

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 16 March 2012

Volume 74, No WA1

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Suggested amendments or corrections will be considered by the Editor.
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to arrive not later than two weeks after publication of this report.

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Kinahan, Danny (South Antrim)
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McCann, Fra (West Belfast)
McCann, Ms Jennifer (West Belfast)
McCarthy, Kieran (Strangford)
McCartney, Raymond (Foyle)
McCausland, Nelson (North Belfast)
McClarty, David (East Londonderry)
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McCrea, Ian (Mid Ulster)
McDevitt, Conall (South Belfast)
McDonnell, Dr Alasdair (South Belfast)
McElduff, Barry (West Tyrone)
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McMullan, Oliver (East Antrim)
McNarry, David (Strangford)
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Maginness, Alban (North Belfast)
Maskey, Alex (South Belfast)
Maskey, Paul (West Belfast)
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Moutray, Stephen (Upper Bann)
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O'Neill, Mrs Michelle (Mid Ulster)
Overend, Mrs Sandra (Mid Ulster)
Poots, Edwin (Lagan Valley)
Ramsey, Pat (Foyle)
Ramsey, Ms Sue (West Belfast)
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Robinson, Peter (East Belfast)
Ross, Alastair (East Antrim)
Ruane, Ms Caitríona (South Down)
Sheehan, Pat (West Belfast)
Spratt, Jimmy (South Belfast)
Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
Swann, Robin (North Antrim)
Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 16 March 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Draft Childcare Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the timescale for the publication of the draft Childcare Strategy.

(AQW 7218/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): We intend to carry out a public consultation later in the year on our proposals for a Strategy to promote the availability of good quality, accessible, integrated and affordable childcare provision.

Department's Equality Unit

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the current (i) number; and (ii) annual cost of staff employed in their Department's Equality Unit.

(AQW 7654/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The OFMDFM Equality and Human Rights Unit currently employs five members of staff:

The total annual staff cost for the Unit is £212,238.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the development of a Childcare Strategy.

(AQO 1216/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are leading on the development of a Childcare Strategy in support of the draft Programme for Government action to implement a strategy for integrated and affordable childcare. This action requires co-operation and joint working across departments and agencies.

In December 2011, the first meeting of a high level working group, the Childcare Strategy Group, was convened. This Working Group is chaired by a senior OFMDFM official and comprises senior officials from key departments involved in childcare provision. Two further meetings of the Working Group were held in January.

The work of this Group will take account of the views of stakeholders, as well as other relevant information and research, and will put forward proposals to us on the development of the Childcare Strategy.

The intention is to carry out a public consultation later in the year on proposals for a Strategy to promote the availability of good quality, accessible, integrated and affordable childcare provision.

The Executive has allocated additional funding of £12 million across the Comprehensive Spending Review Period to support the development of the Childcare Strategy. This funding will not replace existing baseline provision for the delivery of childcare services.

Public Services Available to Older People

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they ensure that older people are aware of all the public services available to improve their quality of life; and how much funding has been allocated for this purpose in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8154/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We appointed Dame Joan Harbison as Older People's Advocate from December 2008 until December 2011. Dame Joan Harbison worked closely with the age sector and departments and highlighted the importance of reaching out to older people to ensure they are aware of what they are entitled to. She also attended many meetings with older people and used her regular newsletters to advise older people on the services available to help them.

In November 2011, we appointed Claire Keatinge as the Commissioner for Older People. The Commissioner will encourage best practice in the treatment of older people and has advised the Department on the most appropriate methodologies to reach older people who are difficult to contact.

The Department also engages regularly with organisations representing the interests and rights of older people, including Age NI and the Age Sector Platform, and Executive Ministers support the work of the Pensioners Parliament.

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

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

(AQW 8190/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM expenditure on conference fees in each of the last three financial years is set out below:

2008-09	£49,580
2009-10	£62,510
2010-11	£25,075

It is not possible to provide details of costs of away-days and team-building exercises as these are not separately recorded in the financial accounting systems.

Landslide Incident in the Marlborough Terrace Area of Londonderry

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why there has been marked disparity in terms of a co-ordinated response to the landslide incident in the Marlborough Terrace area of Londonderry in December 2011 and the inaction over the similar landslide in the Linen Fields development, Banbridge in January 2010.

(AQW 8201/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Policy and operational involvement for these incidents rests with the Minister of the Environment and the Minister for Regional Development and therefore are outside the remit of OFMDFM.

Postage and Printing Costs

Mr McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether their 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 8492/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our Department will provide electronic responses to correspondence from Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) when requested by them to do so. MLAs are normally advised of the publication of reports by our Department or its Arms Length Bodies by means of a letter of notification which will allow them to access the publication on the relevant website. Communication in relation to Ministerial Statements is carried out in accordance with the requirements of Assembly Standing Orders which require written copies of Oral Statements to be made available to each MLA.

Economic Advice

Mr Flanagan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, for each of the last three years, to detail the organisations that have provided economic advice to their Department; and the cost of the advice.
(AQW 8622/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Departmental Economists are the primary source of economic advice to Departments in support of investment appraisal, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. A number of these professional economists are employed within the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) to undertake this work. The cost of this advice over the last three years amounts to £580,284 which includes basic salary, employer national insurance contributions and pension contributions.

Economic advice has also been provided by the Strategic Investment Board. Where additional external economic advice is sought, this is available from a range of sources. These include centres of academic expertise (for example in the universities), research institutes, think tanks, research councils as well as independent researchers. These sources have the potential to offer independent specialist expertise as well as sufficient flexibility to address new and emerging policy issues. Within the last three years, Oxford Economics and the Economic & Social Research Institute have provided advice on a number of occasions with total fees of less than £140,000.

Crossmaglen Republican Monument

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps have been taken in relation to the decision, by the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development that the Crossmaglen republican monument is eligible for funding under Measure 3.6 of the Rural Development Programme; and the results of any such steps.

(AQW 8722/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM does not have responsibility for the Rural Development Programme. Decisions on funding under that Programme are the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Strategic Support Fund

Mr Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the level of funding allocated to groups working with victims and survivors under the 2011/2012 Strategic Support Fund (a) in total; and (b) broken down by each group to date; and (ii) the level of funding allocated in the in-year monitoring rounds.

(AQW 8887/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The information requested for (i) is set out in the table attached.

There was no funding allocated in the in year monitoring rounds.

SSF PAYMENTS 2011/2012

Group	Total funding allocated
Aisling	£ 66,910.81

Group	Total funding allocated
Antrim Counselling	£ 32,204.00
Ashton Centre	£ 456,889.20
Aurora Counselling	£ 87,406.00
Calms	£ 155,794.08
Colin Community	£ 75,167.71
Columba Hse	£ 69,954.76
Contact Youth	£ 59,084.48
Corpus Christie	£ 162,847.64
Cunamh	£ 176,659.00
Derrywell Woman	£ 90,955.22
Ely	£ 214,247.62
Ex Service Mental Welfare	£ 81,642.00
Families Beyone Conflict	£ 53,599.81
Families Moving on	£ 111,844.98
Firinne	£ 153,647.82
HAVEN	£ 67,366.00
HELP NI	£ 75,576.13
Holy Trinity	£ 45,266.93
HURT	£ 119,816.45
Koram	£ 160,653.23
Lenadoon C S	£ 78,065.07
Mast	£ 77,982.90
New Life Counselling	£ 185,706.42
NI Centre T T	£ 271,675.50
Niamh	£ 89,001.00
NIMT	£ 78,925.88
NOVA	£ 126,368.00
OSSHG	£ 136,861.94
Pat Finucane	£ 24,925.00
Peace Factory	£ 84,306.20
Raft	£ 108,768.97
React	£ 45,050.00
Regimental Assoc UDR	£ 55,143.83
RFJ	£ 579,768.16

Group	Total funding allocated
SDAHW	£ 111,847.29
SEFF	£ 225,651.46
Springhill	£ 94,927.22
Survivors of Trauma	£ 147,414.40
TARA	£ 138,697.20
VAST	£ 137,312.88
WAVE	£ 1,207,940.04
West Tyrone Voice	£ 112,235.04
Wider Circle	£ 90,904.21
Total	£ 6,727,012.48

Strategic Support Funding

Mr Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of funded posts for each group that is in receipt of Strategic Support Fund monies, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 8888/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A total of 101 full-time and 56 part-time posts are funded across 44 groups.

A breakdown by constituency is not available; however, a breakdown by District Council is set out below.

	Council /Group	F/T Posts	P/T posts
Antrim Borough Council	Antrim Youth Information & Counselling centre	0	2
Armagh City & District Council	Restorative Action Following on The Troubles	1	1
	REACT	1	1
Banbridge District Council	South Down Action for Healing Wounds	1	1
Belfast City Council	Haven Victim Support Group	1	1
	Springhill Community House	1	2
	Families Beyond Conflict	1	0
	Survivors of Trauma	3	3
	Niamh (Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health	1	0
	Wider Circle	2	0
	New Life Counselling Service Ardoyne	4	0
	Holy Trinity Centre	0	1
	Victims and Survivors Trust (VAST)	2	0
	Corpus Christi Services	1	6
	Ashton Community Trust	4	3

	Council /Group	F/T Posts	P/T posts
Belfast City Council	Relatives for Justice	5	4
	Lenadoon Community Counselling Network	1	2
	Colin Community Counselling Project	3	0
Coleraine Borough Council	Regimental Association of UDR	1	0
Derry City Council	Derry Well Woman	2	0
	C.A.L.M.S	2	0
	Columba Celtic Heritage Support Services	2	0
	Aurora Counselling Services	2	2
	Pat Finucane Centre	0	0
	Cunamh	5	1
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	The Peace Factory	1	2
Fermanagh District Council	Aisling Centre	1	2
	South East Fermanagh Foundation	1	2
	Firinne	2	0
Omagh District Council	Families Moving On	1	1
	Omagh Support & Self Help Group	1	1
	Tara Centre	2	2
	Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma & Transformation	2	4
Strabane District Council	The Koram Centre	3	0
Groups covering more than one Council area	HURT	2	0
	Contact	2	0
	HELP NI	1	1
	NOVA	0	5
	NI Music Therapy Trust	3	0
	Ely Centre	3	0
	West Tyrone Voice	2	0
	Mourne Action for Survivors of Terrorism	0	2
	WAVE Trauma Centre	26	4
This group covers all Council districts	Ex Services Mental Welfare Society	2	0
	Total	101	56

Childcare Strategy Development Fund

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 5873/11-15, to detail (i) the criteria Departments need to meet to secure funding through the Childcare Strategy Development Fund; and (ii) how the provision of school film clubs, within the Extended Services Programme, will support the development of the Childcare Strategy.

(AQW 8903/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In 2011/12, departments secured funding through the Childcare Strategy Development Fund for bids to support improvements in the provision of childcare services. Future years' bids to the Fund will be considered within the context of the emerging aims and objectives of the Childcare Strategy, which will aim to maximise children's life opportunities and development, and support parents to remain, or become, economically active.

As regards the After School Film Clubs Scheme, funding was awarded in 2011/12 to make provision for expansion of the Scheme, consistent with the aims of the proposed Strategy. The Scheme is a community-based service to boost skills development, to help tackle social exclusion and to support working parents. The funding agreement between DCAL and Northern Ireland Screen recommended that the Film Clubs were facilitated through the Extended Schools Programme to target young people in disadvantaged areas. The Scheme links to the school curriculum by developing storytelling, analytical and social skills in children and young people. The Clubs provide a valuable resource for parents who work full time, particularly in deprived areas, allowing children to remain in school after hours, doing something enjoyable and educational.

Childcare Strategy

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the timescale for the development of the Childcare Strategy; and (ii) what consideration has been given to the involvement of Non-Governmental Organisations in its development.

(AQW 8904/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are committed to developing a Strategy to promote the availability of affordable, accessible and integrated childcare provision. OFMDFM is taking the lead in the development of the Strategy with input from other Departments with key delivery responsibilities.

The current phase of the Strategy's development is considering how departments can work together effectively to develop and implement the Strategy. Officials have also met with members from key Non-Governmental Organisations and will continue to do so as the development of the Strategy progresses.

It is proposed that a consultation process on the draft Strategy will be launched in the summer when all interested parties, including key external stakeholders, will have an opportunity to input their views. These views will then be analysed and used to shape the final Strategy document which we aim to publish before the end of 2012.

Victims and Survivors Groups

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of paid employees in each group working with victims and survivors, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 8955/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A total of 101 full-time and 56 part-time posts are funded across 44 groups through the Strategic Support Fund.

A breakdown by constituency is not available; however, a breakdown by District Council is set out in the table in below.

	Council /Group	F/T Posts	P/T posts
Antrim Borough Council	Antrim Youth Information & Counselling centre	0	2
Armagh City & District Council	Restorative Action Following on The Troubles	1	1
	REACT	1	1
Banbridge District Council	South Down Action for Healing Wounds	1	1
Belfast City Council	Haven Victim Support Group	1	1
	Springhill Community House	1	2
	Families Beyond Conflict	1	0
	Survivors of Trauma	3	3
	Niamh (Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health	1	0
	Wider Circle	2	0
	New Life Counselling Service Ardoyne	4	0
	Holy Trinity Centre	0	1
	Victims and Survivors Trust (VAST)	2	0
	Corpus Christi Services	1	6
	Ashton Community Trust	4	3
	Relatives for Justice	5	4
	Lenadoon Community Counselling Network	1	2
	Colin Community Counselling Project	3	0
Coleraine Borough Council	Regimental Association of UDR	1	0
Derry City Council	Derry Well Woman	2	0
	C.A.L.M.S	2	0
	Columba Celtic Heritage Support Services	2	0
	Aurora Counselling Services	2	2
	Pat Finucane Centre	0	0
	Cunamh	5	1
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	The Peace Factory	1	2
Fermanagh District Council	Aisling Centre	1	2
	South East Fermanagh Foundation	1	2
	Firinne	2	0

	Council /Group	F/T Posts	P/T posts
Omagh District Council	Families Moving On	1	1
	Omagh Support & Self Help Group	1	1
	Tara Centre	2	2
	Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma & Transformation	2	4
Strabane District Council	The Koram Centre	3	0
Groups covering more than one Council area	HURT	2	0
	Contact	2	0
	HELP NI	1	1
	NOVA	0	5
	NI Music Therapy Trust	3	0
	Ely Centre	3	0
	West Tyrone Voice	2	0
	Mourne Action for Survivors of Terrorism	0	2
	WAVE Trauma Centre	26	4
This group covers all Council districts	Ex Services Mental Welfare Society	2	0
	Total	101	56

Consultancy Report on the Commission for Victims and Survivors

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether they have commissioned a consultancy report on the Commission for Victims and Survivors; (ii) when the report will be made published, and (iii) for their assessment of the report, including its conclusions and recommendations. [R] **(AQW 8983/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are required under Treasury guidance, through the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, to carry out a review of the Commission every three years. The first review was carried out by KPMG. We have received the report and are currently considering the contents and recommendations.

Budget for Victims and Survivors

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the annual running costs of (i) the Commission for Victims and Survivors; (ii) the NI Memorial Fund; (iii) the Victims Section of the Community Relations Council; and (iv) the proposed Victims and Survivors Service, broken down by percentage of the overall victims' budget. [R] **(AQW 8985/11-15)**

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The total allocated Budget for Victims and Survivors for 2011/12 is £12.648m.

ALBs	Running costs	Percentage of overall Budget
CVSNI	£1,006,250.00	8%

ALBs	Running costs	Percentage of overall Budget
NIMF	£316,358.00	2.5%
CRC (Victims)	£543,000.00	4%
VSS	£100,000.00	0.8%
Total	£1,965,608.00	15.5%

NI Memorial Fund's Individual Needs Based Approach

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) for their assessment of the efficacy of the NI Memorial Fund's Individual Needs Based Approach; and (ii) whether the proposed Victims and Survivors Service is expected to adopt the same formula.

(AQW 8986/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Northern Ireland Memorial Fund continues to deliver a vital lifeline for people who need their help, providing victims with critically important support. Evaluation is an important part of ensuring effectiveness and value for money and ensuring that victims' needs are addressed. To this end, officials have arranged for a full evaluation of the needs based approach to be undertaken in the next few months.

The findings of this evaluation will inform the approach to be taken by the new Victims and Survivors Service with respect to providing assistance to individual victims and survivors.

However, the needs of victims cannot be pigeon-holed into separate categories. The likelihood is that they will experience several interconnected problems at once and the new Service will look at the whole person rather than individual symptoms or issues. It is to be, first and foremost, a holistic Service providing the full spectrum of necessary support and care.

Funding for Arm's-length Bodies

Mr Storey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much funding has been allocated to each of their Department's arm's-length bodies in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8994/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As at 31 March 2011, OFMDFM sponsored nine Arms Length Bodies (ALBs). The funding allocated during the last three years is outlined in the table below.

The grant-in-aid funding of a departmental Arms Length Body relates to the total running costs of the body, and includes programme expenditure by that body, in addition to its staffing, overhead, and operating costs.

TABLE 1: OFMDFM GRANT-IN-AID FUNDING OF ARMS LENGTH BODIES FOR FINANCIAL YEARS 2008/09 TO 2010/11

OFMDFM Arms Length Bodies	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000
The Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland	924	993	657
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	7,226	6,980	6,900
Strategic Investment Board	6,978	7,074	6,360
Ilex Urban Regeneration Company	1,298	1,780	2,406
The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland	1,853	1,838	1,599

OFMDFM Arms Length Bodies	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000
The Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland	783	1,264	1,126
Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission	N/A	N/A	1,284 ¹
Community Relations Council for Northern Ireland	7,354	8,771	9,293
Northern Ireland Memorial Fund	1,139	3,575	4,441
Grand Total	27,555	32,275	34,066

¹ On the devolution of policing and justice powers in April 2010, sponsorship of NIJAC transferred to OFMDFM. Consequently no funding costs were incurred by OFMDFM with respect to NIJAC for 2008/09 or 2009/10.

Victims and Survivors Service

Mr Nesbitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what plans they have to ensure that the database held by the NI Memorial Fund for the last 13 years is transferred to the proposed Victims and Survivors Service.

(AQW 9029/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The interim management team which is setting up the new Victims and Survivors Service is currently scoping its requirement for management information systems and the related information technology to be put in place. As part of that process, the Service will be looking at systems currently in place, how relevant they may be, the contracts governing those systems and the data protection implications regarding the transfer of information. It is our intention that as much relevant material is transferred as possible.

Staff Disciplinary Actions

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of staff disciplinary actions taken by their Department in each of the last two years, at Staff Officer level and above, including details of the offence and the disciplinary sanctions applied.

(AQW 9127/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No staff disciplinary actions have been taken by our Department in the last two years.

Jurisdiction of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what role their Department has had in any discussions between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland on the jurisdiction of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough.

(AQW 9135/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A meeting of UK and Irish Government officials took place in January to discuss a range of specific environmental and marine issues arising from the current jurisdictional position of Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle. OFMDFM officials attended the meeting as observers in respect of the various statutory responsibilities exercised in both loughs by departments of the Executive and which were relevant to the discussion.

Jurisdiction of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what is their Department's position on the ownership and jurisdiction of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough.

(AQW 9136/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: This is an excepted matter but one in which this administration has a direct interest through its range of statutory responsibilities in relation to both loughs.

Consultation Responses on the draft Programme for Government

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many consultation responses were received on the draft Programme for Government, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 9287/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We received 432 written responses to the draft Programme for Government (PfG). Of this, 66 respondents did not give any address details. The remaining 366 respondents are broken down by constituency in the table below.

East Belfast	39	Mid Ulster	7
North Belfast	84	Newry&Armagh	14
South Belfast	71	North Antrim	17
West Belfast	16	North Down	17
East Antrim	18	South Antrim	3
East Londonderry	14	South Down	9
Fermanagh& South Tyrone	12	Strangford	11
Foyle	5	Upper Bann	10
Lagan Valley	12	West Tyrone	7

Ethnic Minority Development Fund

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given the indication on 14 February 2012 to the All Party Group on Ethnic Minority Communities that all staff had been assigned to work on the Ethnic Minority Development Fund, and that no staff were progressing the Racial Equality Strategy, whether they will consider hiring temporary staff to progress the Racial Equality Strategy,

(AQW 9308/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The production of a new Racial Equality Strategy, which will build on the current Strategy, is a key target for this year and work on the revision is currently being taken forward by OFMDFM officials in partnership with the minority ethnic sector. The priority for officials at the moment is to address the issue of the potential gap in funding in the Minority Ethnic Development Fund. However, the Racial Equality Strategy is still being progressed within the Department.

We anticipate making an announcement on consultation during the summer.

Draft Programme for Government

Mr McCallister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many consultation responses were received on the draft Programme for Government; and whether each of the responses will be reviewed before the final paper is put to the Executive on Thursday 8 March 2012.

(AQW 9324/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We received 432 written responses to the draft Programme for Government (PfG). Of this number, 149 were transcripts of a verbatim reply on behalf of the environmental group 'Step up for Nature'.

Responses received have been reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout the consultation period to identify emergent issues and develop policy responses. This process has enabled the development of the PfG draft to take account of issues as they have arisen over the 16-week period between

the publication of the consultation draft and presentation of the Executive draft. By this means, we have been able to bring a draft PfG to the Executive that reflects fully the issues raised through the consultation process.

Social Investment Fund

Mr Moutray asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made in ensuring that the Social Investment Fund will meet its strategic objectives in relation to supporting communities.
(AQO 1453/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have recently sent the consultation report to the OFMDFM Committee and this will shortly be placed on our website. We have also established a project board and are now working through all of the necessary steps to make the fund fully operational early in the next financial year.

We are currently considering the issue of the formation of the steering groups and the support for technical assistance to develop area plans for each of the Social Investment Zones.

These plans will deliver community driven, area based interventions, which will be designed, developed and delivered in partnership with the relevant statutory, voluntary and business sectors to address the interlinked causes and impacts of deprivation.

OFMDFM: Contract Overspends

Mr Molloy asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline how they intend to deal with the issue of overspends in their Department's contracts.
(AQO 1454/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM has robust business case and procurement processes in place to ensure that all spending decisions taken in the Department are accountable.

Managers and, ultimately, the Accounting Officer, is accountable for any overspends that may arise.

Where overspends do occur and approvals are not obtained, the expenditure could be deemed irregular and be reported by the Comptroller and Auditor General in the annual accounts of the Department or Arms Length Body.

As a result of irregular expenditure in 2010/11 OFMDFM Resource Accounts, an Action Plan, monitored by the Department Board, was put in place to address the control weaknesses.

The majority of the recommendations in the Action Plan have been implemented.

Budget Review Group

Mr Boylan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the work of the Budget Review Group.
(AQO 1456/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: During this Assembly term, the Budget Review Group has met four times. On 31 January it agreed a future work programme to meet on a quarterly basis to report and review progress on key priorities. The priorities identified by the Group were 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 underutilised assets; and examining the potential for generating efficiencies through, for example, the ongoing review of Arms Length Bodies. Specific pieces of work were commissioned on each of the priority areas and progress on a number of these was discussed by the Budget Review Group when it met on 1 March. A further meeting is being scheduled for May 2012. Recommendations will be made to the Executive on the full range of issues in due course.

Community and Voluntary Sector: Ethnic Minority Groups

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they have any plans to introduce a framework for community and voluntary sector involvement in addressing problems that are specific to ethnic minority groups.

(AQO 1459/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We recognise the need for the involvement of the broader community and voluntary sector in conjunction with the minority ethnic sector in addressing the issues that confront minority ethnic people and accordingly we will address this in the new Racial Equality Strategy.

Membership of the Victims Forum

Mrs Overend asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why applications for membership of the Victims Forum were not advertised publicly.

(AQO 1460/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Forum is the statutory responsibility of the Victim's Commission and therefore issues such as membership and process are a matter for the Commission.

Advocacy Service for Victims and Survivors of Institutional Abuse

Mr Moutray asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when an advocacy service for victims and survivors of institutional abuse will be announced.

(AQW 9349/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are committed to establishing an advocacy service that will provide support to victims and survivors before, during and after the inquiry and investigation into historical institutional abuse as soon as the necessary financial approvals are in place.

Until this service is established we have arranged for interim support to be provided to victims and survivors 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.

Panel for the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Child Abuse

Mr Moutray asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they intend to appoint members to the panel for the inquiry into historical institutional child abuse.

(AQW 9350/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The consideration of potential candidates for the inquiry panel is at an advanced stage and we will make an announcement on this matter to the Assembly in due course.

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Article 29

Mr D McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what work their Department has carried out, in relation to improving participation in political and public life for people with disabilities, under Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

(AQO 1525/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities places an obligation on all departments to promote, protect and ensure full and equal enjoyment of human rights by all persons with disabilities.

The involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in all areas of public life is an important aspect of the Convention.

To fulfil this requirement, our Department has engaged with the disability sector to raise awareness of the Convention. It has hosted a number of awareness raising events and supported a programme to raise awareness of the Convention in schools.

The Executive's formal response to our obligations under the UN Convention and the findings of the 2009 Promoting Social Inclusion report on disability will be delivered within the context of a new disability strategy and its associated action plans.

Our Department recruited a sectoral expert to work with our officials to develop the strategy. They engaged with disabled people and their representative organisations as part of this work.

A key priority in the strategy will be to increase disabled people's opportunity to influence policies and programmes in government.

We will launch the draft disability Strategy for public consultation in the next few weeks and we will encourage the involvement of people with disabilities in this exercise. During the development of the action plan to support the Strategy, we will consider how to improve support for disabled people to allow them to access public positions and also to improve attitudes towards people with disabilities.

Disability Strategy

Mr G Robinson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions they have had to ensure that people with conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and Epilepsy are given protection under the proposed Disability Strategy.

(AQO 1528/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The draft Disability Strategy will cover the needs of children, young people and adults; it will also address the needs of the families and carers of people with disabilities. It will be relevant to everyone with a disability, including those with conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and Epilepsy.

In preparing the draft Strategy, our officials engaged in discussion with disabled people and the main disability organisations to take their views on the issues that the Strategy should address. There will be further engagement when the draft Strategy is published for consultation.

Peace-building and Conflict Resolution Centre

Ms J McCann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Special EU Programmes Body application for the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQO 1532/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We received a letter of offer from Special EU Programmes Body offering project grant aid of up to £18.1m for the proposed Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre at Maze Long Kesh.

We are considering the way forward and hope to make a positive announcement shortly.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Pony Trekking Businesses

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why pony trekking businesses are now required to provide £5 million insurance cover in order to use Forest Service land.

(AQW 8850/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The arrangements whereby third parties use my Department's land for activities is kept under review to ensure that my Department

fulfils its landowner responsibilities and duty of care to all visitors and that third party organisations taking responsibility for activities on the Department's land are required to provide the appropriate level of indemnity.

The Department's legal advice on this matter is that third parties carrying out activities on Forest Service land should have Public Liability insurance from "an insurer approved by and in terms satisfactory to the Department and for an amount not less than £5million in any one occurrence".

Consistent with this advice, the Department now applies the requirement for £5million Public Liability Insurance to such third party organisations including pony trekking businesses.

