AO	AA	Indus- trial	Total
Ballymena	2	2	5	6	8	5	28	2	0	58
Belfast	82	176	390	432	398	376	620	190	16	2680
Castlereagh	0	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	7
Craigavon	1	1	6	10	11	6	31	2	0	68
Derry	1	5	15	13	21	27	76	8	0	166
Lisburn	0	1	4	8	6	1	7	3	0	30
North Down	1	28	53	39	16	28	28	7	0	200
Omagh	0	1	8	10	26	6	23	1	0	75
Downpatrick	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	6

District Council	G6	G7	DP	SO	E01	E02	AO	AA	Industrial	Total
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	4
Total	87	215	482	525	493	449	814	213	16	3294

Notes:

Data sourced from HRConnect at 1st Jan 2012

Includes all DFP staff (Including staff on secondment)

Figures are Staff Full Time Equivalent (FTE)

Excludes staff on Career Break

DFP Vacancies by analagous grade (G6 and below) by Work Location District Council which the Department are actively seeking to fill at 1st January 2012

District Council	G6	G7	DP	SO	E01	E02	AO	AA	Industrial	Total
Ballymena	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Belfast	0	4	9	26	7	5	10	6	0	67
Castlereagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craigavon	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Derry	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lisburn	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
North Down	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Omagh	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Downpatrick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	4	9	27	16	5	10	6	0	77

Former Department Employees

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel pursuant to AQW 6026/11-15, to detail (i) when each person left the Department; (ii) the grade they were employed at when they left; (iii) the terms of their departure; (iv) the terms under which they were re-hired; (v) for how long they were re-hired, including hours worked; and (vi) the scale of pay on which they were re-hired.

(AQW 7969/11-15)

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

	Staff Member 1	Staff Member 2	Staff Member 3	Staff Member 4	Staff Member 5
(i) Date Left Department	August 2006	October 2003	June 2005	December 1999	February 2009
(ii) Grade When Left	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 7

	Staff Member 1	Staff Member 2	Staff Member 3	Staff Member 4	Staff Member 5
(iii) Terms of Departure	Retirement	Retirement	Retirement	Retirement	Retirement
(iv) Terms Re-hired	To carry out ad-hoc FOI internal reviews.	To provide specialist legal advice and services.	To provide specialist legal advice and services.	Consultancy basis.	Consultancy basis.
(v) How Long Re hired	April 2008 - Ongoing (As required)	November 2008 - February 2009 (48.1 hours)	February 2006 - Ongoing (Contract due to terminate in June 2012) (20 hours per week)	May 2008 - January 2009 (262.5 hours)	March 2009 - January 2010 (180 hours)
(vi) Scale of Pay when Re-hired	£350-£700 per case, depending on complexity.	£67.57 per hour	£26.75 per hour	£24 per hour	£26.67 per hour

Unemployment in the Hollywood Electoral Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the current level of unemployment in the Hollywood electoral area.

(AQW 8162/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The official measure of unemployment is sourced from the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, as a sample survey the LFS is not designed to provide unemployment estimates at ward level.

The following table is sourced to the claimant count measure of unemployment. This shows the number of persons claiming unemployment related benefits in the two Hollywood Wards at January 2012 and these figures as a percentage of the resident working age population.

Ward	Number of Claimants	Rate
Hollywood Demesne	64	3.4
Hollywood Priory	33	2.1
Total	97	2.8

Government Assets

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the Government assets which are currently on the open market for sale; (ii) those which have only been marketed for sale in this financial year to date; and (iii) what progress has been made on the sale of each asset.

(AQW 8184/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are currently 58 surplus property assets for sale on the open market and they are listed on the Land & Property Services (LPS) website. Of these, 45 have been put on the market in this financial year.

Progress on the 58 sales is as follows:

- a) 11 properties are under offer;

- b) 11 properties are agreed for sale; and
- c) 36 properties have no offers.

Department Spend on Conferences, Away-days and Team Building Exercises

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department has spent on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8189/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Expenditure by the Department of Finance and Personnel (including its executive agencies) on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years is set out in the table below.

Year	£'000
2008/09	252
2009/10	136
2010/11	105

Commercial Rates in Town Centres

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what factors prevent him from reviewing commercial rates in town centres before 2015.

(AQW 8234/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Rating valuations are the way of distributing the overall rating burden amongst individual ratepayers. Rates are unlike most other taxes, as the total amount to be raised is decided in advance and the individual bills are worked out afterwards, relative to the rateable value assessed on each property. To maintain consistency the values have to be established at a common and fixed valuation date. For this reason, all properties have to be assessed at the one time through a general revaluation and the legislation does not allow for partial revaluations.

To ensure that economic and social changes that occur over time are taken into account it is necessary to undertake revaluations every few years. Unfortunately, I had no option but to cancel the Revaluation scheduled for 2010. There was simply insufficient market evidence to establish a reliable new Valuation List of non domestic properties. That analysis also suggested that, if the revaluation proceeded, it would fall well short of international valuation standards.

The next revaluation is planned to take place in April 2015. This major exercise will take over two years to complete and therefore cannot be brought forward. It will allow Northern Ireland to align with the next revaluation of non domestic properties in the rest of the UK, which is due to occur then.

If an individual ratepayer is dissatisfied with the relativity of their net annual value assessment between revaluations they can ask for this to be reviewed.

Tender Processes for Public Works

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what discussions he has had with representatives of small construction, surveying or architectural companies in relation to the tender processes for public works and the potential disadvantages for indigenous firms.

(AQW 8240/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My officials in Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) have had regular discussions with the construction industry, through engagement with the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland (CIFNI), in relation to the tender process for works contracts. CIFNI embraces all sectors of the construction industry and includes representatives from main contractors, specialist subcontractors and consultants.

In 2011 for example, work taken forward under the auspices of CIFNI included a review of, and improvements to, the prequalification and tender processes for construction contracts.

More radical proposals for streamlining the procurement process for construction projects below the EU threshold, which currently stands at £4.3 million, are currently being refined and will be put to the Procurement Board for approval later this year. These proposals have been discussed with the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) which represents over 1,300 companies, the majority of which are small and medium sized businesses.

A consideration in all of these discussions has been safeguarding and promoting the interests of small and medium sized enterprises, which constitute the bulk of our indigenous firms involved in construction. Specific measures, such as reducing the complexity of prequalification questionnaires; using random selection to generate tender lists; and tendering on the basis of price alone, will be of particular interest to smaller firms.

Department Spend on Fuel

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department, and its agencies, have spent on fuel in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8251/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Vehicle and plant fuel expenditure by the Department of Finance and Personnel (including its executive agencies) in each of the last five years is as follows:

Year	£'000
2007/08	78
2008/09	81
2009/10	72
2010/11	77
2011/12 (up to 31 January 2012)	33

Security at the Entrances to the Stormont Estate

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the rationale for having security at the entrances to the Stormont Estate; (ii) the annual cost of the security; and (iii) the number of people who have been refused entry to the Stormont Estate in each of the last four years.

(AQW 8264/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Security Guards at the entrances to the Stormont Estate control vehicular access to ensure a safe and secure working environment for all users of the Estate.

In 2010-11, the cost of the security at the entrances to the Stormont Estate was £573,696.

Details of the number of people who have been refused entry over the past four years are not available.

Death through Suicide

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in each year between 2001 and 2011, to detail, for each constituency, the percentage of people who died through suicide, broken down by (i) age; and (ii) gender.

(AQW 8323/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The tables below give the percentage of deaths registered due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury'¹ or 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted'² by Assembly Area by the

five categories (a) persons, (b) males, (c) females, (d) persons aged under 45 and (e) persons aged 45 or more.

Statistics are presented for each year between 2003 and 2011(Quarter 1–Quarter 3P). Detailed Assembly Area mortality statistics for the years 2001 and 2002 are unavailable.

1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes X60-X84, Y87.0

2 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes Y10-Y34, Y87.2

P Provisional Data

Tables: Registered deaths due to ‘suicide and self-inflicted injury’ or ‘undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted’ as a percentage of deaths within each area, 2003 to 2011(Q1-Q3P) for

(A) ... - PERSONS

Area Name	Registration Year								
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 Q1- Q3P
Belfast East	0.2	0.4	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.7	2.3	1.3
Belfast North	1.7	1.7	1.5	2.5	2.0	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.6
Belfast South	1.0	1.2	1.8	1.8	1.4	1.7	1.5	2.5	2.3
Belfast West	1.6	1.0	1.4	2.5	2.6	3.3	3.2	2.4	4.1
East Antrim	0.7	0.4	1.1	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.2	1.1	1.2
East Londonderry	1.3	0.9	0.7	1.9	1.7	1.9	2.2	2.4	1.7
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	0.7	0.9	2.3	1.9	2.2	1.5	2.3	1.7	2.3
Foyle	1.0	1.4	1.6	3.4	1.7	2.8	2.3	3.4	2.1
Lagan Valley	0.5	0.8	1.9	1.6	0.5	1.1	0.8	3.0	2.1
Mid Ulster	0.7	0.8	3.0	3.0	1.8	2.1	2.2	1.4	2.2
Newry and Armagh	0.9	1.2	1.9	1.9	2.3	3.6	2.2	1.8	2.6
North Antrim	1.2	1.0	1.1	1.9	0.9	1.1	1.3	2.3	1.4
North Down	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.4	0.9
South Antrim	0.9	0.8	2.0	2.1	1.0	1.4	2.0	1.8	2.2
South Down	1.5	1.2	1.4	2.0	1.5	1.7	0.8	2.6	1.4
Strangford	1.0	1.3	1.6	2.0	1.5	1.3	0.9	2.2	1.7
Upper Bann	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.5	2.4	1.7	1.8	2.0	2.8
West Tyrone	0.7	1.3	1.0	3.4	2.1	3.1	2.5	2.0	1.9
Northern Ireland	1.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.7	1.9	1.8	2.2	2.1

(B) ... - MALES

Area Name	Registration Year								2011 Q1- Q3P
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Belfast East	0.4	0.2	1.9	1.3	2.0	1.7	3.3	3.7	1.7
Belfast North	3.2	2.2	2.6	3.6	2.7	3.5	3.6	3.0	4.2
Belfast South	1.8	1.8	2.3	2.8	1.9	2.2	2.5	3.9	4.7
Belfast West	2.3	1.9	2.2	4.0	4.1	6.3	5.1	4.0	6.7
East Antrim	1.1	0.8	2.1	2.6	2.3	2.9	2.5	1.8	2.1
East Londonderry	1.8	1.0	0.9	2.5	2.5	3.0	4.0	4.3	2.3
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	0.8	0.7	3.9	2.6	2.7	2.8	4.1	2.4	3.1
Foyle	1.7	1.5	2.6	5.8	3.1	3.6	3.0	5.1	2.3
Lagan Valley	0.8	1.1	2.9	2.3	0.9	1.7	1.1	4.0	3.3
Mid Ulster	1.4	1.6	5.1	5.1	3.1	3.5	4.4	1.7	3.3
Newry and Armagh	1.6	2.7	2.8	3.4	2.3	5.5	3.4	3.1	3.9
North Antrim	1.8	1.5	1.7	3.7	1.7	2.3	2.4	4.2	2.1
North Down	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.5	1.5	3.1	1.4
South Antrim	1.6	1.2	2.9	3.1	1.6	2.2	2.3	3.2	4.2
South Down	2.5	2.3	2.0	2.9	2.2	1.8	1.4	3.7	1.8
Strangford	1.9	1.2	2.6	3.3	2.4	2.1	1.2	3.8	2.8
Upper Bann	2.7	2.5	1.9	2.7	3.8	2.7	2.1	2.5	3.7
West Tyrone	0.9	1.9	1.8	5.6	2.9	4.5	4.8	3.5	3.3
Northern Ireland	1.6	1.5	2.4	3.2	2.4	3.0	3.0	3.4	3.1

(C) ... - FEMALES

Area Name	Registration Year								2011 Q1- Q3P
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Belfast East	-	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.4	0.4	1.1	1.0
Belfast North	0.3	1.2	0.5	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.8	1.0
Belfast South	0.4	0.6	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.2	0.6	1.2	0.3
Belfast West	1.0	0.2	0.6	1.1	1.1	0.4	1.6	0.9	1.9
East Antrim	0.3	-	0.2	0.5	1.2	0.5	-	0.5	0.3
East Londonderry	0.8	0.8	0.5	1.4	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.5	1.1

Area Name	Registration Year								
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 Q1-Q3P
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	0.7	1.1	0.3	1.2	1.5	0.2	0.5	0.8	1.6
Foyle	0.3	1.3	0.6	1.1	0.3	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.9
Lagan Valley	0.2	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.2	0.7	0.5	2.1	1.2
Mid Ulster	-	-	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.6	-	1.2	1.2
Newry and Armagh	0.3	-	1.0	0.5	2.3	1.6	1.0	0.5	1.3
North Antrim	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6
North Down	0.2	0.2	0.4	-	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.5
South Antrim	0.3	0.3	1.0	1.0	0.6	0.3	1.6	0.5	-
South Down	0.5	-	0.8	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.3	1.5	1.1
Strangford	0.3	1.4	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8
Upper Bann	1.0	0.2	0.8	0.2	1.1	0.7	1.6	1.4	1.9
West Tyrone	0.6	0.7	-	1.2	1.2	1.6	0.5	0.4	0.4
Northern Ireland	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.0

(D) ... - PERSONS AGED UNDER 45

Area Name	Registration Year								
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 Q1-Q3P
Belfast East	2.9	5.7	12.0	2.8	11.1	16.3	26.8	29.8	22.2
Belfast North	18.6	25.6	15.2	20.7	23.9	27.1	21.1	31.1	37.5
Belfast South	19.5	14.7	20.9	23.4	25.0	16.7	22.5	17.8	41.4
Belfast West	17.5	9.4	10.9	32.2	20.0	32.1	37.3	23.8	41.7
East Antrim	11.4	10.5	13.5	21.9	10.5	20.9	15.8	15.8	16.7
East Londonderry	14.7	8.7	4.5	25.6	17.9	12.3	25.0	25.5	25.0
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	5.0	10.7	10.8	9.0	18.0	13.2	16.3	15.6	15.8
Foyle	9.4	14.0	16.9	24.3	15.4	27.6	17.6	18.9	14.0
Lagan Valley	3.6	8.9	17.1	25.0	3.1	22.2	11.1	28.6	25.9
Mid Ulster	11.5	2.6	21.6	21.2	13.0	17.8	22.7	19.4	22.2
Newry and Armagh	10.5	5.7	18.9	14.1	17.2	32.8	13.2	11.7	22.0

Area Name	Registration Year								
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 Q1-Q3P
North Antrim	15.6	12.2	7.5	23.9	7.3	10.2	14.0	23.8	16.1
North Down	-	16.1	10.8	6.3	3.6	25.0	13.9	28.6	14.8
South Antrim	10.3	3.4	18.2	16.7	10.4	6.1	19.6	24.3	29.4
South Down	11.1	4.8	13.0	22.9	14.6	12.9	6.1	17.9	14.7
Strangford	12.1	10.9	24.3	26.8	17.1	15.8	11.1	25.6	15.4
Upper Bann	18.0	13.6	9.8	18.2	22.0	19.6	21.7	19.0	27.3
West Tyrone	10.5	17.9	11.4	35.8	18.0	18.2	14.9	19.2	14.3
Northern Ireland	12.0	10.8	14.4	20.8	15.8	20.4	18.9	21.8	23.4

(E) ... - PERSONS AGED 45 OR MORE

Area Name	Registration Year								
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 Q1-Q3P
Belfast East	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.9	1.0	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.3
Belfast North	0.8	0.7	0.7	1.5	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.6	0.7
Belfast South	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.3	1.0	0.5	1.6	0.5
Belfast West	0.3	0.1	0.6	0.4	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8
East Antrim	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.7	1.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
East Londonderry	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.5
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	0.5	0.2	1.4	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.4	0.8	1.4
Foyle	0.3	0.3	0.2	1.1	0.4	0.6	0.7	1.6	1.0
Lagan Valley	0.4	0.3	1.0	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.4	1.3	1.0
Mid Ulster	0.2	0.7	1.4	1.5	1.0	1.1	0.7	0.3	0.7
Newry and Armagh	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.1	1.2
North Antrim	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.4	1.2	0.6
North Down	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.3
South Antrim	0.3	0.6	0.7	1.0	0.3	1.1	0.5	0.6	1.3
South Down	0.6	1.0	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.4	1.4	0.6
Strangford	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.9	1.0
Upper Bann	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.8	1.0
West Tyrone	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.9	2.1	1.6	0.4	0.9

Area Name	Registration Year								
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 Q1- Q3P
Northern Ireland	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.8

P Provisional Data

Unemployed People

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of people of working age who were (i) unemployed; and (ii) unemployed for more than one year, in each year between 2001 and 2011, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 8326/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The official measure of unemployment is sourced from the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the most recent year for which long-term unemployment estimates at constituency level are currently available from this source is 2010.

The following tables therefore are sourced to the claimant count measure of unemployment. Table 1 shows the annual average of all claimants by Parliamentary Constituency Area from 2001 to 2011. Table 2 shows the annual average of long-term (claiming more than one year) claimants by Parliamentary Constituency Area from 2001 to 2011.

TABLE 1. ANNUAL AVERAGE CLAIMANT COUNT BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA 2001-2011

	Annual Average Claimant Count										
Parliamentary Constituency Area	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Belfast East	1,679	1,483	1,657	1,420	1,195	1,172	992	1,025	1,945	2,451	2,699
Belfast North	2,719	2,563	2,462	2,153	2,654	2,679	2,310	2,416	3,758	4,442	4,923
Belfast South	2,042	1,998	1,899	1,629	1,554	1,468	1,361	1,479	2,497	3,096	3,281
Belfast West	4,111	3,875	3,395	3,197	3,257	3,295	3,021	3,204	4,657	4,990	5,092
East Antrim	1,939	1,994	1,891	1,732	1,213	1,135	947	1,046	2,112	2,314	2,337
East Londonderry	2,349	2,033	2,015	1,854	1,910	1,682	1,412	1,782	3,160	3,482	3,546
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	2,284	2,127	2,009	1,643	1,403	1,321	1,145	1,309	2,570	2,874	3,061
Foyle	4,478	4,035	3,717	3,564	3,300	3,335	2,809	2,978	4,352	4,993	5,451
Lagan Valley	1,150	1,071	1,033	932	742	779	684	828	1,689	1,937	2,102
Mid Ulster	1,333	1,153	986	876	873	853	698	1,051	2,621	2,826	2,752
Newry & Armagh	2,497	2,210	2,117	1,849	1,595	1,422	1,337	1,536	3,076	3,998	4,326
North Antrim	1,986	1,770	1,525	1,397	1,317	1,386	1,161	1,434	2,621	2,922	3,066
North Down	1,520	1,352	1,367	1,177	1,079	1,006	901	927	1,586	1,930	2,064
South Antrim	1,427	1,505	1,398	1,111	946	964	838	969	1,930	2,195	2,207
South Down	2,048	1,907	1,818	1,552	1,338	1,201	1,045	1,400	2,776	3,344	3,469
Strangford	1,504	1,347	1,484	1,422	1,148	1,069	939	1,031	1,779	2,106	2,310
Upper Bann	1,840	1,680	1,591	1,371	1,234	1,295	1,175	1,559	3,039	3,527	3,735
West Tyrone	2,662	2,419	2,327	2,080	1,948	1,888	1,630	1,881	2,946	3,385	3,491
Northern Ireland	39,568	36,522	34,691	30,959	28,706	27,950	24,405	27,855	49,114	56,812	59,912

Data from 2005 to 2011 uses the latest Parliamentary Constituency Area boundaries introduced at the last general election.