EU Pig Welfare Directive

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures she is using to inform pig farmers, particularly those with small holdings, of compliance with the EU Pig Welfare Directive; and what measures she is taking to assist them with compliance.

(AQW 8861/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The use of sow stalls has been banned here since 2003 and the main provisions of the Directive are contained within the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations 2000 (as amended). From 1 January 2013 the provisions of the Directive shall apply to all holdings.

My Department is planning a range of communications to remind pig farmers about the requirements of the Pig Welfare Directive. Over the coming weeks, a letter will go to every pig keeper in the north of Ireland alerting them to separate important changes to the rules for the identification and movement of pigs; my Department will also use this opportunity to remind keepers about the requirements of the Pig Welfare Directive. My Department will also place articles in the farming press for this purpose. The Pig Bulletin, which is produced by DARD's CAFRE pig technologists, will continue to highlight the importance of the Pig Welfare Directive to pig farmers.

Over the coming months my Department's Veterinary Service will be inspecting pig holdings, including smaller holdings, to remind farmers of the need to take the necessary steps to comply with the Directive and to help address any issues that they may have. I have asked that my officials bring forward a robust enforcement strategy to ensure that we will have full compliance with the Pig Welfare Directive come 1 January 2013.

Work is currently underway for the next Tranche of the Farm Modernisation Programme (FMP), which aims to provide financial assistance to help farmers modernise their holdings. A number of eligible items will be included specifically for the pig sector and are aimed at helping pig enterprises improve animal welfare, business efficiency and energy efficiency up to a maximum of £4,000 per farm.

Farm Modernisation Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 8345/11-15, for her assessment of the impact that the criterion, in applications for tranche 3 of the Farm Modernisation Programme, which awards marks to those who have not previously applied for funding, will have on previously unsuccessful applicants.

(AQW 8939/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As you will be aware the first two tranches of the Farm Modernisation Programme were extremely popular and heavily oversubscribed. In trying to ensure that those who were unsuccessful or did not apply for funding in the previous tranches have an increased opportunity to avail of funding to modernise, we are proposing to award applications from this group an additional 10 marks.

The inclusion of this new criterion will help to promote equality across all categories by providing additional marks for those who have not applied to the Scheme before or who have previously been unsuccessful. This should act to increase the success rate of groups that were under-represented in previous tranches.

Moyola River

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development which stretches of the Moyola River are (i) designated; and (ii) undesignated.

(AQW 9103/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Moyola River is designated within the meaning of Drainage (NI) Order 1973, from its confluence with Lough Neagh at Water Foot to its upstream limits at Lisnamuck Bridge near Tobermore.

Honey Bee Industry

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the European Commission's decision to allocate over £30 million for studies into honey bee colony losses, how much funding she plans to allocate to the bee industry.

(AQW 9340/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The £30 million funding referred to is in fact for the European Union (EU) Apiculture Programme 2011-13 (€32 million), the north of Ireland and Britain allocation of which is some £1.8 million. The Programme, which operates on a 50% reimbursement of expenditure, seeks to improve the production and marketing of apiculture products. The funding is used here for training, bee inspections and scientific analysis work.

However, a three year pilot surveillance study into honey bee losses is being undertaken at member state level, part funded by the EU. A sum of approximately €3.75 million has been indicated by the European Commission but member states have yet to be advised of allocations. Whilst DARD is not contributing directly to the pilot exercise, outcomes from the study will have relevance to beekeepers here and will be made available in due course.

DARD is currently implementing its 'Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee' in conjunction with the two beekeeping organisations here and seeks to address all issues affecting beekeeping, including the issue of honey bee losses.

Current Honey Bee Population

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made on meeting the objectives of her Department's Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee.

(AQW 9414/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Strategy for the Sustainability of the Honey Bee, which was published in February 2011, provides a plan of action aimed at sustaining the health of honey bees and beekeeping in the north of Ireland for the next decade.

Beekeepers and officials are currently working in partnership to deliver the aims and outcomes of the Strategy. Delivery is being phased and outcomes and priorities reviewed at regular intervals by the Strategy's Implementation Group. Sector representatives are currently developing action plans for agreement by and implementation through the Strategy's Implementation Group.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Additional Funding for Libraries

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when she will announce from where the additional funding for libraries will be sourced.

(AQW 8935/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): I set out below details of how I propose to fund protection of the Libraries service. I have already spoken to the Finance Minister about pressures facing my Department and, in due course, I will be bidding for part of the cost of protecting Libraries. I

cannot assume these will be successful, however, and so I must, as a first step, find the full amount of funding internally.

The cost of protecting the Libraries service is £2.89m.

This has been funded by reductions in budgets elsewhere, illustrated in the table below:

Area	12/13 £k	13/14 £k	14/15 £k	Total £k
1 Olympics	0.00	0.46	0.00	0.46
2 Ulster Scots Academy	0.23	0.30	0.49	1.02
3 National Museums	0.00	0.20	0.50	0.70
4 Sport NI	0.00	0.09	0.22	0.31
5 Arts Council	0.00	0.12	0.28	0.40
Total	0.23	1.17	1.49	2.89

EU Fiscal Treaty

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the potential impact on the creative industries if the electorate in the Republic of Ireland votes against the EU fiscal treaty in the forthcoming referendum.

(AQW 9108/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The creative industries, as highlighted in the draft Programme for Government and Economic Strategy, is a key growth sector for the region. The Executive will continue to support the sector and its potential to rebuild and rebalance the economy irrespective of the outcome of the referendum in which only some Irish citizens can vote.

Use of Salmon Nets

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many salmon were caught by (i) rod and line anglers; and (ii) commercial fishermen using salmon nets, in the 2011 season.

(AQW 9142/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department is currently preparing the data requested at (i) and (ii) above for the 2011 season, but the figures require further verification and as such cannot yet be released.

Breaches of the EU Directives on Salmon Conservation and Habitat

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the financial provision that has been made by her Department to pay potential fines for breaches of the EU directives on salmon conservation and habitat.

(AQW 9144/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am not aware of any infraction proceedings against this DCAL by the European Union and therefore the Department has made no financial provision for infraction fines.

DOE is the lead Department in the north of Ireland for the implementation of the Habitats Directive. DCAL seeks to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Directive and the implementing legislation in the north of Ireland through the discharge of its responsibilities in relation to the conservation and protection of salmon and inland fisheries.

Infraction proceedings by the EU are against Britain as a Member State and not against the devolved administrations or individual Government Departments.

Eel Management Plan on Lough Erne

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the operation of the Eel Management Plan on Lough Erne, including its impact on the employment of eel fishermen and the level of eel stocks; and whether she will support the restoration of fishing rights to the affected fishermen.

(AQW 9148/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The North West International River Basin District, Eel Management Plan has made a very tangible contribution to European eel spawner escapement. The conservation fishery delivered 828 kg of healthy sexually maturing silver eels to the coast at Ballyshannon in 2010/11 and 25252 kg in 2011/12.

The eel fishermen have been eligible to tender to participate in the trap and transport conservation fishery and are also free to apply for licences to net other fish species on Lough Erne.

Commercial eel fishing on Lough Erne was permitted by the Department until March 2010. With the approval of the North West International River Basin District, Eel Management Plan and to comply with the European Commission Eel Regulation, the Department had to close the fishery.

Until there is full compliance with Article 2 of the Regulation and this can be demonstrated, there is no prospect of a case to the European Commission for a resumption of an eel fishery outside of the conservation fishery.

Eel Management Plan

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given that only 2 out of 17 eel fishermen are involved in the trap and truck of silver eels on Lough Erne, what plans has she to provide compensation for those prevented from working by the Eel Management Plan.

(AQW 9149/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: All Lough Erne eel fishermen were free to tender for the trap and truck conservation fishery.

There is no relevant statutory provision for compensation in the 1966 Fisheries Act which would empower the Department to compensate the eel fishermen.

Eel Management Plan

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in light of the upcoming review of the Eel Management Plan, and the apparent health of stocks, will she support limited fishing from June to August.

(AQW 9150/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The upcoming review of the North West Eel Management Plan covering Lough Erne is a review of the existing plan and does not allow the submission of new or revised plans. The current North West Eel Management Plan outlines the necessity of closure of the fishery regardless of the apparent health of stocks to support and enhance stock recovery.

The European eel stock overall remains critically low and is in danger of extinction. Any exploitation, however limited, will further endanger the species.

Staff Disciplinary Actions

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of staff disciplinary actions taken by her Department in each of the last two years, at Staff Officer level and above, including details of the offence and the disciplinary sanctions applied.

(AQW 9184/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am unable to respond to 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.

Television Coverage

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she would raise the issue of TV3 coverage with her counterpart in the Dublin Government.

(AQW 9188/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am pleased to be able to advise you that, when digital switchover takes place, because of an agreement between the British and Irish governments, RTE 1 and 2 are to be broadcast from transmitters in the North of Ireland while Irish language station TG4, which has been broadcasting from the Divis transmitter since 2005, is to have its broadcast footprint expanded.

The effect of this will be to give these three channels near blanket coverage across the North of Ireland for the first time.

Londonderry UK City of Culture Initiative

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding her Department has provided to the Londonderry UK City of Culture initiative to date; and how much it will provide in total.

(AQW 9203/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A DCAL business case has recently been approved for £190k for the City of Culture preparatory/ start up activity for the Cultural Programme. Business cases for 2012/13 and 2013/14 are in development.

In 2011 DCAL also provided £6K support from the Creative Industries Innovation Fund to Derry City Council to support its participation at the Milwaukee Irish Fest and to showcase the North West and £40K funding to the Culture Company to lead on Creativity Month in March 2012.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has ring-fenced £225k for the City of Culture to pay for major commissions and is contributing a further £100k to a Small Grants Programme being run in association with the Big Lottery Fund.

Salmon Stocks

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an estimate of the timescale by which salmon stocks would be wiped out if anglers were not to comply with the catch and release scheme.

(AQW 9211/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: It is not possible to be definitive due to the many factors that influence wild Atlantic salmon survival and abundance and the fact that genetic populations are independent and will be at different levels relative to the Conservation Levels for that population.

The Secretary of the North Atlantic Salmon Organisation (NASCO) has stated at the salmon summit in La Rochelle, France in October 2011 that southern salmon stocks could become extinct by 2040 if conservation measures are not introduced now.

River Bush

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 8548/11-15, why fry or parr were not released into the River Bush as part of the restocking programme in particular years.

(AQW 9225/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Indiscriminate stocking programmes can denude the river of wild spawners, narrow the gene pool and thus the ability of the population to respond to survival pressures, reduce survival of wild eggs and fry through competition for habitat and food, and may focus a disease problem.

The Department has produced guidance on stocking programmes and this is available at the angling section the Departments website at www.dcalni.gov.uk under angling conservation and protection.

The Department also assists wild stocks by placing particular emphasis on in-river habitat rehabilitation works and predator control measures to enhance the wild egg to smolt survival rate. Guidance on habitat is also available on the Departments website.

Paper and Envelopes used in Providing Answers to Assembly Written Questions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 8520/11-15, how much her Department pays for a box of (i) cream conqueror envelopes; and (ii) cream conqueror paper used to answer Assembly Written Questions.

(AQW 9318/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A box of 500 Cream Conqueror envelopes used to answer Assembly Written Questions costs £83.12 and a packet of 500 sheets of Cream Conqueror paper costs £36.90.

Cost-Effectiveness of Away-Days and Team Building Exercises

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how her Department assesses the cost-effectiveness of away-days and team building exercises.

(AQW 9342/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: To ensure cost effectiveness when organising away-days for business planning and team building purposes, staff are expected to use accommodation and facilities associated with the Department, including its Arms Length Bodies or to avail of suitable premises within the NICS Estate.

Líofa 2015 and Bród Club

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions she has had with Bernard Dunne or RTÉ representatives about working together to deliver Líofa 2015 and Bród Club.

(AQW 9347/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have had no discussions with Bernard Dunne or RTÉ representatives about working together to deliver Líofa and Bród Club.

I have requested that my officials to contact the producers of the show to see if Líofa and Bród Club can work together to deliver mutual benefits.

2023 Rugby World Cup

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions she has had with the Irish Rugby Football Association or the Dublin Government about the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

(AQW 9352/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I would be fully supportive of any bid by the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) to host the 2023 Rugby World Cup in Ireland. To date, however, I have received no approach from either the IRFU or the Dublin Government to discuss the matter.

Intercultural Arts Strategy

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the Intercultural Arts Strategy, including what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the Strategy incorporates plans for ethnic diversity in the professional arts as well as at community level.

(AQW 9355/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Arts Council is currently at the final stages in the development of its Intercultural Arts Strategy for the period 2012 – 2017.

The Strategy and Programme will be launched in the lead up to Community Relations Week 2012 and after and will include events both in Stormont and within a community setting.

The Arts Council proposes to meet the creative and social needs of ethnic communities through a set of strategic themes and objectives. These themes include Intercultural Engagement; Developing the Minority Ethnic Arts infrastructure; using the arts to develop Community Cohesion; using the arts to increase awareness of Diversity, and developing programmes that use the arts to develop Good Relations and as a vehicle to tackle Racism.

The Arts Council will also establish an Intercultural Steering Group which will include participation from ethnic artists, arts organisations and umbrella organisations within the minority ethnic sector to provide advice and guidance.

The Intercultural Arts Programme will be launched with dedicated funds made available to community and voluntary groups supporting the themes of the strategy.

Publicly Owned Forests and Woodlands

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether all the bodies or organisations within her Department's remit which own woodland are compliant with the UK Forestry Standard, including her Department, any arm's-length body and any organisation to which her Department provides grant aid.
(AQW 9386/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department, and its associated arm's-length bodies, do not own any woodland.

Fish Pass at the Quoile Barrier on the Quoile River

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 9060/11-15, what communication her Department has had with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in relation to the safe removal of seals from the Quoile River; and whether her Department has any plans to collaborate with the NIEA and to seek the expertise and equipment to safely remove the seals.
(AQW 9402/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: It is the responsibility of both Rivers Agency as owners of the barrier to repair any damage which might allow seals access to the Quoile River and the NIEA which manages the Quoile Nature Reserve to remove seals from the Quoile River.

DCAL officials have met with representatives of both Agencies and advised them of the Departments concerns about the presence of seals in the Quoile River. The Rivers Agency has been asked to undertake a survey of the barrier and carry out any necessary repairs. The NIEA has been asked for advice and DCAL will be guided by that.

Lough Neagh Eel Fishermen

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) what advice has been given to the Lough Neagh eel fishermen in relation to hook specification and manufacture; (ii) what amnesty will be given to the fishermen to facilitate the changing of these hooks; and (iii) whether she will extend this amnesty for the entire season for this year only.
(AQW 9441/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) The Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-operative has been advised that only hooks which meet the regulatory specifications as defined in the Eel Fishing Regulations (NI) 2010 can be used for long-line eel fishing on Lough Neagh.
- (ii) & (iii) The Regulations governing the size of hooks that can be used for long-line eel fishing have been in force since 1964. The Department cannot sanction the use of hooks which do not meet the statutory requirements.

Sports Stadium Development Plans

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she can give an assurance that strong social clauses will be included in the Regional Stadium Development plans.

(AQO 1540/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I fully expect that the inclusion of social clauses will be firmly embedded within the plans for the development of the three Regional Stadiums. Going forward relevant clauses will be included in both contracts for professional services and construction works on the stadium Projects.

The Sports Governing Bodies' Project teams working on the stadiums are liaising with my officials, the Strategic Investment Board, Central Procurement Directorate, the Department for Employment and Learning and Sport NI to ensure that the use of social clauses is both applied and optimised through the development of these major construction projects.

Re-Imaging Communities Programme

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps will be taken to ensure the continued positive impact of the Re-imaging Communities Programme.

(AQO 1541/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I would like to recognise the success of the Re-imaging Communities Programme in relation to promoting reconciliation and better relationships at community level. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the Arts Council and community representatives in making this programme so successful.

The Arts Council applied to the Peace III Programme to build upon the key successes of the Re-Imaging Programme and to develop the artistic interventions on an intra-community, cross-community and cross-border basis.

They are currently awaiting a letter of offer from the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

Twelfth of July: Funding

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how funding for Twelfth of July events this year compares to previous years.

(AQO 1542/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department does not directly fund events such as the Twelfth of July celebrations. However, these celebrations have, in the past, received funding through the Arts Council, The Ulster-Scots Agency and the Community Festivals Fund.

As funding programmes for 2012 have not opened yet, it is not possible to compare this year's Twelfth of July events to previous years.

Levels of funding provided will depend on whether applications for funding are actually received and if the applications score highly enough in what are competitive funding streams.

Libraries: Opening Hours

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the reduction of library opening hours.

(AQO 1543/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: During the public consultation seven thousand people, Assembly Members and political parties all said that libraries are important. I agree with them, for that reason I was pleased to make £2.39 million extra resources available for Libraries NI to help preserve important library services. I have also decided to protect it from making a contribution towards student fees.

This additional money has eased the financial pressure on Libraries NI. Seven of our libraries will not be closing and in general library opening hours will not be reduced as much as originally proposed. However, Libraries NI is still faced with making savings.

The Libraries NI Board decided the number of hours each Branch would open on 19 January. Libraries NI then conducted a local consultation to determine the exact pattern of opening hours for each library, this ended on 4 March.

The public will be advised of the new opening hours for each library by the end of April. Libraries NI plan to implement the revised opening hours from 6 June 2012.

Cathedral Quarter Groups: Funding

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how she intends to mitigate the reduced funding allocation for Cathedral Quarter groups.

(AQO 1544/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My department and the Arts Council work closely with the Department for Social Development and will continue to liaise on support for arts organisations operating in the Cathedral Quarter.

The Arts Council regularly fund many of the arts organisations who have received support from the Laganside Events grant scheme and they will continue to work with client organisations and other funders to ensure the sustainability of our local arts and cultural offering.

I am pleased that it has been announced that funding to the Laganside Events Grant scheme will continue into 12/13 with support from the Department of Finance and Personnel and Department for Social Development.

Sport: East Londonderry

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline what funding her Department has provided to sporting initiatives in East Londonderry since April 2011.

(AQO 1545/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is responsible for the distribution of funding to sport in the north of Ireland. Since 1 April 2011, Sport NI has provided £49,859 to sporting initiatives in East Londonderry. Furthermore, Sport NI has two pending applications for funding in this area totalling £1,245,000.

Just last month I attended the official opening of a new sports facility at Scroggy Road, Limavady. This included a 3G pitch floodlit pitch, a grass pitch, changing pavilion and car parking - all part funded through Sport NI – and provides a much needed shared space for the local community. I was particularly delighted to see so many local school children playing Gaelic games, soccer and rugby on the day.

Cultural Tourism

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what her Department is doing to promote Northern Ireland as a destination for cultural tourists.

(AQO 1546/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure plays a central role in cultural tourism in the north of Ireland and will invest £158.24m capital and £431.19m current funding in the culture, arts and leisure sector over the 4 years of the current CSR Period 2011-2015.

The Department invests in the cultural infrastructure that is essential to attract visitors in the first instance and is central to a positive visitor experience once they get here, for example museums, theatres, sports venues and visitor attractions. In recent years the Department provided significant

funding for the arts infrastructure in the north of Ireland with a number of venues benefitting, including the Playhouse Theatre in Derry and the Lyric Theatre and Metropolitan Arts Centre in Belfast.

In addition to this the Department also funded the new Public Records Office building in the Titanic Quarter in Belfast.

The Department also invests significant revenue funding to ensure that there is an attractive arts and cultural programme on offer for visitors. That investment helps to differentiate the north of Ireland from competing locations as a 'destination of choice' for potential cultural tourists.

There are also opportunities to promote cultural tourism in the north of Ireland during the forthcoming decade of centenaries and commemorations.

DCAL: Public and Ministerial Appointments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in relation to people appointed by the Minister or through the public appointments process to her Department or its affiliated bodies, how many have been convicted of terrorist offences.

(AQO 1547/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Public appointments made by the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure are conducted in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments' NI Code of Practice for Ministerial Public Appointments in NI.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure does not seek, compile or hold information in respect of appointees convicted of political offences as it is not a requirement under the Commissioner for Public Appointments' NI Code of Practice.

Department of Education

Equality Impact Assessment on Preparatory Schools Funding

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education when the analysis of the consultation responses to the Equality Impact Assessment on preparatory schools funding will be published; and to outline the reasons for the delay in publication.

(AQW 8674/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): Over 400 responses were received in respect of the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) consultation on the proposal to withdraw funding from preparatory departments of grammar schools and these have been collated and analysed.

You will recall that the former Minister, Catriona Ruane, took account of the comments received as part of the EQIA consultation exercise and recognised that the complete ending of funding may have caused difficulties for parents and children and possible disruption to some schools. Hence, notwithstanding her publically stated views, she decided to continue funding preparatory departments but at a reduced level. With effect from September 2010 the level of funding was reduced by one-third (i.e. to 20% of an Age Weighted Pupil Unit).

I am planning to complete the final stages of the EQIA and publish it on the Department's website before the end of April 2012.

Teachers: Redundancy Severance Package

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education if teachers availing of the 90 week redundancy severance package will be able to return to teaching as substitute teachers.

(AQW 8738/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is not lawful to prevent a teacher who has received redundancy compensation from seeking to return to employment. Nor is it possible to direct a school not to employ such a teacher. However, my Department has repeatedly advised employers that newly and recently qualified teachers should be afforded every opportunity not only to obtain permanent employment but also to gain valuable experience by providing substitute cover and by filling temporary vacancies. Recent changes to the Common Funding Scheme for the Local Management of Schools were intended to encourage schools in this regard.

I should make it clear that the funding I have made available for enhanced redundancy compensation is intended to assist schools in managing a significant increase in the number of teacher redundancies at August 2012 compared with previous years. It is not intended to allow schools to accommodate every teacher who wishes to leave the profession. I should also make it clear that teachers who lose their jobs in August 2012 as a result of redundancy will receive a compensation payment of three times the number of weeks' pay due under statutory redundancy provisions by reference to age and length of service. Whilst 90 weeks' salary is the maximum payment that a redundant teacher may receive, it is likely that the majority will receive less than this.

Special Needs Schools

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to list all the Special Needs schools that have sought capital funding in each of the last five years.

(AQW 9009/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is detailed in the table below. It is in respect of stand alone Special Schools and relates to applications for major capital works in the last 5 years.

School name
Brookfield Special School, Moira
Castletower School, Ballymena
Elmbrook /Erne Special Schools Enniskillen
Greenwood House Assessment Centre, Belfast
Knockevin Special School, Downpatrick
Mitchell House Special School, Belfast
Rossmar Special School, Limavady
St Gerard's Education Resource Centre, Belfast
Tor Bank Special School, Dundonald

Development Proposals

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education (i) to list all the development proposals that have been published in the last three months; and (ii) to detail the length of time between each development proposal being submitted to the Education and Library Boards and being published.

(AQW 9070/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) There have been 11 Development Proposals published within the last 3 months between 1 December 2011 and 6 March 2012 as tabled below:

School	ELB area	Proposed	Date Published	Proposal
Ballykeigle PS Comber	SEELB		13/12/11	Close 31 Aug 2012
Dunmurry High School	SEELB		13/12/11	Close 31 Aug 2012
Redburn Primary School, Hollywood	SEELB		20/12/11	Close 31 Aug 2012
Primate Dixon PS, Coalisland	SELB	18/10/11	15/12/11	Additional nursery unit for 52 full-time places, from 1 September 2012
St Aidan's Christian Brothers Primary School & St Bernadette's Primary School	BELB	01/11/11	22/12/11	Amalgamate from 1 September 2012.
Edmund Rice Primary School & Star of the Sea Girls' Primary School	BELB	01/11/11	22/12/11	Amalgamate from 1 September 2012
Gaelscoil Neachtain	WELB	01/07/11	11/01/12	Establish a new Irish medium PS, from Sep 2012
Bronte Primary School (501-6612)	SELB		16/02/12	Establish a nursery unit to provide 26 places from 1 September 2012.
Iveagh Primary School (501-1611)	SELB		16/02/12	Establish at nurseury unit to provide 26 full time places from 1 Sept 2012
Brackenagh West Primary School	SELB		16/02/12	To extend from 6 Class base school to 7 from 1 Sept 2012
Colaiste Feirste, post primary satellite	BELB/NEELB	15/11/11	28/02/12	To establish in Maghera, a post primary satellite of Colaiste Feirste.

- (ii) The table shows the date of the pre-publication consultation for Maintained and Irish-medium schools. Dates for Controlled schools are not included as the ELBs are both the proposer and publisher of these Development Proposals.

The elapsed time between submission of a proposal and its publication is dependent on the complexity of the proposal, the unique circumstances surrounding it and the date it is submitted to the Education and Library Board. For each proposal it is essential that it is clear and unambiguous and provides those wishing to comment with the full facts. As this is a statutory process it is also important that all the required processes have been adhered to prior to publication.

Staff Disciplinary Actions

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of staff disciplinary actions taken by his Department in each of the last two years, at Staff Officer level and above, including detail of the offence and the disciplinary sanctions applied.

(AQW 9117/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In 2010 there were 6 staff disciplinary actions taken by the Department of Education at Staff Officer level and above and in 2011 there were 3. The offences were breaches of the Dignity at Work Policy and the Standards of Conduct Policy. Disciplinary penalties applied were within the range of penalties available to persons exercising formal disciplinary powers as set out in the NICS Disciplinary Policy.

Schools Estate

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many school buses are owned by the Schools Estate in each Education and Library board area; and how many of these are in use for 52 weeks of the year.

(AQW 9227/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am advised by the Education and Library Boards that the number of school buses owned by each Board, (including vehicles retained in reserve for engineering and breakdown purposes), is:

BELB	84
NEELB	131
SEELB	169
SELB	205
WELB	279
Total	868

All of the Boards' school buses are taken off-road for one week at each of the Christmas and Easter holiday periods for staff holidays, so none are fully utilised for 52 weeks of the year. Of the remaining 50 weeks, buses are available for use (except when undergoing maintenance and servicing) and provide for a 38-week school year, and a range of other services such as school trips, transport of school meals, summer schemes and all-year-round youth activities.

Londonderry Primary School, Newtownards

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) when his Department took receipt of the Economic Assessment for a new build for Londonderry Primary School, Newtownards, which was commissioned by the South Eastern Education and Library Board; (ii) for his evaluation of the Assessment, and (iii) the current status of the Assessment.

(AQW 9243/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The Economic Appraisal for Londonderry Primary School was received by the Department in Autumn 2008.
- (ii) The Appraisal was however returned to the South-Eastern Education and Library Board by Cairtriona Ruane in February 2009 as the need for a capital scheme and options for appraisal had not been agreed.
- (iii) All future capital investment will be considered in the context of the area planning process.