Data from 2001 to 2004 uses the previous boundaries.

TABLE 2. LONG-TERM ANNUAL AVERAGE CLAIMANT COUNT BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA 2001-2011

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Long-term (Claiming Over 12 Months) Annual Average Claimant Count										
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Belfast East	475	290	340	360	205	190	175	140	235	535	630
Belfast North	920	700	590	575	615	645	525	420	570	940	1,150
Belfast South	475	415	300	320	250	250	265	270	330	620	730
Belfast West	1,645	1,355	885	895	930	840	805	730	925	1,290	1,250
East Antrim	460	355	390	345	220	195	150	115	225	450	440
East Londonderry	615	455	450	430	405	315	225	200	355	775	750
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	845	685	610	560	385	340	305	195	345	660	685
Foyle	1,665	1,150	730	910	675	675	635	490	680	1,155	1,355
Lagan Valley	230	195	150	160	105	115	100	75	155	375	420
Mid Ulster	320	210	190	180	160	155	105	95	270	660	570
Newry & Armagh	840	610	535	550	440	345	290	230	445	1,135	1,455
North Antrim	505	380	300	295	235	235	200	175	330	665	655
North Down	355	270	220	240	200	185	180	135	225	455	500
South Antrim	315	290	280	255	175	180	155	140	225	490	475
South Down	530	445	400	375	290	255	200	170	365	855	900
Strangford	390	310	270	325	260	255	210	150	240	455	505
Upper Bann	505	375	310	300	175	190	180	150	380	940	1,030
West Tyrone	1,065	785	680	650	445	460	360	350	510	870	940
Northern Ireland	12,160	9,280	7,625	7,730	6,165	5,825	5,065	4,225	6,810	13,330	14,435

Data from 2005 to 2011 uses the latest Parliamentary Constituency Area boundaries introduced at the last general election.

Data from 2001 to 2004 uses the previous boundaries.

Economically Inactive People

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of economically inactive people who did not claim benefits in each year since 2006, broken down by gender.

(AQW 8351/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Estimates of the numbers of economically inactive people who did not claim benefits are sourced from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Please note, that annual data are available for the years 2006 to 2010, whilst the most recent data available for 2011 are for the quarter October – December 2011.

The requested breakdown of the number of economically inactive people, who did not claim benefits in each year since 2006, is shown in the table overleaf.

Table 1

Period	Male	Female	Total
2006	56,000	62,000	118,000
2007	50,000	64,000	114,000
2008	56,000	67,000	123,000
2009	64,000	69,000	134,000
2010	60,000	72,000	132,000
October - December 2011	60,000	75,000	134,000

Source: Labour Force Survey Please note: LFS questions on State Benefits apply to all survey respondents that are aged between 16 and 69.

Long Term Unemployed

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people in each constituency are currently classified as long term unemployed.

(AQW 8368/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The official measure of unemployment is sourced from the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS). However, the most recent year for which long-term unemployment estimates at constituency level are currently available from this source is 2010.

The following table therefore is sourced to the claimant count measure of unemployment and gives the number of long-term (claiming over one year) claimants by Parliamentary Constituency Area for January 2012.

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Claiming for over 12 months
Belfast East	655
Belfast North	1,315
Belfast South	735
Belfast West	1,320
East Antrim	490
East Londonderry	770
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	750
Foyle	1,680

Parliamentary Constituency Area	Claiming for over 12 months
Lagan Valley	460
Mid Ulster	535
Newry & Armagh	1,485
North Antrim	670
North Down	465
South Antrim	425
South Down	910
Strangford	535
Upper Bann	1,030
West Tyrone	1,015
Northern Ireland	15,230

Small Business Rates Relief Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many non-domestic ratepayers have benefitted from the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme.

(AQW 8377/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As at 19th February 2012, a total of 24,217 non-domestic premises have benefited from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme.

Fuel Smuggling

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cost of fuel smuggling to the economy in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8434/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Fuel smuggling in Northern Ireland imposes a revenue loss to the UK Exchequer and adversely affects local fuel retailers. HM Revenue and Customs take the lead on fuel smuggling and fraud, working closely with the Irish authorities. The Organised Crime Task Force, which is chaired by the Northern Ireland Justice Minister, estimated in its 2011 threat assessment that there is an annual tax loss of £200 million from fuel fraud and legitimate cross-border fuel shopping. This is significantly down from a 2005 estimate of £280 million – likely due to changes in exchange and duty rates, which have made smuggling less profitable.

I would suggest however, that for further clarification you may wish to redirect your question to the Justice Minister or the Organised Crime Task Force.

Actual Penny Product

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the Actual Penny Product for each council in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8453/11-15)

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

Land & Property Services is responsible for undertaking the calculations and notifying District Councils of the outcome. The calculations were undertaken in accordance with statutory formula set out in The Rates Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (as amended)

APP BY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA FOR THE RATING YEARS 2006 - 2010

District		2006-07 £	2007-08 £	2008-09 £	2009-10 £	2010-11 £
Antrim	01	584,627	614,156	569,919	642,430	646,081
Ards	02	698,159	700,399	706,778	720,272	726,054
Armagh City & District	03	472,546	475,371	472,455	488,020	489,205
Ballymena	04	686,783	699,864	709,585	707,668	722,249
Ballymoney	05	212,292	211,620	211,450	218,374	220,837
Banbridge	06	367,728	390,502	400,620	397,150	404,706
Belfast	07	4,671,246	4,598,581	4,813,810	4,832,035	4,755,670
Carrickfergus	08	361,494	359,052	373,037	370,924	372,238
Castlereagh	09	771,660	783,677	782,565	825,790	800,491
Coleraine	10	719,129	720,844	743,370	737,006	740,909
Cookstown	11	292,264	303,621	313,452	323,310	333,603
Craigavon	12	881,036	913,211	915,157	941,523	951,110
Down	13	604,010	609,500	612,179	633,185	639,308
Dungannon & South Tyrone	14	437,377	453,909	459,610	478,443	488,253
Fermanagh	15	591,114	600,421	625,063	638,770	647,920
Larne	16	345,002	344,809	349,565	363,128	369,448
Limavady	17	265,155	275,196	259,635	267,139	275,793
Lisburn	18	1,224,311	1,266,895	1,271,568	1,308,294	1,306,830
Derry	19	1,185,459	1,162,545	1,187,265	1,190,854	1,202,321
Magherafelt	20	311,200	333,581	330,144	344,069	343,789
Moyle	21	142,672	143,426	145,539	147,690	149,099
Newry	22	920,303	920,657	925,132	956,018	977,363
Newtownabbey	23	873,447	896,367	932,208	923,631	927,093
North Down	24	1,042,466	988,951	1,047,698	1,059,936	1,045,926
Omagh	25	499,071	513,132	514,390	519,230	537,751
Strabane	26	282,822	284,395	295,684	306,188	313,568
Total		19,443,371	19,564,680	19,967,878	20,341,074	20,387,617

Figures may not add up due to rounding

Suicides in the North Down Area

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of incidents of suicide per ward in the North Down area in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8479/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table below gives the number of deaths registered due to either ‘suicide and self-inflicted injury’¹ or ‘undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted’² by ward of the deceased within North Down Local Government District, 2006 to 2010.

To limit the possibility of disclosure of sensitive information on deceased individuals, statistics are presented for the combined five year period only.

¹ International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes X60-X84, Y87.0

² International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes Y10-Y34, Y87.2

Table: Registered deaths due to ‘suicide and self-inflicted injury’ or ‘undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted’ by Ward within North Down Local Government District, 2006-2010.

Area Name	Number of ‘suicides’ registered between 2006 and 2010
Ballycrochan	3
Ballyholme	2
Ballymaconnell	1
Ballymagee	1
Bangor Castle	0
Bloomfield	5
Broadway	2
Bryansburn	1
Churchill	2
Clandeboyne	1
Conlig	1
Craigavad	2
Crawfordsburn	2
Cultra	0
Dufferin	5
Groomsport	2
Harbour	1
Hollywood Demesne	0
Hollywood Priory	2
Loughview	3
Princetown	0
Rathgael	1
Silverstream	1
Spring Hill	1
Whitehill	0
North Down Local Government District	39

Research and Development Spending

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) value; and (ii) percentage of the total Research and Development spend in each of the last three years, broken down by industry sector.

(AQW 8502/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Total Research and Development (R&D) consists of R&D in Business, Higher Education and Government. Table 1 overleaf presents Northern Ireland Research and Development (R&D) spend, in cash terms, for the last three years, 2008 to 2010, and also the percentage of Business Expenditure on Research and Development (BERD) within the industry sectors of Manufacturing and Services & Other. Further breakdown is not available due to confidentiality constraints.

TABLE 1: EXPENDITURE ON TOTAL R&D IN NORTHERN IRELAND, 2008-2010

	2008 (£million)	2009 (£million)	2010 (£million)
Total	344.0	482.8	521.4
Higher Education	144.2	143.0	161.8
Government	15.9	16.1	15.6
Business Expenditure on Research and Development (BERD)	183.9	323.7	344.0
BERD within Manufacturing	114.3 (62%)	228.9 (71%)	245.8 (71%)
BERD within Services & Other	69.7 (38%)	94.8 (29%)	98.2 (29%)

Source: NI R&D Surveys, NISRA

Research and Development Spending

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the top 20 investors in Research and Development (R&D); and what percentage each of this spend represents of the total R&D spend.

(AQW 8503/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on individual companies is not available due to confidentiality constraints. However, Total Business Expenditure on Research and Development (BERD) in Northern Ireland was £344.0 million in 2010, of which £243.8 million (71%) was spent by the top 20 companies engaging in Research and Development activities.

Research and Development Spending

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the amount spent on Research and Development in each of the last ten years; and (ii) the percentage of the estimated GDP that it represents.

(AQW 8504/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Total Research and Development (R&D) consists of R&D in Business, Higher Education and Government. Table 1 overleaf presents Northern Ireland Total Research and Development in cash terms and as a percentage of Northern Ireland Gross Value Added (GVA). Regional GVA data is the measure used as regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measures are not available.

TABLE 1: EXPENDITURE ON TOTAL R&D IN NORTHERN IRELAND, 2001-2010

	Total R&D (£millions)	R&D as %GVA
2001	263.8	1.3%

	Total R&D (£millions)	R&D as %GVA
2002	272.5	1.3%
2003	261.8	1.2%
2004	277.4	1.2%
2005	314.1	1.2%
2006	330.8	1.2%
2007	351.1	1.2%
2008	344.0	1.2%
2009	482.8	1.8%
2010	521.4	1.9%

Source: NI R&D Surveys, NISRA; Regional GVA data, ONS.

£1 Billion Youth Contract

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much funding will be allocated to the Executive, as a result of the Barnett Consequentials, following the announcement of the £1 billion Youth Contract by the Westminster Government; and how much of that funding will be allocated to the Department for Employment and Learning.

(AQW 8613/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department of Work and Pensions received a Resource DEL allocation of £942.7 million in respect of the Youth Contract. This was offset by an assumed Resource DEL saving of £65 million, resulting in a net addition of £877.7 million over the three years from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Northern Ireland received a Barnett consequential on both the allocation and savings, resulting in a net addition of £26.5 million to the Northern Ireland Block over the three year period.

Barnett consequentials are unhypothecated and, as such, it is for the Executive to determine how any such funding is to be used within Northern Ireland. The Executive will consider the allocation of this funding in due course.

Cross-Departmental Issues

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether current legislation permits Departments to pool financial and/or staff resources when working on cross-departmental issues.

(AQW 8694/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Administrative arrangements between departments in support of cross-departmental working is not directly covered by legislation, but should reflect the purposes for which funding has been voted by the Assembly.

Northern Ireland Audit Office: Consultants

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much the Northern Ireland Audit Office has spent on external consultants in each of the last three financial years.

(AQO 1437/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Unfortunately I am not in a position to provide details of the external consultancy projects undertaken by the Northern Ireland Audit Office. As Members will be aware my Department requests returns from all Departments on an annual basis as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee. This information is then collated and published in DFP's Annual Compliance Report on the Use of External Consultants. My Department not only requests this information from the 12 Ministerial

Departments, but also the other non-ministerial Departments, that is: the Food Standards Agency; the Utility Regulator; The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission; the Assembly Ombudsman and Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints; and the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Unfortunately on each occasion when the Northern Ireland Audit Office has been asked for details of its external consultancy projects it has declined to provide it. I fully understand that the Audit Office is not bound by the Executive's controls and I completely respect its independence, however I don't believe that making this information available would compromise the Audit Office's independence, but rather it would demonstrate openness and transparency.

UK Credit Rating

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the impact on the Northern Ireland economy if the UK loses its AAA credit rating in the next eighteen months.

(AQO 1439/11-15)

Mr Wilson: If the UK were to lose its AAA rating this could potentially increase borrowing costs for the UK Government, businesses and consumers. A particular concern would be the impact on investment by firms, where higher borrowing rates would deter investment to grow businesses and create new jobs.

However, the scale of the impact on the economy would depend on whether or not the other credit rating agencies follow suit. In practice, downgrades from AAA ratings tend to result in small changes to yields, given that AA rated debt is still considered low risk.

Furthermore, in its statement Moody's Investor Service identified structural strengths in the UK economy and the Government's current fiscal consolidation programme as reasons for maintaining the AAA rating. The agency expects the UK economy to eventually return to its trend growth rate of 2.5 per cent.

Government Assets

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the sale of surplus assets by Departments.

(AQO 1440/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I presume that the Member is referring to progress made by the Asset Management Unit (AMU) in identifying assets for disposal against their £100 million target over the four year Budget period.

In terms of this financial year, the AMU was charged with delivering £10 million of additional capital receipts. At the time of the January Monitoring round, the AMU advised that it had achieved contractually completed sales of £1.3 million so far in this financial year. It also advised that there was potential to realise further sales in 2011-12 but that uncertainty remained in terms of these additional receipts. Any receipts not realised in this financial year will be added to next year's figure to ensure the integrity of the overall £100 million target.

The profile of the remaining AMU receipts (£15m/£25m/£50m) is skewed towards the end of the Budget period to allow sufficient time to plan for delivery. This will also allow the local property market to recover sufficiently to realise value from our surplus assets. AMU is currently working with departments to identify and plan these asset disposals. My officials are also assisting in this task.

Barnett Formula

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has had any discussions with the Exchequer, in the last year, about the future of the Barnett Formula.

(AQO 1441/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I am not aware of any Government plans to review the Barnett formula and therefore I have not had any specific discussions with Treasury Ministers over the last year about its future.

However, I do recognise that the potential transfer of further fiscal powers to the devolved areas, particularly in the context of the ongoing Scotland debate, does raise the issue of how public expenditure is administered and allocated to the regions in this context.

That said, I have no plans to instigate any discussions in this regard and would approach any debate on this issue very cautiously. For example, some would argue that public expenditure should be allocated on the basis of need, but we must also recognise the potential for a lack of

objectivity in constructing a replacement needs based formula. The Calman Commission highlighted these difficulties.

Government Contracts: Social Clauses

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has provided a definition of 'social clauses' to other Departments and their agencies, for use in the drafting of contracts.

(AQO 1442/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There is currently no standard definition of social clauses. However significant work has been carried out by Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) in the development of clauses covering a range of social requirements specifically related to the construction industry, including the provision of employment and training opportunities as well as requirements relating to essential skills training, health and safety and fair treatment for suppliers.

CPD is also developing guidance for procurement practitioners in CPD and Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs) on the use of social clauses linked to the subject matter or performance of the contract. This guidance will include a range of model contract clauses which can be

easily adapted for use in contract specifications and as contract performance conditions.

DFF: Cost of Division

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline what action his Department will take to tackle the cost of division following the assurance, which he gave to the Assembly on 13 February 2012, that the Executive would address this issue.

(AQO 1443/11-15)

Mr Wilson: One of the key commitments in the draft Programme for Government is to build a stronger, more united and diverse community which can only be achieved when we work to reduce segregation and separation.

As Finance Minister I always urge Ministers to look at how their Departments spend money and eradicate duplication where possible.

Economic Inactivity: 18-25 Age Group

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what funding will be made available to Departments to encourage people in the 18-25 years age bracket who are economically inactive.

(AQO 1445/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I recognise that there is an issue with regard to the number of young people who are economically inactive.

Regarding youth unemployment, on 9 February 2012 the Minister for Employment and Learning tabled a paper of new support measures aimed at this group. These measures are currently in development by his Department and the Minister has also indicated he plans to present a final draft strategy to the Executive in March for dealing with those young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

These proposals will need to be considered alongside competing priorities in determining future funding allocations by the Executive.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Dermatology Departments in Hospitals

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, for each of the last three years, to provide a breakdown of the funding allocated to the Dermatology Departments in hospitals in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area, compared with the Dermatology Departments in hospitals in other Trust areas.

(AQW 8194/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): It is not possible to provide a breakdown of the funding allocated to dermatology departments, as trusts do not allocate funding directly to specific departmental areas in a manner that captures all the resources for this speciality. For example, dermatology treatment can be provided in a number of clinical areas within each hospital or trust.

However, the total expenditure of dermatology activity delivered by dermatology speciality consultants within each trust is contained in the following table:

HSC Trust	2010/11 £m	2009/10 £m	2008/09 £m
Northern	1.5	2.3	2.0
Southern	3.3	3.4	3.1
South Eastern	1.5	1.3	1.4
Western	1.8	2.2	2.0
Belfast	4.8	5.6	5.0
Total	13.0	14.8	13.5

Cancer Patients in Rural Areas

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures are in place to support cancer patients in rural areas who need to travel long distances to access treatment.

(AQW 8216/11-15)

Mr Poots: In May 2011 I announced that the development of a radiotherapy unit at Altnagelvin Hospital would proceed. When the new unit opens in 2016 it will represent a real improvement in access to radiotherapy. Radiotherapy patients from rural areas in the northwest will no longer need to travel to Belfast for treatment.

In addition I can advise that the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Patient Community Service (PCS) is available to cancer patients who have a clinical need for transport confirmed by a clinician. It offers pre-booked non-emergency transport for patients attending outpatient appointments and those being discharged from or transferred between hospitals.