Primary Schools in South Down

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Education, for each primary school in the South Down area, to detail (i) the enrolment number; (ii) the enrolment capacity; (iii) the current financial situation; and (iv) the percentage of pupils (a) with special educational needs; and (b) who are in receipt of free school meals. **(AQW 9272/11-15)**

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

INFORMATION ON PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY – 2011/12

School name	Enrolment number ¹	Enrolment Capacity ²	% pupils with SEN ³	% pupils entitled to free school meals
All Children's Integrated Primary School	215	212	12.6	21.9
Annalong Primary School	135	185	17.0	32.6
Annsborough Primary School	45	85	20.0	28.9
Ballydown Primary School	305	319	19.3	8.2
Ballyholland Primary School	219	244	23.7	17.4
Brackenagh West Primary School	158	166	24.7	12.7
Bronte Primary School	173	174	12.1	10.4
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	75	87	17.3	34.7
Carrick Primary School	410	406	15.9	12.4
Castlewellan Primary School	77	100	35.1	19.5
Cedar Integrated Primary School	185	196	28.1	10.3
Christ the King Primary School	96	197	28.1	30.2
Clontifleece Primary School	41	81	19.5	9.8
Cumran Primary School	200	203	32.0	18.0
Downpatrick Primary School	208	200	37.0	31.7
Dromore Road Primary School	93	88	16.1	28.0
Drumadonnell Primary School	202	203	16.8	8.9
Glasswater Primary School	76	97	18.4	14.5
Grange Primary School	96	145	13.5	30.2
Holy Cross Primary School, Kilkeel	125	123	13.6	10.4
Iveagh Primary School	228	274	21.5	29.8
Kilbroney Integrated Primary School	92	140	22.8	34.8
Kilkeel Primary School	407	611	22.9	19.4
Killowen Primary School	110	116	10.0	9.1
Moneydarragh Primary School	67	108	11.9	20.9

School name	Enrolment number¹	Enrolment Capacity²	% pupils with SEN³	% pupils entitled to free school meals
Newcastle Primary School	117	198	17.9	34.2
Our Lady and St Patrick Primary School, Downpatrick	411	460	20.7	36.5
Sacred Heart Primary School	81	136	29.6	28.4
Spa Primary School	146	200	15.1	5.5
St Brigid's Primary School, Downpatrick	220	266	19.1	24.5
St Bronagh's Primary School, Rostrevor	168	203	9.5	23.2
St Colman's Primary School, Annaclone	130	134	16.9	17.7
St Colman's Primary School, Kilkeel	185	454	29.2	45.4
St Colman's Primary School, Saval	166	174	22.3	19.9
St Colmcille's Primary School, Downpatrick	165	338	45.5	63.6
St Dallan's Primary School, Warrenpoint	471	697	18.3	29.5
St Francis' Primary School, Castlewellan	70	73	25.7	22.9
St Joseph's Primary School, Ardglass	64	76	25.0	40.6
St Joseph's Primary School, Ballymartin	93	128	35.5	18.3
St Joseph's Primary School, Killough	79	112	31.6	40.5
St Joseph's Primary School, Newcastle	154	194	5.8	23.4
St Joseph's Primary School, Strangford	33	91	18.2	18.2
St Joseph's Primary School, Tyrella	65	115	26.2	16.9
St Macartan's Primary School, Loughlinisland	175	185	21.7	9.7
St Malachy's Primary School, Castlewellan	299	350	33.1	32.4
St Malachy's Primary School, Kilclief	66	69	36.4	28.8
St Malachy's Primary School, Kilcoo	130	165	27.7	26.9
St Mary's Aughlinnafin	156	166	19.2	28.2
St Mary's Primary School, Ardglass	89	81	25.8	20.2

School name	Enrolment number¹	Enrolment Capacity²	% pupils with SEN³	% pupils entitled to free school meals
St Mary's Primary School, Glassdrumman	63	116	17.5	39.7
St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle	278	420	23.0	29.1
St Mary's Primary School, Rathfriland	102	115	18.6	29.4
St Marys Primary School, Dechomet	78	95	20.5	15.4
St Matthew's Primary School, Magheramayo	56	87	10.7	26.8
St Nicholas' Primary School, Ardglass	108	269	31.5	44.4
St Patrick's Primary School, Castlewellan	44	95	6.8	18.2
St Patrick's Primary School, Downpatrick	165	202	17.0	30.9
St Patrick's Primary School, Drumgreenagh	76	84	13.2	15.8
St Patrick's Primary School, Hilltown	281	287	14.6	28.1
St Patrick's Primary School, Mayobridge	296	284	11.1	17.9
St Patrick's Primary School, Saul	176	174	17.6	14.8
St Paul's Primary School, Cabra	74	77	17.6	12.2
St Ronan's Primary School, Newry	391	391	13.3	11.8
The Holy Family Primary School, Downpatrick	190	195	25.8	9.5

Source: NI school census for enrolment numbers. DE School Access Team for approved enrolment capacity figures.

Notes:

- 1 The Enrolment Number has been interpreted to be the actual number of Reception – Year 7 pupils on the school roll as at the October 2011 school census and includes children in receipt of a statement of special educational needs, admitted on appeal or by direction of the Exceptional Circumstances Body. These pupils are supernumerary to a school's approved enrolment capacity.
- 2 Enrolment Capacity has been interpreted to be the approved Reception – Year 7 enrolment number for the 2011/12 school year and does not include any temporary variation to that number which may have been granted by the Department.
- 3 Figures for % SEN pupils relate to pupils at Stage 1 – 5 on the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION - EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY

School name	Cumulative surplus/ deficit at March 2011^{(1),(2)} £	Cumulative surplus/ deficit as a % of available Delegated Budget
All Childrens Integrated PS	-4,943	-0.84%
Annalong PS	18,891	3.70%
Annsborough PS	5,919	2.94%
Ballydown PS	44,934	4.88%
Ballyholland PS	-43,383	-7.32%
Brackenagh West PS	6,795	1.46%
Bronte PS	10,703	2.08%
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche	-20,758	-9.15%
Carrick PS, Warenpoint	51,670	4.86%
Castlewellan PS	804	0.29%
Christ the King PS	33,867	8.93%
Clontifleece PS	-3,257	-1.62%
Cumran PS	161,159	19.42%
Downpatrick PS	82,039	11.23%
Dromore Road PS	70,104	20.95%
Drumadonnell PS	113,969	17.02%
Glasswater PS	61,073	19.61%
Grange PS	47,591	12.27%
Holy Cross PS	-16,943	-5.20%
Iveagh PS	35,274	5.06%
Kilbroney Integrated PS	71,109	16.33%
Kilkeel PS	100,659	8.31%
Killowen PS	4,325	1.10%
Moneydarragh PS	-11,690	-4.26%
Newcastle PS	5,465	1.12%
Our Lady and St Patrick PS, Downpatrick	no data available – school opened Sept. 2011 after amalgamation of St Patrick's PS, Downpatrick and Convent of Mercy PS.	
Sacred Heart PS, Newcastle	20,592	6.62%
Spa PS	94,027	15.80%
St Brigid's PS, Downpatrick	82,504	12.12%

School name	Cumulative surplus/ deficit at March 2011⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ £	Cumulative surplus/ deficit as a % of available Delegated Budget
St Bronagh's PS, Rostrevor	-6,399	-1.14%
St Colman's PS, Annaclone	151,054	30.07%
St Colman's PS, Kilkeel	21,506	3.86%
St Colman's PS, Saval	44,062	8.85%
St Colmcille's PS, Downpatrick	59,253	7.80%
St Dallan's PS, Warrenpoint	90,959	5.75%
St Francis' PS, Drumaroad	-17,228	-8.09%
St Joseph's PS, Ballycruttle	10,397	5.24%
St Joseph's PS, Ballymartin	13,977	3.95%
St Joseph's PS, Carnacaville	57,410	11.31%
St Joseph's PS, Killough	40,091	11.85%
St Joseph's PS, Strangford	43,515	18.16%
St Joseph's PS, Tyrella	18,576	6.63%
St Macartan's PS	124,467	20.21%
St Malachy's PS, Castlewellan	174,288	17.69%
St Malachy's PS, Kilclief	21,074	8.67%
St Malachy's PS, Kilcoo	46,458	10.93%
St Mary's PS, Ardglass	61,924	15.90%
St Mary's PS, Aughlisnafin	13,484	2.88%
St Marys PS, Dechomet	22,770	7.40%
St Mary's PS, Glassdrumman	-37,633	-17.94%
St Mary's PS, Newcastle	58,205	5.71%
St Mary's PS, Rathfriland	69,773	16.56%
St Matthew's PS, Magheramayo	56,162	20.98%
St Nicholas' PS, Ardglass	40,228	9.20%
St Patrick's PS, Ballymaghery	-3,766	-0.50%
St Patrick's PS, Castlewellan	-19,421	-9.97%
St Patrick's PS, Drumgreenagh	22,656	7.55%
St Patrick's PS, Legamaddy	134,498	21.88%
St Patrick's PS, Mayobridge	13,879	1.77%
St Patrick's PS, Saul	95,632	17.53%
St Paul's PS, Cabra	35,049	12.30%

School name	Cumulative surplus/ deficit at March 2011⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ £	Cumulative surplus/ deficit as a % of available Delegated Budget
St Ronan's PS, Newry	-8,615	-0.89%
The Holy Family PS	65,770	10.59%

GRANT-MAINTAINED INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL (3) & (4) IN THE SOUTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY

School name	Comment on Financial Position
Cedar Integrated PS	The reported financial position of Grant-Maintained Integrated (GMI) schools includes an element of non-public funds, which means that it cannot be compared on a like-for-like basis with ELB schools.
	The Department of Education can confirm that there are no GMI schools with a deficit of public funds at March 2011.

Notes:

- 1 2010/11 is the latest Financial year for which financial data are available;
- 2 Data source for the Education and Library Board schools is the 2010/11 Local Management of Schools Outturn Statements from Southern Education and Library Board and from the South Eastern Education and Library Board;
- 3 DE is Funding Authority for the Grant-Maintained Integrated (GMI) sector;
- 4 GMI schools are not reported on in the same way as schools for which ELBs are Funding Authority.

Source: School census

Asbestos in Schools

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education what discussions he has had with counterparts in Great Britain concerning the dangers of asbestos in school buildings.

(AQW 9306/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Following the introduction of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (NI) 2003 and the Control of Asbestos (NI Order) 2007 the ELB's arranged for asbestos assessments to be carried out of the schools' estate to ascertain the extent of asbestos containing materials present. Any asbestos containing materials that were identified during assessments as being 'High Risk' were removed following the assessment. Each school has an asbestos register detailing the presence of any asbestos containing materials within that school. This register is available for inspection by any personnel wishing to carry out any works at the school or for information purposes.

In addition Department of Education Circular 2003/20 provides advice on the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (NI) 2003. I have had no discussions with counterparts in Great Britain concerning the dangers of asbestos in school buildings.

Financial Viability of Schools

Ms Lewis asked the Minister of Education which schools in the South Antrim area are deemed to be in financial viability stress.

(AQW 9313/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Viability Audits carried out by education and library boards were published on the boards' websites on 6 March 2012. Individual reports for all schools are available, and they include the financial position of each school.

A list of all schools in the South Antrim constituency is set out below. Viability Audit Information on each of them can be found at:

<http://www.neelb.org.uk/schools/area-based-planning/>
and http://www.seelb.org.uk/PDFs/SEELB_Viability_Audit_2012.pdf

Primary Schools	Post-Primary Schools
All schools in North Eastern Board area, except for those noted as South Eastern (SEELB)	All schools North Eastern Board area
Antrim Primary School	Antrim Grammar School
Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School (SEELB)	Ballyclare High School
Ballyclare Primary School	Ballyclare Secondary School
Ballycraigy Primary School	Crumlin Integrated College
Ballymacrickett Primary School (SEELB)	Parkhall Integrated College
Ballymacward Primary School (SEELB)	St Benedict's College
Ballynure Primary School	
Carlane Primary School	
Carnmoney Primary School	
Creavery Primary School	
Creggan Primary School	
Crumlin Primary School	
Doagh Primary School	
Duneane Primary School	
Earlview Primary School	
Fairview Primary School	
Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach	
Greystone Primary School	
Groggan Primary School	
Kilbride Primary School	
Loanends Primary School	
Maine Integrated Primary School	
Mallusk Primary School	
McKinney Primary School Dundrod (SEELB)	
Moneynick Primary School	
Mossley Primary School	
Mount St Michael's Primary School	

Primary Schools	Post-Primary Schools
All schools in North Eastern Board area, except for those noted as South Eastern (SEELB)	All schools North Eastern Board area
Parkgate Primary School	
Parkhall Primary School	
Randalstown Central Primary School	
Rathenraw Integrated Primary School	
Round Tower Integrated Primary School	
St Comgall's Primary School	
St Joseph's Primary School	
St Joseph's Primary School	
St Macnisius' Primary School	
St Macnissi's Primary School	
St Oliver Plunkett's Primary School	
Straid Primary School	
Straidhavern Primary School	
Templepatrick Primary School	
Thompson Primary School	
Tildarg Primary School	
Tir-na-Nog Primary School	

Asbestos in Schools

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education what plans he has for asbestos training for people working in schools.

(AQW 9359/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The education sectors, in line with current legislation and policy, adequately manage the presence of asbestos containing materials in the North of Ireland schools' estate. Currently there are no plans to provide specific asbestos training to school staff.
- (ii) As a result of the introduction of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (NI) 2003 and the Control of Asbestos (NI Order) 2007 the ELBs arranged for asbestos assessments to be carried out of the schools' estate to ascertain the extent of asbestos containing materials present. Any asbestos containing materials that were identified during assessments as being 'High Risk' were removed following the assessment. Each school has an asbestos register detailing the presence of any asbestos containing materials within that school. This register is available for inspection by any personnel wishing to carry out any works at the school or for information purposes. In addition Department of Education Circular 2003/20 provides advice on the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (NI) 2003. I do not currently plan to issue any statement on the matter.
- (iii) Please see below a table detailing the percentage of schools in each ELB area (not including those in the Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated sectors) that currently contain asbestos containing materials.

Board Area	%
BELB	67.63%
SEELB	74.36%
SELB	90.71%
NEELB	81.99%
WELB	88.65%

Asbestos in Schools

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education if he will make a statement on asbestos inspections in schools.
(AQW 9360/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The education sectors, in line with current legislation and policy, adequately manage the presence of asbestos containing materials in the North of Ireland schools' estate. Currently there are no plans to provide specific asbestos training to school staff.
- (ii) As a result of the introduction of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (NI) 2003 and the Control of Asbestos (NI Order) 2007 the ELBs arranged for asbestos assessments to be carried out of the schools' estate to ascertain the extent of asbestos containing materials present. Any asbestos containing materials that were identified during assessments as being 'High Risk' were removed following the assessment. Each school has an asbestos register detailing the presence of any asbestos containing materials within that school. This register is available for inspection by any personnel wishing to carry out any works at the school or for information purposes. In addition Department of Education Circular 2003/20 provides advice on the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (NI) 2003. I do not currently plan to issue any statement on the matter.
- (iii) Please see below a table detailing the percentage of schools in each ELB area (not including those in the Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated sectors) that currently contain asbestos containing materials.

Board Area	%
BELB	67.63%
SEELB	74.36%
SELB	90.71%
NEELB	81.99%
WELB	88.65%

Asbestos in Schools

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education what percentage of schools in each Education and Library Board area currently contain asbestos.
(AQW 9361/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The education sectors, in line with current legislation and policy, adequately manage the presence of asbestos containing materials in the North of Ireland schools' estate. Currently there are no plans to provide specific asbestos training to school staff.
- (ii) As a result of the introduction of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (NI) 2003 and the Control of Asbestos (NI Order) 2007 the ELBs arranged for asbestos assessments to be carried

out of the schools' estate to ascertain the extent of asbestos containing materials present. Any asbestos containing materials that were identified during assessments as being 'High Risk' were removed following the assessment. Each school has an asbestos register detailing the presence of any asbestos containing materials within that school. This register is available for inspection by any personnel wishing to carry out any works at the school or for information purposes. In addition Department of Education Circular 2003/20 provides advice on the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (NI) 2003. I do not currently plan to issue any statement on the matter.

- (iii) Please see below a table detailing the percentage of schools in each ELB area (not including those in the Voluntary Grammar and Grant Maintained Integrated sectors) that currently contain asbestos containing materials.

Board Area	%
BELB	67.63%
SEELB	74.36%
SELB	90.71%
NEELB	81.99%
WELB	88.65%

School Visit Invitations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of school visit invitations he has (i) received; and (ii) declined since coming into office, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 9370/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since coming into office I have received 106 invitations and declined 57. Two invitations are still under consideration.

Constituency	Received	Declined	Pending
Belfast East	2	1	
Belfast North	7	4	
Belfast South	5	1	
Belfast West	12	5	1
East Antrim	3	3	
East Derry	4		
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	9	4	
Foyle	3	2	
Mid Ulster	7	3	
Newry & Armagh	13	8	
North Antrim	1	1	
North Down	6	4	
South Antrim	2	2	
South Down	9	7	
Strangford	5	4	1

Constituency	Received	Declined	Pending
Upper Bann	11	5	
West Tyrone	7	3	

Dissolution of the Education and Library Boards

Ms Lewis asked the Minister of Education for an estimate of the number of jobs that might be lost as a result of the dissolution of the Education and Library Boards and the introduction of the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQW 9378/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The original Business Case for the Education and Skills Authority envisaged a reduction of 463 staff. The Business Case is currently being reviewed and no estimate has yet been made regarding the final figure for staff reduction.

Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team

Ms Lewis asked the Minister of Education what action the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team has taken to engage with schools during the transitional period to the single authority.

(AQW 9379/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In advance of the planned implementation date for the Education and Skills Authority of January 2010, there was considerable engagement with school Principals through a range of forums including conferences, focus groups, and meetings with informal and formal principal groups. The Chief Executive (Designate) also attended school Governor conferences and met with school Governors to discuss the establishment of the new organisation.

Following the announcement in November 2011 that the new organisation will be established by April 2013, the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team and the Chief Executive (Designate) have sought to engage further with school Principals and Governors to discuss the implications of the new arrangements for schools. Since November 2011, the Chief Executive (Designate) has already met with school Principals and Governors and attended a Governors' conference and this engagement will increase further over the transition period.

Voluntary Severance Programme

Ms Lewis asked the Minister of Education (i) which Education and Library Boards are currently offering voluntarily severance to staff; (ii) how many staff, to date, have taken voluntary severance; and (iii) how many staff Boards expect to take voluntary severance.

(AQW 9380/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A severance scheme is currently open to staff in all education sector organisations. As a result of the 2010-2011 Cost Reduction Programme 209 staff were released. As part of the current 2011-2012 Voluntary Severance Programme, in response to the Savings Delivery Plan, 192 staff to date have been approved for release. It is not necessarily the case that all staff whose applications are approved will ultimately decide to avail of the opportunity and consequently it is also not possible to estimate a figure for staff who are likely to do so.

Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team

Ms Lewis asked Minister of Education how many staff currently work for the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team; and how many staff in total it intends to employ.

(AQW 9381/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team is a branch within my Department. 20 full time and 5 part time staff currently work on the team. It is envisaged that a small

number of additional staff may be needed in the run up to the implementation of ESA, but no decision has yet been taken on this.

Dickson Plan for Education

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education to detail the future of Lurgan College as a grammar school within the two-tier Craigavon-based Dickson Plan for Education.

(AQW 9415/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Responsibility for the future of controlled post-primary provision in the Lurgan area, including that at Lurgan College, is in the first instance a matter for the Southern Education and Library Board as the school managing authority.

As I set out in my Statement to the Assembly on Monday 26 September 2011, I have commissioned the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) working in close conjunction with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectors to co-ordinate a strategic area planning exercise based on each ELB area to shape the future pattern of education delivery.

I have asked for these area plans to be completed by the end of March 2012 for post-primary schools and June 2012 for primary schools.

No school will be looked at in isolation but must be considered in the context of the wider area. Until the work in developing the strategic area plans has been completed and proposals have been brought forward I cannot comment on the future of individual schools.

Draft Programme for Government

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education, in light of his commitment in the draft Programme for Government to provide one year of funded pre-school education for every child, what steps he intends to take to aid parents wanting to place their children in a funded pre-school in September 2012, particularly in the high demand rural areas.

(AQW 9424/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Programme for Government commitment to provide one year of funded pre-school education for every child whose family wants to avail of it is consistent with the aim of the Department's Pre-School Education Expansion Programme (PSEEP), which was launched in 1998.

In the current school year there are over 23,000 children in funded pre-school education provision and if necessary, additional capacity in the sector may be achieved through the creation of new/additional statutory nursery units or by the allocation of additional funded places in voluntary and private pre-school settings participating in the PSEEP.

I have recently approved the creation of 104 new places in four new statutory nursery units at Orchard County PS, Portadown, Waringstown PS, Craigavon,

St Patrick's PS, Mayobridge and Drumadonnell PS, Banbridge. A number of other Development Proposals to increase capacity in the statutory nursery sector are currently under consideration.

In addition the number of DE funded pre-school places in voluntary/private settings has increased by over 1,400 in the past three years.

DE will continue to work closely with the Pre-School Education Advisory Groups in the Education and Library Boards, who are responsible for the planning and provision of pre-school places, to ensure that the Programme for Government target is met.

Funded Pre-school Places

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what proportion of children of the appropriate age in North Down are receiving a year of funded pre-school education.

(AQW 9435/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In 2011/12, it is estimated that 91% of children in their immediate pre-school year living in the North Down Local Government District were in funded pre-school education.

Note:

- 1 The figure is based on numbers of children resident in North Down who are attending nursery units or reception classes in primary schools, nursery schools and, on the number of funded places in voluntary and private pre-school centres in the North Down area (as the Department does not hold individual level residence information for children at these centres).

Employment of Gavin Boyd

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how many posts Gavin Boyd currently holds within education administration and how many are paid posts.

(AQW 9449/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Mr Boyd is employed by my Department as Chief Executive (Designate) for the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). He is also Interim Chief Executive of the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB). He receives no additional remuneration for these responsibilities. The Education and Skills Authority is to be established by 1 April 2013, as part of the Executive's Programme for Government. Under the legislation, the BELB and the other four Education and Library Boards will be dissolved and their functions subsumed within the ESA.

Understanding the Needs of Children

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education when, and under what circumstances, an Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) form should be submitted by a teacher; and (ii) under what circumstances relating to child pastoral care and child protection issues should a UNOCINI form not be used.

(AQW 9451/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The UNOCINI form and related assessment system is intended to be the basis for securing support for children and young people both within and between agencies who work with them.

The UNOCINI form is used for any referral of a pupil to social services by a school where there are concerns of a child protection nature. The form is normally completed by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or the Deputy Designated Teacher and use of the system is included in the training provided for these positions.

A school can use the form to make referrals to seek support from other services, such as Education Welfare and as the basis for its own record keeping. In these circumstances it is a matter for the school to determine the arrangements which are most appropriate.

Post-Primary Education

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education to detail the qualification criteria for prospective teachers wishing to be employed in post-primary education.

(AQW 9452/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The General Teaching Council (GTC) is the self regulatory professional body for teachers and has a statutory duty to determine who should be a member of the teaching profession here.

Persons employed as teachers in grant-aided schools are required to be registered with the Council. As part of its registration process, the GTC approves qualifications for the purpose of registration and eligibility to teach.

Although a teacher registered with the Council is eligible to teach in either primary or secondary schools, when making appointments, employer bodies should ensure that the teacher is suitably

trained for the required phase and subject, especially in practical and physical subjects where there is a potential health and safety risk.

Teaching vacancies are widely advertised in the local press and open to all eligible teachers who meet the eligibility criteria. The responsibility for developing relevant and focused job descriptions, personnel specifications and job advertisements rests with the Boards of Governors of individual schools, in consultation with the relevant employing authority. Eligibility criteria must be made known to prospective applicants, related to the ability to do the job, and must be non-discriminatory.

Irish-Medium School in Dungiven

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Education whether it is financially viable to open a new Irish-medium school in Dungiven when the existing Irish-medium unit at St Canice Primary School, Dungiven currently functions below capacity.

(AQW 9459/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are two Development Proposals currently with my Department; one for the establishment of Gaelscoil Neachtain as a controlled Irish-medium (IM) primary school in Dungiven and one for the closure of the IM unit at St Canice's Primary School. The latter proposal is predicated upon approval of the former.

The statutory 2-month objection period for the proposal to open the new Gaelscoil ended on 12 March and I will make a decision on it taking account of all the pertinent information and the comments received.

The proposal for the closure of the St Canice's IM unit was published on 7 March and the statutory 2-month objection period is therefore in operation. I will not be in a position to consider the proposal until the consultation period has ended.

I cannot at this stage provide definitive answers to the questions raised; they will, however, be issues that form part of my assessment of the individual merits of these two Development Proposals.

Irish-Medium School in Dungiven

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Education whether he intends to finance the existing Irish-medium unit at St Canice Primary School, Dungiven instead of opening a new Irish medium school, Gaelscoil Neachtain, Dungiven.

(AQW 9461/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are two Development Proposals currently with my Department; one for the establishment of Gaelscoil Neachtain as a controlled Irish-medium (IM) primary school in Dungiven and one for the closure of the IM unit at St Canice's Primary School. The latter proposal is predicated upon approval of the former.

The statutory 2-month objection period for the proposal to open the new Gaelscoil ended on 12 March and I will make a decision on it taking account of all the pertinent information and the comments received.

The proposal for the closure of the St Canice's IM unit was published on 7 March and the statutory 2-month objection period is therefore in operation. I will not be in a position to consider the proposal until the consultation period has ended.

I cannot at this stage provide definitive answers to the questions raised; they will, however, be issues that form part of my assessment of the individual merits of these two Development Proposals.

Irish-Medium School in Dungiven

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Education whether he has considered the impact to the Irish-medium unit at St Canice Primary School, Dungiven if the proposed new Irish-medium school in Dungiven, Gaelscoil Neachtain, is agreed.

(AQW 9463/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are two 'live' Development Proposals with my Department; one for the establishment of Gaelscoil Neachtain as a controlled Irish-medium (IM) primary school in Dungiven and one for the closure of the IM unit at St Canice's Primary School in Dungiven. The latter proposal is predicated upon prior approval to the former proposal.

The statutory 2-month objection period for the first proposal ended on 11 March. I have however recently agreed to meet with the interim Board of Gaelscoil Neachtain, to hear their views in support of the proposal and it will only be after that meeting that officials will be in a position to provide a submission to me to support my decision on this case.

In the case of the latter proposal for the closure of the St Canice's IM unit; this was only recently published and the statutory 2-month objection period is in operation. I will not be in a position to consider the merits of this proposal until the objection period has ended.

I cannot at this stage provide definitive answers to the questions raised; they will however be issues that form part of the assessment of the individual merits of these two published Development Proposals.

Segregated Education

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Education to outline his position on the segregation of Irish-medium education and English-medium education.

(AQW 9464/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There is no segregation of Irish-medium and English-medium education. The 26 Irish medium schools are either within the Catholic Maintained or Controlled sectors, or categorised as Other Maintained. There are also 13 Irish medium Units (9 primary and 4 post primary) attached to English medium schools which are Catholic Maintained schools.