For those patients for whom PCS is not considered appropriate or is not available, HSC Trusts each operate various alternatives, which include rural transport schemes, volunteer driver services, local charities, minibus and taxi. Patients may also, at times, prefer to travel with friends or family.

Physiotherapy Graduates

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 3634/11-15, what action his Department is taking to combat the level of unemployment amongst physiotherapy graduates.

(AQW 8238/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department carries out workforce reviews for each clinical professional group, including physiotherapy. This provides information to support decision making on the commissioned numbers required to support service delivery. For 2010/11, the commissioned number was reduced by 10 to 59 and has remained at this level for 2011/12 to reflect both the current and projected level of demand for newly qualified staff.

Operating Department Practitioners

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Operating Department Practitioners are working in each Health and Social Care Trust area; and at what salary band they are employed.

(AQW 8304/11-15)

Mr Poots: As at February 2012, there were ten Operating Department Practitioners employed within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (nine within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and one within Western Health and Social Care Trust). All of these were employed at Pay Band 5 level.

Since October 2004, it has been a requirement to be registered with the Health Professions Council to work as an Operating Department Practitioner as this is a protected title by law.

Operating Department Practitioners

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many vacancies for Operating Department Practitioners have been advertised in the last 24 months by each Health and Social Care Trust; and at what salary band were they advertised.

(AQW 8305/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is given in the table below.

Number of vacancies for Operating Department Practitioners within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care by Trust advertised since February 2010

Trust	Pay Band	Headcount
Belfast	-	0
Northern	-	0
South Eastern	5	1
Southern	-	0
Western	See note 3 below	

Source: Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

- 1 All of the above staff are employed at Pay Band 5 level.
- 2 South Eastern Trust advised that they advertised one vacancy for Pay Band 5 Operating Department Practitioner in April 2010.
- 3 The Western Trust advised that they advertise for a waiting list jointly for Theatre Nurses / Operating Department Practitioners at Pay Band 5 level in order to maximise the number of suitable candidates who interested in working within theatres. The waiting list is used to fill all vacancies that arise within theatres over a 12 month period. However all of the posts appointed in the last 24 months have been recruited as Band 5 Theatre Nurses.
- 4 Since October 2004, it has been a requirement to be registered with the Health Professions Council to work as an Operating Department Practitioner as this is a protected title by law.

Recruitment of Speech and Language Therapists

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department will consider lifting the vacancy control measures in relation to the recruitment of speech and language therapists.

(AQW 8331/11-15)

Mr Poots: Vacancy control measures are put in place by Trust management in relation to their service and financial plans. As such, the appropriate time for the removal of vacancy controls is a matter for employers, in discussion with the Health and Social Board and the Department.

Health Service Vacancies

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of current vacancies for (i) consultants; (ii) registrars; (iii) senior house officers; and (iv) pre-registration house officers in each hospital, in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 8334/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information from the latest Health & Social Care vacancy survey is provided below.

Number of current vacancies for Consultants, Specialty Registrars, Foundation House Officer 2 and Foundation House Officer 1 by Hospital as at 30th September 2011

Trust	Hospital	Consultant		Specialty Registrar		Foundation House Officer 2	
		HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Belfast	Beechcroft (Forster Green)	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Belfast City Hospital	8	7.8	2	1.5	0	0.0
	Windsor House (BCH)	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Mater Hospital	2	2.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Musgrave Park Hospital	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Royal Victoria Hospital	20	19.5	3	3.0	0	0.0
	Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children	6	6.0	4	4.0	0	0.0
	School of Dentistry	3	2.5	0	0.0	1	1.0
	Non-Hospital Location	2	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Northern	Antrim	6	6.0	8	7.5	0	0.0
	Causeway	0	0.0	8	8.0	0	0.0
	Holywell	0	0.0	1	1.0	0	0.0

Trust	Hospital	Consultant		Specialty Registrar		Foundation House Officer 2	
		HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
South Eastern	Downe	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Lagan Valley	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Ulster	10	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Southern	Craigavon Area	12	12.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Daisy Hill	7	6.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Western	Altnagelvin	10	10.0	5	5.0	1	1.0
	Erne	3	3.0	2	2.0	1	1.0
	Gransha	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: NI Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

1. HC = Headcount; WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
2. Information on the number of vacancies within the Northern Ireland Health & Social Care is collected bi-annually (as at 31st March and 30th September) by means of a survey and is published on the DHSSPS website at http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/work_force/stats-hsc.htm.
3. A current vacancy is a post which at 30th September 2011, the organisation was actively trying to fill.
4. There were no vacancies for Foundation House Officer 1 at 30th September 2011.
5. Figures exclude vacancies for temporary posts.
6. Under Modernising Medical Careers, grading within the Medical and Dental Occupational Family was replaced by a new system. Information has therefore been provided within the new grading system framework.

Encouraging People to Choose a Healthier Lifestyle

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department intends to encourage people to choose a healthier lifestyle.

(AQW 8346/11-15)

Mr Poots: We are continuing to develop, review and revise our health promotion policies (on obesity, mental health, alcohol and drug misuse, tobacco, suicide, sexual health, etc) which include a particular focus on encouraging people to choose a healthier lifestyle.

The Public Health Agency will also continue to play a key role to encourage people to choose a healthier lifestyle by working with the statutory, community and other sectors in driving forward the implementation of these health promotion policies at both a regional and local level and in areas of greatest need.

In addition my Department is developing a new Public Health Strategic Framework which will follow on from Investing for Health and will seek renewed cross-Departmental and cross-sectoral support to tackle the wider social determinants of health.

Waiting Time to See a Neurologist

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average waiting time to see a neurologist, following a referral from a G.P.

(AQW 8403/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department collects information on the number of patients waiting for a first outpatient appointment for all referral sources, not just those received from a G.P.

Data are collected in aggregate time bands, based on the length of time a patient is waiting for a first outpatient appointment, therefore it is not possible to calculate an average waiting time. It is, however, possible to calculate the median time band, a similar statistical measure.

The waiting time for a first appointment with a consultant in the Neurology specialty, at 31st December 2011, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available, is outlined in the table below.

PATIENTS WAITING FOR AN APPOINTMENT AT THE NEUROLOGY SPECIALTY, BY WEEKS WAITING

	0-6	>6-9	>9-13	>13-21	>21-26	>26	Total Waiting
Northern Ireland	1,347	617	680	1,028	537	1,683	5,892

Source: Departmental Return CH3

The median waiting time band, for a first outpatient appointment with a consultant in the Neurology specialty, at 31st December 2011, was between 13 and 21 weeks.

Alternative Therapies Scheme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 7481/11-15, why, if the Complementary and Alternate Medicines (CAM) pilot project was 'not designed to investigate the effectiveness of CAM therapies', did the final report evaluation of a CAM pilot project in Northern Ireland (2008) state that a pilot objective was 'to measure the health outcomes of the service and monitor health'.

(AQW 8408/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Complementary and Alternate Medicines (CAM) Pilot Project funded by the Department in 2007/2008 aimed to treat patients with acute or chronic conditions who were referred by their GP to a range of CAM therapies including acupuncture, chiropractic, osteopathy, homeopathy, reflexology, aromatherapy and massage. The project was commissioned with a view to exploring the potential to integrate CAM within existing primary care services in Northern Ireland.

The project evaluation relied significantly upon a validated patient-generated instrument which was used as a research tool to capture the patient's self-reported health change. The evaluation pointed to the need for a more scientific basis to examine the relationship between CAM and health outcomes for patients. No longitudinal studies were undertaken to ascertain whether the reported gains experienced by the patients were sustained. That would have required a quite different approach and structure to the project and its evaluation.

Data on Cancer Patients

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what data the Health and Social Care Trusts are required to collect on cancer patients aged (a) under 16; and (b) between 16 and 24; and (ii) whether data could be collected for cancer patients aged between 16 and 24, separate from the general adult patient data; and whether he will direct the Trusts to do so.

(AQW 8417/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts collect information relating to cancer patients of all ages including, but not specifically relating to, patients aged under 16 and patients aged between 16 and 24. Trusts are not required to collect this data for statistical purposes.

Health and Social Care Trusts use a range of systems to collect this information for care pathway management purposes, for example;

- New cancer referrals for patients of all ages is recorded on the Northern Ireland Regional Cancer Patient Pathways system (CaPPs). Information recorded on CaPPs includes date of referral, date of diagnosis, date of decision to treat, date first seen and first treatment type.
- Information for all patients including cancer patients of all ages is also routinely recorded on the Patient Administration System (PAS) including the number of referrals to an outpatient service with suspect cancer and details on diagnosis and treatment in an inpatient or day case setting.
- Systems exist specifically for recording information on patients receiving radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatment which include date of birth.

As date of birth is recorded on CaPPs and PAS, it is currently possible for Trusts to separate data for cancer patients aged 16-24 from the general adult patient data.

I have no plans to direct the Trusts to collect this specific information.

Cancer Patients

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what provisions are in place to tailor support and meet the needs of cancer patients aged between 16 and 24 in comparison to children and general adult cases.

(AQW 8418/11-15)

Mr Poots: I must advise that the health service provides specialist Consultants, Clinical Nurse Specialists, Allied Health Professionals, Community Children's Nurses and hospice services tailored to meet the individual needs of a patient, regardless of age. This support extends to the family of the patient.

However I recognise that there is more than we can do with regard to services for young cancer patients aged between 16 and 24 in respect of raising awareness of the needs of this particular age group; developing of appropriate referral pathways and protocols; and strengthening multidisciplinary teams and mechanisms for shared care arrangements.

I can advise that the HSC Board and Public Health Agency aim to take forward work to ensure that pathways and protocols for teenagers and young adults with cancer reflect high quality care, consistent with NICE Guidance on Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People with cancer. It is intended that this work will be progressed in collaboration with HSC Trusts and voluntary sector organisations.

Postage and Printing Costs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department, and its arm's-length bodies, give elected representatives the choice of receiving reports and all other correspondence by email to minimise postage and printing costs.

(AQW 8426/11-15)

Mr Poots: In line with good practice and sustainable development, my Department has implemented an electronic publications policy, where statutory or parliamentary constraints permit. Elected representatives are advised of the launch of Departmental public consultations via a letter of notification, giving them the opportunity to obtain copies of the documents in their preferred format.

Similarly my Department's Arms Length Bodies seek to make reports available electronically in the first instance, providing hard copies where there is a statutory requirement to do so, or on request.

When an elected representative corresponds with my Department, a hard copy response will routinely be provided unless an electronic response is requested. For correspondence to my Department's Arms Length Bodies, a response will generally issue in the same format as the initial contact was made, unless the response is requested in a particular format.

MRI Scanner in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 7665/11-15, to detail (i) when in 2012 the outline business case will be submitted; (ii) how long approval is likely to take; (iii) how many children required an MRI scan in 2010; (iv) for a breakdown of the number of patients currently waiting for an MRI scan and how long they have been waiting; (v) how many children are currently waiting for an MRI scan; and (vi) the provisions currently in place for children who require an MRI scan.

(AQW 8481/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Prior to the development of an outline business case for this project, the Belfast HSC Trust must obtain Departmental and HSCB approval for a Strategic Outline Case (SOC), which outlines the approximate costs in terms of revenue and capital, together with a range of options to address the need. Work is well advanced on the SOC which is expected to be submitted for approval in the next few weeks.
- (ii) The further development and approval of a more detailed Outline Business Case (OBC) might reasonably take 6 to 9 months. OBC approval is necessary before funding can be identified within the overall budgetary allocation and expenditure incurred.
- (iii) I have been informed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust that a total of 1,012 children¹ received an MRI scan at the Trust during 2010.
- (iv) The number of patients currently waiting for an MRI scan at the Belfast HSC Trust, and the length of time they are currently waiting, is outlined in the table below:

NUMBER WAITING FOR AN MRI SCAN (BY WEEKS WAITING)

HSC Trust	0 - 6	6 - 9	9 - 13	13 - 21	21 - 26	Over 26	Total waiting
Belfast	987	154	306	222	67	347	2,083

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

- (v) Of the 2,083 patients currently waiting for an MRI scan at the Belfast HSC Trust, 332 are children¹.
- (vi) The Belfast HSC Trust has informed me that there are currently seven MRI scanners within the Trust. The majority of children receive their MRI scan within the Imaging Centre at the Royal Victoria Hospital. This is the only facility with a scanner equipped with the provision to administer general anaesthetic to those children who require it.

¹ Children are categorised as patients aged between 0 and 16 years of age.

Care Provided to the Elderly

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his Department's assessment of the care currently provided to the elderly in (i) hospitals; (ii) independent and statutory nursing homes; and (iii) residential homes.

(AQW 8491/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) registers and inspects a wide range of health and social care services and facilities. This includes those caring for the elderly, such as nursing homes, residential care homes and domiciliary care agencies. The quality of services is assessed against minimum care standards and inspections are intended to ensure the safety, comfort and dignity of all those using services. Where necessary, RQIA can take enforcement action to drive improvements.

All treatments provided in hospitals in Northern Ireland are based on clinical need regardless of the patient's age.

Procurement Process for the Provision of Retail Outlets within Hospitals

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the procurement process in relation to the provision of (i) vending machines; and (ii) other retail outlets within hospitals, including the average length and value of a contract.

(AQW 8532/11-15)

Mr Poots: The question of procurement arises where Trusts act as purchasers. In the present context Trusts are more often in receipt of income from e.g. companies owning the vending machines than paying for goods or services. Where procurement does arise it is conducted under the guidance of the Business Services Organisation's Procurement and Logistics Service (BSO PaLS).

With that in mind, the answers are as follows:

- i. contracts above £30k are advertised on the E-Sourcing NI web portal. For contracts below that threshold, BSO PaLS complies with the DHSSPS procedures on minor procurement expenditure e.g. a minimum of three written quotations are sought where the contract value exceeds £2k; and
- ii. the duration of contracts in relation to retail outlets varies; three years, with provision for one or more 12-month extensions, would not be untypical. Their cost structure may also differ; a contract may be framed to allow for annual payment, payment to cover the multi-annual duration of the contract, or payment based on the use made of the service.

Marian Price

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust advised that Marian Price should be moved from Maghaberry Prison.

(AQW 8534/11-15)

Mr Poots: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has responsibility for the healthcare needs of prisoners. In close partnership with the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Trust has been regularly reviewing the health and well-being of Marian Price. Based on this ongoing clinical assessment, the Northern Ireland Prison Service decided to relocate Marian Price to Hydebank Wood.

Fertility Unit at Craigavon Area Hospital

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether a Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority licensed consultant, who can carry out intra-uterine insemination treatment, is employed at the Fertility Unit at Craigavon Area Hospital.

(AQW 8550/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has confirmed that, on 23 February 2012, it received written notification from the Human Fertilisation Embryology Authority that a consultant had been successful in his application to become the person responsible for the fertility clinic at Craigavon Area Hospital.

This will allow intrauterine insemination to take place at the fertility clinic with immediate effect.

Alcohol Consumption of Adults

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any research his Department has carried out on the average alcohol consumption of adults.

(AQW 8608/11-15)

Mr Poots: My department publishes a range of statistical information on alcohol consumption of adults in Northern Ireland which can be found in the reports listed below:

- 1 Adult drinking patterns in Northern Ireland - This report examines the amount of alcohol respondents consumed, when, where and what they drank, who they drank with, together with binge and problem drinking. The latest report is available at: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/adult_drinking_patterns_in_northern_ireland_2011.pdf
- 2 Health Survey Northern Ireland – Summary information on the percentage of respondents who reported drinking in excess of the weekly drinking limits can be found at: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/health_survey_northern_ireland_-_first_results_from_the_2010-11_survey.pdf
- 3 Social Costs of Alcohol Misuse in Northern Ireland for 2008/09 – This report examines the overall social costs of alcohol misuse in Northern Ireland, in light of healthcare, social work, public safety, criminal justice and economic costs. A copy of the report can be found at: http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/social_costs_of_alcohol_misuse_200809.pdf

Funding of Community Pharmacies

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on his Department's approach to funding community pharmacies.
(AQW 8615/11-15)

Mr Poots: The remedy hearing for the Judicial Review brought by Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland (CPNI) was held on 7 February 2012. At the hearing Mr Justice Treacy did not rule that the 2011 Drug Tariff does not provide fair and reasonable remuneration, nor that the Drug Tariff is illegal.

I am committed to the development of a long term, stable model for the delivery of community pharmacy services in Northern Ireland and met with CPNI on 14 February to agree a way forward for community pharmacy within the current constrained financial environment.

Following this meeting negotiations have resumed between my officials and CPNI with the aim of developing a long term stable model which will ensure the adequate provision of community pharmacy services to the public in Northern Ireland.

Mental Health Services in the Omagh Area

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will give a commitment to retain and expand mental health services in the Omagh area.
(AQW 8634/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am committed to ensuring the people of Northern Ireland, including people in the Omagh area, have equitable access to mental health services. This service provision will be within the context of regional policy, particularly the Bamford Review and Transforming Your Care. Service provision will reflect regional policy by focussing on treating people in the community and reducing the need for inpatient care.

The future provision of inpatient mental health services in the Omagh area will be considered within Phase 2 proposals for the Omagh Hospital. These will be subject to consultation and set out in a business case for approval by the Health and Social care Board and my Department. At this stage Phase 2 is not scheduled to commence within this budget period.

Judicial Review in Relation to the Pharmaceutical Contractors Committee

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much the judicial review in relation to the Pharmaceutical Contractors Committee cost his Department, including (a) the total legal costs incurred; and (b) the legal costs his Department had to pay to the Committee.
(AQW 8638/11-15)

Mr Poots: As previously stated in my answers to AQW 7825/11-15, AQW 7855/11-15 and AQW 7931/11-15; the Departmental Solicitor's Office acted on behalf of my Department and to date they

have not submitted an account of the costs they incurred in defending the action. To date no account has been received from CPNI of the legal costs they incurred in taking the Judicial Review.

Community Meals

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline (i) the eligibility criteria for community meals; (ii) what consultation took place to ensure that it correctly identifies the nutritional and social needs of older and vulnerable people; and (iii) if any service users were consulted.

(AQW 8644/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Eligibility Criteria to Support and Maintain Service Users' Independence in Meal Preparation is designed to consider the various stages in assessing a service user's ability to prepare and eat meals. It is intended to prompt consideration of the needs and risks and to consider the range of options available to meet those needs and risks.

The eligibility criteria for community meals are not a nutritional assessment tool. Any client referred will have had their total care needs assessed using the Northern Ireland Single Assessment Tool which has a nutritional domain. If there are concerns regarding a client's nutritional status, a referral would be made to the District Nursing Service to complete a nutritional assessment using the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool as recommended in the regional strategy "Promoting Good Nutrition".

The Guidance was adopted by all Trusts to ensure regional consistency in the approach to the provision of a Community Meals Service. I understand that there was no consultation with service users.

Blood

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the countries in Great Britain that Northern Ireland received blood from in each month between January and October 2011.

(AQW 8645/11-15)

Mr Poots: Details of blood received in Northern Ireland from countries in Great Britain from January 2011 to October 2011 are as follows.