Funding for Classroom Assistants

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 8489/11-15, to detail (i) whether individual schools, rather than the Education and Library Boards, are now or will be responsible for the commissioning or funding of classroom assistants; (ii) any changes which have been made or are planned to the employment contracts of classroom assistants; and (iii) whether there is or will be any statutory requirement for schools to hire classroom assistants.

(AQW 9470/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) My Department has not made any changes to the way Classroom Assistants are or will be commissioned or funded.
- (ii) I am not aware of any changes which have been made or are planned to the employment contracts of classroom assistants however this is a matter for the Education and Library Boards as the employing authority.
- (iii) I can confirm that there is currently no statutory requirement on schools to employ classroom assistants and that the SEN Review has no proposals relating to the employment of classroom assistants or putting a statutory requirement on schools to hire them.

Middletown Autism Centre

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how many special education schools have availed of the services of Middletown Autism Centre.

(AQW 9480/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: 37 special schools have availed of the services of the Middletown Centre for Autism to date.

Pre-school Provision: Newry and Armagh

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to increase pre-school provision in the Newry and Armagh constituency.

(AQO 1555/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Pre-School Education places are available in statutory nursery schools, nursery units in Primary Schools and in voluntary and private pre-school settings.

The Boards and the Pre-School Education Advisory Groups (PEAGS) within each ELB are responsible for the planning and allocation of pre-school places on behalf of the Department at local level, to ensure that the aim of the Pre-School Education Programme is met. However, it is not always possible to make a place available in the first preference setting expressed by a parent.

For the 2012/13 pre-school admissions process, there are 936 places available in statutory nursery schools and nursery units in Primary Schools in the area. This includes 26 places recently approved at Orchard County Nursery Unit. A provisional allocation of 683 places has been made to providers in voluntary / private settings including a new IME pre-school provider in Armagh town. The decision to bring this provider into the programme (for 2012/13 only at present) was made based on the analysis of first preference applications which evidenced a demand for IM places.

The SELB PEAG will continue to monitor levels of provision across the board area, and will progress additional capacity subject to need and available resources.

The draft PfG included a commitment to provide one year of funded pre-school education for every child whose parent wants it. DE will continue to work with the Education and Library Boards to ensure that the PfG commitment can be met.

Schools: Closures

Ms Lewis asked the Minister of Education how his Department, and its associated bodies, are assisting pupils and parents in schools which are scheduled to close.

(AQO 1556/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All proposals for school closures are governed by the statutory Development Proposal process. Always included in this process is an assessment of the availability of alternative and suitable places for pupils whose school may close. It is the statutory responsibility of the Education & Library Boards to ensure adequate provision in their areas.

In the context of closures planned in this manner, the admissions and transport arrangements operated by Education and Library Boards will see children affected by any closure placed in alternative suitable schools within reasonable travelling distance.

Education and Library Boards: Chief Executives

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what plans are in place to fill current and future Chief Executive vacancies in the Education and Library Boards.

(AQO 1557/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Vacancies within the ELBs are advertised in line with the Vacancy Control Policy, pending the establishment of ESA.

There have recently been two vacancies within the ELBs at Chief Executive level, one in BELB and one in SEELB. Both posts were subject to a trawl under Stage 2 of the Vacancy Control Policy, with short-listed candidates interviewed in late February.

In respect of the BELB post, no appointment was made following the recruitment process. In response to a BELB request Gavin Boyd has undertaken the role of Interim Chief Executive, with effect 1 March. The Board is now exploring other options to fill this position, on the basis that this is an interim appointment.

In respect of SEELB, the Board Commissioners have made a recommendation to the Department for the appointment of a Chief Executive on a temporary basis.

Primary Schools: East Belfast

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Education how he intends to progress the plans to rationalise primary schools in East Belfast.

(AQO 1558/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: You will be aware that I have commissioned the Education & Library Boards, working with CCMS and the other sectors, to undertake an area planning process.

I have asked for initial Area Plans for Primary schools, to be submitted to the Department by the end of June. This will include plans for primary schools in East Belfast. The Boards will then manage a public consultation exercise on the draft Area Plans in due course. This will provide the opportunity for all interested parties to comment before the plan is finalised.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Education when he will introduce a Bill on the Education and Skills Authority.

(AQO 1559/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Bill has been drafted and circulated to Executive colleagues. Subject to Executive agreement, I intend to introduce it in the Assembly in the very near future.

Drumcree College, Portadown

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education whether there is sufficient alternative provision for pupils in the Portadown area if Drumcree College is closed.

(AQO 1560/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that the Catholic Commission's Post Primary Review recommends that the Drumcree College trustees and CCMS begin discussions on the school's closure.

All proposals for school closures are governed by the statutory Development Proposal process. This ensures that all interested parties have the opportunity to make their views known before any decisions are taken.

Following publication of a Development Proposal there is a two month consultation period during which anyone may make their views known to the Department. I then make a decision on the proposal taking account of all pertinent information and comments received. This always includes an assessment of the availability of alternative places for pupils whose school may close.

Schools: Rationalisation

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education how many school rationalisation processes are in progress in all education sectors.

(AQO 1561/11-15)

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

Recently I have approved Development Proposals for the closure of two schools and the amalgamation of four schools to form two new schools with effect from 31 August 2012. My Department is also currently considering a further five Development Proposals.

In September 2011, I commissioned the Education and Library Boards in conjunction with CCMS and the other sectoral bodies to develop area plans for the schools' estate. This process is still ongoing and I have asked for the plans for the post-primary sector to be completed by the end of March with plans for the primary sector by end June 2012.

Until the area planning work is completed it is not possible to say what further proposals for rationalisation of the schools' estate may be brought forward by managing authorities.

Commission for Catholic Education: Post-Primary Review

Mrs McKevitt asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the post-primary review undertaken by the Commission for Catholic Education.

(AQO 1562/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have asked the Education and library Boards to co-ordinate an area-based planning process. It requires that all education sectors must contribute to a single agreed plan for each board area.

The Catholic Commission's review sets out proposals for the future of the Catholic post-primary sector. It will therefore represent an important element in the collective effort which will deliver those agreed Area plans.

I am however disappointed that the Commission did not provide a firm deadline for the ending of academic selection in its schools.

Department for Employment and Learning

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the Scottish Government's approach to the administration of the Education Maintenance Allowance.

(AQW 8025/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Means-tested Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) were introduced along similar lines throughout the United Kingdom administrations to encourage young people to stay on in full-time education, after reaching the legal age for compulsory attendance and variations have developed among the administrations.

In Scotland, arrangements have been in place since April 2011 to extend the EMA scheme to young people leaving education and not entering training or employment. The eligibility criteria for these additional learners to receive EMA differ from the previous scheme in Scotland as regards required attendance hours, Learning Centre and course accreditations. The administration infrastructure is also different involving Local Authority management and one-to-one advisor – learner contracts or Activity Agreements.

In terms of the future of EMA in Northern Ireland, the options currently being considered are based on findings from the joint review commissioned by my Department and the Department of Education. The intention has been to modify the existing scheme by better targeting it to continue encouraging young people from low household income families to stay on in full time education.

Further Education College Health Check Report

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the Further Education College Health Check Report for the North West Regional College for the current year.

(AQW 8817/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department compiles and issues health check reports to the governing bodies of all further education colleges on a quarterly basis. The reports detail the performance of colleges across a

number of key areas. Reports relating to the first quarter of the 2011/12 academic year were delayed to allow refined performance data to be included. These reports have now been issued to colleges.

Multiple Redundancies in a Concentrated Area or Constituency

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the support his Department can provide when there are multiple redundancies in a concentrated area or in a constituency.

(AQW 8825/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning works in partnership with the Social Security Agency, training organisations, further education colleges, enterprise agencies and local councils to deliver a joined-up redundancy service to those facing unemployment. Employment Service staff provide on-site redundancy clinics and can organise Job Fairs and Advice Forums in areas where multiple redundancies have occurred and other employers are recruiting.

Further Education College Staff

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people are employed full-time at each further education college.

(AQW 8826/11-15)

Dr Farry: Each further education college, in its capacity as an employing authority, is responsible for all employment related matters. Consequently, my Department does not hold the information requested by the member. I have, therefore, referred this query to the six further education college Directors, each of whom will respond to the member directly.

Further Education College Students

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students are currently enrolled at each further education college.

(AQW 8827/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of students at each Northern Ireland (NI) Further Education (FE) College in 2010/11 is detailed in Annex A.

Annex A

NUMBER OF STUDENTS BY NI FE COLLEGE IN 2010-11

Student Numbers	Belfast Metropolitan	Northern Regional	South Eastern Regional	Southern Regional	South West	North West Regional	Total
Professional and Technical Students	22,397	12,570	15,707	17,472	11,975	14,172	94,293
Students undertaking recreational courses	4,660	3,796	2,044	2,660	2,373	3,235	18,768
Total	27,057	16,366	17,751	20,132	14,348	17,407	113,061

Source: Further Education Statistical Record (FESR)

Notes:

- (1) Latest validated data held by my Department pertains to the 2010/11 academic year.
- (2) The figures presented above are a student headcount as opposed to enrolments (where the same student can be enrolled more than once).

- (3) Professional and technical provision relates to those courses which have a qualification aim attached.

Secondment to Trade Unions

Mr McCallister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the number of (a) full-time; and (b) part-time staff who are currently on secondment from his Department, or its arm's length bodies, to each recognised trade union; (ii) the salary scale for each secondee; and (iii) the length of each secondment to date.

(AQW 8854/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning currently has three full-time Civil Servants, one at Deputy Principal grade, one at Senior Instructional Officer grade and one at Executive Officer 1 grade, who are seconded to NIPSA to carry out full-time trade union duties. There are currently no part-time Civil Servants who are seconded to NIPSA from the Department. There are no staff in the Department's arm's length bodies who are seconded to a trade union.

The 2011/12 salary scales and the length of each secondment to date are detailed overleaf.

Grade	2011/12 Pay Bands	Length of Secondment to Date
Deputy Principal	£34,163 - £38,893	6 years 5 months
Senior Instructional Officer	£28,631 - £30,985	20 years 2 months
Executive Officer 1	£23,336 - £26,086	5 months

Apprenticeships

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many apprenticeships have been created in the last five years, broken down by trade.

(AQW 8864/11-15)

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 data at Annex A details the number of apprentices who started on ApprenticeshipsNI and Jobskills, broken down by sector, for each of the last five years. The Member may wish to note that while the Jobskills Programme was replaced in September 2007 for new starts, existing Jobskills participants continued to progress within Jobskills until their natural conclusion.

Annex A

APPRENTICESHIPS NI STARTS

Start Period	Health, Public Service and Care	Business, Admin and Law	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	Construction, Planning and The Built Environment	Information and Communication Technology	Retail and Commercial Enterprises	Leisure, Travel and Tourism	Arts, Media and Publishing
1 Feb 2007 31 Jan 2008	194	111	22	998	999	15	607	17	9

Start Period	Health, Public Service and Care	Business, Admin and Law	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	Construction, Planning and The Built Environment	Information and Communication Technology	Retail and Commercial Enterprises	Leisure, Travel and Tourism	Arts, Media and Publishing
1 Feb 2008 31 Jan 2009	1666	762	27	1083	696	81	2058	15	7
1 Feb 2009 31 Jan 2010	1392	1075	35	1206	691	113	2323	9	18
1 Feb 2010 31 Jan 2011	1933	1640	32	1144	556	305	2904	19	34
1 Feb 2011 31 Jan 2012	1805	2306	75	1159	434	248	3271	34	23

JOBSKILLS STARTS

Start Period	Admin, Clerical, Reception and secretarial	Creative, Educational, Recreational	Health, Community and Personal Services	Selling and Storage	Hotel and Catering Food Preparation	Agriculture and Related	Construction and Civil Engineering	Motor Vehicle Repairs and Maintenance	Printing	Processing	Engineering
1 Feb 2007 31 Jan 2008	170	1	502	131	177	35	792	146	11	1	138
1 Feb 2008 31 Jan 2009	25	0	107	2	3	10	804	120	5	0	92
1 Feb 2009 31 Jan 2010	0	0	31	0	1	1	36	7	0	0	4
1 Feb 2010 31 Jan 2011	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 Feb 2011 31 Jan 2012	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

People with a Disability who have Completed Third Level Education

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people with a disability have completed third level education in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8878/11-15)

Dr Farry: The total number of students with a disability who have completed third level education in each of the last five years, for which data are available, broken down by those completing courses and gaining achievements at the Northern Ireland Further Education Colleges (FECs) and by those obtaining qualifications at the Northern Ireland Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is set out in the table below.

Academic Year	FECs - up to and including Level 3	FECs - HE in FE	HEIs
2006/07	2,414	78	880
2007/08	3,440	161	955
2008/09	4,019	180	900
2009/10	4,347	202	755
2010/11	5,057	194	880

Sources: Further Education Leavers Survey (FELS) & Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- (1) In line with HESA's rounding strategy, figures at the HEIs have been rounded to the nearest 5.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2010/11.
- (3) Information on disability is collected on the basis of a student's self assessment.
- (4) Given the different available definitions of third level education, the data presented above for the FECs have been split into provision up to and including Level 3 and those who have achieved at the HE in FE level.

Schemes Specifically for 16-24 Year Olds

Mr B McCreagh asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what schemes his Department funds that are specifically for 16-24 year olds.

(AQW 8892/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department provides a guarantee of a training place for all eligible unemployed young people aged 16 and 17, with extended eligibility for those with a disability or from an in-care background. Training is offered through the demand led Training for Success and Programme-Led Apprenticeship (PLA) programmes with participants following a chosen occupational area.

The PLA programme was introduced in September 2009 as an intervention measure during the current economic downturn. This intervention offers a similar training opportunity as the employer-led ApprenticeshipsNI, by providing a participant with the opportunity to gain a full apprenticeship framework at Level 2. The work placement is a fundamental element of the PLA programme ensuring that the participant can gain evidence towards a competence based qualification.

ApprenticeshipsNI is my Department's flagship training model for those in employment. ApprenticeshipsNI aims to provide participants with the opportunity to take part in a Level2/Level3 Apprenticeship.

ApprenticeshipsNI is open to those who have reached school leaving age, are either entering or already in employment and contracted to work a minimum of 21 hours per week. The apprentice is in paid employment from day one.

For those aged 16 -24 years my Department undertakes to pay the full costs of the 'off-the-job' training included in the ApprenticeshipsNI framework for the duration of the apprenticeship.

While not specifically for 16 – 24 year olds, the Steps to Work programme is available to anyone aged 18 or over (lone parents aged 16 or over) who is not working or working less than 16 hours per week.

Similarly, while not specifically for 16 -24 year olds, the Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) is an all age service initiative designed to help unemployed people in the community overcome those issues that may be preventing them from finding and keeping a job.

In addition to these programmes, the Department also provides financial assistance through the 'Adviser Discretion Fund' to anyone aged 18 or over (lone parents aged 16 or over) who is not working or working less than 16 hours per week, to fund the purchase of goods or services to remove a barrier to employment.

Under the joint DEL/DE means-tested Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme, young people aged between 16 and 19 attending schools and Further Education colleges in Northern Ireland are eligible to receive a means-tested weekly allowance (£10, £20 or £30) to encourage them to stay in full-time education, depending on their family household income. In addition, learners are eligible to receive bonus payments of up to £300 a year.

The Department has funded two programmes aimed at raising the aspiration and educational attainment levels of school pupils in disadvantaged areas with traditionally low levels of participation in higher education.

"Step Up" provides an opportunity for young people to improve their academic performance and to gain entry to higher education.

"Discovering Queen's" aims to raise their awareness of higher education. Interventions include taster days, summer schools, master classes and enhanced induction programmes.

Whilst the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NIESF) Programme, 2007-2013 is not specifically targeted at 16 – 24 year olds they are eligible to participate and do take part in projects funded under the programme.

Step Ahead Programme

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the success rate for people who complete the Step Ahead programme.

(AQW 8893/11-15)

Dr Farry: Since Step Ahead was introduced in September 2009, 37% of participants who left the programme by March 2011 found employment (the latest date for which statistics are available).

Discontinued Courses

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to list the courses that have been discontinued in each regional college in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8894/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not hold the lists requested by the Member, as information relating to the number of discontinued and new courses is a matter for individual colleges.

My officials have contacted the Directors of the six Regional Colleges who have confirmed that the information is not readily available, and could only be obtained at significant cost.

Therefore, as it is only available at disproportionate cost, I am not in a position to provide the information to the Member.

Regional Colleges: New Courses

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to list the new courses that have started in each regional college in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8895/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not hold the lists requested by the Member, as information relating to the number of discontinued and new courses is a matter for individual colleges.

My officials have contacted the Directors of the six Regional Colleges who have confirmed that the information is not readily available, and could only be obtained at significant cost.

Therefore, as it is only available at disproportionate cost, I am not in a position to provide the information to the Member.

Working Abroad Expo in Dublin

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether she has planned any meetings with the delegation of Government officials and employers from Western Canada, who are attending the Working Abroad Expo in Dublin, and who are seeking to identify sources of skilled labour to help fill vacancies in the construction sector and related trades.

(AQW 8900/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have no plans to meet the delegation of government officials and employers from Western Canada who are attending the Working Abroad Expo in Dublin.

Student Placements and Courses

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many businesses does each regional college have a formal relationship or agreement with in relation to student placements and courses.

(AQW 8902/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not hold the information requested by the Member, as it has no locus in such matters. The six regional colleges have provided the following information, as set out in the table, overleaf:

Name of College	Number of businesses with a formal relationship or agreement for the purpose of student placements and courses
Belfast Metropolitan College	1,640
Northern Regional College	526
North West Regional College	728
South Eastern Regional College	1,268
Southern Regional College	1,500
South West College	1,933
Total	7,595

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

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the reasons why he met with the Equality Commission on the proposed merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University Belfast, but did not meet with the Commission regarding St Mary's University College; and whether he has ruled out St Mary's being included in any possible merger.

(AQW 8934/11-15)

Dr Farry: I met with the Equality Commission to discuss its response to the public consultation on the proposed merger of Stranmillis University College with Queen's University. I announced a two-stage study of the teacher education infrastructure in Northern Ireland on 28 November 2011. The second stage of this study will set out options for a more shared and integrated system for the delivery and funding of teacher education.

Information and Communication Technology Sector

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department has a strategy or policy in place to address the lack of people who are suitably qualified for the information and communication technology sector.

(AQW 9015/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Sector is recognised by my Department as a priority sector of the Northern Ireland economy. A vibrant and world-class technology skills base is an essential pre-requisite for success in the global economy.

My Department has taken forward a number of areas of work in order to support the ICT sector.

In 2011 my Department and Invest NI convened a focus group of ICT companies and, in conjunction with the South East Regional College, designed and developed a 14 week training programme, incorporating eight weeks classroom based training and a six week work placement, in order to address difficulties in recruiting for software testing positions in the sector. The Software Testers' Academy programme began on 24 October 2011 and finished on 17 February 2012. We are optimistic that all the trainees will secure permanent employment in software testing roles as a result of the Academy. As a result of this success we have agreed with Invest NI that we will instigate a second cohort of the Academy.

Over my period as Minister I have listened to the concerns of employers in the ICT sector on skills issues. In response to these concerns I have established, and Chair, an ICT Working Group made up of key employers in the industry, universities and Further Education colleges, as well as other Government Departments. The purpose of this new working group is to:

- develop a vision and strategy for ensuring the skills needs of the sector are met;
- align supply to demand to ensure a better match in skills;
- enhance career attractiveness to assist continued growth of the sector; and
- ensure that the education sector meets the needs of industry.

This group has now met twice and is developing an action plan to deal with the issues of skills provision, sector attractiveness and improved communications. This action plan will provide a roadmap with specific

actions for all the stakeholders in the sector to ensure that Northern Ireland ICT companies continue to grow and that we remain a location of choice for inward investment.

Tackling Youth Unemployment

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether the Ministerial paper that he is to bring to the Executive will promote an innovative and Northern Ireland specific approach to tackling youth unemployment to address the rise in the number of people claiming benefits.

(AQW 9026/11-15)

Dr Farry: The proposals I have put to the Executive are a Northern Ireland specific approach to tackling youth unemployment. I believe the package proposed is innovative.

Executive Paper on Youth Unemployment

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in light of his comments to the Committee for Employment and Learning on 8 June 2011, when he gave recognition to the Committee's role as a partner to his Department in the development of policy, why he did not seek the views of the Committee on his Executive paper on youth unemployment.

(AQW 9028/11-15)

Dr Farry: The proposals I have put to the Executive are cross-cutting and therefore require Executive agreement in the first instance. It is entirely appropriate that the Executive takes a view on this issue before we share our thinking more widely. As soon as the Executive has agreed an approach I will be happy to share the details of that approach with the Committee for Employment and Learning.

IT Qualifications Achieved in Further Education Colleges

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of IT qualifications achieved in Further Education Colleges in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) college; and (ii) level of qualification.

(AQW 9062/11-15)

Dr Farry: The number of IT related qualifications achieved in Further Education Colleges for the last 3 years for which data are available is detailed overleaf by (i) college and (ii) level of qualification.

(I)

College	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Belfast Metropolitan	2,081	2,781	2,970
Northern Regional	494	756	1,140
South Eastern Regional	2,111	2,737	4,138
Southern Regional	1,180	1,917	2,847
South West	421	740	1,165
North West Regional	1,003	1,288	1,480
Total	7,290	10,219	13,740

(II)

Level of Study (& Equivalents)	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Entry Level & Level 1	3,232	4,461	7,677
Level 2	2,432	3,700	4,342
Level 3	1,265	1,716	1,382
HE in FE	361	342	339
Total	7,290	10,219	13,740

Source: Further Education Leavers Survey

Notes:

- (i) Data include full and partial qualifications achieved.
- (ii) IT is defined as Sector Subject Grouping 'Information and Communication Technology' plus ICT Essential Skills.
- (iii) 2010/11 is the latest data available.

Queen's University Belfast and Stranmillis University College: Merger

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 1394/11-15, (i) whether the staff commissioned for the two-stage study of the teacher education infrastructure are the

same members of staff who were tasked with dealing with issues surrounding the proposed merger; and (ii) to provide an estimate of the cost of the study.

(AQW 9075/11-15)

Dr Farry: No members of staff have been commissioned for the two-stage study of the teacher education infrastructure as it is to be carried out by persons independent of my Department. I estimate the cost of the study to be around £50,000.

Job Centre Online or Internet Access Points in Rural Areas

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department intends to provide Job Centre online or internet access points in rural areas to assist people who are unemployed.

(AQW 9133/11-15)

Dr Farry: Responsibility for the provision of JobCentreOnline, the Public Employment Service website in Northern Ireland, lies with the Department for Employment and Learning.

JobCentreOnline can be accessed in any area through a computer with internet access. It can also be accessed via the self service Job Points in the thirty-five Jobs and Benefits offices and JobCentres throughout Northern Ireland. Employment Service staff provide a job search service via the telephone for clients without internet access.

The Department is currently conducting a review of future Information Communication Technology requirements, including JobCentreOnline.

Schemes for Unemployed People

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning which legislation prohibits the provision of funded training for unemployed people over the age of 58 years; and whether all his Department's schemes for unemployed people pay at least the National Minimum Wage and are not in breach of the Human Rights Act and the Abolition of Slavery Act.

(AQW 9207/11-15)

Dr Farry: There is no legislation prohibiting the provision of funded training by my Department for unemployed people over the age of 58 years. In circumstances where schemes funded by my Department are waged, that is where participants are engaged in subsidized employment, the National Minimum Wage is payable. All other schemes for unemployed people are regarded as training schemes, that is, participants are engaged in training rather than in employment. These arrangements are not in breach of the Human Rights Act or the Abolition of Slavery Act.

Degree Courses in Veterinary Medicine

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 8347/11-15, whether his Department will fund a non-repayable grant for annual tuition fees in excess of £3,200 for students who wish to enrol in veterinary medicine degree courses in Britain.

(AQW 9253/11-15)

Dr Farry: For academic year 2012/13 my Department will provide a maximum tuition fee loan of up to £9,000 for eligible students from Northern Ireland who enrol on veterinary degree courses in Britain. There will be no grants available for tuition fees for these courses.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

KPMG and the Business Start-Up Programme

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to KPMG and the Business Start-Up Programme, whether she is aware of the EU concerns regarding conflicts of interest,

in respect of large accounting and consultancy companies, and of the proposed legislation to force large consultancy companies to split their audit and consultancy functions.

(AQW 7794/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): I am aware that the general issue of audit and consultancy is receiving attention from the European Union and that this is at proposal stage. In relation to the specific issue of KPMG and the Business Start Programme, you will appreciate that this is currently subject to a legal challenge. As such, it would not be appropriate for me to comment at this time.

Fracking in Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given that she has stated that she is unsure of the total financial benefits of the shale gas in Fermanagh, or the potential economic, environmental and health consequences of fracking, why she took the decision to award Tamboran an exploration licence.

(AQW 8620/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My officials granted a petroleum licence to Tamboran Resources, in accordance with the relevant legislation, after careful consideration of a properly made licence application.

Geothermal Energy

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when concerns about the lack of legislation on geothermal energy were first raised with her Department; and when she first became aware of these concerns.

(AQW 8839/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The EU-funded Geothermal Regulations – Heat (GTR-H) Project, in which members of the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland took part and which ran from December 2006 – November 2009, identified the lack of appropriate legislation as a barrier to the development of geothermal energy in a number of EU Member States.

As I said in my Answer to AQW 8356/11-15 of 1st March 2012, my officials are monitoring the progress on geothermal legislation elsewhere in the UK.

Visa Waiver Scheme

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has made any estimate of the potential loss to the economy of not having a Visa Waiver Scheme for China, India, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Belarus, Montenegro, Serbia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

(AQW 8848/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Visitors from China, India, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Belarus, Montenegro, Serbia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan can enter Northern Ireland on a valid United Kingdom visa.

There are security and resource implications which currently prevent the introduction of a Visa Waiver Scheme in respect of valid Irish visas being used to enter the United Kingdom and I will continue to raise this issue with both Governments.

Go for It Programme

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 6708/11-15 (i) given that the Go For It website states that InvestNI will provide a 'business planning 1:1 session to review and finalise your business plan', whether these mentoring hours will be provided; (ii) to outline the nature of the engagement with the Department for Employment and Learning and the Prince's Trust

regarding the provision of other services in this area; and (iii) why InvestNI cannot provide figures for the number of business plans that have been produced by start-up businesses.

(AQW 8858/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI provides individuals with access to either business clinics or 1:1 advisory sessions at which they can receive advice in relation to preparing and completing a business plan. Invest NI does not provide mentoring hours.

Invest NI has an active and on-going relationship with DEL (and its service providers) in relation to the Self Employment strand of its STW programme. Participants on the STW are routinely referred to Invest NI for advice and support in relation to starting their businesses.

Invest NI also has an agreement with Prince's Trust NI (PTNI) that all enquiries received from 18-24 years olds will be referred to the Trusts' Enterprise Programme through which they can receive additional support. Invest NI engages directly with these individuals through the Invest NI business clinics and 1:1 advisory sessions.

In the period October 2011 to February 2012 Invest NI responded to 3216 enquiries, held 88 business clinics and met 444 individuals which in turn resulted in 301 completed business plans.

Londonderry Railway Station

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in view of the role of public transport in the tourism industry, and the fact that Londonderry is the UK City of Culture 2013, for her assessment of the operating times of Londonderry Railway Station, particularly after 17.30 each evening.

(AQW 8877/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The operating time(s) of Londonderry Railway Station is an operational issue for Translink which falls under the remit of the Department for Regional Development.

Meeting with Tamboran

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail her recent meeting with Tamboran.

(AQW 8910/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I met representatives from Tamboran Resources on 15th February 2012. The company provided me with an update on the results of their initial feasibility study and outlined their proposals for the next phase of work including environmental baseline studies to support a possible drilling application and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Foreign Direct Investment Opportunities

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline any current contacts which InvestNI has with Foreign Direct Investment opportunities based in Arizona.

(AQW 8916/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's discussions with potential investors are conducted on a commercial in confidence basis. It would therefore be inappropriate to name potential investors as this would jeopardise the possibility of securing the project for Northern Ireland.

Invest NI's presence in North America includes offices in New York, Boston and San Jose, along with representatives in Chicago and Toronto. Arizona is covered by the San Jose office. Despite not having a permanent physical presence in the state, Invest NI actively monitors media, targets and meets companies and attend events in the Arizona area.

In order to maximise its use of resources, Invest NI will target geographical areas that represent the best potential for securing investment in both Northern Ireland's key sectors (primarily Information and

communications technology, business services and financial services) and also those emerging sectors where we have a strong offering (creative industries, digital media, the renewables sector).

Tourism: Causeway Coast

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how the number of visitors to the Causeway coast compares with the number of visitors to the top five tourist destinations in the island of Ireland.

(AQW 8926/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The latest full year figures are for 2009 and are provided on the basis that the Causeway Coast and Glens destination is made up of 6 Council areas i.e. Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne, Limavady and Moyle. In this year an estimated 0.8 million overnight trips, including both out-of-state visitors and domestic trips, were within the Causeway Coast & Glens area.

Regional figures for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are not directly comparable due to the difference in size of the regions, with the Republic of Ireland regions being much larger. Fáilte Ireland publish visitor estimates for 7 regions within the Republic of Ireland, while the draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 identifies 9 key tourism areas/destinations across Northern Ireland.

Republic of Ireland visitor estimates can be found by accessing the link below.

<http://www.failteireland.ie/Research-Statistics/Tourism-Facts/Annual-Tourism-Facts>

Business Start-Up Programme

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 7789/11-15, what steps her Department took to investigate the alleged breach of confidentiality once it became aware of it.

(AQW 8936/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The alleged breach of confidentiality by the Go Group is currently being considered in the course of ongoing litigation. It would not therefore be appropriate to comment further at this time.

Enterprise Development Programme and the Go For It Programme

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much funding InvestNI allocated to the Enterprise Development Programme and the Go For It programme between December 2008 and December 2011.

(AQW 8937/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI delivered the Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) from April 2009 to September 2011. The EDP had a Go For It element as part of the branding, but Invest NI did not deliver a separate "Go For It Programme".

The original approval for the Enterprise Development Programme forecast a budget of approximately £4.9m per annum for programme delivery costs.

InvestNI

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much her Department has allocated to InvestNI in each of the last five years; and how InvestNI used this money.

(AQW 8938/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

£'000	2010/11	2009/10	2008/9	2007/8	2006/7
Total Budget	187,485	208,184	147,115	136,727	137,035

The total budget includes allocations for programme activities, administration/ running costs, retained receipts, and non-cash budget relating to depreciation and impairment charges. The budget figures also include expenditure on EU funded activities.

The total expenditure is as reported on the annual budget outturn statement to the Department of Finance and Personnel.

A significant percentage of the total budget is directly assigned to programme activities and financial assistance for economic development purposes.

Prosecutions by the Health and Safety Executive

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) how many prosecutions have been brought by the Health and Safety Executive in each of the last five years; (ii) how many of these were successful; and (iii) how much each case cost.

(AQW 8940/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland has, in the past five years, brought 90 prosecutions. Of these, 87 have resulted in a successful conviction, with fines totalling £1.97 million. Taking into account costs awarded, the average cost per case was £1,440.

Key Tourism Destinations

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 7381/11-15 (i) what consultation has taken place with Larne Borough Council and Moyle District Council regarding the Causeway coast and the Glens of Antrim; (ii) whether the consultations have offered alternatives to the Councils' current tourism strategies; and (iii) whether local MLAs will be consulted on this issue.

(AQW 8953/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department's draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 (TSNI) advocates for tourism delivery to be focused at 2 levels, national and local, with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) taking the lead at a national level and the local authorities at a local level. Through consultation and facilitation NITB has offered guidance and support at the national delivery level.

To assist the Causeway Coast & Glens destination development, NITB facilitated an Envisioning Day for stakeholders on 2nd November 2011. The aim of this workshop was to achieve a shared vision and collaborative approach to the development of a Causeway Coast & Glens (CC&G) Tourism Area Plan. Invitations were issued to officers from all 6 Councils including Moyle District Council and Larne Borough Council. To inform further consultation NITB organised a Destination Roadshow on 9th February 2012. The outputs of this event are now being used to inform the Causeway Coast & Glens Destination Tourism Area Plan.

The process for the development of a Tourism Area Plan for the Causeway Coast & Glens destination has offered an opportunity for existing local council strategies to feed into and influence the Tourism Area Plan at a wider Destination level.

While NITB has facilitated discussion on wider destination development, the Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Area Plan has been funded and is therefore the property of the local authorities. NITB is unaware of how the 6 councils plan to consult MLAs on this issue.

Ballymena Railway Station

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of Ballymena's position as the gateway to the Glens of Antrim in the event that its railway station is downgraded as a result of staff redundancies.

(AQW 8976/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Staffing levels are an operational matter for Translink which is required to operate commercially within the current difficult economic environment.

Discussions with Members of the Business Community or InvestNI

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with members of the business community or InvestNI about ways of improving Northern Ireland's (a) attractiveness to foreign direct investors; and (b) competitiveness compared with (i) the rest of the UK; and (ii) the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 8999/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I meet on a regular basis with members of the business community and Invest NI about ways of improving Northern Ireland's economic competitiveness.

During the recent consultation on the draft Northern Ireland Economic Strategy, I hosted a working dinner with the Chairs from the Institute of Directors; the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the Confederation of Business Industry; the Centre for Competitiveness and Invest NI as well as the two University Vice Chancellors. At the meeting, we discussed their views on the draft NI Economic Strategy including ways of improving Northern Ireland's attractiveness to foreign direct investors and competitiveness compared with other regions. I was also able to share some of the key issues emerging from early public consultation engagements on the Northern Ireland Economic Strategy.

Visitors to the Giant's Causeway

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what analysis she has carried out on the drop in the number of visitors to the Giant's Causeway in 2010; and whether there is any indication that there was or will be a significant increase in the number of visitors in 2011 and 2012.

(AQW 9001/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In 2010 the method of calculating the number of visitors to the Giant's Causeway changed. While figures may demonstrate a decline in visitors from 2009 to 2010, it is not possible to determine whether this decline relates to an actual fall in visitors or is a result of methodology change.

Due to this change in methodology visitor figures for the Giant's Causeway cannot be directly compared with figures from previous years, however, figures for 2011 are comparable with 2010 figures.

Figures provided by the National Trust, show that the Giant's Causeway attracted 533,448 visitors in 2011 (for the period January-December) which is an increase of 15% compared with the 2010 visitor figures.

The National Trust business plan, published in December 2008, proposed first year operating figures following the opening of the new Visitor Centre of 700,000 visitors (for the period 2 July 2012-1 July 2013).

Domestic Electricity Prices

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 7003/11-15, how she can direct and oversee energy policy without having the relevant data.

(AQW 9019/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As noted in my response to AQW 7003/11-15, my Department does not routinely collect comparative data on domestic electricity prices. However specific data on energy costs is obtained when considered necessary for a particular purpose.

Potential Foreign Direct Investors

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the current potential Foreign Direct Investors within the United States of America, broken down by (i) industrial sector, and (ii) base State.

(AQW 9036/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's discussions with potential investors are conducted on a commercial in confidence basis. It would therefore be inappropriate to name potential investors as this would jeopardise the possibility of securing the project for Northern Ireland.

Exploratory Licences

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what exploratory licences have been granted by her Department and by the Crown Estate for exploration for natural minerals and other assets; (ii) what minerals and assets these exploratory licences cover; and (iii) what percentage of land mass is currently subject to exploratory licences.

(AQW 9037/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The information requested is as follows.

Mineral Prospecting Licences (MPLs) are awarded for an initial two-year period with the option for a first extension of two years and a final second extension for another two years.

Petroleum Licences (PLs) are granted for an initial period of five years.

Licences Issued: April 2000 - March 2001

Mineral Prospecting Licences

Name of Company	Ballymoney Power Ltd
MPL ref no.	MM9 /98
Date Licence issued	1998
Extensions	1st 30.06.00
Commodity	Lignite
Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds & Gold PLC
MPL ref no.	C1 /96
Date Licence issued	1996
Extensions	2nd 13.10.00
Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds & Gold PLC
MPL ref no.	C2 /96
Date Licence issued	1996
Extensions	2nd 13.10.00

Petroleum Licences

Name of Company	Evergreen Resources Inc
PL ref no.	PL1 /00
Date Licence issued	01.07.96
Name of Company	Evergreen Resources Inc
PL ref no.	PL2 /00
Date Licence issued	01.07.96
Name of Company	Evergreen Resources Inc
PL ref no.	PL3 /00
Date Licence issued	01.07.96
Name of Company	Evergreen Resources Inc
PL ref no.	PL7 /00
Date Licence issued	01.07.96

Issued: April 2001 - March 2002**Mineral Prospecting Licences**

Name of Company	Omagh Minerals Ltd
MPL ref no.	OM2 /97
Date Licence issued	1997
Extensions	2nd: 18.07.01

Name of Company	Ulster Minerals Ltd
MPL ref no.	UM1 /02
Date Licence issued	2002
Extensions	

Name of Company	Ulster Minerals Ltd
MPL ref no.	UM2 /02
Date Licence issued	2002
Extensions	

Petroleum Licences

Name of Company	Antrim Resources (NI) Ltd
PL ref no.	PL1 /01
Date Licence issued	17.10.01
Issued: April 2002 - March 2003	

Mineral Prospecting Licences

Name of Company	Antrim Coal Co. Ltd
MPL ref no.	AC4 /97
Date Licence issued	1997
Extensions	2nd: 01.06.02
Commodity	Lignite

Name of Company	Belmore Resources
MPL ref no.	BR1 /02
Date Licence issued	08.11.02
Extensions	

Name of Company	Belmore Resources
MPL ref no.	BR2 /02
Date Licence issued	08.11.02
Extensions	

Name of Company	Ballymoney Power Ltd.
MPL ref no.	MM9 /98
Date Licence issued	1998
Extensions	2nd: 30.06.02
Commodity	Lignite

Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds & Gold PLC
MPL ref no.	C1 /02
Date Licence issued	14.10.02
Extensions	

Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds & Gold PLC
MPL ref no.	C2 /02
Date Licence issued	14.10.02
Extensions	

Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds & Gold PLC
MPL ref no.	C3 /02
Date Licence issued	14.10.02
Extensions	

Issued: April 2003 – March 2004**Mineral Prospecting Licences**

Name of Company	Tournigan Gold Corporation
MPL ref no.	TG1 /03
Date Licence issued	24.04.03
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Tournigan Gold Corporation
MPL ref no.	TG2 /03
Date Licence issued	24.04.03
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Tournigan Gold Corporation
MPL ref no.	TG3 /03
Date Licence issued	24.04.03
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Tournigan Gold Corporation
MPL ref no.	TG4 /03
Date Licence issued	24.04.03
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Omagh Minerals Limited
MPL ref no.	OM1 /03
Date Licence issued	18.07.03
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Ulster Minerals Limited
MPL ref no.	UM1 /02
Date Licence issued	2002
Extensions	1st: 02.01.04

Name of Company	Ulster Minerals Limited
MPL ref no.	UM2 /02
Date Licence issued	2002
Extensions	1st: 02.01.04

Issued: April 2004 – March 2005**Mineral Prospecting Licences**

Name of Company	Tournigan Gold Corporation
MPL ref no.	TG5 /04
Date Licence issued	01.09.04.
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc
MPL ref no.	C1 /02
Date Licence issued	2002
Extensions	1st: 14.10.04

Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc
MPL ref no.	C2 /02

Date Licence issued	2002
Extensions	1st: 14.10.04
Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc
MPL ref no.	C3 /02
Date Licence issued	2002
Extensions	1st: 14.10.04
Name of Company	Belmore Resources Limited
MPL ref no.	BR2 /02
Date Licence issued	2002
Extensions	1st: 08.11.04

Petroleum Licences

Name of Company	Finavera Ltd
PL ref no.	FL1 /04
Date Licence issued	01.12.04
Name of Company	Connaught Energy
PL ref no.	CE1 /04
Date Licence issued	31.12.04
Name of Company	Connaught Energy
PL ref no.	CE2 /04
Date Licence issued	31.12.04

Issued: April 2005 - March 2006**Mineral Prospecting Licences**

Name of Company	Tournigan Gold Corporation
MPL ref no.	TG1 /03
Date Licence issued	2003.
Extensions	1st: 04.04.05
Name of Company	Tournigan Gold Corporation
MPL ref no.	TG2 /03
Date Licence issued	2003
Extensions	1st: 04.04.05
Name of Company	Tournigan Gold Corporation
MPL ref no.	TG3 /03
Date Licence issued	2003
Extensions	1st: 04.04.05
Name of Company	Tournigan Gold Corporation
MPL ref no.	TG4 /03
Date Licence issued	2003
Extensions	1st: 04.04.05
Name of Company	Omagh Minerals Limited
MPL ref no.	OM1 /03
Date Licence issued	2003
Extensions	1st: 18.07.05
Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc
MPL ref no.	C1 /02
Date Licence issued	2002
Extensions	2nd: 14.10.05

Name of Company Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc
 MPL ref no. C2 /02
 Date Licence issued 2002
 Extensions 2nd: 14.10.05

Name of Company Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc
 MPL ref no. C3 /02
 Date Licence issued 2002
 Extensions 2nd: 14.10.05

Name of Company Belmore Resources Limited
 MPL ref no. BR2 /02
 Date Licence issued 2002
 Extensions 2nd: 08.11.05

Lapses N/A

Name of Company Ulster Minerals Limited
 MPL ref no. UM1 /02
 Date Licence issued 2002
 Extensions 2nd: 02.01.06

Name of Company Ulster Minerals Limited
 MPL ref no. UM2 /02
 Date Licence issued 2002
 Extensions 2nd: 02.01.06

Issued: April 2006 – March 2007

Mineral Prospecting Licences

Name of Company Irish Salt Mine and Exploration Co. Ltd.
 MPL ref no. ISME1 /06
 Date Licence issued 31.08.06
 Extensions N/A
 Commodity Salt

Name of Company Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc
 MPL ref no. C4 /07
 Date Licence issued 15.01.07
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc
 MPL ref no. C5 /07
 Date Licence issued 15.01.07
 Extensions N/A

Issued: April 2007 – March 2008

Mineral Prospecting Licences

Name of Company Metallum Exploration Ltd
 MPL ref no. MR4 /07
 Date Licence issued 01.12.07
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Metallum Exploration Ltd
 MPL ref no. MR5 /07
 Date Licence issued 01.12.07
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no. MR6 /07
Date Licence issued 01.12.07
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no. MR9 /07
Date Licence issued 01.12.07
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no. MR10 /07
Date Licence issued 01.12.07
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no. MR11 /07
Date Licence issued 01.12.07
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Antrim Resources Plc
MPL ref no. AR1 /08
Date Licence issued 01.01.08
Extensions N/A
Commodity Salt

Name of Company Dalradian Gold Ltd
MPL ref no. DG1 /08
Date Licence issued 01.01.08
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Dalradian Gold Ltd
MPL ref no. DG2 /08
Date Licence issued 01.01.08
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
MPL ref no. Lon1 /08
Date Licence issued 01.01.08
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
MPL ref no. Lon2 /08
Date Licence issued 01.01.08
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
MPL ref no. Lon3 /08
Date Licence issued 01.01.08
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
MPL ref no. Lon4 /08
Date Licence issued 01.01.08
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
MPL ref no. Lon5 /08
Date Licence issued 01.01.08
Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
 MPL ref no. Lon6 /08
 Date Licence issued 01.01.08
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
 MPL ref no. Lon7 /08
 Date Licence issued 01.01.08
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
 MPL ref no. Lon8 /08
 Date Licence issued 01.01.08
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
 MPL ref no. Lon9 /08
 Date Licence issued 01.01.08
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Portland Gas (NI) Ltd
 MPL ref no. PG1 /07
 Date Licence issued 01.01.08
 Extensions N/A
 Commodity Salt

Lapses

Name of Company Belmore Resources Limited
 MPL ref no.. BR2 /02
 Revoked

Issued April 2008 – March 2009

Mineral Prospecting Licences

Name of Company Omagh Minerals Ltd
 MPL ref no. OM2 /08
 Date Licence issued 01.05.08
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Omagh Minerals Ltd
 MPL ref no. OM3 /08
 Date Licence issued 01.05.08
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
 MPL ref no. LON10 /08
 Date Licence issued 01.06.08
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Lonmin Plc
 MPL ref no. LON11 /08
 Date Licence issued 01.06.08
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company Metallum Exploration Ltd
 MPL ref no. MR1 /08
 Date Licence issued 01.06.08
 Extensions N/A

Name of Company	Bord Gais Network
MPL ref no.	BG1 /08
Date Licence issued	01.09.08
Extensions	N/A
Commodity	Salt
Name of Company	Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no.	MR2 /08
Date Licence issued	01.11.08
Extensions	N/A
Name of Company	Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no.	MR3 /08
Date Licence issued	01.11.08
Extensions	N/A
Name of Company	Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no.	MR8 /08
Date Licence issued	01.11.08
Extensions	N/A
Name of Company	Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no.	MR12 /08
Date Licence issued	01.11.08
Extensions	N/A
Name of Company	Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no.	MR13 /08
Date Licence issued	01.11.08
Extensions	N/A
Name of Company	Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no.	MR14 /08
Date Licence issued	01.11.08
Extensions	N/A
Name of Company	Metallum Exploration Ltd
MPL ref no.	MR15 /08
Date Licence issued	01.11.08
Extensions	N/A
Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc.
MPL ref no.	C1 /09
Date Licence issued	01.01.09
Extensions	N/A
Name of Company	Conroy Diamonds and Gold Plc.
MPL ref no.	C3 /09
Date Licence issued	01.01.09
Extensions	N/A
Lapses	
Name of Company	Lonmin Plc
MPL ref no.	LON6 /08
Relinquished	
MPL ref no.	LON7 /08
Relinquished	

Issued April 2009 – March 2010**Mineral Prospecting Licences**

Name of Company	Dalradian Gold Ltd
MPL ref no.	DG3 /09
Date Licence issued	25.04.09
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Dalradian Gold Ltd
MPL ref no.	DG4 /09
Date Licence issued	25.04.09
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Lonmin Plc
MPL ref no.	LON12 /09
Date Licence issued	01.07.09
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Gaelectric Developments Ltd
MPL ref no.	GDL1 /10
Date Licence issued	01.02.10
Extensions	N/A
Commodity	Salt

Issued April 2010 – March 2011**Mineral Prospecting Licences**

None.

Petroleum Licences

Name of Company	Infrastrata Plc
PL ref no..	PL1 /10
Date Licence issued	04.03.11

Name of Company	Rathlin Energy Ltd
PL ref no..	PL3 /10
Date Licence issued	15.02.11

Name of Company	P. R. Singleton Ltd
PL ref no..	PL5 /10
Date Licence issued	22.02.11

Issued April 2011 – March 2012**Mineral Prospecting Licences**

Name of Company	Dalradian Gold Ltd
MPL ref no.	DG3 /11
Date Licence issued	24.04.11
Extensions	N/A

Name of Company	Dalradian Gold Ltd
MPL ref no.	DG4 /11
Date Licence issued	24.04.11
Extensions	N/A

Lapses

Name of Company	Dalradian Gold Ltd
MPL ref no.	DG3 /09
MPL ref no.	DG4 /09
Name of Company	Lonmin Plc
MPL ref no.	LON12 /09

Petroleum Licences

Name of Company	Tamboran Resources Pty Ltd
PL ref no..	PL2 /10
Date Licence issued	01.04.11

My Department holds no information about exploratory licences issued by the Crown Estate.

The Mineral Prospecting Licences were granted in respect of all minerals vested in the Department by the Mineral Development Act 1969 unless otherwise stated. The exceptions relate to licences taken out to prospect for specific minerals. Petroleum licences are issued for “petroleum existing in its natural condition” which “includes any mineral oil or relative hydrocarbon and natural gas existing in its natural condition in strata, but does not include coal or bituminous shales or other stratified deposits from which oil can be extracted by destructive distillation.”

48.7% of Northern Ireland’s landmass is covered by Mineral Prospecting Licences and 16.2% by Petroleum Licences. A total of 57% of the landmass is subject to exploration licences, taking into account those areas covered by both Mineral Prospecting and Petroleum Licences.

Face To Face Debt Advice Service

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when the new contract for the Face To Face Debt Advice Service will be put out to tender.

(AQW 9054/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Central Procurement Directorate are finalising the documentation for the integrated debt advice service competition and plan to issue via eSourcingNI by 16 March 2012. The new service should be operational with effect from 1 July 2012.

In the meantime, the existing debt advice contracts delivered by A4e, Advice NI and the Northern Ireland Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux have all been extended until 30 June 2012.

Climate Change

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 7750/11-15 (i) for his assessment of the potential impact that the exploitation of 2.2 trillion cubic feet of shale gas reserves, identified by Tamboran resources, might have on Northern Ireland’s carbon budget to 2050; and (ii) how much of this 2.2 trillion cubic feet of shale gas reserves should be exploited.

(AQW 9065/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the Member to the answer given to AQW 8559/11-15.

Single Electricity Market

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment pursuant to AQW 7003/11-15, if comparative data is not routinely collected, where the information came from to answer AQW 1305/11-15.

(AQW 9092/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The response to AQW 1305/11-15 was based on a review of information published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in GB, information from the Utility Regulator, and an exercise the Department completed in March 2011 to report on energy trends in relation to a specific government PSA target.

EU Fiscal Treaty

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the potential impact on inward investment in Northern Ireland if the electorate in the Republic of Ireland votes against the EU fiscal treaty in the forthcoming referendum.

(AQW 9106/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The local economy is not immune to global economic conditions. A number of factors, including ongoing issues in the Eurozone, have led to uncertainty in the markets. As a result, the current pipeline for new Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects has been impacted, with companies focussing on cost containment and delaying investment decisions.

Any delay to the recovery in the Eurozone countries could lead to increased uncertainty in the short term and would have a negative impact in terms of investor confidence.

However, there are signs of strength emerging in the US market while India continues to have a strong economy and is forecast for FDI growth. Invest NI is continuing to push the Northern Ireland proposition in its key markets, including the Republic of Ireland, as well as explore FDI opportunities in new emerging markets.

Invest NI also continues to investigate new and emerging sectors which present FDI opportunities for Northern Ireland, such as creative industries, digital media, renewables and professional services.

In addition, the Jobs Fund, a package of temporary measures aimed at boosting employment over the next four years, offers an additional opportunity to promote Northern Ireland in the contact centre and knowledge process outsourcing sectors.

Charges Imposed by Utility Companies

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans her Department has to review the charges imposed by utility companies on customers who chose not to pay their bills by direct debit.

(AQW 9140/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Utility Regulator controls the maximum price that the two previous monopoly suppliers (PowerNI and Phoenix Supply Ltd) charge their domestic customers and this covers the various payment types (direct debit, standard credit and pre-payment). Neither my Department nor the Utility Regulator has any statutory role in determining those discounts which energy companies competing with the previous monopoly suppliers may choose to offer customers who pay by direct debit.

All energy supply licences include a requirement that the differential between tariffs resulting in different payment types is cost reflective. Natural gas customers with pre-payment meters are not charged more than the standard credit tariff, and electricity customers using pre-payment meters receive a discount over the standard credit tariff. My Department has therefore no plans to review the current charging arrangements.

InvestNI

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the locations worldwide in which InvestNI has a presence; and to outline the nature of that presence.

(AQW 9147/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest Northern Ireland has a global presence including representation in North and South America, Europe, Asia, the Far East and South Africa.

Invest NI's offices are based in the following locations:

***FDI – FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT**

Location	Function
Boston	FDI
Chicago	FDI
New York	FDI
Brussels	FDI
Dublin	FDI
London	FDI
Tokyo	FDI
Dubai	Trade
Dusseldorf	Trade
Jeddah	Trade
Taipei	Trade
Shanghai	Trade & FDI
Bangalore	Trade & FDI
Mumbai	Trade & FDI
San Jose	Trade & FDI
Toronto	Trade & FDI

In addition, Invest NI has representation in the following locations:

Brazil	Trade
Czech Republic	Trade
Netherlands	Trade
Russia	Trade
South Africa	Trade
Sweden	Trade

Individual office locations and contact details can be found by accessing Invest NI's website at www.investni.com

The remit of our overseas offices and advisers includes attracting Foreign Direct Investment, assisting NI companies in researching export markets and developing export sales, developing university linkages and the NI Diaspora network.

Energy Costs

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the concerns of local businesses regarding high energy costs, specifically the level of pass through charges when compared with similar sized companies in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 9158/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department does not set electricity and gas tariffs, however it works with the Utility Regulator to develop market conditions to put downward pressure on prices. I appreciate the concerns of consumers regarding energy prices, which is an international issue not confined to Northern Ireland.

The retail electricity market is open to competition across Northern Ireland. The retail gas market is currently open to competition in the Greater Belfast area, and the market in the Ten Towns area will be open to competition from October this year (for large industrial and commercial businesses). Business consumers are therefore free to choose their energy suppliers. Following an investigation into business electricity tariffs in 2010, the Utility Regulator produced a buyer's guide to assist business consumers in purchasing energy and switching suppliers. Manufacturing NI also produced guides to help businesses make effective choices in relation to their electricity and gas supplies.

The cost of electricity to end users comprises a number of elements. The largest cost element relates to generation which is highly dependent on the price of natural gas. Regulated elements include costs related to the Single Electricity Market (Capacity Charges, Imperfections Charges and Market Operator charges) which are borne at the same rate in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. There are also regulated costs relating to other elements of overall electricity tariffs including the cost of electricity networks, the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation, and Public Service Obligations costs, some of which are not directly comparable with electricity price elements in the Republic of Ireland.