Month	Country	Detail
January 2011	Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS)	50 units
February 2011	-	-
March 2011	-	-
April 2011	-	-
May 2011	-	-
June 2011	-	-
July 2011	-	-
August 2011	Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS)	40 units
September 2011	-	-
October 2011	-	-

Implementation of HTM 01-05

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether an impact assessment has been carried out on the effect that the loss of 7 percent gross income will have on the ability of Health Service dental practices' to provide treatment for patients in deprived areas, whilst remaining financially viable and being able to continue to employ staff during implementation of HTM 01-05.

(AQW 8675/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health Service committed dental practices remain able to claim the higher rate of practice allowance and so it was not considered necessary to carry out an impact assessment. The criteria for claiming Practice Allowance are clearly set out in the Statement of Dental Remuneration. If practices are unable to register 100 fee paying adults and are therefore, unable to meet the criteria set out in the Statement of Dental Remuneration, they may apply to the HSC Board to have this condition waived. If, on appeal, the practice submits a declaration which demonstrates that the practice is at least 90% committed to the Health Service then the higher rate of Practice Allowance will be paid. All changes to the Statement of Dental Remuneration are made following consultation with the British Dental Association. The requirement to submit this declaration in order to receive the practice allowance was implemented from the 1 April 2011.

If practices do not meet the criteria in the Statement of Dental Remuneration and are unable to claim the higher rate of practice allowance this is because they have a significant income from private treatments. It is, therefore, not unreasonable for some of this income to be used to help fund practice expenses.

Dentists

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how dentists, working in the top 20 percent most deprived areas, were informed that the automatic 7 percent Practice Allowance would be cancelled.

(AQW 8676/11-15)

Mr Poots: The changes to the criteria for determining eligibility for the Practice Allowance were made following consultation with the British Dental Association and were fully implemented with effect from 1 April 2011. The wider profession were informed of the changes through two Memoranda to Dentists (MDS). These were issued to all General Dental Practitioners by the Business Services Organisation in April 2009 and January 2011.

Waiting Times at Accident and Emergency Units

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average waiting time at an Accident and Emergency Unit in each Health and Social Care Trust area, in the last 12 months.

(AQW 8678/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the average waiting time at Accident & Emergency Units in each Health & Social Care Trust area in the last 12 months is not currently available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Information on emergency care waiting times is published quarterly and is available to view or download from:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/hospital-stats/emergency_care-3/emergency_care-monthly_waiting_times.htm

The latest published information on emergency care waiting times refers to the months of October, November and December 2011.

MRI Scanner for the Clark Clinic in The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether any funding has been allocated for a dedicated MRI scanner at the Clark Clinic at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, given that Northern Ireland is still the only area in the UK which does not have a dedicated MRI scanner for children.

(AQW 8689/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am supportive of this scheme, but I am not in a position to allocate funding to this, or any other project, until a business case has been assessed and approved confirming the need for and value for money of the proposal. The Belfast Trust is currently developing the required analysis and a detailed Outline Business Case (OBC) is expected to be submitted later in 2012, for consideration and approval. Following approval, I will then be in a position to try to identify the required funding from within my constrained budgetary allocation.

Northern Ireland Cancer Network

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the 2012 work plan for the Northern Ireland Cancer Network has been agreed.

(AQW 8690/11-15)

Mr Poots: The role of NICAN is to contribute to improved cancer care by promoting and implementing patient pathways and protocols, developed through a multi disciplinary and patient centred approach. The 2012/13 work plan for NICAN will be developed in the context of agreed priorities for cancer care.

NICAN will work closely with the HSC Board and Agency's commissioning teams to translate the priorities into specific action to help prevent cancer, promote early diagnosis, and improve patient care and experience through the HSC sector.

It is anticipated that the 2012/13 work plan for NICaN will be finalised in April 2012.

Children and Young People with Cancer

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he intends to improve the care and treatment of children and young people, up to the age of 24 years, with cancer.

(AQW 8691/11-15)

Mr Poots: I recognise that there is more than we can do with regard to services for young cancer patients aged between 16 and 24 in respect of raising awareness of the needs of this particular age group; developing of appropriate referral pathways and protocols; and strengthening multidisciplinary teams and mechanisms for shared care arrangements.

I can advise that the HSC Board and Public Health Agency aim to take forward work to ensure that pathways and protocols for teenagers and young adults with cancer reflect high quality care, consistent with NICE Guidance on Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People with cancer. It is intended that this work will be progressed in collaboration with HSC Trusts and voluntary sector organisations.

Bi-Polar Disorder

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently being treated for bi-polar disorder, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 8696/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of people currently being treated for bi-polar disorder is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Bi-Polar Disorder

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how bi-polar disorder is diagnosed.

(AQW 8697/11-15)

Mr Poots: When Primary care clinicians suspect a diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder, individuals should be referred to specialist mental health services for comprehensive assessment, including consideration of their history of physical and psychological symptoms, behaviour, and social functioning. A diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder would be made if the assessment confirmed the necessary criteria for this disorder, as drawn from recognised classifications of mental disorders such as the WHO Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders.

Bi-Polar Disorder

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures are in place to ensure that patients with bi-polar disorder are given the appropriate treatment and support.

(AQW 8698/11-15)

Mr Poots: As with other mental health disorders, following confirmation of the diagnosis of Bi-polar Disorder by specialist services, a care plan will be developed appropriate to the person's assessed needs and which may include physical treatments such medication, psychological therapies, and social supports. Treatment of the person often involves care being provided across a range of settings, from primary care, community mental health services, outpatient care, day therapy through to inpatient care. Individuals may also require social support depending on their circumstances and this may include support from appropriate voluntary sector organisations, help with housing, education or employment.

Around £235m is spent annually on specialist services for people with mental health problems (although it is not possible to identify separately the amount spent by Health and Social Care Services on the treatment and support of people with individual disorders such as Bi-polar Disorder). This does not include expenditure on primary care services.

Voluntary organisations which may treat and support patients with Bi-polar Disorder are an important part of the range of support available. Such organisations have an obligation to follow appropriate professional and good practice guidance, and also to monitor their performance through their own governance arrangements. The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority has a responsibility to regulate and monitor the provision of specific services to people with mental health problems, following their assumption of the responsibilities of the Mental Health Commission.

Abiraterone for the Treatment of Prostate Cancer

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to approve and fund the use of Abiraterone for the treatment of prostate cancer.

(AQW 8709/11-15)

Mr Poots: Abiraterone is a newly licensed drug in the UK since September 2011. NICE published a draft technology appraisal on 1st February 2012 which does not recommend the use of abiraterone. This guidance has now been issued for consultation. In addition the manufacturer has requested permission to submit further analyses to address some of the Appraisal Committee's considerations which will necessitate re-scheduling of the planned second Committee meeting to facilitate a further evidence review. It is possible that NICE's recommendation may change following consultation. NICE is now due to publish the final guidance in June 2012.

In Northern Ireland patients can access drugs that are not approved by NICE through the Individual Funding Request (IFR) process if their consultant considers the drug to be of benefit to them. All cases are dealt with on an individual basis and considered on its merits, however it is expected that clinical exceptionality is demonstrated to support an IFR request.

Treatment of Prostate Cancer

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much has been spent on the treatment of prostate cancer in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8711/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information is available on the cost of inpatient episodes and day case attendances in an acute hospital setting only where the patient has a diagnosis of prostate cancer.

Financial Year	No. Day cases	No. Inpatient FCEs	Total Cost £m
2010-11	1,289	2,027	5.5
2009-10	1,376	2,044	5.7
2008-09	1,210	1,622	4.5
2007-08	999	1,479	3.8
2006-07	867	565	1.8

Information is collected for Trust local administrative purposes, but not at the level of detail required to determine what has been spent on people with specific diagnoses such as prostate cancer. Similarly, information on the costs of A&E, outpatient, primary care, community and personal social services, chemotherapy drugs and delivery (day cases), would only be available at disproportionate cost.

Business Services Organisation Recruitment Process

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the commencement of the Business Services Organisation recruitment process for administration staff, in particular its impact on the validity of the consultation on the Business Services Transformation Programme and on staff who are currently in administrative jobs which are not considered safe.

(AQW 8763/11-15)

Mr Poots: This recruitment exercise concerned the requirements of the current Business Services Organisation (BSO). It was aimed at developing a waiting list of applicants to fill BSO vacancies that may arise over the course of the year and which, for business continuity reasons, need to be filled on a temporary basis. It was entirely unrelated to the Business Services Transformation Programme in general and to the Shared Services proposals in particular - a point demonstrated by the fact that the locations named in the recruitment pack were those of existing BSO operations, and did not include Omagh, one of the proposed sites for a Shared Service Centre of Expertise.

Given the uncertainty provoked by its publication, however, the BSO has reviewed the timing of its current recruitment exercise and has decided to suspend it until we are clearer as to the impact on staff of the Shared Services decisions.

Antrim Area Hospital

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the next phase of the Antrim Area Hospital will be completed.

(AQW 8811/11-15)

Mr Poots: The next phase of development at Antrim Area Hospital will contain a new Emergency Department and a new 24 bedded unit. The 24 bedded unit is expected to be completed in January 2013 and operational in February 2013 while the new Emergency Department is expected to be completed in April 2013 with an anticipated opening date of June 2013.

Business Services Transformation Programme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many requests his Department has received for copies of all correspondence between the Business Services Organisation and his Department in relation to the Business Services Transformation Programme; and (ii) how many of the requests did his Department fulfil.

(AQW 8837/11-15)

Mr Poots: One request was received by the Business Services Organisation under Freedom of Information provisions and this was denied on the basis of “policy under development”. Subsequently, an appeal against this decision was received and is, as yet, under consideration by the Business Services Organisation.

Jobs Lost in the South Down Constituency

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many jobs have been lost in each of the last 10 years, in the South Down constituency, broken down by (i) council ward; (ii) departmental jobs; and (iii) jobs in his Department’s arm’s-length bodies.

(AQW 8906/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Details of job losses in the HSC by council ward are not available;
- (ii) None of my Department’s civil servants are employed in the South Down Constituency.
- (iii) Job losses in the health economy in the last four years have been a direct result of the RPA reforms. Under these reforms 1,700 administrative posts were removed from the health economy across Northern Ireland. The RPA reforms were designed primarily to ensure that administrative structures and procedures are fit for purpose and that resources are maximised for frontline services. Developments in frontline services are dependent upon the reinvestment of £49 million RPA savings. It is not possible to break these jobs down by constituencies.

Belmont House Special School, Derry

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what arrangements his Department has put in place for emergency school nurse cover for Belmont House Special School, Derry.

(AQW 8960/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Western Health and Social Care Trust that there is no requirement to have nursing cover at Belmont House Special School. However, the Trust has suggested that the question may relate to Foyle View Special School, Londonderry, which is also located on the Racecourse Road, Londonderry.

The Trust advises that it does provide a school nurse to Foyle View School and attempts to cover any absences. However, this is not always possible due to a shortage of available workforce. The Trust continues to seek to recruit into a range of temporary cover arrangements.

The Trust further advises that classroom assistants at Foyle View School have been appropriately trained and possess the skills required to meet the needs of every child attending the School.

Family Fund

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much funding has been allocated to the Family Fund in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8997/11-15)

Mr Poots: The funding allocated by my Department to the Family Fund in the last three financial years was as follows:

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
£1.73m	£1.77m	£1.57m

Applications to the Family Fund

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when applications to the Family Fund can be submitted.

(AQW 8998/11-15)

Mr Poots: Applications to the Family Fund can be submitted at any time.

Department of Justice

Kanram Jafar

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how Kanram Jafar was erroneously released from HMP Maghaberry; and whether he has been returned to custody.

(AQW 8271/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): I can confirm that Kamran Jafar was released from Maghaberry Prison on 8 February 2012 before service of a warrant by the UK Border Agency giving Northern Ireland Prison Service the authority to hold him pending removal or deportation. The circumstances surrounding the release are subject to a full investigation by the Northern Ireland Prison Service. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the circumstances while the investigation is ongoing. Mr Jafar has not been returned to custody.

Public Order Offences Committed Over the Twelfth of July 2011 Period in Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, of the 30 men who are due to stand trial for public order offences committed over the Twelfth of July 2011 period in Belfast, (i) how many have been granted legal aid; (ii) how many legal companies are on record; (iii) how many have been certified for counsel; (iv) what is the cost of legal aid to date; and (v) what is the projected overall legal aid cost.

(AQW 8274/11-15)

Mr Ford: Court records show that 31 defendants, who are charged with offences arising from public order offences committed over the Twelfth of July 2011 period in Belfast, have still to be dealt with. Of those, 30 are legally aided.

There are a total of 24 firms of solicitors on record as representing the 30 legally aided defendants. To date only two of the defendants have had their cases certified for counsel.

The total paid to date in respect of representation at the Magistrates' Court is £3,356.00 (inc. VAT of £491.00). The total paid to date in respect of PACE (the Police and Criminal Evidence Act) advice is £4,321.70 (inc. VAT of £705.97).

It is estimated that the overall cost of advice under PACE and the Magistrates' Court proceedings will be approximately £33,000.

As this case is still ongoing not all bills have yet been received.

Independent Members of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Justice whether the deadline for the quota of applications for independent members of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships was met by all councils; and

whether he can confirm that all the applications received before the deadline will be considered, and that applications received after the deadline will not.

(AQW 8342/11-15)

Mr Ford: The process of recruiting independent members to the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) is not carried out by my Department, but is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

Visits to Her Majesty's Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to visit any of Her Majesty's prisons in other regions of the UK which are bound by the same searching laws as Northern Ireland, given that he intends to visit Portlaoise Prison, which is outside British jurisdiction.

(AQW 8360/11-15)

Mr Ford: In addition to a recent visit to Portlaoise Prison, I have previously visited Birmingham Prison and Edinburgh Prison.

I will visit prisons in any jurisdiction where such visits are beneficial and relevant to my role as Minister of Justice.

Safer Custody Project

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice on what dates did the Safer Custody Project commence and finish; and what changes or amendments have been made in prisons as a result.

(AQW 8432/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Safer Custody Project was initiated by Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) in November 2009 in response to the findings and recommendations made by the Prisoner Ombudsman in her report into the tragic death of Colin Bell in 2008. In October 2010, this project was subsequently subsumed into the Vulnerable Prisoners Programme, which provides a continuous improvement approach to the development of the safer custody function. Work within the vulnerable prisoners programme will also link in with the Strategic Efficiency and Effectiveness (SEE) programme in the coming months. The SEE programme is the vehicle which will deliver fundamental end to end change within NIPS and place all those in their care at the centre of what they do.

Noticeable changes to prison regime and delivery of services to those considered vulnerable thus far are considerable and include:

- Development of formal working arrangements between NIPS and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust in the care and treatment of vulnerable prisoners and those who are identified as poor copers and potentially at risk;
- Introduction of the Supporting Prisoners At Risk (SPAR) procedures, providing a multi-disciplinary approach to the management of those who self harm or show signs of potential suicide. This process has replaced the dated PAR1 process which was criticised in previous reports;
- Improved links and working arrangements between NIPS and the Samaritans organisation; the Samaritans provide training and mentoring for the peer support programme known as the Listener scheme;
- Opening of the Therapeutic Day Centre – Donard – at Maghaberry to provide a day centre facility for chronic cases offering vulnerability assessments and provision of support managed through delivery of a structured and predictable regime, staffed by Healthcare professionals and specifically trained prison staff;
- Completion of the Challenging Anti-social Behaviour policy and procedures which will effectively manage all aspects of anti-social behaviour; and
- Delivery of training to prison staff of Supporting Prisoners at Risk procedures and the Applied Suicide Intervention & Skills Training (ASIST).

Anti-Social Behaviour in the Public Gallery of Court Rooms

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he will introduce legislation to make anti-social behaviour in the public gallery of court rooms a public offence.

(AQW 8433/11-15)

Mr Ford: A person in the public gallery of a court who engages in anti-social behaviour can already be prosecuted for the common law offence of contempt of court. Under the Contempt of Court Act 1981, a penalty of up to two years imprisonment or an unlimited fine can be imposed. The person can also be removed from the court by the court security staff with or without prosecution. I do not believe there is a need for an explicit anti-social behaviour offence in courts.

Costs to the Health & Safety Executive in the Failed Crown Court Prosecution of Trevor Bailie

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what were the total legal aid costs in the failed Crown Court prosecution of Trevor Bailie by the Health and Safety Executive which concluded in or about September 2011.

(AQW 8445/11-15)

Mr Ford: The total paid to date in respect of Mr Bailie's defence at the Crown Court is £49,664.81 (including VAT of £4,791.88). Not all claims for payment have been received as yet.

Proposed Bowling Green at HMP Maghaberry

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the proposed bowling green at HMP Maghaberry, whether any work or assessments were carried out on the area of land in question by outside contractors, prior to the plan being abandoned.

(AQW 8495/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prior to plans being abandoned for a proposed bowling green at Maghaberry, no assessments were carried out by outside contractors.

Security at Hydebank Wood Prison for Marian Price

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice to outline the security in place at Hydebank Wood Prison for Marian Price.

(AQW 8497/11-15)

Mr Ford: The security measures in place for any prisoner are based on security categorisation and risk assessment and are an operational matter. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the detail of such measures.

Police and Community Safety Partnerships

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many places are available for independent members on each of the proposed Police and Community Safety Partnerships.

(AQW 8592/11-15)

Mr Ford: The number of places available for independent members on each of the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) is dependent on the number of political members selected by each District Council. The Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that there will be 8, 9 or 10 political members on a PCSP, with 7, 8 or 9 independent members respectively.

The breakdown of places for independent members by PCSP is detailed below.

PCSP/ DPCSP	Independent members
Antrim	9

PCSP/ DPCSP	Independent members
Ards	9
Armagh	9
Ballymena	9
Ballymoney	9
Banbridge	8
Belfast	9
Belfast - North	5
Belfast - South	5
Belfast - East	5
Belfast - West	5
Carrickfergus	7
Castlereagh	8
Coleraine	9
Cookstown	7
Craigavon	9
Derry	9
Down	9
Dungannon & South Tyrone	8
Fermanagh	9
Larne	7
Limavady	8
Lisburn	9
Magherafelt	8
Moyle	7
Newry and Mourne	9
Newtownabbey	9
North Down	9
Omagh	7
Strabane	7
Total	237

Convictions for Child Abduction

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of convictions for child abduction in each of the last five years; and in how many cases the convicted person was related to the child.
(AQW 8727/11-15)

Mr Ford: Abduction of a child is an offence under Articles 3 and 4 of the Child Abduction (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. It is also an offence to abduct a child from care under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

The table below gives the number of persons convicted for child abduction offences between 2004 and 2008 (the latest year for which data are available).

Offence	2004	2005	2006		2007	2008
Child Abduction (By Parent etc)	No convictions					
Attempted Child Abduction (By Parent etc)	No convictions					
Child Abduction (By Other Person)		1	1		1	
Attempted Child Abduction (By Other Person)	1		1			1

In the case of the convictions above, it is not possibly accurately to determine from the database the relationship of the person convicted to the child.