In respect of natural gas, transmission and distribution networks within Northern Ireland are subject to regulation and these costs, along with the cost of gas are borne by consumers within their gas bills. Gas network costs in Northern Ireland are entirely separate from those in the Republic of Ireland and associated with the recovery of costs required to provide what is relatively new gas infrastructure compared to the longer established gas networks in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

In terms of comparison, it should be noted that Public Service Obligation charges and Transmission Use of System charges per unit of demand, are higher in the Republic of Ireland than in Northern Ireland. It should also be noted that there may be differences in business consumer bills between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland depending on the allocation of costs between different customer groups.

Staff Disciplinary Actions

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of staff disciplinary actions taken by her Department in each of the last two years, at Staff Officer level and above, including details of the offence and the disciplinary sanctions applied.

(AQW 9186/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There has been no disciplinary action taken at Staff Officer level and above over the last two years.

Ministerial Contributions for a Publication

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail all the organisations for which she has provided a (i) Ministerial introduction; (ii) foreword; or (iii) any other introductory or concluding contributions for a publication.

(AQW 9200/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below lists all the publications for which the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment provided articles and forewords from January 2011 to March 2012.

Article	Publication	Date
Foreword	Licensing & Catering News	January 2012
Foreword	Public Service Review	February 2011

Article	Publication	Date
Foreword	Economic Commentary (DETI)	March 2011/June 2011/ November 2011/January 2012
Foreword	Howarth Hotel	March 2011
Foreword	Centre for Competitiveness	June 2011
Foreword	Ulster Business Top 100	July 2011
Foreword	Federation of Small Businesses Diary	October 2011
Foreword	Young Entrepreneur of the Year	2011
Foreword	Arts and Business	2012
Foreword	City Business	January 2012
Foreword	Licensing & Catering News	January 2012
Foreword	Engergy Institute	January 2012
Foreword	Energy Ireland	January 2012
Article	Public Service Review	January 2012
Foreword	BDO – family business research	February 2012
Foreword	Business First	February 2012
Foreword	Business Eye Supplement	February 2012
Foreword	Ulster Community Investment Trust	February 2012
Foreword	Belfast Telegraph Top 100	March 2012
Foreword	Quarry Products Association	March 2012
Preview	Insider	2012

Indigenous Business Start-Ups

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the number of indigenous business start-ups between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2010, broken down by Parliamentary constituency.

(AQW 9228/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below shows the number of indigenous business start-ups approved by Invest NI between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2010 broken down by Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA).

INVEST NI INDIGENOUS BUSINESS START-UPS BY PCA (2007-08 TO 2009-10)

Pca	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Total
Belfast East	142	116	102	360
Belfast North	132	108	135	375
Belfast South	153	132	134	419
Belfast West	146	106	105	357
East Antrim	163	107	97	367

Pca	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Total
East Londonderry	248	168	149	565
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	337	247	220	804
Foyle	273	168	135	576
Lagan Valley	131	90	98	319
Mid Ulster	283	182	212	677
Newry And Armagh	234	154	145	533
North Antrim	236	137	87	460
North Down	98	86	57	241
South Antrim	131	100	93	324
South Down	218	135	134	487
Strangford	120	80	72	272
Upper Bann	181	158	120	459
West Tyrone	252	186	191	629
Unknown			5	5
Total	3,478	2,460	2,291	8,229

Notes:

- 1 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.
- 2 The UNKNOWN category contains offers for which this level of detail is not available.

There were an additional 38 start-ups approved during the period that did not proceed as planned.

Business Start-Ups

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many of the 8,267 business start-ups between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2010 are still operational.

(AQW 9229/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Of the 8,267 business start ups approved, 7,825 were under the Enterprise Development Programme. Recent analysis suggests that, of these, 68% of the start-up approvals actually started a business, with 80% of these businesses surviving beyond 12 months. This would suggest that 5,321 businesses started and circa 4,257 of these survived for more than 12 months.

During the same period, Invest NI supported an additional 442 locally-focused business starts through other schemes. Of these our records show that 38 did not proceed as planned and a further 15 are now closed or subject to formal insolvency proceedings. This would indicate that 389 are still operational.

Investment in Business Start-Ups in the North Down and Strangford Constituencies

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she is taking to encourage more investment in business start-ups in the North Down and Strangford constituencies.

(AQW 9230/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI provides a range of financial assistance to support the establishment and growth of new export focussed businesses in the North Down and Strangford Constituencies and across the province. This support is targeted particularly at businesses that sell in markets outside

Northern Ireland, are actively pursuing growth plans and can contribute to increased Northern Ireland productivity. Financial support is based on the needs of the project and is normally targeted at areas such as Research and Development, Marketing and Employment.

In addition Invest NI is responding directly to individuals with an interest in starting a locally focussed business. Invest NI provide advice and guidance and engage with other stakeholders providing services in this area including the Department for Employment and Learning and Princes Trust NI.

Social Enterprises can attract grant support towards business start-up costs including salary, marketing, equipment and overheads via the Social Entrepreneurship Programme.

In direct response to the renewed economic downturn, Invest NI launched its Boosting Business initiative in Nov 2011. Businesses can receive advice, guidance and support under a number of themes: Jobs, Exporting, R&D, New technology & Skills.

In addition Invest NI has organised and delivered a series of "Focus on" workshops. Topics covered so far include finance, selling and profit through improvement. These workshops are open to all businesses including those in the North Down and Strangford area.

Rural Broadband Services

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the provision of rural broadband in Northern Ireland compared with neighbouring jurisdictions.

(AQW 9299/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Since 2005 broadband services have been available across all rural areas of Northern Ireland. Today a variety of technologies are available to consumers and a range of broadband speeds can be supplied from a range of suppliers. This is as a result of interventions by DETI aimed at stimulating investment to benefit our SMEs. This has included: the award of contracts to supply broadband services to targeted groups; technology pilots to encourage better learning and understanding; and activities to stimulate demand for services from businesses. I believe that this places Northern Ireland ahead of other neighbouring jurisdictions and DETI Telecoms Action Plan for 2011-15, when implemented, will ensure we continue to stay ahead.

Broadband for Rural Areas

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with BT regarding the roll-out of high-speed broadband in rural areas.

(AQW 9301/11-15)

Mrs Foster: This matter was discussed at my most recent meeting with Colm O'Neill CEO of BT in January of this year at which I highlighted that rural broadband availability continues to be a major issue despite the very significant investments by Government and industry to make it available across all of Northern Ireland using a variety of technologies from a range of suppliers. I emphasised that fixed, wireless, mobile and satellite communications networks will all have a part to play in delivering superfast broadband and that was in both our interests – given commercial and public expenditure constraints – to acknowledge that broadband does not have to be delivered via fixed line technology nor by a single organisation. Mr O'Neill noted this view.

4G Mobile Telecommunications

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the timescale for the provision of 4G mobile telecommunications.

(AQW 9302/11-15)

Mrs Foster: OFCOM, the UK telecommunications Regulator has responsibility for the spectrum clearance programme and the subsequent auction of spectrum that will allow delivery of 4G mobile services. OFCOM anticipates that 2017 is the earliest reasonable date by which any 4G coverage obligation arising from the auction process might be met. Provision of access to 4G services

will however be primarily a matter for commercial decision by the Mobile Network Operators. My Department is in discussions with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Broadband Delivery UK to access funding to position Northern Ireland as a pilot region for the earlier delivery of a 4G solution.

Rosemount Primary School, Derry.

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what funding is available to allow Rosemount Primary School, Derry to install a solar panel in a cottage being built to mark its Centenary. **(AQW 9338/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: The method of funding will be dependent on the type of solar panel being installed. Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels are used to generate renewable electricity for attached premises whilst solar thermal panels generate renewable heating for hot water purposes.

Solar PV panels are incentivised by the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation which provides a revenue stream for the renewable electricity generated in the form of Renewables Obligation Certificates (ROCs) which can be sold to electricity suppliers. Further information can be found at www.energy.deti.gov.uk. DETI does not offer grants towards the installation of solar PV panels for renewable electricity.

It has been proposed to incentivise the uptake of solar thermal panels, and other renewable heating technologies, under a future Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). My Department consulted on these proposals between July – October 2011, further information can be found at the aforementioned website. The Northern Ireland RHI would provide payments for renewable heating installations for the renewable heat generated; the amount of payment depends on the type and size of installation. Under the most recent proposals a solar thermal panel (up to 200kWth) would receive 8.5p/kWh for the lifetime of the technology (to a maximum of 20 years). Following the consultation further analysis was required and I plan to make an announcement shortly on the final design of the Northern Ireland RHI.

Fibre Optic Broadband

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many properties have a direct fibre optic connection. **(AQW 9412/11-15)**

Mrs Foster: My Department does not hold this information.

Department of the Environment

The Planning Act

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment when his Department will publish the new guidelines that will come into effect following the introduction of the Planning Act. **(AQO 296/11-15)**

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Most of the provisions within the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 will only apply once planning powers transfer to district councils as part of local government reform. Many of these provisions will require subordinate legislation to bring them into operation. Drafting of key subordinate legislation has begun and the subordinate legislation and guidance will be in place before powers transfer.

In advance of the transfer of powers to councils I am bringing forward a Bill that will accelerate the implementation of a number of those reforms, to be administered by the Department. I intend to introduce the Bill in this Assembly session and to have the reforms in place sooner rather than later.

COR/13/08 and COR/47/09

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the rationale behind the statement from his Department to Fermanagh District Council, contained within COR/13/08 and COR/47/09, that the legislative change previously proposed by the Council would provide neither a feasible nor practical way forward as a method of enabling councils to number houses in a particular townland by referring to the townland only.

(AQW 3031/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Road naming and numbering is governed by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, ("the 1995 Order") and this legislation is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment. The purpose of an address is to provide a unique reference for a property/postal delivery point and assistance in reaching that property/postal delivery point. Streets have a linear logic to them, whereas townlands do not. Difficulties would arise in numbering houses in townlands, particularly when additional houses were built and needed new numbers.

Although there is no legal requirement to include townlands within postal addresses it is a practice that is supported, where possible, in government communications. Some councils have encouraged promotion of townlands by including them on street nameplates under the street name. The 1995 Order does not prevent the use of townland names within any postal address.

There are difficulties in dealing with UK based or UK administered banks, insurance companies etc. whose systems only accept standard UK addresses using street/road names and postcodes and this could/has had a detrimental effect on some residents. Visitors and tourists who may need emergency assistance could have difficulty in establishing their location if only townlands are used.

This was the rationale that was used at the time of these correspondence cases. I have subsequently written to the Council on this issue, being as supportive as I can on an issue which I believe is important.

MOT Tests

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how much revenue his Department raised through MOT tests in the (i) 2009/10; and (ii) 2010/11 financial years.

(AQW 3769/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The total revenue generated in each year for all vehicle tests were as follows:

2009/10	£26,614,000
2010/11	£28,000,000

The figures are for full tests and retests carried out on all vehicles by the Driver & Vehicle Agency and are given to the nearest £ 000's.

George Best Belfast City Airport's Planning Agreement

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment why a new inquiry into the George Best Belfast City Airport's Planning Agreement is necessary when a full examination in public reported on the Planning Agreement in 2006.

(AQW 4573/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The reason I am seeking to modify the Planning Agreement is to bring the most important planning issues at the George Best Belfast City Airport to a conclusion in a cohesive and inclusive way. The issue of the noise contour has not been concluded. It is not good enough for local people or for others that uncertainty continues. I plan to be decisive and remove doubt. That is what people should properly expect from me as Minister. Doubt or drift is not an option.

My objective is to secure the establishment of a fair and effective noise management system at the airport, based on noise control contour(s), that achieves the right balance between the social and

economic benefits of airport with the need to protect the quality of life for local residents and the environment.

Reform of Local Government

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Reform of Local Government. (AQO 862/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As the Minister responsible for implementation of the local government reform programme, I shall manage reform in line with the 2015 timetable proposed in the draft Programme for Government 2011-15.

I am taking forward the programme of legislation required to give effect to local government reorganisation. There are two main pieces of legislation, the first of which is the draft Local Government (Boundaries) Order (NI) 2012, which has recently been agreed by the Executive and will be laid before the Assembly in the near future. The second is the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill which, subject to the Executive's agreement, I intend to introduce during the autumn session to give effect to the Executive's decisions on the future shape of local government.

I am also establishing the implementation structures needed to help manage and integrate the work needed to bring about the operational delivery of the overall reform programme. I will shortly be forming a Regional Transition Committee, which I will chair, to provide the high level political leadership necessary to drive implementation forward. Its membership will include the Chairs of the 11 Voluntary Transition Committees. Indeed, I have already written to Council Mayors and Chairs requesting that they restore the eleven Transition Committees by the end of this month. This will enable convergence work to commence in each of the council groupings.

Extending the Duration of a Planning Approval

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration has been given to an extending the duration of a planning approval for parties who are unable to begin construction due to the recession.

(AQW 6148/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department would give consideration to granting planning permission for a longer period of time where an applicant indicates in making a planning application that this may be necessary, and can demonstrate that there are clear and justifiable reasons for doing so. An example of this may be an application for renewable energy development, where additional consents are required to be put in place following issue of planning approval. Requests made in this way would be considered on a case by case basis.

Under current planning legislation, developers who wish to delay the commencement of development may choose to apply for renewal of planning permission as the time limit for implementation of the planning approval approaches.

Developers who do not wish to apply for renewal of planning permission do have the opportunity to commence development on the site in order to implement the planning permission and prevent the permission from lapsing. To assist and provide clarification, my officials have published guidance on this issue 'Guidance on Renewing Planning Permission and Starting Development' which is available to view at DOE Planning Portal. This guidance includes useful examples of when the Department would accept that development has commenced in accordance with the approved planning permission.

I have been considering this issue, including practice in other jurisdictions and the reduction of planning renewal fees (as part of a current review), and will update the Member in due course.

Fracking in Fermanagh in the Early 2000s

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, prior to fracking in Fermanagh in the early 2000s, whether baseline samples were taken for air purity, and if so, (a) who tested the samples; (b) where

the samples were taken; (c) when the samples were taken; (d) for what the air was tested; and (e) to provide details of the results.

(AQW 6200/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The exploratory drilling operation in 2002 did not require submission of a planning application. Given this, DOE did not require any additional specific air quality monitoring in respect of the sites involved. However, I am assessing what environmental requirements should be satisfied at each and all stages of the development of this matter.

Wind Farms

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to address the issue of the community benefits of wind farms.

(AQW 6349/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The provision of community benefits by a windfarm developer are made on a voluntary basis. Moreover, it is apparently the case that developers enter into private arrangements with local landowners. I am aware that an industry group and a community group are both currently developing community benefit protocols. The Sustainable Energy Interdepartmental Working Group will consider these documents and advise if additional government guidance is required, which will also be on the agenda of the next Planning Forum meeting.

Wind Farms

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether the community benefits of wind farms will be dealt with through planning reform; and (ii) what action is being taken to address this issue.

(AQW 6350/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The provision of community benefits by a windfarm developer are made on a voluntary basis. I am aware that an industry group and a community group are both currently developing community benefit protocols and my Department will consider these documents when published, and determine through the Sustainable Energy Interdepartmental Working Group if additional government guidance is required.

It should be noted that one of the aims of planning reform, which will transfer the majority of planning powers to councils, is to ensure that planning supports the future economic and social development needs of Northern Ireland and manages development in a sustainable way. The Planning Act 2011 will 'copper fasten' the sustainable development duty to ensure that all relevant authorities will take into account sustainable development in the decision-making process.

I also intend to meet the Fermanagh Trust in relation to their recent publication on "Community Benefit". I will assess what further measures are needed and desirable to best benefit local communities.

PPS 5

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the timescale for the publication of PPS 5.

(AQW 6569/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I intend to shortly commence a wider debate on the future of city and town centres and all matters relating to their vitality and viability. I will be announcing my intention to initiate such a debate amongst key stakeholders in the near future. Thereafter, this debate will inform the preparation of a fit for purpose planning policy on retailing and town centres.

In addition, I will soon be announcing my intention to give weight to draft PPS 5.

Planning Applications

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for new businesses in the North Down area have been received, in each of the last two financial years.

(AQW 6612/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department does not have information on the number of planning applications for new businesses that have been submitted. Planning applications specify the applicant's name and address and do not specify whether the applicant is an existing or new business.

Judicial Review: Legal Costs

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment how much the Planning Service has spent on defending decisions in court in each of the last five years, broken down by divisional planning office.

(AQW 6802/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The method used to record Judicial Review payments in 2006/07 means that the Department is unable to allocate costs against individual cases and therefore unable to determine how much of the costs related to planning application decisions and how much related to other Judicial Review cases. For this reason costs have been provided for the last four years only.

The table below shows the cost paid by the Department as recorded in the Annual Report and Accounts in relation to judicial reviews on decisions on planning applications broken down by Divisional Planning Office. The total cost paid by the Department in the last four years is £107,986 as of end of March 2011. This includes costs awarded and legal costs.

Area Office	2007/08 (£)	2008/09 (£)	2009/10 (£)	2010/11 (£)	Total Costs in last 4 years (£)
Ballymena	0	0	0	3,339	3,339
Belfast	0	1,697	26,680	0	28,377
Craigavon	0	0	0	0	0
Derry	0	0	0	0	0
Downpatrick	0	0	0	6,000	6,000
Headquarters	0	0	0	39,445	39,445
Omagh	0	0	0	30,825	30,825
Total	0	1,697	26,680	£79,609	107,986

The above figures refer to judicial reviews of decisions on planning applications and do not include judicial reviews on procedural issues prior to a final decision on a planning application being made, or judicial reviews of area plans or planning policy.

Illegal Taxis

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to deal with the increasing number of illegal taxis operating without an adequate licence.

(AQW 7404/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Over the last six months the Driver & Vehicle Agency has increased the number of staff dedicated to taxi enforcement, and a recruitment exercise which will further increase the number of permanent operational staff has also just been completed.

The Agency is currently introducing the second phase of the graduated fixed penalty and deposit scheme, which will enable a more comprehensive range of fixed penalty notices to be issued for taxi related offences. Since the introduction of the scheme in April 2011, a total of 198 fixed penalty tickets have been issued by DVA enforcement officers for taxi related offences, with 101 relating specifically to the use of unlicensed taxis. In addition, a further 57 cases were reported with a view to prosecution.

My Department is also planning to introduce a range of new initiatives under the Taxis Act (NI) 2008 including operator licensing and single-tier licensing. It is anticipated that the changes will allow the activities of the Department's enforcement staff to be redirected towards other forms of illegal activity with greater implications for road safety, customers, business and the environment.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of the Environment to which third parties the Driver and Vehicle Agency is authorised to release vehicle owner details.

(AQW 7431/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In relation to the release of information, DVA acts in accordance with the policy set by DfT. The relevant legislation permitting the release of information from the vehicles register is regulation 27 (1) of the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002, which states "(1) The Secretary of State may make any particulars contained in the register available for use - ...

- (a) by a local authority for any purpose connected with the investigation of an offence or of a decriminalised parking contravention;
- (b) by a chief officer of police;
- (c) by a member of the Police Service of Northern Ireland;
- (d) by an officer of Customs and Excise; or
- (e) by any person who can show to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State that he has reasonable cause for wanting the particulars to be made available to him".

Under the policy on the release of data, DVA releases vehicle owner details to PSNI, Councils, HM Revenue and Customs, and to any person showing reasonable cause for needing the information such as car parking enforcement companies, solicitors, finance and insurance companies, mileage verification companies and garages.

Ground Survey Carried out at the Mound of Down, Downpatrick

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the wildlife species identified in the ground survey carried out at the Mound of Down, Downpatrick.

(AQW 7437/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The survey at the Mound of Down carried out by wildlife specialists of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency between 13 and 20 January 2012 looked for evidence of protected species including badger, otter, pine marten, Irish hare and bats. The survey identified the presence of badgers. 27 entrances were found to badger setts, 24 of which were concentrated in four clusters with three isolated entrances. Some rabbit holes were also located.

Scrub clearance works, affecting only about one third of the scrubbed-over banks, were licensed. These were restricted to two areas and avoided all the sett clusters and occupied isolated setts and were timed to be completed prior to the bird nesting season. Some clearance of tall trees was approved in the vicinity of two currently unoccupied setts, though the scrub concealing them was retained.

PPS 21

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment what information or guidance his Department has provided to divisional planning offices about PPS 21 Policy CTY 10 in relation to clustering and integration.

(AQW 7460/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In June 2011 I launched a review of how PPS21 was operating in practise. Part of the review sought to ensure that the policies were applied consistently throughout Northern Ireland.

Subsequently, at my request, the Department rolled out training for all planning officers on the implementation of PPS21. This training took place over a three week period last October, at which time approximately 150 staff were trained.

The training covered each of the policies in detail; however it focussed on those areas which gave particular concern. It provided examples of proposals which are acceptable and those which are unacceptable when considered in the context of the relevant policy.

In relation to policy CTY10, examples of poorly sited proposed new dwellings were demonstrated using relevant maps and photographs; equally, examples of well integrated buildings were also shown. Staff were advised how to define a 'cluster'; how to verify the farm ID number and what to do in the absence of such a number.

The trainer also used relevant case law and recent PAC decisions to demonstrate, how in some circumstances, different weight can be attached to policy and other material factors in reaching a balanced planning decision.

In addition to the training sessions, the Department has provided various guidance notes for staff and for members of the public in relation to the implementation of PPS21. Specifically in relation to Policy CTY10, guidance produced relates to the definition of an 'active' farm and to clustering where there are no other buildings on the farm. A copy of this guidance is attached at Annex A and B for your information.

I shall shortly complete the operational review of PPS21 and intend to make a statement to the Assembly in that regard.

Annex A

PPS 21

Advice on the implementation of Policy CTY 10 – Dwellings on Farm - Criterion (c) where there are no buildings on the farm

The above policy in PPS21 will allow for a dwelling to be permitted on an active farm, every 10 years, subject to certain criteria.

Criterion (c) of CTY10 requires that the new building be visually linked or sited to cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm. Policy CTY10 does not make reference to circumstances where the farm holding has no building or group of farm buildings for a dwelling to visually link or cluster with.

PNRD has advised that as applications for a house on a farm without any buildings was considered by DARD to be a rare occurrence no references were made to this situation in the final document.

Therefore, for the purposes of determining applications where there are no buildings on the farm, the site should comply with policies CTY13(a-f), CTY14 and CTY16, similar to applications where an alternative site is being considered under criterion (c)

Where there is one building on the farm holding, the farm dwelling should cluster with that building unless it is considered as an exceptional case for an alternative site in which case policies CTY13(a-f), CTY14 and CTY16 apply.

Planning Service Headquarters
September 2010

Annex B**PPS 21****Advice on the implementation of Policy CTY 10 – Dwellings on Farms – Active Farmers**

The above policy in PPS 21 will allow a dwelling to be permitted on an active farm, every 10 years subject to certain criteria.

Criterion (c) of Policy CTY 10 operates with a presumption that the dwelling is sited to either visually link or cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm.

As an exception, consideration will be given to an alternative site away from other buildings on the farm where there are either, demonstrable health and safety reasons, or verifiable plans to expand the farm business at the existing group of buildings.

In this respect the applicant will be required to submit appropriate supporting evidence demonstrating to the satisfaction of Planning Service that it is not appropriate or feasible to position the dwelling in close proximity to existing buildings on the farm. Such evidence may include a report from an independent consultant.

Given the site specific element within this policy, prospective applicants and their agents are strongly encouraged to consider carefully matters such as site selection, particularly where an alternative site away from existing buildings is proposed, including the substance of any supporting evidence. Note: The policy also allows for the selection of a well landscaped site adjacent to a building group on a farm where there is a degree of visual linkage.

Prospective applicants should NOT make any direct approaches to either Environmental Health or the Health & Safety Executive NI in advance of making their application. Planning Service will consult with all relevant statutory bodies / agencies where appropriate.

Illegal Car Parks

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the (i) number of illegal car parks currently operating in Belfast; and (ii) what action his Department has taken, since 2007, to address this problem. **(AQW 7504/11-15)**

Mr Attwood:

- 1) The Department is currently investigating 17 car parks which are operating without planning permission in Belfast.
- 2) Since 2007 the Department has investigated over 50 cases in relation to unauthorised car parks in Belfast. Of these 17 cases are still under investigation.
 - 9 have been closed due to immunity in that they were operating for more than 10 years prior to the complaint being received.
 - 9 have been approved on a permanent basis or with a temporary permission. Of these, 3 were approved by the Planning Appeals Commission.
 - 13 have been closed due to enforcement action and the use of the site as a car park has ceased.

Of the remaining 17, 6 remain under negotiation while the rest are awaiting the outcome of planning applications or appeals. My enforcement team remain committed to actively pursuing these breaches of planning control.

Empty Residential Properties

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any plans to introduce legislation to compel owners of empty residential properties to maintain the exterior of the property at a reasonable standard of upkeep, so as not to infringe on the value of neighbouring properties.

(AQW 7526/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The upkeep of empty residential property, so as not to detract from the property value of other residences, is not currently subject to any statutory controls under Northern Ireland's environmental or planning law. I have been considering how to better manage sites where development has not commenced or has commenced but subsequently abandoned. I will address the issue of empty residential property in this context.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Givan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost and the length of time it has taken to produce the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.

(AQW 7535/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The preparation of BMAP was formally initiated by the Minister of the Environment, Sam Foster MLA on 10 January 2001, and a notice of intention to prepare the Plan was published in February 2001. An Issues Paper was published in December 2001, followed by the Draft Plan in November 2004, and a Plan Amendment in February 2006.

The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) was asked to conduct a public inquiry in order to consider the objections to the Draft Plan and the Plan Amendment. The Inquiry commenced in April 2007 and concluded in May 2008.

During the period from 21 January 2009 to 31 January 2012, the PAC Reports on the BMAP Public Inquiry have been delivered to my Department in a piecemeal manner. All outstanding reports have now been received over three and a half years since the conclusion of the public inquiry. This delay has impacted on the progress towards the adoption of BMAP.

To date, the cost to my Department of producing the Plan has been in the region of £9 million.

Listed Buildings

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department has given to paying grant aid for work on listed buildings directly to contractors, so that householders and businesses do not have to acquire finance before the grant aid is paid.

(AQW 7553/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) administers the listed building grant-aid scheme on behalf of the department, and has around 200 'live' schemes on its database at any time. In general, particular schemes are administered by an owner's architect/consultant, who has the responsibility of 'project managing' the works, in accordance with a separate contract/agreement between the owner and the builder; this role includes the method and frequency of payment.

The department is a third party to this, and is a partial funder for the overall works; in general up to 35% is provided for the cost of repairs to original fabric. Current consideration has not been given to paying contractors directly (as part of the ongoing review of the grant-aid scheme), as it has been concluded that the current system of payment on production of receipted accounts, provides a clear audit trail on behalf of the public purse, and ensures the department is not involved in potential contractual disputes - between the owner and the builder - for the overall project.

Amount Paid to Recruitment Agencies

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of the Environment 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 7648/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below details the amount paid to recruitment agencies covering the period 2008-09 to 2010-11.