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Data for 2004-2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2008 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

Case Number 12/20314

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 8564/11-15, given that the reporting restrictions imposed by the Court relate only to the identification of the defendant and the alleged victim, whether he can clarify if the defendant was on day release when the alleged offence was committed. **(AQW 8847/11-15)**

Mr Ford: As the reporting restrictions imposed by the Court in the above matter remain in force and have not changed since my earlier response, I refer you to my answer to AQW 8564/11-15 which was provided on 24 February 2012.

Department for Regional Development

Street Lighting on the Main A28 Killylea Road, Armagh

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will erect street lighting on the main A28 Killylea Road, Armagh, to enhance the safety of pedestrians and motorists using the stretch of carriageway between the two junctions at Killylea village. **(AQW 7866/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): My Department's Roads Service has advised that it only installs road lighting, at a rural location, if it is required as a measure to reduce the incidence of after dark traffic accidents resulting in personal injury, and there are no alternative traffic options available which will produce a similar outcome.

I have asked my officials to meet with you on-site to discuss the Roads Service policy on street lighting. Mr Jack Robinson at Roads Service Southern Division, Marlborough House, Central Way, Craigavon, (028 3839 5627) will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient date.

Gritting Schedule

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the roads that have been added to the gritting schedule in each of the last five years; and (ii) how many vehicles, per day, were surveyed using each road at the time when it was added to the schedule.

(AQW 7945/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it carries out an assessment using a criteria based system which takes into account various factors including whether or not the road is a main through route, topography, road gradient and geometry, traffic volumes and availability of alternative routes. In addition, small settlements in rural areas, containing 100 dwellings or more, have salted links to roads on the main salted network.

A list of the roads added to the gritting schedule in each of the last five years and how many vehicles used the roads per day are detailed in the table below:-

Year	Road Name	Traffic Volume Vehicles per Day
2007/08	A2 Buncrana Road/Skeoge Roundabout, Londonderry	18,260
	Dundrum Road, Armagh	1,757
	Derrymore Road, Aghalee	1,396
	Brankinstown Road, Aghalee	900
	Leitrim Road, Leitrim	1,510
2008/09	U204 Urney Road, Clady	1,703
	U943 Whites Road, Ballygawley	1,581
	C437 Marble Arch Road, Florencecourt	1,529
	B146 Causeway Road, Bushmills	1,700
	B15 Whitepark Road, Bushmills	>2,000
	Tullyear Avenue, Banbridge	1,728
	Granemore Road, Keady	1,684
	Derrynoose Road, Derrynoose	1,670
	Derryleckagh Road, Warrenpoint	1,640
	Derryboye Road, Crossgar	1,693

Year	Road Name	Traffic Volume Vehicles per Day
2009/10	C407 Lack Road, Irvinestown	1,782
	C413 Makenny Road, Ballinamallard	1,504
	From B72 Strabane Road to Erganagh	Connection to settlement > 100 residences
	B64 Craigdunloof Road, Ballymena	1,138
	Tirkeeran Road, Garvagh, Coleraine	882
	Glen Road, Garvagh	769
	U248 Gortnaghey Road	540
	A26/M2 Dualling, Ballymena	23,420
	A515 Skeoge Road dualling, Londonderry	18,260
	Ballymagarry Lane / Lyndhurst Crescent, Belfast	2,200
	Station Road, Ballygowan	1,630
	Drumlough Road/Bavan Road, Mayobridge	2,207
	Finnegans Road, Newry	2,191
2010/11	A4 Dungannon to Ballygawley (new dual carriageway)	16,000-20,000
	U340 Tullybryan Road, Ballygawley	1,634
	A2 Clooney Road, Londonderry	27,740
	Old Kilmore Road, Moira	3,600
	Prince Andrew Way, Carrickfergus	6,628
	Clady/Cladymore Road, Armagh	1,308
	Blackskull Road, Donaghcloney	882
	New Line, Lurgan	1,868
2011/12	U6007 Bridge Street, Irvinestown	1,711
	C573 Springtown Road, Londonderry	3,801
	Cherry Road, Lisburn	5,762
	Lagmore View, Lisburn	2,066
	Mayfield Link, Glengormley	4,436
	Hill Street, Milford	1,453

Disabled Blue Badges

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to facilitate an awareness campaign to encourage abled-bodied drivers not to park in bays allocated for blue badge holders. **(AQW 8010/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has responsibility for parking enforcement in relation to disabled person's parking spaces on the public road and in Roads Service car-parks.

I can confirm that Roads Service gives a high priority to this enforcement to deter non Blue Badge holders from parking in these spaces. Roads Service has advised that from 1 January 2011 to 31 December 2011, 7,542 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were issued to vehicles parked in disabled person's parking spaces without clearly displaying a valid badge.

Officials in my Department avail of all possible opportunities to raise awareness of this issue and have contributed to numerous media interviews and newspaper articles. My staff will continue to do so through all forms of the media, as further opportunities arise.

I also feel that public awareness in this area will continue to develop as on-going effective enforcement is provided and PCNs are issued to contravening vehicles.

I would also advise that my Department has no responsibility for enforcement of disabled person's parking spaces on private land.

Duneany Road

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development whether Roads Service defines the Duneany Road, between Glarryford and Rasharkin, as having a difficult topography.

(AQW 8040/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that Duneany Road between Glarryford and Rasharkin has a good alignment and generally has only minor gradients along its 8 km length. Roads Service would therefore not consider Duneany Road as having a difficult topography.

Gritting Schedule

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to list the roads in the North Antrim area which are used by no more than 1,500 vehicles per day and are currently on the gritting schedule.

(AQW 8041/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that traffic counts are not available for all roads in North Antrim that are on the salting schedule. Most of the salted routes have been on the schedule for many years and it is the Department's policy to dispose of winter service records after a period of seven years and traffic volume records after a period of five years.

Stationery Costs in Replying to Assembly Written Questions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on stationery costs in replying to Assembly Written Questions, including the price of the envelopes and paper used, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8046/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not hold the information to provide the complete stationery costs in replying to Assembly Questions Written (AQWs).

Internal work on AQWs is mainly undertaken electronically via email. The table below provides the estimated paper and envelope costs, for the period 7 May 2007 to 31 January 2012 based on the work conducted within my Private Office, to answer AQWs which have been tabled for the Department for Regional Development including corrections.

Financial Year	Total number of AQWs answered	Estimated paper costs £	Estimated envelope costs £
7 May 2007 to 31 March 2008	877	25.24	52.30

Financial Year	Total number of AQWs answered	Estimated paper costs £	Estimated envelope costs £
1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009	1242	35.74	74.06
1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010	1158	41.09	69.11
1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011	1087	48.37	64.88
1 April 2011 to 31 January 2012	692	19.91	41.26
Total	5056	170.35	301.61

Department Spend on Conferences, Away-days and Team Building Exercises

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8097/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Expenditure on conferences, away-days and team building exercises by my Department for the last three financial years is laid out in the table below. The figures do not include the costs/fees for conferences organised by external bodies that my staff attended.

	Cost		
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Conferences	£0.00	£11852.00	£2518.00
Away-days	£15948.00	£14674.00	£2203.00
Team building exercises	£5248.00	£1024.00	£0.00

Gatwick Set of Trains

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what is the current status of the Gatwick Set of trains; (ii) how much this set cost; and (iii) how long they were in service.

(AQW 8102/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that:

- (i) and (iii) following its purchase in 2001 and subsequent commissioning, the Gatwick train set was used to supplement peak commuter capacity on the Cross Border Line, specifically between Newry and Portadown and to Belfast until June 2009. This rolling stock provides network back-up and remains an integral part of Translink's operational reserve fleet;
- (ii) the information requested relates to contracts Translink has entered into with other commercial organisations which are bound by confidentiality. Furthermore, the information has implications for the commercial interests of the organisation.

Gatwick Set of Trains

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what was the cost of rebuilding a Driver Trailer for use with the Gatwick Set of trains; (ii) when this work was carried out; (iii) whether the Driver Trailer was used; (iv) where it is now; and (v) what are the future plans for this Driver Trailer.

(AQW 8109/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has provided the following detail:

- (i) The information requested relates to contracts Translink has entered into with other commercial organisations which are bound by confidentiality. Furthermore, the information has implications for

the commercial interests of the organisation. The original business case for the Driver Van Trailer envisaged spare capacity for trains in place including for example security disruptions or other unforeseen events.

- (ii) In 2007, following the purchase of the Gatwick trains, Translink separately procured a Driving Van Trailer which was upgraded to the specification required to facilitate push-pull operation with the Gatwicks. This unit, along with modifications to three locomotives, has been fully tested and commissioned.
- (iii) Due to a downturn in the economy and a reduction in passenger numbers (particularly evident on the cross-border line) and revenues in Northern Ireland Railways during 2009, the Gatwick train set and upgraded Driving Van Trailer were not returned to service but were placed into reserve fleet.
- (iv) The Driving Van Trailer and Gatwick train set remain in strategic fleet reserve and are located at Lisburn and Ballymena sidings.
- (v) The Driving Van Trailer was part of an Economic Appraisal for short term

additional train capacity until the new trains arrived. This also included Class 80 refurbishment. The procurement of the new trains will allow Translink to retire a number of fleet.

Driving Brake Standard Open Carriage

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the status of the Driving Brake Standard Open carriage which Translink purchased from Rivera Trains; and how much did it cost.
(AQW 8113/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Driving Brake Standard Open carriage referred to above is the same vehicle referred to as a "Driving Van Trailer" in AQW 8109/11-15.

Parking Facilities for Residents at Priors Lea in Holywood

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to improve the parking facilities for residents at Priors Lea in Holywood, particularly for older residents.
(AQW 8160/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are no current plans to alter the existing parking facilities for residents at Priors Lea in Holywood.

Funding for Roads in Donaghadee

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on the roads in Donaghadee in each of the last five years.
(AQW 8161/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has spent approximately £722,000 on roads in the Donaghadee area in the five financial years, from 2007/08 to date. Details of this spend are provided in the table below:

Year	Expenditure on roads in Donaghadee
2007/08	£108,000
2008/09	£80,000
2009/10	£275,000
2010/11	£52,000
2011/12	£205,000

Year	Expenditure on roads in Donaghadee
Total	£720,000

Courthouse Closures

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) whether he has had any discussions with the Minister of Justice regarding the provision of additional transport services, should the proposed courthouse closures go ahead; (ii) whether he is considering a dedicated court users service; and (iii) whether this would be a direct route to the courts or would it be absorbed into existing services.

(AQW 8168/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have not had such discussions with the Minister of Justice. I understand that issues related to access continue to be considered as part of the public consultation on the proposals. However, I have no powers to support a transport that is dedicated solely to court users.

A5 Upgrade

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Regional Development what proportion of his road construction budget will be allocated to the construction of the A5 upgrade during the period 2012/13 to 2015/16 inclusive.

(AQW 8223/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's capital budget allocation covers the period to 2014/15. In his recent announcement, the Minister of Finance and Personnel indicated that £20 million would be made available in 2015/16 to complete the currently proposed A5 works. The full capital allocation for that year will not be known until the next comprehensive spending review.

However, I can advise that the £310 million allocated for the A5 in the 2012/13 – 2014/15 period represents 47% of my capital budget for that period, at this point in time.

Parking Infringement in a Private Car Park

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of what level of fine or penalty, for a parking infringement in a private car park, is reasonable.

(AQW 8285/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has no authority or responsibility for the regulation of car parks on private land.

Therefore, I have no views on what level of fine or penalty for a parking infringement in a private car park is reasonable.

Car Clamping

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development, given the rising levels of clamping and penalties for parking infringements, for his assessment of the need to regulate private car park operators.

(AQW 8287/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department has no authority or responsibility in relation to the regulation of car parks on private land.

I understand that the Department of Justice is looking at the future regulation of the private security industry in Northern Ireland, including issues arising from parking enforcement on private land.

A26

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the A26 road, including the estimated timescale for progressing the required works.

(AQW 8288/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the A26 dualling scheme is currently progressing through the scheme assessment process. The Environmental Statement and draft Orders are programmed for publication in March 2012. The draft Orders include a draft Vesting Order which identifies the land required for the scheme, a draft Direction Order which is broadly equivalent to a planning application explaining the changes proposed to the trunk road network and a draft Stopping Up of Private Accesses Order.

If required, it is anticipated that a Public Inquiry would be held for this scheme in late 2012.

Timing of construction of the project is dependent on progression through the statutory processes and the availability of funding in the next Budget period and beyond. You will be aware that the draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021 is currently at the consultation stage.

Digital Information Display Units at Bus Stops

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of bus stops in the (a) East; (b) North; and (c) South Belfast constituencies; (ii) the number of these that have real-time digital information on display; and (iii) how many new real-time digital information display units are planned for (a) East; (b) North; and (c) South Belfast.

(AQW 8316/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) The information is not available in exactly the format requested. Where Translink has details of bus stops in the greater Belfast area, they do not have the information as to where these are in relation to parliamentary constituency areas. The following table gives details of the number of bus stops (inbound and outbound) on each Metro corridor route across Belfast.

	Metro	No. of Stops	No. of Stops
Service No.	Corridor	Inbound	Outbound
1A	Antrim Road	62	61
2C	Shore Road	44	46
3A	Hollywood Road	36	30
4A	Upper Newtownards Road	49	38
5A	Castlereagh Road	34	33
6A	Cregagh Road	23	22
7A	Saintfield Road	35	33
8A	Malone Road	29	29
9A	Lisburn Road	34	32
10A	Falls Road	31	34
11A	Shankill Road	31	34
12A	Oldpark Road	24	28
	Total	432	420

- (ii) The information is not available in the format required as the maps available do not clearly define parliamentary boundaries. However the approximate numbers of bus stops in East, North and South Belfast constituencies that have real time digital information on display are provided in the table below:

Constituency	Bus Stops With Real Time Information
Belfast North	50
Belfast South	53
Belfast East	57

- (iii) With regard to the number of new passenger displays that are planned, I understand that the current contract is due to be re-tendered later this year and the provision of additional facilities will depend upon the level of funding that may be available.

A5 Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development when the Business Case for the two sections of the A5, which he announced on 14 February 2012 would proceed, was submitted to DFP; and when it was approved.

(AQW 8318/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As I previously advised the Member, the business case for all major road projects evolves as the scheme is developed. The economic assessment for the A5 is contained within the scheme development reports, which are available on the project's web site: <http://www.a5wtc.com/>.

The final business case will be compiled when the scheme has been defined following the public inquiry process and will be submitted to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) for approval prior to moving to the construction stage. This is in accordance with the process agreed with DFP

A5 Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 70/11-15, why he announced in advance of the Independent Inspector's report that two sections of the A5 will proceed.

(AQW 8319/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member will be aware, my announcement of the upgrade of significant elements of the A5 to dual carriageway is part of a balanced package of improvements to our strategic road network. I have made it clear that progression of the A5, through completion of statutory procedures and commencement of construction, is subject to the outcome of the Public Inquiry held last year. This does not prejudge the outcome of the Inspector's report, nor compromise its independence.

This announcement is part of a collective decision taken by the Executive. The decision was necessary at this time in order to give Departments clarity on their budgets, as we approach a new financial year.

A5 Dual Carriageway: Contractors

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the statement by the Minister of Finance and Personnel in the Assembly on 14 February 2012, that contractors had already been appointed to build two sections of the A5 dual carriageway (i) who has been appointed; (ii) when they were appointed; and (iii) what is the contract price.

(AQW 8320/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that following completion of a 2 stage tender process in December 2009, contractors were appointed to the three sections of the proposed A5 dual carriageway project. Through this Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) type agreement, contractors were initially appointed to provide advice on construction related issues during the design stage and

the Public Inquiry process. However, the construction phase of the contracts will not commence until completion of the statutory orders process, approval of the business case and conclusion of necessary administrative/legal procedures. Accordingly, there is no contract price in an ECI type contract as scheme specific target costs are agreed in advance of construction.

The contractors appointed to the two sections are as follows:

- New Buildings to Strabane – Balfour Beatty / BAM / FP McCann
- Omagh to Ballygawley – Graham / Farrans

A5 Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development for a breakdown of the £330m commitment announced in the Assembly on 14 February 2012 for the A5 project.

(AQW 8321/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Of the £330 million to be allocated to my Department for the A5 Dual Carriageway, it is estimated that £170 million will be required for the section from Londonderry to the North of Strabane and £160 million will be required for the section from south of Omagh to Ballygawley.

Non-Adopted Roads in Co. Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development what progress has been made in addressing the number of non-adopted roads in Co. Fermanagh.

(AQW 8373/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware that the adoption of road and sewerage infrastructure within private developments has become a significant issue in the current economic climate, as a result of the difficulties being faced by developers. In the Fermanagh District Council Area, as in all district council areas, my Department's Roads Service will continue to administer the adoption of private streets with due regard to available resource and the particular circumstances associated with each development.

Over the last few years, Roads Service's Western Division has, on average, adopted approximately 10% of the total "live" unadopted sites within any one year. This figure fluctuates given the nature of the work and the number of new sites moving into construction phase.

Roads Service remains committed to reducing the number of outstanding unadopted developments and the staff resource tasked with this function will remain in place. Roads Service practice is to afford defaulting developers every opportunity to comply with their undertakings, provided through private streets determinations, to complete the outstanding works. However, where the bond in place is insufficient to cover the cost of completing such works, Roads Service is only able to complete work if sufficient public funding is available.

Roads Service will continue to work with other Government Agencies, such as NI Water, to administer the backlog of development sites that require adoption, but it must be emphasised that responsibility for these sites remains with the developers until the adoption process can be completed.

Belfast to Londonderry Railway Line

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development, given that passenger numbers on the Belfast to Londonderry railway line compare favourably with those for the Belfast to Dublin line, whether he will seek to have this line 'pre-identified' on the EU Common European Framework list, so that the line may be considered for investment to accompany the present Trans European Network on the Belfast - Dublin - Cork line.

(AQW 8385/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Assuming that the member is referring to the Connecting Europe Facility, may I refer you to the answer given to Mr C Eastwood in response to AQW 8031/11-15.

Use of Public Transport

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development how many people have used public transport in each of the last five years; and how many of these people are regular commuters.
(AQW 8389/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The number of passenger journeys on public transport services provided by Translink in each of the last 5 years is set out below.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT PASSENGER JOURNEYS (MILLIONS)

Year	Metro Millions	Ulsterbus Millions	NI Railways Millions	Total Millions
2006/07	24.1	43.4	8.5	76.0
2007/08	26.0	43.9	9.5	79.4
2008/09	26.5	44.0	10.2	80.7
2009/10	26.3	41.9	10.0	78.2
2010/11	25.8	40.8	10.4	77.0

Statistics on the actual numbers of passengers are not available.

Estimates of commuting journeys as a proportion of all Metro, Ulsterbus and NI Railways journeys have been obtained from the latest Travel Survey for Northern Ireland data (2008-2010). Applying these proportions to the actual numbers of passenger journeys for Metro, Ulsterbus and NI Railways in 2010/11 gives an estimated number of 15 million commuting journeys.

Making a very broad assumption that a commuter makes an average of 450 commuting journeys per year (45 working weeks times 10 journeys per week), this could mean that there were approximately 33,000 passengers in 2010/11 who might be regular commuters (15 million commuting journeys divided by 450).

A6 Londonderry to Dungiven Dual Carriageway Project

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 6499/11-15, in light of recent funding announcements for the A5 and the A8, when the dualling of the A6 from Derry to the M22 will be completed.
(AQW 8391/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that development work on the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dual carriageway proposal is currently ongoing. As the Member may be aware, draft Statutory Orders were published in December 2011 and I would anticipate that a Public Inquiry will be held later this year.

I can also advise that the planning for dualling the A6 from Randalstown to Castledawson roundabout is complete with the exception of a junction at Castledawson. It is anticipated that planning for this proposed scheme will be complete in 2013, following the outcome of the Public Inquiry into the draft Vesting Order for the Annaghmore Road/Bellshill Road junction.

Timing of delivery of these projects will be dependent on the outcome of the Public Inquiries, the availability of funding, and successful procurement. Spending beyond the current budget period will be determined by the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021, which, as you may be aware, is currently published for consultation.

Promoting the Use of Public Transport

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development what is his Department's strategy to encourage people to increase their use of public transport.

(AQW 8392/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) presents a range of initiatives to improve our transportation infrastructure, promote sustainable travel and encourage the use of modes of travel other than the car. It is being implemented through three transport plans.

These plans provide for, and encourage, greater use of public transport and include proposals for improved bus and rail services, Park and Ride and Rapid Transit.

My Department for instance is providing funding to allow Translink to purchase a further 20 new trains, the first of which are already in service. It has also continued to fund the purchase of new modern buses which will be used throughout Northern Ireland.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that it continues to put measures in place that are intended to provide priority for buses and thereby help improve journey times and reliability. This includes measures such as bus lanes, bus priority at junctions, bus gates, and Quality Bus Corridors.

The provision of Park and Ride sites is recognised as having an important role in promoting sustainable transport which my Department will aim to prioritise as available funding permits. In addition, Roads Service is firmly committed to providing and improving bus based Park and Ride facilities and ensuring that the enforcement of parking restrictions continues to be a priority to assist bus and traffic flow.

Further, my Department's Travelwise Northern Ireland initiative is seeking to promote, and generally raise the awareness levels of the general public, towards more sustainable transport options including cycling, walking, greater use of public transport in order to encourage a change in public attitudes away from the private car as the main mode of travel in Northern Ireland.

My Department is currently developing a bus-based rapid transit system for Belfast. The pilot Belfast Rapid Transit network will link East Belfast, West Belfast and Titanic Quarter with and through the city centre and present a further enhancement of public transport.

Public Transport Serving the North Antrim Area

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to access to public transport serving the North Antrim constituency, to detail (i) the average distance from a residential property to the nearest bus stop; and the average frequency of services; and (ii) the average distance from a residential property to the nearest train station; and the average frequency of services.

(AQW 8393/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink have advised me that the information requested is not currently available and it would involve disproportionate cost for them to deliver relevant answers to the questions posed.

My staff in Transport Policy Division also advise that they do not keep the relevant information and the same issue of disproportionate cost applies within the Department. In the future arrangements to be put in place as a result of Public Transport Reform and relevant EU regulations may require this information to be formulated.

A5 Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the length of each section of the A5 that is due to be upgraded as announced on 14 February 2012.

(AQW 8412/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is expected that the length of new offline dual carriageway between New Buildings and Strabane will be approximately 14km and approximately 21km between Omagh and Ballygawley. A

1.5km single carriageway bypass of New Buildings is also proposed. Final decisions on proposed works will depend on the outcome of the Public Inquiry process.

Expansion of the Rail Network

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the barriers, other than financial, to expanding the rail network to counties such as Fermanagh and Tyrone.

(AQW 8422/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Neither Northern Ireland Railways nor my Department has carried out studies to determine the extent of engineering works or land acquisition necessary to extend the rail network into Counties Fermanagh and Tyrone. There are no plans to carry out such studies. My current priority with regards to investment in railways remains to maintain, improve and upgrade the existing network.

Staff Reductions in the North-West Rail Stations

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether, in advance of intended staff reductions on the north-west rail stations, Translink has conducted a risk analysis to assess the enhanced security issues resulting from fewer staff on duty; and to outline the reasons for his position on this matter.

(AQW 8510/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In relation to staffing levels I would refer you to the answer to AQW 8511/11-15.

A risk analysis is an operational matter for Translink who have advised me that they have conducted and continue to review risk assessments relating to all stations network-wide. A live 'Change Management' process has been developed for Waterside and Coleraine stations. This process does consider risk analysis and is designed to ensure compliance with both internal and external procedures/legislation. I will, of course, expect Translink to remain in contact with the PSNI about all relevant matters impacting on its operations.

Staff Levels at Ballymena Railway Station

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the proposed changes by Translink, what are the anticipated weekend staff levels at Ballymena Railway Station.

(AQW 8512/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Staffing levels are an operational matter for Translink who have advised me that the staffed opening hours of Ballymena Railway Station remain unchanged. The Station is staffed from 06:00 to 22:30 hours Monday to Saturday and is unstaffed on Sundays.

Draft Active Travel Strategy

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development why the Draft Active Travel Strategy contains an aspiration to increase the percentage of cycle trips rather than a target.

(AQW 8514/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The draft Active Travel Strategy 'Building an Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland' aims to build upon the many programmes and initiatives that have already been successful – both in Northern Ireland and elsewhere. I want the Strategy, when agreed, to provide the foundations, over the longer term, to build a travel culture in which walking and cycling are seen as the natural choice for most of the journeys most of us make. Recognising that the proportion of trips made by bicycle in Great Britain is much higher than in Northern Ireland and that this is set to increase, I wanted the draft Strategy to capture the aspiration to rise to a comparable level over around ten years.

The public consultation on the draft Strategy ends on 9th March 2012. Following this and informed by the views expressed, we will consider whether a specific target is required. My Department will also

draw up a detailed action plan to coordinate and monitor delivery and the impact of the actions through the current budget period, 2012 – 2015.

2020 Cycle Targets

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for his estimate of the percentage of cycle trips that should be made by 2020.

(AQW 8515/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The 'Travel Survey for Northern Ireland 2008 – 10' reveals that around 1% of all journeys undertaken in Northern Ireland are by bicycle and around 17% are walked. These figures compare to around 71% of all journeys taken by private car.

Increasing the number of journeys walked or cycled requires a reduction in the number of journeys taken by other modes – particularly the private car. A change in travel behaviour at the personal level is required if the walking and cycling percentages are to be increased and the number of journeys taken by car reduced.

Meeting the aspirational targets set out in the draft Active Travel Strategy (currently out to public consultation) should result in a doubling or tripling of the percentage of cycle trips made in Northern Ireland by 2020. This can be achieved if we all make a modest reduction in the number of journeys we take by the private car. The purpose of this Strategy, when agreed, is to build a travel culture in which walking and cycling are seen as the natural choice for most of the journeys most of us make.

Structural Maintenance of the Roads Network

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the total level of funding allocated for structural maintenance of the roads network in the (a) 2012-2013; and (b) 2013-2014 financial years; and (ii) whether he intends to allocate additional funding in the (a) 2012-2013; and (b) 2013-2014 financial years.

(AQW 8823/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is estimated that the current operational budget of my Department's Roads Service will provide an initial allocation for structural maintenance of £47.5 million during 2012/13 and £52 million during 2013/14.

The maintenance of road and footway surfaces and their underlying structure continues to be a high priority for Roads Service. However, there are many demands on the resources available and the road maintenance programme must therefore compete for funding along with the many other Departmental spending programmes.

Of course, it is always the case that additional maintenance work could be completed if more funding was made available. Roads Service will, therefore, continue to make strong bids for additional structural maintenance funds and, in the meantime, make the best use of available resources to develop and maintain the road network.

Department for Social Development

Housing Stock

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has any plans to amend existing legislation to allow capital spending by the Housing Executive on multi-element improvements to its housing stock.

(AQW 8115/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The Housing Executive does not require any change in legislation to carry out improvement work to their own stock. However, their Multi-Element

Improvement (MEI) Programme was suspended in 2007/08 initially due to a lack of funding brought about by the collapse of the land and property market. Since then however, Savills, a leading UK based residential consultant, have highlighted that such MEI works were inefficient and did not represent value for money for the public purse.

I remain committed to improving the homes of those 6,000 Housing Executive tenants who were previously on a MEI programme and one such alternative that is already being piloted is through Stock Transfer from Housing Executive to Housing Association ownership, such as the scheme in Rinnmore, Londonderry. In this 55 homes have now transferred to a local Housing Association who is already undertaking the necessary improvement work from their own reserves and it is estimated this scheme alone will save the public purse up to £2.5m. However it was only approved after tenants voted overwhelmingly in favour of it and I am now exploring the potential for this in other areas where homes need significant improvement.

Department Spend on Conferences, Away-days and Team Building Exercises

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department has spent on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8188/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Details of expenditure on conferences, away-days and team building exercises in each of the last three years are provided in the table below:

2009-10	2010-11	2011-12 to date
77,618	68,490	31,328

Outstanding Compensation Claims

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number; and (ii) the cost of outstanding compensation claims, in relation to the severe weather conditions in the winter of 2010/11, that his Department is currently assessing, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 8213/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive cannot provide the information in the format requested as they do not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, the table below gives details of the outstanding claims relating to the severe winter weather conditions of 2010/11 by Housing Executive district office area.

District Office	O/S Claims	Amount Claimed*
Belfast East	2	£525
Belfast South	2	£1,500
Belfast North	2	£1,700
Belfast Shankill	16	£7,090
Newtownards	1	£1,600
Lisburn	3	£5,355
Downpatrick	2	£9,200
Newry	7	£17,105
Armagh	2	£430
Lurgan/Brownlow	1	£500

District Office	O/S Claims	Amount Claimed *
Dungannon	1	-
Fermanagh	4	£3,010
Ballymena	2	£2,000
Newtownabbey 1	1	-
Ballycastle	1	£1,060
Coleraine	1	£500
Waterloo Place	2	£2,400
Collon Terrace	2	£2,100
Limavady	6	£2,540
Strabane	4	£5,155
Total	62	£63,770

* The amounts claimed are those indicated by the claimant.

With regard to Housing Associations, there are two claims outstanding in relation to the severe weather conditions in the winter of 2010/11. Both are in the East Belfast constituency and total £10,832.

The Information provided is an Official Statistic. The Production and dissemination of all such Statistics is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Repairs to the Annadale Flats, South Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been spent on repairs to the Annadale Flats, South Belfast, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8218/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has spent over £800,000 on improvements to the Annadale Flats over the last three years. This includes a kitchen replacement scheme that was carried out in 2011 at an estimated cost of £502,000 for 113 properties, and response maintenance repairs totalling £299,276.21 including over £23,000 on roof repairs. The table below gives a breakdown by year of the response maintenance repairs.

Year	All Repairs
01/01/09 – 31/12/09	£89,336.10
01/01/10 – 31/12/10	£128,126.29
01/01/11 – 31/12/11	£81,813.82
Total	£299,276.21

Repairs to the Roofs of the Annadale Flats, South Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been spent on repairs to the roofs of the Annadale Flats, South Belfast, to make the them watertight.

(AQW 8219/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has spent £23,320.84 on repairs to the roofs of the Annadale Flats in the last three years. They are currently developing a programme for replacing the roofs of the flats commencing in the 2012/13 financial year, dependent on the availability of funding.

People Recruited to the Housing Executive

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development for each of the last ten years, to detail the (i) number; and (ii) percentage of people recruited to the Housing Executive from a (i) Protestant; (ii) Roman Catholic; and (iii) non-determined religious background.

(AQW 8221/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the figures in relation to the religious composition of staff recruited to the Housing Executive in the last ten years.

Year	Total Recruited	Protestant		Roman Catholic		Non Determined	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
2002	398	153	38.4	213	53.5	32	8.0
2003	417	162	38.8	207	49.6	48	11.5
2004	320	117	36.6	168	52.5	35	10.9
2005	245	101	41.2	120	49.0	24	9.8
2006	243	82	33.7	138	56.8	23	9.5
2007	294	101	34.3	164	55.8	29	9.9
2008	127	52	40.9	51	40.2	24	18.9
2009	178	60	33.7	95	53.4	23	12.9
2010	98	47	48.0	40	40.8	11	11.2
2011	114	57	50.0	37	32.5	20	17.5

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(Note: Percentage totals for each year may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding's.)

Laganbank Quarter Development Proposals

Mr Givan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail his Department's involvement with the Laganbank Quarter development proposals.

(AQW 8252/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has worked closely with Lisburn City Council over the past few years to prepare the supporting documentation required to progress the Laganbank Quarter Development Scheme. This work included an archaeology and heritage study, a flood risk analysis, the Lisburn City Centre masterplan and a detailed transport study. The next stage of the process is to prepare a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the proposed Development Scheme as required by legislation. My Department will appoint consultants to carry out the required assessment and should be in a position to publish a draft development scheme early next year.

Smithfield Square Development Proposals

Mr Givan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail his Department's involvement with the Smithfield Square development proposals.

(AQW 8253/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department worked closely with Lisburn City Council to develop a masterplan for the city centre, which was published in September 2010. The masterplan identified the Smithfield car park as a high priority development opportunity site. My Department appointed consultants in July 2010 to assist with the process of delivering the regeneration of this key site and, in conjunction with the Department for Regional Development, is currently in the process of finalising a development brief and initiating a procurement exercise to seek a 'preferred developer'. I anticipate that the competition will commence in early spring 2012 and I am hopeful that, subject to the response from the private sector, a preferred developer will be appointed by late summer 2012.

Dromore Revitalisation Programme

Mr Givan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the Dromore Revitalisation Programme in the Lagan Valley area.

(AQW 8254/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has been working with Banbridge District Council on a proposed revitalisation scheme for Dromore town centre. Banbridge District Council is currently engaging with local traders to draw up an action plan that will be submitted to my Department for consideration. The details of any scheme in Dromore will be determined by the contents of that action plan. When an agreed action plan is received, my Department will undertake an appraisal of the project.

Assistance with Repairs and Extension Grants from the Housing Executive

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development how many of the 11,391 applications that the Housing Executive received for assistance with repairs and extension grants were successful in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8265/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The number of formal applications approved in the last three financial years were as follows:-

2008/09	6,087
2009/10	3,034
2010/11	3,103

It is important to note that following receipt of a formal application the Housing Executive must approve or refuse the application within six months. Therefore, the number of approvals issued each year will not relate directly to the number of formal applications received in that year.

Vandalism in the West Belfast Area

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development how much the Housing Executive has spent as a result of vandalism in the West Belfast area in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8266/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details the total spent by the Housing Executive as a result of vandalism in West Belfast in each of the last three years.

Year	Cost
2008/09	£18,864.31
2009/10	£28,709.56
2010/11	£38,804.85

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Tenant with a History of Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development, when a tenant with a history of anti-social behaviour moves into a new community, to detail the duty of care that the Housing Executive and Housing Associations have to (i) the community; and (ii) the new tenant with a history of anti-social behaviour.

(AQW 8267/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In relation to anti-social behaviour, neither the Housing Executive nor registered housing associations have any statutory duty of care to individual tenants or to the wider community. However, all social landlords in Northern Ireland recognise that every individual is entitled to live in peace within their neighbourhood, and are committed to tackling anti-social behaviour.

The Housing Executive has statutory power to treat applicants as ineligible for social housing if they have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour.

Since 2003, all new tenancies of social housing have been allocated on an introductory basis for 12 months. Where a new Housing Executive tenant appears to have a particular vulnerability, the Executive can arrange for support services to help the tenant to sustain their tenancy. In cases where an introductory tenant proves to be unsuitable to hold a tenancy of social housing, landlords can repossess the tenancy with a minimum of delay during the 12 month period.

The Housing (Amendment) Act 2011 made new provision which allows the Housing Executive and housing associations to withhold consent to a tenancy exchange in cases where a court order relating to anti-social behaviour is in force. Similarly, policy guidance operated by the Housing Executive and housing associations currently stipulates that a tenant applying for a transfer should not be guilty of any serious breach of tenancy conditions, including unacceptable behaviour. I will be seeking to strengthen the guidance as part of the new Housing Strategy.

Dereliction of the North and West areas of Belfast City Centre

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development how he intends to address the dereliction of the North and West areas of Belfast City Centre, given the failings of the North West Quarter Masterplan.

(AQW 8273/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department through the North West Quarter Part 1 (NWQ1) masterplan proposed a retail-led approach to the regeneration of the area focused on the redevelopment of Castlecourt. The developer selection process that we carried out in 2005/06 resulted in the selection of the Royal Exchange retail-led scheme, located in the North East Quarter of the city centre, as the next major scheme to follow Victoria Square ahead of Castlecourt. Given the ongoing downturn in the retail market it is doubtful whether the NWQ1 masterplan will be implemented in the foreseeable future. In view of this my department will give further consideration to the regeneration needs of the NWQ1 area. In the meantime the NWQ1 masterplan continues to be my department's adopted policy for the area.

Improvements to Housing in the Harbour Area of Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding has been allocated to improve housing in the Harbour area of Bangor.

(AQW 8280/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are no Housing Executive owned properties within the Harbour Ward Bangor and therefore no expenditure has been incurred on Planned or Response Maintenance in the area. The Housing Executive has advised that there has been no Private Sector Grants expenditure in the Harbour Ward in the past financial year and there have been no social housing newbuild schemes by Housing Associations within the Ward over the past year.

Co-ownership Scheme

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development how many properties have been purchased through the Co-Ownership scheme in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 8308/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not readily available in the format requested. The table below details the number of homes purchased under the Co-Ownership Scheme in each of the last financial years, broken down by Council area.

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Derry City Council	30	67	7	16	12
Limavady Borough Council	3	8	1	6	8
Coleraine Borough Council	10	19	4	7	1
Ballymoney Borough Council	3	7	4	8	9
Moyle District Council	0	0	1	2	1
Larne Borough Council	7	32	9	1	2
Ballymena Borough Council	11	32	9	11	19
Magherafelt District Council	0	10	0	2	3
Cookstown District Council	2	6	3	5	8
Strabane District Council	0	12	5	6	3
Omagh District Council	2	6	1	2	2
Fermanagh District Council	2	8	5	4	3
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	1	7	2	6	8
Craigavon Borough Council	5	61	33	49	54
Armagh City and District Council	0	3	3	0	1
Newry and Mourne District Council	0	10	5	8	11
Banbridge District Council	5	28	13	13	6
Down District Council	2	23	7	2	13
Lisburn City Council	27	64	45	83	90

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Antrim Borough Council	7	28	9	19	17
Newtownabbey Borough Council	38	91	33	42	40
Carrickfergus Borough Council	22	45	9	6	11
North Down Borough Council	47	106	29	33	31
Ards Borough Council	42	74	14	21	26
Castlereagh Borough Council	12	32	13	23	31
Belfast City Council	47	156	61	86	82
Total	325	935	325	461	492

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Co-ownership Scheme

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development how many (i) first-time buyers; and (ii) second-time buyers have purchased a property through the Co-Ownership scheme in each of the last five years. **(AQW 8309/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: Due to the exceptional level of demand experienced by the Co-Ownership Scheme during a period of constrained resources, the scheme was restricted to first-time buyers only from the 2008/09 financial year until the latter half of the current financial year. Therefore, those assisted in the 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11 financial years were all first-time buyers.