Business Area	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
Department (excluding agencies)	0	209,921	310,584
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	1,936,120	2,430,584	842,292
Planning Service	0	7,269	0
Driver and Vehicle Agency	892,210	1,503,374	1,227,822
Arms-Length Bodies (NILGOSC and Local Government Staff Commission)	8,995	14,118	35,598
Total	2,837,325	4,165,266	2,416,296

The information held on the accounting system does not distinguish between full time and part time posts. To obtain this information would require an extensive manual analysis of all payments to recruitment agencies over the three year period and therefore could not be obtained except at disproportionate cost.

The Department uses recruitment agencies to fill a range of posts for a number of reasons. In some cases, it is necessary to recruit agency staff to cover posts on a temporary basis due to staff transfers, maternity leave, secondments, etc., or where there may be uncertainty regarding the availability of adequate budget cover in the forward years to pay for the recurring salary costs of staff. It is also beneficial for the Department to be able to flex its workforce requirements where demand for services may fluctuate, for example in the driver and vehicle testing function, or where specific, short-term programmes or projects need to be taken forward.

However, I have asked for a review of these costs, particularly DVA and NIEA, given their scale. I shall update the member in due course.

Incomplete Roads in Private Housing Developments

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the number of roads in private housing developments that are incomplete as a result of developers being in financial difficulties, whether he will consider reviewing the planning process in relation to this matter.

(AQW 7746/11-15)

Mr Attwood: A Private Streets Determination is carried out in conjunction with DRD Roads Service prior to granting full planning permission for a housing development. This will be subject to a private streets condition stating that the width, position and arrangement of the internal streets shall be as indicated on the Private Streets Determination drawing.

The key legislation that governs the eventual adoption of new roads in housing developments are the Private Streets (NI) Order 1980 and the Private Streets (Amendment) (NI) order 1992. This legislation requires developers to make provision for the cost of street works and to secure that by means of a bond.

The process of seeking the bond is carried out by DRD Roads Service and follows the grant of planning permission.

The current private streets legislation and procedures are the means of ensuring that new roads in housing developments are built to appropriate standards and hence adopted into the public road network when they are completed. I will however keep this matter under review.

Transition Committees

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment when he intends to put Transition Committees on a legislative footing, given the amount of time that it will take such Committees to assess and address the issues relevant to the merging of councils.

(AQW 7779/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In moving forward, I would propose to have Transition Committees established in statute in May 2013 to enable them to deliver a range of activities in advance of the establishment of Shadow Councils in June 2014.

However, I am writing to councils now about the re-establishment of the Voluntary Transition Committees by March 2012. This should allow convergence work to commence shortly on addressing local issues in council groupings.

The Statutory Transition Committees will, in due course, become responsible for taking forward the practical work developed during the voluntary process.

Delays in Planning Applications

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment why delays in processing planning applications continues when the total number of applications received by his Department continues to fall and application fees have increased.

(AQW 7824/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since becoming Minister, I have commenced a radical reform of planning in order to reduce delays in processing applications and require active case management and other interventions to ensure applications are processed in a more timely manner. These include a further extension of the streamlined consultation scheme and proactively managing renewable applications. I meet with planning senior management monthly to discuss Article 31 applications and this has already borne fruit as last month I was able to dispose of five major applications including the approval of three. I intend to accelerate this with further approvals in February and forthcoming months.

There are a number of reasons for delays in processing planning applications mainly due to the redeployment of planning and administrative staff due to a reduction in income from planning application fee receipts. This has led to reallocation of cases to remaining staff and increase in case loads. This is a legacy I inherited – but which I have been addressing. That said, the backlog of applications is continuing to reduce but inevitably the average and percentile timescale for processing will lengthen as decisions are issued on more older applications. I have developed a workforce planning model in order to build a planning system that is more fit for purpose and provide decisions on planning applications in a timely manner, subject to finance being available .

My objective is to have planning on a more sustainable funding model before the transfer of functions to the new local authorities and have asked officials to progress stage 2 of the review of planning fees review. I consider it is right that the development industry covers the cost of processing of their applications but recognise that more timely decision making is required. I will therefore include more challenging targets for processing applications in the Departmental business plan for next year.

I also would urge applicants to engage with my planners and local communities at an early stage, and to submit high quality applications accompanied by all of the information and surveys necessary to allow if to be determined as quickly as possible.

Listed Buildings

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department has given to allowing discretion in the imposition of variable penalties on those held responsible for the incorrect maintenance of listed buildings which are (i) private homes; (ii) commercial premises; and (iii) public buildings.

(AQW 7845/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has a range of powers and controls to protect listed buildings which, if breached, constitute an offence regardless of whether the building is used for private, commercial or public use.

Penalties are normally set as a maximum in terms of the level of a fine or a term of imprisonment, although conviction on indictment for an offence under Article 44(6) (b) may involve an unlimited fine. Decisions on the level of fine or term of imprisonment are matters for the courts and not the Department.

The Planning Act (NI) 2011 introduced an increase maximum on summary conviction under Article 44(6) (a) (control of works for demolition, alteration or extension of listed buildings) from £30,000 to £100,000.

The Department is committed to investigating breaches of planning control for both listed and non-listed buildings and where such breaches cannot be suitably resolved informally then, where it is expedient to do so, the Department will take formal enforcement action including prosecution through the courts.

Listed Buildings

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department has given to incentivising owner occupancy of listed buildings as commercial premises.

(AQW 7846/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The department has considered incentivising owner occupancy of listed buildings as commercial premises. However, DOE does not have the relevant vires. Its key statutory objective is to secure the conservation of the character of listed buildings which it does in accord with current policy. It remains flexible in considering various uses, or re-use - including those with adaption - that best fulfil this objective.

The department's listed building grant-aid scheme is available for the repair and maintenance of historic fabric for most listed buildings, in keeping with the legislation; large commercial organisations are ineligible.

In addition, NIEA's conservation architects provide advice and guidance to owners on the upkeep of their buildings, and, where appropriate, seek to encourage a 'meanwhile use' for vacant listed buildings.

The department's grant-aid scheme also provides funding assistance to help with the acquisition of listed buildings at risk by Building Preservation Trusts (BPTs). Many BPTs have a proven track record of saving, conserving and reusing such properties - including for commercial activities - in a sensitive and sustainable way. However, I have been considering how Government may better use listed buildings as part of the Government Estate, thereby helping to maintain the fabric of listed properties.

Listed Buildings

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department has given to incentivising owner occupancy of listed buildings as private homes.

(AQW 7847/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I refer you to my answer to AQW 7846/11-15, which is relevant here.

Department's Equality Unit

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the current (i) number; and (ii) annual cost of staff employed in his Department's Equality Unit.

(AQW 7892/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) The Department currently employs two staff in its Equality Unit – one Deputy Principal and one Staff Officer;
- (ii) The current total annual cost to the Department of these 2 staff is £84,000.

Stationery Costs in Replying to Assembly Written Questions

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment 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 7958/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides details in relation to the estimated costs of stationery incurred over the last four years in replying to Assembly Questions.

Financial Year	Total Cost (£)
2007-08	136.64
2008-09	205.76
2009-10	148.16
2010-11	119.20

The costs of stationery are not captured separately from other types of expenditure, however, to provide the Member with a response to this question, the Department has calculated the average cost of stationery for answering an Assembly Question and applied this to the number of questions answered in each year. The average cost of stationery for an Assembly Question has been estimated at £0.16p.

It is only possible to provide the Member with estimated costs over the last four years as the Department does not have access to records prior to May 2007 for the number of assembly questions. The total number of Assembly Questions includes written, oral and part input. It is not possible to distinguish between the three types of question. However, the total amount of oral and part input questions would be negligible.

Taxed Motorcycles, Scooters and Motor-Trikes

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment how many (i) motorcycles; (ii) scooters; and (iii) motor-trikes are currently taxed for road use.

(AQW 7965/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Vehicle licensing is an excepted matter which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport. It is administered in Northern Ireland by the Driver & Vehicle Agency under an agreement between my Department and the Department for Transport.

There are a number of body type categories that relate to motorcycles and tricycles, so the response below details the number of vehicles currently licensed in each of the categories at 31 December 2011.

Vehicle Type	Number Currently Licensed
Motorcycle	23,809

Vehicle Type	Number Currently Licensed
Scooter	2,361
Tricycle	255
Moped	2,327
Motorcycle Combination (ie a motorcycle with a sidecar)	17

Area Licensed to Tamboran for Gas Exploration

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) all of the chemicals and metals that are underground in the area licensed to Tamboran for gas exploration; (ii) the potential impact that the displacement of these chemicals and metals would have on the local environment and residents; and (iii) whether this will be taken into consideration as part of the planning process.

(AQW 8032/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The soils, superficial sediments and rocks that underlie the area of Tamboran Resources' petroleum licence contain a wide range of minerals and organic matter containing many different elements and compounds. There is no reason to believe that there are high concentrations of potentially toxic metals in the rocks of this area. Ongoing scientific research will build the evidence base in this regard.

Where material has been introduced into the sub-surface by means of drilling operations, or where hazardous materials are naturally occurring, the risk of these materials coming into contact with the surface or near-surface environment, as a result of drilling and associated operations, will be considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment appropriate to any part of this operation.

In terms of their role in the consultation process NIEA will assess existing groundwater data and where necessary carry out additional groundwater monitoring to establish an environmental baseline for groundwater quality once planning applications are received and the exact location of a proposed hydraulic fracturing operation is known. I am currently assessing the scale of environmental regime for any exploratory drilling.

I have met with representatives of Tamboran Resources and made it clear to that I will uphold the most rigorous Environmental Impact Assessment in relation to this matter. Tamboran have accepted the need for such assessments and to liaise with both Strategic Planning Division and NIEA in scoping the content of the required Environmental Statement.

Liaison will continue at both Ministerial and Official level with our counterparts in the South who will be dealing with the same type of planning applications and environmental impact issues.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether he is satisfied that any Environmental Impact Assessment that will be carried out prior to hydraulic fracturing taking place will be carried out by a properly qualified, independent and impartial organisation with the necessary expertise; and (ii) whether he would consider ordering an independent public inquiry into the potential use of fracking before it reaches the stage where planning permission is required.

(AQW 8033/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have made it clear – including in a meeting with Tamboran – that all appropriate environmental requirements will be complied with at all times.

In terms of any planning applications submitted by Tamboran Resources involving hydraulic fracturing the responsibility is on the company to provide a full and proper Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to support their application.

I have also made it clear to Tamboran Resources that I expect the most rigorous EIA to form the basis of the Departments determination of any future planning application taking account of all potential impacts on the environment and public health. The EIA will be the subject of very careful consideration by the Strategic Planning Division with the assistance and expert advice from a range of other consultees with responsibilities for environmental protection and public health and safety.

As I have already stated in a previous answer on the subject of public inquiries the Department has various powers to call a public inquiry or independent examination in public should it consider necessary to do so. I will carefully consider this option as events, research and my assessment unfolds.

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. However, as I have said, I will consider this option as information, evidence with the North, on the island and beyond develops.

Planning Approval

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment on how many occasions planning approval has been granted against the advice of the Environment Agency in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8145/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning legislation states that a decision on planning application is made having regard to the development plan and other material considerations. The guiding principle that DoE Planning observe in making decisions on planning applications is set out in Planning Policy Statement 1 'General Principles'. This states that development should be permitted, having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, unless it would cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

DoE, as the planning authority, may ask for advice from a number of other agencies and organisations to inform the decision on an application. This can include other parts of the DOE such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). Advice from NIEA officials will normally be sought on matters relating to built and natural heritage issues, water quality and land and resource management.

The advice provided by NIEA officials, and other consultees is one of a number of factors to be considered in reaching a balanced decision in any planning application. In making a decision where there are different priorities and policies the courts have held that the assessment of weight is a matter for the decision maker and therefore rests with the planning authority. Accordingly it is for DoE Planning as decision-maker to exercise its judgement in determining the balance of considerations. This is critical – it is for DOE Planning or, in the case of Article 31 applications, for the DOE Minister to make the decision.

Table 1, shows the number of planning applications approved in the last five years where advice provided by NIEA officials was an objection to the proposal or recommended refusal. However, in instances where NIEA officials record their advice as being 'approval/refusal', this should not be confused with the DoE Planning role as decision-maker, where it is required to reach a balanced and informed decision taking account of all material factors, including the opinions of its consultees.

TABLE 1

Year Decision Issued	Consultation Response (Objection)	Consultation Response (Refusal Recommended)	Total
07-08	8	9	17
08-09	28	19	47
09-10	40	22	62

Year Decision Issued	Consultation Response (Objection)	Consultation Response (Refusal Recommended)	Total
10-11	12	22	34
11-12	4	41	45
Total	92	113	205

Source: DOE Planning

Notes: Figures quoted may differ from officially published statistics and may be subject to revision

In all cases where the advice from NIEA officials was not given determining weight it was because other material considerations outweighed that advice and, after due consideration the Department decided that permission should be granted.

Homes Built on Flood Plains

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment how many homes are built on flood plains.
(AQW 8228/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Historically many cities and towns in Britain and Ireland, have been built in valleys and along river corridors and thus have resulted in increased flood risk. The Department recognises that the effects of flooding on human activity are wide ranging, impacting on the economy, social well being and the environment.

However, the planning system cannot in itself prevent the flooding of properties but it does acknowledge the risks and uncertainties associated with climate change. The Department considers that actions to address these matters through the planning system should be based on a precautionary approach. This approach is embodied in the policies set out in Planning Policy Statement 15 'Planning and Flood Risk' to ensure that the development decisions we make today and in the future does not increase flood risk.

The Department does not capture information in relation to the number of dwellings proposed or approved on flood plains or monitor the commencement or completion of building works. However, it has consulted with Rivers Agency in relation to almost 4,500 planning applications on sites which are located in an area of known flood risk in the last 5 years. The Department also consults with Rivers Agency when a development plan is being prepared to ensure that such plans do not bring forward sites or zone land that may be susceptible to flooding, unless there are exceptional circumstances, or it is considered appropriate to put mitigation measures in place.

Advanced Driving Test

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment how many drivers have passed the Advanced Driving Test in each of the last three years; and how this figure, as a percentage, compares with other UK regions.
(AQW 8230/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) carries out statutory driving tests in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Department under the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 and the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.

Advanced driving tests both in NI and in Britain are carried out by private organisations. The main providers are the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA), and they have provided the tabulated statistics below for advanced driving tests.

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS (IAM)

Category	2008-2009			2009-2010			2010-2011		
	Tests	Pass Rate	No of Passes	Tests	Pass Rate	No of Passes	Tests	Pass Rate	No of Passes
NI									
Car	201	98%	199	114	96%	109	81	98%	79
Motorcycle	16	88%	14	32	97%	31	34	100%	34
Britain									
Car	8376	92%	7706	4314	89%	3839	3004	86%	2583
Motorcycle	2027	87%	1763	1874	86%	1612	1785	86%	1535

Source: Institute of Advanced Motorists (not Official Statistics)

ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS (ROSPA)

Category	2008-2009			2009-2010			2010-2011		
	Tests	Pass Rate	No of Passes	Tests	Pass Rate	No of Passes	Tests	Pass Rate	No of Passes
NI									
Car	101	100%	101	88	100%	88	70	100%	70
Motorcycle	8	100%	8	19	100%	19	15	100%	15
England									
Car	1850	98.7%	1826	1844	98.5%	1816	2097	99%	2076
Motorcycle	433	98.6%	427	441	99%	437	572	99%	566
Scotland									
Car	144	100%	144	126	99.2%	125	170	99.4%	169
Motorcycle	26	100%	26	37	100%	37	20	100%	20
Wales									
Car	74	100%	74	54	98.2%	53	73	100%	73
Motorcycle	28	100%	28	50	100%	50	53	94.3%	50

Source: Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (not Official Statistics)

The statistics provided by the IAM and RoSPA indicate that over the three years in question 20,484 drivers passed the advanced driving test in Britain compared with 646 in NI while for motorcyclists 6,551 riders passed the advanced test in Britain and 121 in NI.

The numbers of advanced tests taken with the IAM and RoSPA in this period totalled, for cars, 22,126 in Britain and 655 in NI, and, for motorcycles, 7,346 in Britain and 124 in NI. For car tests, the figures for both Britain and NI represented 0.4% of the numbers of ordinary practical driving tests taken by motorists in the same period, while advanced motorcycle tests represented 3.3% of the number of ordinary motorcycle tests taken in Britain and 2.1% of the number taken in NI.

Department Spend on Fuel

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department, and its agencies, have spent on fuel in each of the last five years.

(AQW 8249/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides details of expenditure by the Department, for the years in question, on vehicle fuel (both petrol and diesel for cars, vans, lorries and boats).

Business Area	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
Driver and Vehicle Agency	21,484	17,988	29,826	28,107	31,565
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	120,573	136,714	168,842	173,160	187,957
Total	142,057	154,702	198,668	201,267	219,522

The increase in spend between 2007/08 and 2008/09 is largely due to the purchase of 26 additional vehicles, including larger 4x4s for use on agricultural land, by Northern Ireland Environment Agency to enhance enforcement and environmental regulation activities in relation to environmental crime, landfill site monitoring and water sampling. In addition, we have seen significant increases in the price of fuel, with the cost of diesel increasing by some 23% between 2008 and 2010.

Surveying of Historic Buildings

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department has given to reducing the costs related to the surveying of historic buildings.

(AQW 8259/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) currently has two contracts to undertake surveys of historic buildings. A three year, area based, contract to survey specific council areas - as part of the Second Survey programme, and a three year ad-hoc record contract to survey 'one-off' buildings, not least in response to the service of Building Preservation Notices etc.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) report of March 2011 ('Safeguarding Northern Ireland's Listed Buildings' (see attached)) reported that the average cost to survey a historic building, as part of the Second Survey, was £310, and the average cost to survey a historic building as a 'one off' to the same level of detail, for example as a result of a request from a member of the public, or their elected representative, was £753.

The difference between the two rates is because it is much more efficient to survey buildings in groups where historical research can be shared, and to do this in a designated area, where travel and time efficiencies can be maximised. Most of NIEA's survey work is therefore concentrated on 'area based' surveys, and surveys of 'one off' records are minimised as much as possible.

The Second Survey commenced in 1997, with a contract through which consultants were paid by the hour for their survey work.

Over the last five years, ie since 2006/07 the Survey process has been reviewed comprehensively and a new contract arrangement introduced. This sought a price for an expected number of buildings within a designated area. This was tested in 2008 and 2009, before the current three year contract was let in 2010.

The new contracts also sought to reduce the total number of buildings surveyed by around 30%, in a bid to increase efficiency, and speed up the progress of the work. This has resulted in the greatest cost saving in relation to the Second Survey, and work is concentrated on buildings with a high potential to be listed. Data from the first ten years of the survey allowed an estimate to be made of the number of new records to be expected, which relates to the number of existing listed buildings in an area. This approach has been reasonably successful. Of the 7 full council areas surveyed since 2008, two -

Omagh and Newtownabbey - have been, significantly, in excess of the expected number of surveys, but most have been within a margin of error of 10% of the tendered figure.

NIEA Conservation Architects now meet with the contractors, after they have undertaken a 'scoping' of an area, to omit any surveys that are considered unnecessary. This requires more meetings (ie staff time etc), but ensures greater efficiency for the money spent and is expected to further reduce the number of surveys undertaken.

Partial surveys (known as D1 records) have also been introduced. In the area survey, the Department seeks to update records of structures which have a reference number from previous survey work. Where it is clear that a structure is not 'listable', a single photograph and minimal information is recorded, at c1/10 of the cost of a full survey.

The scale of work can also have an impact on cost as there will be a higher relative cost to a contractor to assemble a team for a short period of time rather than for a long one. This may, in part, explain why the first test contract of 2008 for a single council area cost £540 per record, whereas the second test contract of 2009/10 for the equivalent of two council areas cost only £351 per record (a reduction of 35%). The average cost per record under the current contract is £350. These costs per record are taken from the NIAO report.

In regard to the survey, the NIAO report recommended: '...that improved arrangements built into the current contract for targeting survey work and managing throughput of work within NIEA are reflected in all future contracts for the remainder of the survey process.' And 'We recommend that NIEA builds on its procedures for the current contract by formally prioritising for survey those buildings that are most at risk. We also recommend that decisions on the approach to be taken after the current contract expires in 2013 are based on a through appraisal of a range of relevant, fully costed options, to ensure that future survey work delivers value for money.'

NIEA will take account of these recommendations prior to any retendering. This tendering work will also be undertaken in association with the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) within DFP which also seeks to reduce costs (and ensure quality etc) in accord with government practice.

In May 2011 the budget for the survey was reduced from £320K to £60K, as a result of the widespread financial cut backs at the time. However, although work in 2011/12 began on a reduced basis, the transfer of additional funding, in-year, returned the annual budget to £324K which resulted in the projected systematic survey work being completed in full, and allowed for some ad hoc surveys – on buildings that were adjudged to be 'at risk' of loss of character – in other areas.

Area Plan for the Derry City Council Area

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment when the new Area Plan for the Derry City Council area will be completed.

(AQW 8294/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Consideration is currently being given to the best mechanisms for both working with and empowering Councils to participate in Plan production over the run up to the Reform of Public Administration.

Until such time as a new area plan is prepared under the provisions of PPS:1 General Principles (paragraph 45) the existing Plan continues to be a material consideration past its stated end by date, to the extent that policies and proposals remain applicable to current circumstance. At present Derry has a generous supply of development land, with existing permissions and housing zonings providing potential for 9973 dwellings in Derry City and 1750 dwellings in the Districts remaining settlements. However the Department will continue to monitor the situation and if a need arises then remedial action will be taken.

Consumption of Alcohol on all Private Hire Buses and Vehicles

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration is being given to banning the consumption of alcohol on all private hire buses and vehicles.

(AQW 8379/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Regulation 51(1)(k) of the Public Service Vehicle Regulations (NI) 1985 makes it an offence for a passenger on a public service vehicle to consume alcohol. The Police Service of Northern Ireland has primary responsibility for the enforcement of this regulation.

I am very concerned about the consumption of alcohol on buses and am currently considering additional means by which to deal with this issue, as I am aware that the current legislation creates an offence for members of the public but not for the operator or driver of the vehicle. My assessment covers a number of issues.

Firstly, the ongoing review of bus operator licensing is considering the introduction of legislation that would require operators and those using bus services to ensure that alcohol is carried separately from passengers. When this proposal was consulted on in 2010 many respondents suggested that a blanket ban on alcohol would be more effective but a number of respondents raised concerns over the responsibility placed on operators and drivers, without the power to search people boarding a bus.

Secondly, the Department is looking at how blanket bans on alcohol on buses have been delivered both here in Northern Ireland (before sporting events) and in Scotland, with a view to considering making similar wide ranging legislation as part of the ongoing review of bus regulation.

Thirdly, I have recently set up a Bus Forum to fully engage with industry representatives and stakeholders such as the PSNI. One of the key tasks of the Forum will be to consider and make recommendations on the most appropriate means of dealing with the consumption of alcohol on buses.

Fourth, my officials are working with officials in DHSSPS as part of their Alcohol in the Night Time Economy working group. This group is looking at the whole issue of alcohol consumption in Northern Ireland and their findings will help to inform decision making on the control of alcohol in the transport industries.

Fifth, I have called in a range of bus operators to confirm concern of the issue and assess how best to go forward. The meeting was held on 14 March 2012.

Waste Management

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the benefits for waste management of single thermal treatment, or gasification facilities, for municipal waste, located within each of the three current waste management organisation's boundaries; and what annual tonnage capacity he envisages that each facility would be required to handle.

(AQW 8387/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Energy from waste, whether through incineration, gasification or other technology, is a tightly regulated means of treating the residual waste remaining after as many recyclates as is practicable have been extracted from the waste collected by municipal authorities through either kerbside or bluebin collection and Mechanical Biological Treatment. Each of the three Waste Management Groups has gone through a rigorous process of assessment to identify the solutions that it believes best meets the waste management needs of its constituent councils.

The main benefits of the Waste Management Groups' preferred solutions are the reduction of waste going to landfill and the 5-7% contribution that front-end processing (Mechanical and Biological Treatment) would make to our overall recycling figures. It is vital that we achieve our landfill diversion targets if we are to avoid heavy infraction fines from the EU. The energy from waste (EfW) component of each project has the potential to power district heating schemes or to be fed back into the main electricity grid, thereby reducing the use of fossil fuels and bringing us closer to our stated goal of

becoming a low carbon economy. Beyond the specific benefits to waste management, the projects will also create jobs in both their construction and operational phases.

The Waste Management Groups have calculated that their respective Contract tonnages will be as follows:

arc21	c. 240,000 – 250,000 tonnes per annum
NWRWMG	c. 120,000 tonnes per annum
SWaMP2008	c. 140,000 – 160,000 tonnes per annum.

Possible Planning Approval for Parkgate Quarry

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment whether a full hydrological study will be a precondition in the possible planning approval for Parkgate quarry.

(AQW 8480/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In terms of any possible approval for the proposal at Parkgate Quarry a hydrogeological survey will be required but not as a precondition of planning permission as it is not the role of planning permission to impose conditions to achieve the purposes of a separate system of control.

This facility will require both the grant of planning permission and also the grant of a permit licence under the Pollution Prevention Control regulatory regime, in order that it may be lawfully regulated and operated. A full and robust hydrogeological study will be required by NIEA in the granting of any such licence for the operation of this site.

Vacant Listed Heritage Buildings in the Belfast City Centre Area

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has an action plan for the following vacant listed heritage buildings in the Belfast City Centre area (i) University Road Methodist Church; (ii) Kitchen Bar, 1 Victoria Square; (iii) Carlisle Memorial Methodist Church; (iv) Crumlin Road Courthouse; (v) Crumlin Road Jail; (vi) Bank of Ireland, Royal Avenue; (vii) Assembly Rooms, Donegall Street; (viii) Ewart Building Bedford Street; (ix) Riddell Warehouse; (x) Harland and Wolff HQ and drawing office; (xi) Musgrave Street Police Station; (xii) St Joseph's Church Sailortown; (xiii) Ormiston House; (xiv) Donegall Arcade and associated buildings; (xv) Victoria Hall, May Street; (xvi) St George's Market; (xvii) Linen Warehouse, Bedford Street; (xviii) Linen HQ Bedford Street; and (xix) Jordanstown Schools.

(AQW 8483/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It is for owners who are responsible for the maintenance and security of individual buildings to develop plans for the building.

In relation to the category of 'Buildings at Risk' DOE seeks to highlight the issues faced by such buildings in general, by publishing the Built Heritage at Risk in Northern Ireland (BHARNI) register. It makes assistance available through its listed building grant-aid funding for the repair of original fabric, and by providing funds for voluntary groups and charities to help them to acquire, and find sustainable uses for, listed buildings at risk. The department's Conservation Architects also engage with owners, to advise on appropriate conservation, the availability of funding, and where appropriate, potential new usages for buildings. In addition, funding is provided to the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society (UAHS) that employs a surveyor as a 'Built Heritage at Risk Project Officer' to work with owners, and make them aware of potential solutions.