The table below details the number of (i) first-time buyers and (ii) non first-time buyers who purchased a home through the Co-Ownership Scheme in each of the last five years.

Year	First-Time Buyer	Non First-Time Buyer	Total
2006/07	309	16	325
2007/08	887	48	935
2008/09	325	0	325
2009/10	461	0	461
2010/11	492	0	492

People Living in Poverty

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development, in each year between 2001 and 2011, to detail, for each constituency, the percentage of (i) people living in income poverty; (ii) children living in poverty; and (iii) children living in severe child poverty. **(AQW 8322/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: During the years between 2002-03 and 2009-10 the percentage of people living below the relative income poverty line for each Westminster Parliamentary Constituency is presented in Table 1, based on three year averages. The percentage of children living below the relative income poverty line for each Westminster Parliamentary Constituency is presented in Table 2, based on four

year averages. The results are produced using the Family Resources Survey datasets for Northern Ireland, and the Households Below Average Income datasets for Northern Ireland.

Severe child poverty results for Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies are not available due to small sample sizes.

TABLE 1:**PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS IN RELATIVE LOW INCOME POVERTY**

Westminster Parliamentary Constituency	2007-08 to 2009-10	2006-07 to 2008-09	2005-06 to 2007-08	2004-05 to 2006-07	2003-04 to 2005-06	2002-03 to 2004-05
Belfast East	17	16	17	12	..	..
Belfast North	27	24	27	25	24	22
Belfast South	14	14	11	12	..	..
Belfast West	31	30	26	24	20	25
East Antrim	25	22	24	22	21	17
East Londonderry	26	24	19	19	21	24
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	28	27	28	28	29	25
Foyle	32	27	27	26	27	26
Lagan Valley	15	13	12	11	10	9
Mid Ulster	27	26	23	24	26	31
Newry and Armagh	18	17	18	21	20	18
North Antrim	19	21	24	22	24	20
North Down	16	16	18	17	16	14
South Antrim	21	15	16	15	16	16
South Down	24	20	20	20	20	20
Strangford	11	10	14	21	26	25
Upper Bann	21	23	20	20	15	17
West Tyrone	23	23	20	21	27	31
Northern Ireland	22	20	20	21	21	21

TABLE 2:**PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN RELATIVE LOW INCOME POVERTY**

Westminster Parliamentary Constituency	2006-07 to 2009-10	2005-06 to 2008-09	2004-05 to 2007-08	2003-04 to 2006-07	2002-03 to 2005-06
Belfast East	..	..	..	..	..
Belfast North	29	26	29	25	28
Belfast South	..	..	..	..	..

Westminster Parliamentary Constituency	2006-07 to 2009-10	2005-06 to 2008-09	2004-05 to 2007-08	2003-04 to 2006-07	2002-03 to 2005-06
Belfast West	40	34	33	30	29
East Antrim	..	29	26	..	..
East Londonderry	29	23	23	27	27
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	32	33	35	34	32
Foyle	40	40	37	35	37
Lagan Valley	..	..	..	..	..
Mid Ulster	31	31	28	30	31
Newry and Armagh	27	25	24	25	24
North Antrim	..	21	19	25	22
North Down	..	..	..	..	..
South Antrim	..	..	..	19	20
South Down	23	24	25	..	24
Strangford	..	..	26	32	32
Upper Bann	24	21	22	23	23
West Tyrone	26	25	20	..	27
Northern Ireland	25	24	24	25	26

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Neighbourhood Renewal Areas

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 5538/11-15, to provide a breakdown of the £140 million spend on Neighbourhood Renewal areas in each of the last seven years, including (i) the level of funding allocated to each Neighbourhood Renewal area; (ii) to where the funding was allocated; and (iii) for what purpose.

(AQW 8324/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) As advised in the response to AQW 5538/11-15, the total Neighbourhood Renewal expenditure from 2004/05 to 2010/11 was £123.73m. The breakdown of this by Neighbourhood Renewal Area for the 7 years is shown below.

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Outer West Belfast - Colin	241,479	275,836	1,004,489	935,276	1,115,511	1,084,100	1,095,288	5,751,979
Upper Ardoyne	6,049	47,036	79,212	218,865	119,024	468,588	548,693	1,487,466
Ligoniel	0	0	0	34,560	271	312,106	56,013	402,950
Greater Shankill	6,869	386,107	1,385,686	1,251,880	1,195,828	1,676,223	978,474	6,881,067
Inner East Belfast	317,468	581,832	826,145	1,884,673	1,040,484	1,966,852	2,228,363	8,845,817
Outer West Belfast - Lenadoon	33,337	161,855	602,344	437,633	272,177	261,476	352,560	2,121,383
Upper Springfield/ Whiterock	169,688	479,245	976,731	1,536,123	1,288,344	1,081,652	969,696	6,501,479
South West Belfast		161,825	418,228	590,949	675,607	719,745	701,796	3,268,149
Inner North Belfast	15,619	451,120	878,742	1,119,588	5,525,671	1,853,700	978,217	10,822,657
Inner South Belfast		119,833	249,077	430,054	563,103	1,142,337	509,028	3,013,432
Lower Falls/Clonard	229,631	617,608	1,279,854	1,273,909	1,212,798	2,781,952	1,702,375	9,098,127
Tullycarnet	6,382	73,165	91,545	101,414	539,241	141,228	39,591	992,565
Crumlin/Ardoyne	111,105	529,937	747,976	713,262	564,245	184,128	748,425	3,599,079
Rathcoole	0	0	0	36,999	54,281	68,256	52,413	211,948
Andersonstown	0	672	0	28,222	237,913	543,301	182,766	992,874
Suffolk	0	2,023	0	24,582	32,582	34,190	29,748	123,126
Triax	38,359	673,918	1,281,477	1,128,934	823,695	1,151,964	979,092	6,077,439
Outer North	14,175	490,207	831,721	874,855	661,368	1,145,697	581,465	4,599,489

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Outer West	10,615	301,699	645,510	773,323	428,727	467,639	227,825	2,855,339
Strabane	0	149,633	350,176	165,369	430,590	452,265	382,848	1,930,882
Waterside	6,885	166,298	603,424	626,508	658,131	901,287	919,231	3,881,765
Limavady	0	7,401	95,077	233,946	117,807	181,351	259,421	895,004
Strathfoyle	0	4,343	18,775	0	0	0	16,900	40,018
Coleraine East (Ballysally)	50,000	41,150	161,389	225,382	614,234	100,093	99,931	1,292,180
Coleraine West (Churchlands)	15,210	60,195	107,504	325,801	5,766	13,176	32,590	560,241
Ballyclare	1,895	75,375	353,455	76,368	18,561	119,616	28,378	673,649
Downpatrick	957	224	77,390	137,552	363,473	102,712	65,845	748,154
Newry	11,266	30,408	400,733	942,083	357,328	446,806	721,941	2,910,564
Bangor	29,855	252,429	99,172	131,188	149,495	260,175	169,987	1,092,302
Armagh	0	120,412	350,705	656,685	207,688	387,062	302,872	2,025,424
Omagh	0	31,072	65,111	46,616	264,638	264,019	365,268	1,036,724
Lurgan	0	52,787	5,805	135,189	672,982	1,180,435	346,947	2,394,144
Portadown	0	30,425	93,582	202,386	159,572	67,855	53,271	607,091
Ballymena	299,719	350,655	797,815	763,343	377,008	312,904	407,367	3,308,813
Brownlow	0	0	0	6,917	386,303	642,358	354,773	1,390,351
Coalisland	0	0	0	6,588	88,818	269,865	114,726	479,997
Enniskillen	0	0	0	16,827	63,351	107,784	253,491	441,452

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Ballymoney - Newhill	0	0	0	0	0	0	23,960	23,960
Dungannon	82,000	0	125,601	83,844	192,303	209,788	201,495	895,032
Multiple Areas	1,219,422	1,152,868	1,732,808	3,906,372	3,651,441	4,593,386	3,194,798	19,451,094
Total	2,917,984	7,879,595	16,737,261	22,084,068	25,130,359	27,698,069	21,277,869	123,725,204

(ii) Owing to technical difficulties, information for this part of the question cannot be provided in the required format; however, a copy will be placed in the Assembly Library.

(iii) To tackle the complex, multi-dimensional nature of deprivation in an integrated way, Neighbourhood Renewal encompasses four interlinking strategic objectives:

Community Renewal – to develop confident communities that are able and committed to improving the quality of life in the most deprived neighbourhoods;

Economic Renewal – to develop economic activity in the most deprived neighbourhoods and connect them to the wider urban economy;

Social Renewal – to improve social conditions for the people who live in the most deprived neighbourhoods through better co-ordinated public services and the creation of safer environments; and

Physical Renewal – to help create attractive, safe, sustainable environments in the most deprived areas.

In line with these objectives, the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund has been allocated to provide services where a need has been highlighted and prioritised within individual Neighbourhood Action Plans.

Social Housing Units

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development how many social housing units will be completed in each council area, in each of the next three years.

(AQW 8332/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Social Housing Development Programme for 2012-15 is currently being finalised. Once approved, it will be published on the Housing Executive website. (www.nihe.gov.uk) and I will advise the member in due course.

Social Housing

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current level of unmet need for social housing in each council area; and the projected need in each of the next three years.

(AQW 8333/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The current level of housing need in each council area as currently assessed by the Housing Executive is attached.

In respect of meeting that need, the Social Housing Development Programme for the next 3 years has just recently been submitted to me and I am now considering it. We will publish the final programme once it has been formally approved.

ANNEX A

WAITING LIST & SHDP BY COUNCIL AREA

	Non Housing Stress @ 31/3/11	Housing Stress (30+ points) @ 31/3/11
Belfast City Council	4235	5927
Antrim Borough Council	500	477
Moyle District Council	169	165
Ballymena Borough Council	640	880
Ballymoney Borough Council	336	160
Carrickfergus Borough Council	477	497
Coleraine Borough Council	659	638
Larne Borough Council	373	177
Newtownabbey Borough Council	803	940
Armagh City and District Council	500	302
Banbridge District Council	384	293
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	407	615
Fermanagh District Council	507	346
Craigavon Borough Council	1195	727
Newry and Mourne District Council	867	960
North Down Borough Council	924	960
Castlereagh Borough Council	730	732

	Non Housing Stress @ 31/3/11	Housing Stress (30+ points) @ 31/3/11
Down District Council	575	748
Lisburn City Council	1032	1563
Ards Borough Council	719	1092
Cookstown District Council	227	180
Derry City Council	1228	1765
Limavady Borough Council	284	188
Magherafelt District Council	268	244
Omagh District Council	462	160
Strabane District Council	408	230
Grand Total	18909	20966
Outside NI	16	1
Overall Total	39,892	

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Green New Deal

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 7523/11-15, whether the cost benefit analysis of the Green New Deal will include the direct and associated benefits of (i) job creation for the construction industry; (ii) the economy wide multiplier effect, created through lower levels of imported energy consumption; and (iii) a reduction in costs to the Health Service due to lower levels of fuel poverty.

(AQW 8353/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The economic appraisal for the £12m that has been set aside over the next three years for a Green New Deal solution has been developed in accordance with the guidance in the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation (NIGEAE). The criteria being used for the options within the economic appraisal is to determine the most cost effective way of spending the £12m, ensuring that the maximum benefit is realised from the expenditure. This means that options are assessed on the basis of what they propose to deliver in the context of improving energy efficiency in domestic properties, any associated benefits or costs, wider economic benefits in relation to private sector expenditure, direct job creation/income and multiplier effects. It also assesses any associated risks around the potential to deliver the proposal including where those risks may lie.

Equality Impact Assessments

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department has spent on (i) Equality Impact Assessments; and (ii) consultations in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8365/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

(i) Equality Impact Assessments

2009/2010	£6857.14
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2010/2011	-
2011/2012	£4938.50

(ii) Consultations

2009/2010	£52777.85
2010/2011	£17694.67
2011/2012	£2596.40

Some EQIAs/consultations have been carried out by the Department where the cost cannot be segregated from the overall cost of the consultancy assignment or were carried out in house as part of normal business and disseminated through the internet. Therefore these costs have not been included in the figures given above.

Housing Executive: Tenants With Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the effectiveness of the anti-social powers which guide the Housing Executive in dealing with tenants with anti-social behaviour, given the requirement for tenants to provide evidence.

(AQW 8366/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive's statutory powers for dealing with anti-social behaviour include power to apply to the court for an order for possession. The court will not grant such an order unless it is satisfied that it would be reasonable to make the order and that there are statutory grounds for making it. Where an application is made on the grounds that the tenant has been guilty of conduct causing nuisance or annoyance to another tenant, it would be reasonable to expect the tenant who has suffered the nuisance or annoyance to provide evidence of this. It is however accepted that there may be circumstances where a tenant is reluctant to give evidence in court. The Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 therefore made provision for the court to make an order for possession where a tenant has been guilty of conduct causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance to a person visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in the locality. This means that any person who has witnessed the anti-social behaviour, such as a police officer or a member of the Housing Executive's staff, may give evidence that can be accepted by the court.

I am not fully satisfied with the range of powers available to the Housing Executive to deal with anti-social behaviour and will be including further proposals within the new Housing Strategy.

Town Centre Masterplans

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to list the dates and venues of the departmental sponsored town centre focused conferences, roadshows and meetings.

(AQW 8369/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development is responsible for the implementation of programmes which target social need and seek to address the social, economic and physical regeneration of cities, towns and villages in Northern Ireland. To this end the Department, in partnership with local Councils, develops town centre masterplans, which will ensure the development of a cohesive and sustainable regeneration strategy. While the town centre masterplans are developed in partnership with the councils, responsibility for associated events normally lies with the local council. However, in the case of the Bangor Town Centre Masterplan the Department provided a small amount of funding to facilitate the following events:

Date	Venue	Queen's Parade Community Engagement Partnership Meetings.
13.05.10	Marine Court Hotel	
02.06.10	Marine Court Hotel	
19.10.10	Marine Court Hotel	
21.10.11	Marine Court Hotel	

Homeless Single Young Men

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development how many single young men, aged between 18 and 30, are registered as homeless in each constituency.

(AQW 8382/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency, nor can they disaggregate their figures. However the table below shows the number of men in the age range 18-25 and 26-59 years awarded Full Duty Applicant Status, by Housing Executive District Office for the year 2010-11.

District Office	18-25 year old men awarded Full Duty Applicant	26-59 year old men awarded Full Duty Applicant
Belfast (West)	26	113
Belfast 2 (East)	27	46
Belfast 4 (North)	45	112
Belfast 5 (Shankill)	18	26
Belfast 7 (South)	49	93
Homeless Services Unit	0	54
Bangor	23	52
Castlereagh	54	65
Newtownards	24	46
Lisburn	34	91
Dairyfarm (Poleglass)	15	31
Downpatrick	13	56
Armagh	4	16
Newry	8	63
Banbridge	10	21
Lurgan / Brownlow	4	28
Portadown	4	18
Dungannon	13	46
Fermanagh	7	28
Ballymena	29	58
Antrim	23	74

District Office	18-25 year old men awarded Full Duty Applicant	26-59 year old men awarded Full Duty Applicant
Newtownabbey 1	8	29
Newtownabbey 2	12	30
Carrickfergus	2	30
Larne	11	24
Ballycastle	2	17
Ballymoney	6	15
Coleraine	20	46
Waterloo Place	12	43
Waterside	11	30
Collon Terrace	17	53
Limavady	15	43
Magherafelt	7	16
Strabane	2	18
Omagh	6	23
Cookstown	3	18

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Social Housing

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his Department's policy for addressing the high volume of single young men, aged between 18 and 30, who cannot access social housing.

(AQW 8383/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Social housing cannot be the only answer to the housing needs of single young men, just as it cannot be the only answer to each of the 40,000 applicants on the waiting list.

We clearly need to find a more holistic and sustainable solution to housing need for all who need a home. The forthcoming welfare reform changes will have a particular impact on a wide range of younger people and we are undertaking some research at the minute to identify the scale of that impact.

In the meantime I plan to bring forward a new housing strategy that will seek to create more choice, opportunity and provide access to a wider range of people to whom social housing cannot meet their needs and this will be announced in the coming months.

Street Trading Licences

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will consider amending the law to permit the transfer of established street trading licences, other than temporary licences, to allow retiring traders to sell their businesses or pass them on to family members.

(AQW 8436/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The overall purpose of the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 is to enable district councils to regulate street trading in their areas in such a way as to prevent undue nuisance, interference and inconvenience to other persons or vehicles. Permitting the transfer of licences between street traders would undermine district councils' fundamental autonomy not only in deciding which areas to designate as suitable for trading pitches but also to whom and for what period licences should be granted. Therefore I am of the opinion that it would be inappropriate to consider such an amendment to the legislation.

2010 Craigavon Integrated Development Framework

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the issuing of development briefs for town centre sites in Lurgan and Portadown, consistent with the identified priority sites for regeneration in the 2010 Craigavon Integrated Development Framework.

(AQW 8455/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has been working closely with Craigavon Borough Council to take forward the Castle Lane development site in Lurgan and the Portadown Gateway sites. DSD appointed consultants in August 2010 to assist with the regeneration of these key sites and it is expected that a development brief will issue for the Castle Lane site in Lurgan later this year. It has also been agreed that further work is required on infrastructure improvements in Portadown before any development brief can be issued for the Portadown Gateway sites.

DSD, along with Craigavon Borough Council, are exploring how to deliver the necessary infrastructure improvements to enable regeneration to take place in the future in Portadown.

Regeneration Projects

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of development briefs issued to date by his Department for regeneration projects, including the location and status of each project.

(AQW 8456/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below lists the location and current status of development briefs for regeneration projects issued by my Department since April 2009.

Project location	Current status
Mall West, Armagh	Evaluation process to appoint preferred developer ongoing.
Curran Street/Obins Street, Portadown	Unable to appoint preferred developer. Negotiations to sell the site for social housing are ongoing.
232 Newtownards Road, Belfast	No proposals received. Site currently being maintained by the Department and will be held pending an improvement in market conditions.
294-296 Crumlin Road, Belfast	No proposals received. Site currently being maintained by the Department and will be held pending an improvement in market conditions.
130-138 Castlereagh St & 60-64 Clondeboye St, Belfast	No proposals received. Site currently being maintained by the Department and will be held pending an improvement in market conditions.
141-145 Shankill Road, Belfast	Deadline for proposals was noon 23 February 2012.

Development Briefs for Town Centres

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many development briefs for town centres his Department intends to publish between now and the next local government election; and (ii) the location of each project.

(AQW 8457/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Development briefs for town centres that are programmed for publication between now and the next local government election are set out in the following table:

Town	Location
Antrim	Central Car Park
	Railway Street/Church Street
Ballymena	Bridge Street
Craigavon	Central Craigavon Development Site
Downpatrick	The Grove, Market Street
Dungannon	Scotch Street
Lisburn	Antrim Street Car Park
	Smithfield Car Park
Lurgan	Castle Lane Car Park
Omagh	Dublin Road/Kelvin Avenue
Portrush	Castle Erin
Strabane	Canal Street/Dock Street

This future programme is dependent on budget and the availability of resources. Development briefs for other sites may emerge as my Department works with district councils and other stakeholders to bring forward opportunities for development that have been identified in Town Centre Masterplans.

Development Briefs for Town Centres

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has decided not to progress some development briefs for town centres because it intends to pass responsibility for them to the new super councils post 2015.

(AQW 8458/11-15)

Mr McCausland: No development briefs have been held back by my Department because it is intended that responsibility for them will pass to the new enlarged local authorities proposed to be created in 2015 under the review of Public Administration.

Girdwood Site

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Girdwood site as a catalyst for regeneration of North Belfast.

(AQW 8484/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department has always recognised the value and importance of the Girdwood site in the wider context of North Belfast and is supportive of any approach to develop Girdwood in a manner that will bring benefit to and have the support of the whole community. My department is currently reviewing the implementation of the draft masterplan for the Girdwood site and former Crumlin

Road Gaol. Following consultation with OFMDFM and other stakeholders I aim to announce the way forward as soon as possible.

Regeneration of the Crumlin Road Courthouse

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the importance of the regeneration of the Crumlin Road Courthouse to the site of the Jail and Courthouse in realising its full potential.

(AQW 8485/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Courthouse is identified as a priority site for development in the draft Crumlin Road to Lower Oldpark Physical Regeneration Concept Masterplan, which is due to be published in its final form in summer 2012. The Masterplan, which was developed at a time when the owner was considering a hotel development at the site, also proposes complementary development at the sites adjacent to the Courthouse for commercial, residential and retail uses.

Girdwood Site

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Girdwood site will be given urgent attention and whether priority will be given to the potential for tourism and social enterprises.

(AQW 8486/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department is currently reviewing the implementation of the draft masterplan for the Girdwood site and former Crumlin Road Gaol. Following consultation with OFMDFM and other stakeholders I aim to announce the way forward as soon as possible. As part of the implementation review my department is considering what priority should be given to all of the uses for the site proposed in the draft masterplan including the potential for tourism and mixed-use development.

ReStore Programme in Carrickfergus

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 1670/11-15, what funding will be made available under the ReStore Programme in Carrickfergus.

(AQW 8487/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The level of grant funding available for a ReStore project or similar type of town centre revitalisation scheme is up to £150,000 for each location or town centre. The exact content of each scheme is decided by a representative group of traders, but projects typically focus on improving the appearance of building frontages and some forms of promotional and marketing activity designed to attract more people into the town centre.

Funding for a scheme in Carrickfergus town centre is currently scheduled in the Department's capital expenditure programme in 2013/14. Any offer of funding for the scheme will be subject to a satisfactory business case and appraisal being completed and necessary approvals being granted. The timing of the scheme is designed to follow after the current public realm works in the town centre have been completed as combining public realm and revitalisation projects in this way has been found to be more effective.

Repairs to the Roofs of the Annadale Flats, South Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been spent on repairs to the roofs of the Annadale Flats, South Belfast, to make them watertight, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8539/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has spent £23,320.84 on repairs to the roofs of the Annadale Flats in the last three years broken down as follows:-

2009	£1,308.65
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2010	£16,540.15
2011	£5,472.04

The Housing Executive is currently developing a programme for replacing the roofs of the flats commencing in the 2012/13 financial year, dependent on the availability of funding.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development how his Department ensures that the payment of Disability Living Allowance for people who suffer from alcohol addiction is used to improve their circumstances and is not counter productive.

(AQW 8583/11-15)

Mr McCausland: One of the purposes of Disability Living Allowance is to promote independence and freedom of choice for disabled people. There is therefore no requirement for recipients to use their benefit for any particular purpose and they are free to choose how they spend it.

Disability Living Allowance is paid as a contribution towards the disability-related extra costs faced by severely disabled people. It is not paid to people because they are addicted to alcohol. Entitlement depends on the effect a person's disability or illness has on their need for personal care and/or their ability to walk rather than their specific disability or diagnosis. Alcoholics who, for example, need a high level of care because of a physical disability resulting from their illness, may qualify for Disability Living Allowance.

Payment to another person can be considered in individual cases where there is evidence that it is necessary to protect the interests of the beneficiary or a dependant for whom the benefit is paid. In such cases my Department can direct that all or part of the benefit be paid to another person on the beneficiary's behalf.

Department for Work and Pensions

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Social Development what discussions he has held with Ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions regarding mitigation measures in respect of Welfare Reform proposals.

(AQW 8595/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have had a number of discussions with Lord Freud, the Department for Work and Pensions Minister for Welfare Reform, and Maria Miller, the Department for Work and Pensions Minister for Disabled People, on a range of issues arising from the Coalition Government's Welfare Reform programme. These discussions have included specific challenges that may arise from the implementation of the proposed Welfare Reform changes in Northern Ireland.

Officials from my Department continue to be involved in discussions on all aspects of the Welfare Reform programme with their counterparts in the Department for Work and Pensions. As part of this ongoing work I have instructed officials to identify those areas where there may be scope for alternative arrangements to be made for the delivery of the various elements of Welfare Reform in Northern Ireland.

Board of the Housing Executive

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Social Development when he is next due to meet with the Board of the Housing Executive; and what items will be for discussion.

(AQW 8598/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am meeting the Board of the Housing Executive on Wednesday 29 February about the fundamental review of the NIHE and my housing priorities.

Housing Waiting Lists in the Strabane and Omagh District Council Areas

Ms Boyle asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the changes in the number of people on the housing waiting lists in the Strabane and Omagh district council areas in the last 12 months.

(AQW 8599/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information contained in the table below gives details of applicants registered on the Waiting List for the areas in question between 30 June 2010 and 30 June 2011, which is the most up to date information available.

	Omagh	Strabane
Applicants on the Waiting List as at 30 June 2010	620	551
Applicants on the Waiting List as at 30 June 2011	598	652
Applicants in Housing Stress (30 or more Points) as at 30 June 2010	149	194
Applicants in Housing Stress (30 or more Points) as at 30 June 2011	159	240

Housing Executive: Vacant Houses

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties in the North Down constituency are vacant.

(AQW 8604/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary constituency. However, the Housing Executive's Bangor District Office, which covers the North Down constituency, has confirmed that they had 59 vacant properties at 31 January 2012. Of these, 13 were categorised as awaiting relet, 10 pending sale/demolition and 36 undergoing repairs or are vacant for decanting purposes.

Social Security (Loss of Benefit) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, following the debate on Monday 20 February 2012, on the Social Security (Loss of Benefit) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011, whether he will undertake a financial assessment of the cost that would have been incurred on an annual basis if the Motion had been defeated and the Department for Work and Pensions had regarded this as a breach of parity.

(AQW 8607/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Statement of Funding Policy provides that social security benefits in Northern Ireland are funded on the same model as in Great Britain, in line with actual entitlement of claimants. It also states that if the Northern Ireland Executive change social security policy to differ from the rest of the United Kingdom, United Kingdom Ministers will need to take a view on whether and how to adjust this funding. It would, therefore, fall to the Westminster Government to consider if parity had been breached and any associated costs if the Motion had been defeated. Ultimately any such consideration has the potential to put the overall funding of £4.9bn at risk.

Divergence from the Loss of Benefit provisions as enacted for Great Britain would also impact on the level of deterrence. The Social Security Agency has successfully delivered reductions in the estimated levels of fraud in the benefit system, with losses through fraud down to 0.5% of expenditure, equivalent to £20.5m. While difficult to place specific values on the impact of deterrence, any variations on the current levels of fraud carry significant financial impact, with for example an increase of 0.1% equating to increased losses of around £4m per year.

Housing Executive's Homelessness Strategy

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development what progress has been made on the Housing Executive's Homelessness Strategy.

(AQW 8610/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Homelessness Strategy 2012/2017 is almost finalised and it is proposed to publish the strategy in early to late Spring 2012.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to extend the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme which ends on 31 March 2012.

(AQW 8833/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme has been very successful and the Housing Executive is no longer taking applications for the scheme. The scheme will close on 31 March and will then be subject to a full evaluation which will determine if the pilot scheme should continue.

Installers engaged in carrying out boiler replacement for applications which have already been approved, should ensure works have been completed and electrical certificate and Building Control certificates are submitted to their local Grant Office before 31 March 2012.

Funding for Advice Services

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development why funding for Advice Services lasts for only one year, whilst funding for Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships covers a period of three years. [R]

(AQW 8981/11-15)

Mr McCausland: DSD supports regional advice services through the Regional Infrastructure Programme which funds Advice NI, Citizens Advice NI and the Law Centre NI. Contracts for funding to these organisations currently cover a one year period. The Department is now putting in place arrangements to fund regional advice services over a period of 2 years and 6 months from 1 October 2012. Funding for frontline advice services is provided through DSD's Community Support Programme (CSP) and delivered through 26 local councils who contribute additional support for frontline advice services from their own resources. DSD funds annual CSP contracts to councils who are responsible for the commissioning of local advice services for their own areas.

Additionally DSD's North West Development Office funds specific posts in advice projects in its Neighbourhood Renewal areas. These projects have been invited to apply for Neighbourhood Renewal funding for the period April 2012 to March 2013 and this funding is added to the one-year CSP allocations administered by the local councils. During this period the Department intends to work with these organisations and with the local councils to explore ways of maximising the benefits from the resources invested in these projects.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Tour of Parliament Buildings

Mr McKay asked the Assembly Commission, in relation to the tour of Parliament Buildings (i) what reference is made to the old Stormont Parliament of 1921-72; and (ii) whether the views that nationalists held of the old Stormont Parliament are referred to, in order to provide a balanced overview.

(AQW 8108/11-15)

Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The aim of the tour of Parliament Buildings is to provide an insight into the day-to-day procedural work of the Assembly. In addition,

the tour aims to highlight the building's architecture and usage. As the duration of the tour is only 45 minutes, it is not possible to cover every aspect of the procedural work, architecture and history of usage. The core script for the tour was approved by the Assembly Commission in 2001. The tour does not make reference to the Old Stormont Parliament (1921-72) beyond its usage of Parliament Buildings.

Video Conferencing

Mr Flanagan asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) the video-conferencing facilities available at Parliament Buildings; (ii) on how many occasions the facilities have been used in each of the last four years; and (iii) what plans are in place to improve the uptake of the facilities to save on unnecessary travel for MLAs and staff.

(AQW 8378/11-15)

Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):

- (i) Video-conferencing facilities are currently available in Room 30 and Room 54. The video-conferencing unit was installed in Room 30 in February 2010 and in Room 54 in October 2010. The video-conferencing facility is only available in Room 30 if a television screen has been requested for use as a permanent television has not been installed in this room.
- (ii) No records have been kept in relation to the use of the videoconferencing in Room 30; however, it has been used by at least two Committees since its installation.

Since 2010 the Education Service has organised ten video conferences involving approximately 25 MLAs and a range of schools.

Date & Location	School(s) involved	Focus of Video Conference
27 April 2010 (Room 30)	Lurgan College (Upper Bann)	A Level Business Studies students had a question and answer session with Members of the Enterprise, Trade and Investment Committee
21 June 2010 (Room 30)	Lumen Christi College (Foyle)	A group of students took part in a video link with Foyle MLAs and had a question and answer session on local issues
23 November 2010 (Room 54)	Sperrin Integrated College and Magherafelt High School (Mid Ulster)	Students had a joint question & answer session with Mid Ulster MLAs
24 November 2010 (Room 54)	Glengormley High School (North Belfast)	A group of students presented 'vertical registration', a new initiative in the school, to Members of the Education Committee
15 December 2010 (Room 54)	Methodist College Belfast (South Belfast)	A Level Politics students had a question and session with South Belfast MLAs

Date & Location	School(s) involved	Focus of Video Conference
21 Feb 2011 (Room 54)	1. Our Lady of Lourdes PS, Belfast 2. Moat Primary School Lisnaskea 3. Knockloughrim PS, Magherafelt 4. St Patrick's PS, Crossmaglen 5. Millennium Integrated PS Carryduff	The Education Minister had a question and answer session with a range of schools concurrently to launch Video Conference Festival week
26 September 2011 (Room 54)	St Malachy's, Castlewellen (south Down)	A question and answer session with Willie Clarke MLA
26 September 2011 (Room 54)	St Macartan's, Loughinisland (south Down)	A question and answer session with C McDevitt MLA
27 September 2011 (Room 54)	St Bernard's Primary School (south Antrim)	A question and answer session with P Girvan MLA
27 September 2011 (Room 54)	St MacNissi's Primary School (south Antrim)	A question and answer session with D McNarry MLA and D Kinahan MLA

(iii) Information on video-conferencing is available to schools on the Education Service section of the Assembly website.

The Education Service is currently developing the use of 'Elluminate'. This is a web conferencing programme where virtual rooms are used to facilitate meetings or classes. It is envisaged that teachers will 'dial in' from their classroom computer to Education Officers.

The video-conferencing facilities are available to Members and have been booked by parties for their use. Records are not kept of this usage.

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for Marian Price	WA 362	Affordable Childcare	WA 234
Visits to Her Majesty's Prisons	WA 361	District Council Community	
Department of the Environment	WA 297	Relations Programme	WA 228
Care of the Historic Government		Former Ballykelly Army Base	WA 233
Estate	WA 322	Forthcoming Trade Missions	WA 232
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Sites and Monuments	WA 297	Abuse Taskforce	WA 234
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Revised Written Answers

Friday 2 March 2012

(AQW 6865/11-15)

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

Since the conclusion of the public inquiry, the PAC has considered all the information before it prior to making its recommendations available to my Department. The Commission's reports have been delivered over a period of time, beginning with the part relating to Strategic Retail Issues (received in January 2009), the part relating to the Strategic Plan Framework (received in March 2011), the reports on Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh Districts (received in July 2011), the reports on North Down District, and Lagan Valley Regional Park (received in September 2011) and finally the reports on Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey Districts (received in January 2012). Further outstanding information was also received from the PAC in February, but the Commission has now confirmed that it has considered all relevant objections and I can confirm that my Department has now received the full complement of reports from the PAC relating to BMAP.

My Department is currently considering the PAC recommendations and preparing the Plan for adoption. I am now assessing how best to manage the report, if parts can be taken forward ahead of full adoption in order to accelerate the issue and help create certainty in these difficult times.

At present it is anticipated that adoption will take place early in 2013.

(AQW 2225/11-15)

The table below shows the number of non-HSC invoices paid within 10 days and the percentage this represented of the total invoices received by each HSC Trust for 2010/11 and the five months ended 31 August 2011.

	2010-11		31 Aug 2011	
	Invoices paid within 10 days	% of total invoices received	Invoices paid within 10 days	% of total invoices received
Belfast	136,696	38.3	73,316	47.4
Northern	51,729	37.6	19,085	36.4
Southern	40,496	38.0	15,562	33.8
South Eastern	51,114	42.2	21,690	40.0
Western	54,032	54.5	23,510	56.2
N.I.A.S.	5,517	36.5	2,519	40.1

It is not possible to provide comparable information for the HSCB, as this could only be done at disproportionate cost.

(AQW 7694/11-15)

The information in respect of my Department is as follows:

DRD POSTS* AT 1 JANUARY 2007 BY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

District Council	Analogous Grade Level						Total
	AA	AO	E01/ E02	S0	DP	Grade 6/7	
Antrim	5	3	10	3	2	0	23
Ards	4	2	3	1	1	0	11
Armagh	11	7	10	3	1	0	32
Ballymena	42	54	91	55	23	5	270
Ballymoney	7	1	4	1	1	0	14
Banbridge	4	1	5	1	1	0	12
Belfast	115	209	406	222	202	86	1240
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Castlereagh	35	25	70	41	19	8	198
Coleraine	29	15	51	23	13	5	136
Cookstown	7	1	4	1	1	0	14
Craigavon	33	19	75	42	23	5	197
Derry	14	31	56	20	12	1	134
Down	30	24	64	26	14	3	161
Dungannon	9	3	8	2	1	0	23
Fermanagh	14	12	28	9	4	1	68
Larne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limavady	5	1	3	1	1	0	11
Lisburn	13	5	10	3	2	0	33
Magherafelt	5	2	6	1	1	0	15
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry & Mourne	13	11	16	4	2	0	46
Newtownabbey	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
North Down	9	1	5	2	1	0	18
Omagh	20	21	54	31	14	5	145
Strabane	9	2	6	1	1	0	19
Unidentified	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Total	434	451	987	494	340	119	2825

* In addition to these figures, there were a further 448 vacancies across all grades in DRD. This figure cannot be split by individual grade or by District Council area.

DRD POSTS AT 1 JANUARY 2012 BY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA**

District Council	Analogous Grade Level								Total
	AA	AO	E02	E01	S0	DP	Grade 7	Grade 6	
Antrim	6	3	0	9	3	2	0	0	23
Ards	5	3	0	5	1	1	0	0	15
Armagh	8	7	0	13	3	2	0	0	33
Ballymena	22	23	7	42	30	13	5	2	144
Ballymoney	5	1	0	6	1	1	0	0	14
Banbridge	5	1	0	6	1	0	0	0	13
Belfast	80	118	77	102	143	119	50	5	694
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Castlereagh	17	26	5	71	48	19	6	2	194
Coleraine	21	22	7	40	21	13	6	1	131
Cookstown	10	3	0	12	2	1	0	0	28
Craigavon	27	25	6	45	28	10	4	1	146
Derry	12	6	4	16	6	5	0	0	49
Down	23	29	8	44	23	14	3	1	145
Dungannon	10	5	0	8	3	1	0	0	27
Fermanagh	13	15	1	16	5	2	0	0	52
Larne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Limavady	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Lisburn	15	2	0	8	2	1	0	0	28
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry & Mourne	12	2	0	8	2	1	0	0	25
Newtownabbey	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
North Down	7	2	0	4	1	1	0	0	15
Omagh	20	36	10	49	34	15	5	1	170
Strabane	7	2	0	6	1	1	0	0	17
Total	327	331	125	512	358	222	79	13	1967

** This includes funded and unfunded vacant posts



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