In certain cases where engagement is not producing results and the listed building's condition is deteriorating, the department issues warning letters, advising of the statutory powers available to the Department to arrest further decline. During 2011-12, three Urgent Works Notices have been served, requiring that works to secure buildings are undertaken; where the owner has failed to act, the department has carried out the works, and can seek recovery of costs.

Of the buildings listed in the question, some are not regarded as being 'at risk' - eg - (xvi), St George's Market. Further buildings, such as (ii), the Kitchen Bar, and (xi), Musgrave Street Police Station, are not listed.

The Department has had engagement with owners of many of the other buildings in recent years, to seek a sustainable future, although the economic downturn has meant that schemes approved for a new use - ie - (i), University Road, Bedford Street; (x), the Harland and Wolff HQ and drawing office; (iv), the Crumlin Road Courthouse; and, (vi), Bank of Ireland, Royal Avenue, have not proceeded. Other schemes, such as (vii), the Assembly Rooms, Donegall Street, and (xv), Victoria Hall (which was delisted in 1989) are subject to current planning applications.

The NIEA Built Heritage Directorate is reviewing all of the buildings on the Built Heritage at Risk database, in conjunction with the UAHS Heritage Officer, to prioritise action.

Enforcement Cases

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment, excluding the Downpatrick Planning Office, to detail the number of (i) enforcement cases; and (ii) staff tasked to deal with these cases in each divisional planning office.

(AQW 8579/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Excluding the Downpatrick Planning Office, the number of (i) enforcement cases; and (ii) staff tasked to deal with these cases in each divisional planning office is set out in the table below.

Divisional Office	(i) Number of Live Enforcement Cases as of 23 February 2012	(ii) Number of Staff	
		Full Time	Part time
Belfast	421	3	0
Ballymena	288	4	0
Craigavon	426	4	1
Northern - Derry	230	2	1
Northern - Coleraine	230	2	3
Omagh	310	4	0
Headquarters	339	3	2
Total	3581	22	7

There are also 10 senior officers at PPTO (Principal Planner) grade who manage the enforcement teams combined with their other duties in Development Management. They have not been included in the figures.

Planning Management acknowledges the disparity in live caseloads throughout the Divisional Planning Offices and has been taking action to address resource issues. This has required the movement of staff in a number of local offices to help equalise case loads across all offices with minimum disruption to service and inconvenience to staff. Senior Management will continue to review caseloads and redeploy staff as necessary.

Mobile Driver and Vehicle Agency Units

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 6451/11-15, to detail (i) the areas where the units operated; (ii) the number of successful detections; and (iii) the cost of operating the three mobile units, including staff wages.

(AQW 8799/11-15)

Mr Attwood: On 26 December 2011 the Agency's three mobile units were operating on the A2 Hollywood by-pass, at Castle Street, Ballymoney, and on the A4 at Augher, Co Tyrone. The mobile units detected a total of 114 vehicles during the three operations in question, and the costs involved, including staff wages, were estimated at £536.66.

Listed Buildings Occupied as Private Homes

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number and percentage of listed buildings that are occupied as private homes.

(AQW 8821/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department is unable to provide information in the form that you have requested.

It may help if I explain that the focus of listing is on buildings, and they are identified by their address and location – rather than through ownership - which is subject to change, without the need for Departmental consent, and for which there is no legal requirement currently for the Department to hold records.

General correspondence issuing from the Department is, as a result, addressed to the ‘owner/occupier’, although specific named individuals are referred to in response to correspondence with owner/occupiers who identify themselves to us.

That noted, information available from within the Northern Ireland Environment Agency databases indicates that about 50% of all listed properties are categorised as ‘houses’.

Civil Service Hydrogeologists

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how many Civil Service hydrogeologists have worked for the Environment Agency in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8836/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In the last 3 years, 2009 -2011, NIEA has employed 1 member of staff with a formal hydrogeological qualification.

In addition to permanent staff employed by NIEA, the Agency is supported by hydrogeologists contracted from the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland and also from an environmental consultancy group.

Hydrogeologists from GSNI are Public Servants under contract from the British Geological Survey.

Power to Rename Streets

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment when he will bring forward proposals to give councils an explicit power to rename streets.

(AQW 8867/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am aiming to issue for consultation proposals on street names, which will include the issue of providing councils with explicit powers to rename streets, during the course of 2012.

Existence of the Colletes Floralis Mining Bee in the Vicinity of Bushfoot Strand, Co Antrim

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether his Department has any evidence of the existence of the colletes floralis mining bee in the vicinity of Bushfoot Strand, Co Antrim; and (ii) whether the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation was consulted on the proposal for the Dunes Golf Course development; and to provide details of its response.

(AQW 8920/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) The Northern colletes, *Colletes floralis*, was recorded at three locations in 2008, one of which was within the development boundary. Further survey in 2011 did not record the bee as being present.
- (ii) Decisions about nomination, management and the status of World Heritage properties are taken by the World Heritage Committee (WHC) which meets annually. This means that consultation with the WHC would result in lengthy delays in reaching a local decision. I therefore did not consult the WHC on the proposal for the Bushmills Dunes development.

The Department did however advise the Department for Culture, Media, Sport and Leisure (DCMS), which is the Government body responsible for all World Heritage properties in the UK, immediately once my decision was taken. DCMS in turn advised UNESCO which is the parent body of the WHC.

The Department has also committed to send a State of Conservation report to UNESCO within four weeks to provide more detail about the proposal and the decision. It will also provide an updated and full account of the planning policies, progress of the development plan and any other relevant provisions for protecting the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property. The WHC is likely to consider this report at its next meeting in June after which a response can be expected. The WHC may request an independent review which could then be considered at its 2013 meeting.

The importance of the Giant's Causeway and Causeway Coast World Heritage Site (WHS) and its setting is recognised and provided for in both regional planning policy and the emerging development plan for the area. Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage policy BH5: The Protection of World Heritage Sites states that "The Department will operate a presumption in favour of the preservation of World Heritage Sites and that development which would adversely affect such sites or the integrity of their settings will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances."

The emerging Northern Area Plan contains designations and policies relating to the WHS which recognise and seek to protect its landscape setting. These are currently being considered through the Independent Examination which the Planning Appeals Commission is conducting. The Department has proposed these policies to support one of the objectives in the WHS Management Plan 2005 which was prepared to meet the UK government obligation under the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The objective is "to encourage the protection of the setting of the site and to secure the overall integrity of the site".

The importance of protecting the WHS and its setting in the planning process is therefore fully recognised. Legislation however allows development plan policies and designations to be outweighed by other material considerations and PPS6 policy BH5 allows for development which would adversely affect the WHS if there are exceptional circumstances. This is a matter of planning judgement and in the Department's view, which I fully endorsed, there were exceptional circumstances in this case that outweighed the environmental impact that will result from the development. As a result of discussions between officials and the applicant the plans have been amended to reduce the development's prominence and I have ensured that there are stringent environmental conditions included in the final notice of opinion to ensure that the environmental impact will be mitigated as much as possible.

Board of the Environment Agency

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether there has been a reduction in the number of independent members on (a) the Board of the Environment Agency; and (b) other Boards within his Department, or its arm's-length bodies, in each of the last 12 months; and (ii) to outline the reasons for the reductions.

(AQW 8921/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have considered the number of independent board members (IBMs) on the Departmental Board and each Agency Board within the Department and concluded that one IBM per Board (a total number of 3 IBM's in the Department) is sufficient to fulfil an audit and challenge function. The IBM on each Board will chair the relevant Audit Committee in line with the standards of good corporate governance.

As a consequence, there has been a reduction in the number of IBMs in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), where 2 contracts expired in August 2011, and following a re-appointment process, 1 member was re-appointed to the NIEA Board in November 2011. The IBM also chairs the Audit Committee and is supported by 2 officials who are independent of the Agency, contributing to a challenge and audit function.

In addition, with the de-agentisation of the Planning Service, from 1 April 2011, and the winding up of the Planning Service Agency Board and Audit Committee there was no longer a requirement for an IBM.

The IBM in Planning Service chaired his last Audit Committee in June 2011 as part of the process of finalising the 2010-11 Agency Accounts.

I plan to continue to reduce the number of IBMs in the Department as existing contracts expire. I am confident that the Audit Committees will continue to perform their functions effectively with IBM membership and senior officials from outside the Department or agency.

Meeting with Tamboran

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on his recent meeting with Tamboran. (AQW 8923/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Given the widespread concerns in relation to the process of hydraulic fracturing I asked to meet representatives of Tamboran Resources to hear directly from the company. The company confirmed that they were still in the exploration phase of the proposal and outlined their thinking.

I made it explicitly clear of the imperative that the company ensures it complies with all appropriate environmental requirements. I commented that there will be the need for a robust and thorough Environmental Impact Assessment which deals all the relevant issues. Tamboran accepted the need for such an assessment and to liaise with both Strategic Planning Division and NIEA in scoping the content of the Environmental Statement.

I advised the company that the company should keep the Government and the community properly informed of their activities and that their recent media briefings had not built confidence, including with me as the Minister with responsibility for planning and environmental regulations.

I believe the company fully know where I and DOE stand on this issue. I continue to actively assess how to manage this issue.

Listed Buildings in Banbridge Lurgan and Portadown

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the listed buildings in (i) Banbridge; (ii) Lurgan; and (iii) Portadown. (AQW 8945/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency records listed buildings on a ward basis within District Council areas (1974 boundaries apply).

There are currently 334 listed buildings in the Banbridge District Council area; There are 208 listed buildings in the Craigavon District Council area which covers the Lurgan and Portadown areas. Of these there are 166 listed buildings in the Banbridge town area, 130 in Lurgan and 63 in Portadown.

It should be noted that some of these entries may relate to multiple properties - such as terraces or large estates - which may feature on the list as a single record.

More detailed information on individual buildings/addresses may be found on the Northern Ireland Buildings Record which is published on NIEA's website.

You can access this information via the following link:

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/other-index/content-databases/content-databases-build.htm>

Illegal Car Parks

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of the Environment how many illegal car parks are currently operating in each council area. (AQW 8946/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since becoming Minister I have made it clear that enforcement must be given high priority across my Department and have implemented a number of measures aimed at providing a more robust approach to unauthorised development.

There were 32 enforcement cases relating to alleged unauthorised car parks as of 9 March 2012 and these are set out by Council area in the table below.

Council Area	Number of enforcement cases
Antrim	8
Ards	1
Armagh	0
Ballymena	0
Ballymoney	0
Banbridge	1
Belfast	17
Carrickfergus	0
Castlereagh	0
Coleraine	0
Cookstown	0
Craigavon	0
Derry	0
Down	2
Dungannon	0
Fermanagh	0
Larne	0
Limavady	1
Lisburn	0
Magherafelt	0
Moyle	0
Newry and Mourne	1
Newtownabbey	0
North Down	1
Omagh	0
Strabane	0

ASDA's Plans for a New Store at Crescent Link Retail Park

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment whether he is aware of the opinion poll, involving 1017 residents in Londonderry and its surrounding areas, which was conducted between 4-11 January 2012 and showed that (i) 81 percent supported ASDA's plans for a new store at Crescent Link Retail Park; (ii) 79 percent agreed that a greater choice of supermarkets would result in lower prices; and (iii) 81 percent would welcome a greater choice of supermarket provision.

(AQW 8947/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am aware of the opinion poll carried out by LucidTalk Ltd in January this year on ASDA's behalf.

The findings of this poll will be considered as part of my Department's assessment of the current Article 31 planning application for a new ASDA store at Crescent Link Retail Park, Derry.

Class 1 Food Superstores in Londonderry

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) all the Class 1 food superstores in Londonderry which service the city and its surrounding areas; and (ii) whether he will give consideration to promoting consumer choice when making a decision on the current planning applications for Class 1 food superstores in Londonderry.

(AQW 8948/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) A list of the food superstores and their location in Derry/Londonderry is attached below.

Each of the current applications for food superstores in Derry/Londonderry will be considered on their individual merits. Planning Policy Statement 5:

- (ii) Retailing and Town centres sets out my Department's policy objectives for town centres and retail developments which seek, among other things, to focus development, especially retail development, in locations where the proximity of businesses facilitates competition from which all consumers are able to benefit.

PPS5 also highlights that the Department's commitment to allow freedom of choice and flexibility in retail development, throughout the North, to assist in the provision of a wide range of shopping opportunities which are accessible by the whole community.

Consumer choice is relevant to all major retail proposals and it will be a key material consideration in the Department's assessment of the subject applications in Derry/Londonderry, details of which are:

Store/Centre Name	Location
Tesco	Quayside Shopping Centre, City Centre
Sainsburys	Strand Road
Tesco	Lisnagelvin District Centre
Dunnes Stores	Springtown District Centre

Please note this is not an exhaustive list and the Department is considering a range of convenience operators within Derry/Londonderry in addition to the superstores. Other convenience operators include the Supervalu at Northside District Centre, the Costcutter at Rathmore District Centre, the Supervalu at Waterloo Place, Longs at Lisnagelvin District Centre and Lidl Buncrana Road.

A superstore is defined in PPS5 as a self-service store selling mainly food, or food and non-food goods, usually with more than 2500sqm gross retail floorspace. The list of food superstores above are based on this definition.

ASDA store at Crescent Link Retail Park, Londonderry

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment when he will make a decision on planning application A/2010/0493/F in relation to an ASDA store at Crescent Link Retail Park, Londonderry.
(AQW 8951/11-15)

Mr Attwood: This planning application is being assessed along with several other current applications in Derry which include a major retail element as part of the proposals.

My officials have undertaken a thorough reassessment of the relevant retail information associated with these proposals to ensure that decisions are made with the benefit of the most up to date information available.

Each case will be considered on its individual merits.

Motorcycles: Compulsory Basic Training Test

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, to detail (i) why the law was changed to require that experienced L plate drivers of motorcycles under 125cc undertake a compulsory basic training (CBT) test; (ii) whether, once a driver has completed a CBT test they will be required to repeat the test every two years; and to outline the rationale for this; (iii) for his assessment of the number of motorcycle and scooter drivers who, as a result of the additional £170 expense of undertaking a CBT test, may decide to drive a car instead; and the potential impact this will have on traffic congestion and the environment; (iv) for his assessment of the extent to which the introduction of the CBT test will reduce the average number of accidents, per driver; (v) whether the benefits of introducing a mandatory CBT test for all L plate drivers outweigh the £170 cost; and (vi) whether there is a more flexible arrangement for drivers who can demonstrate considerable experience.

(AQW 8990/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Prior to the introduction of compulsory basic training (CBT) in Northern Ireland, anyone wishing to learn to ride a motorcycle only needed to apply for a provisional licence. The licence was valid for 10 years and could be renewed upon application. Once this had been received the person could ride a motorcycle not exceeding 125cc/11kW on the road as long as they displayed 'L' plates and complied with insurance and other legal requirements. There was no requirement to take any mandatory training, nor was there any incentive for them to take a test or obtain a full driving licence. Learner riders could ride motorcycles indefinitely without ever being trained and/or tested - they were effectively in a permanent state of learning. In addition, research into motorcycle related collisions showed that 21% of motorcyclists involved in KSI collisions (ie where someone was killed or seriously injured) were 'L' drivers (33% of all collisions).

In the circumstances, it was considered that action needed to be taken to improve the standard of training and testing, and that CBT had a significant role to play. The evidence suggested that licence holders who had obtained provisional entitlement prior to the introduction of CBT were also at risk, so it was decided that the requirement for CBT to be undertaken should apply to them as well as to new provisional licence holders.

CBT, the cost of which is determined by the market rather than by the Department, is a course, not a test. Once it has been completed successfully, the participant is issued with a certificate valid for two years. During this time the rider may choose to gain full entitlement to ride a motorcycle by taking a motorcycle test. Once full entitlement is gained, there is no need to retake CBT. However, failure to attain full entitlement within this two-year period results in the rider having to re-take CBT, in order to demonstrate that they have retained the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to ride safely.

It is not possible to estimate how many motorcycle provisional licence holders actually ride motorcycles as all full car licences provide provisional motorcycle entitlement. Prior to the introduction of CBT, however, and in order to predict the number of motorcyclists who might require CBT training, the NI vehicle licensing database was used to identify the registered keepers of all motorcycles with cylinder capacities less than or equal to 125cc. Motorcycles with larger cylinder capacities cannot be ridden legally by provisional licence holders. This identified 10,087 motorcycles registered to 8,038 keepers.

All of those identified were written to in order to inform them of the requirement either to gain full motorcycle entitlement within 12 months from 21 February 2011 or to undertake a CBT course. During this 12-month period there was an increase of 45% in applications for motorcycle tests. Those riders who chose to gain full entitlement at that time will not have had the additional expense of a CBT course.

It is also worth noting that during this period there was a drop in the number of car tests and whilst there is no evidence to suggest this was a direct result of the introduction of CBT it may have been a factor.

Britain introduced CBT in 1990 and there is nothing to suggest that there was an increase in traffic congestion or that it had a detrimental impact on the environment. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the same results will be experienced in Northern Ireland.

The CBT scheme was introduced in Britain in 1990 and evidence shows since introduction there has been an improvement in road safety for both motorcyclists and other road users. Deaths for motorcycle riders through road collisions decreased from 469 in 1992 to 440 in 1996. It is envisaged that Northern Ireland will experience similar benefits. Also as part of the course syllabus focuses on the environment and eco-safe riding it is envisaged that environmental awareness will increase as a result of CBT. The potential road safety and environmental benefits clearly outweigh the cost of the course.

The CBT scheme, which was developed in conjunction with the motorcycle industry, road safety organisations and the PSNI, was designed with flexibility in mind not only to take account of a trainee's experience and knowledge but also to accommodate an individual's ability to learn. The course may be delivered and undertaken in either bite-sized pieces or as a full course, which means trainees may learn at their own pace thereby spreading the overall costs.

CBT, once completed, is valid for two years and provided full motorcycle entitlement is gained within this period will not be required again. However, if a person decides not to take a motorcycle test and remain a learner rider, they have to complete CBT every two years but when undertaking subsequent courses, positive experiences will be taken into consideration and this will reduce the amount of time required to deliver the course which, in turn, should reduce the overall cost of the course.

Reform of Public Administration

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment to provide an estimate of the total annual cost of councillors based on (i) the number of MLA/Councillors remaining the same, and the two thirds reduction in salary being introduced; and (ii) the position following the abolition of dual mandates and all Councillors being entitled to full salary.

(AQW 9023/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Using the information from the financial statements of councils for the year ending March 2011, the total annual cost of the 582 councillors in Northern Ireland during the period 2010/2011 was £7,906,984.

There are currently 29 councillors who hold dual/multiple mandates. The total estimated annual cost, allowing for a two-thirds reduction in the basic allowance and special responsibility allowance payable to dual/multiple mandate councillors, during the same period would be £7,713,532 (a difference of £193,452).

Following the abolition of dual mandates and allowing for no revision in the amount of the allowances payable, the total estimated annual cost of the 582 councillors would be unchanged from the current cost of £7,906,984.

HGV Licences

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he has taken to reduce the delay in issuing HGV licences that are dependent on medical assessments.

(AQW 9043/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Applicants for driving licences with entitlement to drive large goods vehicles (LGV) or passenger-carrying vehicles (PCV) are required to meet higher medical standards than drivers of other vehicles. All LGV and PCV driving licence applications requiring medical assessments are referred to the Occupational Health Service (OHS), who make recommendations on an applicant's fitness to drive, based on the medical evidence provided. In some cases, OHS request additional information or a medical examination before a recommendation can be made.

All LGV and PCV applications are referred to OHS within 10 working days of receipt and licences are issued within 10 working days of receipt of OHS recommendations. In order to minimise delays in the application process, my Department has entered into a service level agreement with OHS which requires 75% of cases not requiring further medical evidence to be returned within 12 working days and 90% within 20 working days. In practice, cases are generally dealt with well within these target times.

There can be individual cases where further medical evidence is required either from OHS-appointed experts or from an applicant's own doctor, and there can be some delay in these cases. However, such cases are monitored closely and every effort is made to expedite decisions.

If there are issues around this process, I welcome hearing from members.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the locations of all Areas of Special Scientific Interest that have been declared in each of the last three years.

(AQW 9044/11-15)

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

Details of the locations are attached.

SiteNo	SiteName	County	ConfirmArea	DeclareDate
ASSI296	River Faughan and Tributaries	Londonderry, Tyrone	202.00	09/05/2008
ASSI299	Ross	Fermanagh	17.57	19/12/2008
ASSI297	Knocknashangan	Fermanagh	5.75	12/01/2009
ASSI286	Castle Point	Antrim	8.54	15/01/2009
ASSI293	Cloghinny	Armagh	4.26	15/01/2009
ASSI289	Camlough Quarry	Armagh	0.38	22/01/2009
ASSI306	Lower Creevagh	Londonderry	0.21	22/01/2009
ASSI290	Lislea	Armagh	5.22	22/01/2009
ASSI300	Scraghy	Tyrone	13.05	02/02/2009
ASSI301	Cloghfin Port	Antrim	3.70	10/02/2009
ASSI292	Glendesha	Armagh	0.97	20/02/2009
ASSI291	Mullaghbane	Armagh	5.49	27/02/2009
ASSI307	Knocknacloy	Tyrone	2.42	27/02/2009
ASSI245	Shimna River	Down	38.78	09/03/2009
ASSI298	Blackslee	Fermanagh	31.45	09/03/2009
ASSI303	Slieveanorra and Croaghan	Antrim	1,609.77	11/03/2009
ASSI295	Lough Gullion	Armagh	126.28	23/03/2009
ASSI311	Mountfield Quarry	Tyrone	1.08	25/03/2009
ASSI305	Moneystaghan Bog	Londonderry	163.96	25/03/2009
ASSI254	Glenballyemon River	Antrim	27.14	25/03/2009
ASSI308	Annaghagh Bog	Tyrone	64.47	31/03/2009
ASSI309	Mullaghcarn	Tyrone	2,039.49	31/03/2009
ASSI287	Glarryford	Antrim	259.44	31/03/2009

SiteNo	SiteName	County	ConfirmArea	DeclareDate
ASSI302	Carey Valley	Antrim	495.79	31/03/2009
ASSI304	Aghabrack	Tyrone	122.74	31/03/2009
ASSI322	Drumbegger	Fermanagh	3.38	17/08/2009
ASSI288	Lisnaragh	Tyrone	139.96	04/09/2009
ASSI324	Keadew	Fermanagh	6.53	14/09/2009
ASSI315	Coolcran	Fermanagh	0.38	14/09/2009
ASSI321	Tullyratty	Down	13.53	21/09/2009
ASSI317	Makenny	Tyrone	0.14	21/09/2009
ASSI320	The Maidens	Antrim	6.06	21/09/2009
ASSI319	Gravel Ridge Island	Fermanagh	1.15	30/09/2009
ASSI312	Sruhanleanantawey Burn	Londonderry	1.75	16/11/2009
ASSI314	Largy Quarry	Fermanagh	0.72	16/11/2009
ASSI323	Little Deer Park	Antrim	19.30	27/11/2009
ASSI332	Tower More	Fermanagh	119.83	07/01/2010
ASSI313	Cashel Rock	Tyrone	19.07	01/02/2010
ASSI331	Glen East	Fermanagh	14.65	22/02/2010
ASSI327	Church Bay	Antrim	20.44	26/02/2010
ASSI339	Brackagh Bog	Armagh	113.25	05/03/2010
ASSI334	Brookend	Tyrone	1.49	11/03/2010
ASSI341	Linford	Antrim	14.39	15/03/2010
ASSI342	Caledon and Tynan	Armagh, Tyrone	318.27	18/03/2010
ASSI337	Minnis	Antrim	9.38	23/03/2010
ASSI338	Cloghastucan	Antrim	2.95	24/03/2010
ASSI336	Blaeberry Island Bog	Down	24.58	26/03/2010
ASSI343	North Woodburn Reservoir	Antrim	9.11	30/03/2010
ASSI345	Copeland Reservoir	Antrim	10.32	30/03/2010
ASSI344	South Woodburn	Antrim	77.51	30/03/2010
ASSI330	Fair Head and Murlough Bay	Antrim	251.26	17/08/2010
ASSI329	Ederney Quarry	Fermanagh	1.77	24/09/2010
ASSI326	Larkhill	Fermanagh	1.38	24/09/2010
ASSI328	Drumbally Hill	Londonderry	0.12	24/09/2010
ASSI347	Loughermore Mountain	Londonderry	1.18	30/09/2010

SiteNo	SiteName	County	ConfirmArea	DeclareDate
ASSI333	Galboly	Antrim	192.78	14/10/2010
ASSI353	Lough Anierin	Fermanagh	18.39	04/11/2010
ASSI356	Rathlin Island - Kebble	Antrim	138.72	25/01/2011
ASSI325	Butterlope Glen	Tyrone	6.90	08/02/2011
ASSI359	Lough Naman Bog and Lake	Fermanagh	48.30	09/02/2011
ASSI349	Baronscourt	Tyrone	103.78	09/02/2011
ASSI361	Clarehill	Down	1.26	18/02/2011
ASSI348	Lough Macrory	Tyrone	29.02	23/02/2011
ASSI369	Glenarm Woods Part 2	Antrim	22.57	23/02/2011
ASSI371	Gortcorbies	Londonderry	55.21	04/03/2011
ASSI364	Tempo River	Fermanagh	28.06	16/03/2011
ASSI372	Craigs	Antrim	13.46	16/03/2011
ASSI355	Glenariff Glen	Antrim	12.71	16/03/2011
ASSI350	Castle Coole	Fermanagh	163.83	23/03/2011
ASSI354	Lough Cowey	Down	30.11	23/03/2011
ASSI373	Drummond Quarry	Tyrone	0.44	29/03/2011
ASSI367	Kilbroney River	Down	0.38	29/03/2011
ASSI357	Killeter Forest Bogs and Lakes	Tyrone	299.64	31/03/2011
ASSI358	Tyrella and Minerstown	Down	272.08	31/03/2011
ASSI368	Gruggandoo	Down	5.26	31/03/2011
Total	75.00		7,896.70	

Arc21 Waste Management Plan

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the annual tonnage capacity that the proposed ARC 21 waste incinerator for Greater Belfast will need to meet EU waste management targets; (ii) whether there will be a requirement to produce a minimum amount of waste to ensure that the incinerator is economically viable, and whether this might impact on efforts to reduce waste and increase the level of recycling; (iii) whether the business case accurately predicts the annual tonnage of municipal waste likely to require incineration; and (iv) whether, in the event of the incinerator proceeding, there will be a public consultation exercise to seek views on a final list of preferred sites. **(AQW 9063/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The Outline Business Case for the arc21 project used a reference project that was based on 430k tonnes-per-annum capacity for Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) and 200k tonnes-per-annum Energy from Waste (EfW) capacity. The project was advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union on the basis of maximising landfill diversion.

The overall tonnage of waste arisings in the arc21 catchment area has fallen since the procurement was advertised; the capacities of the proposed facilities have been reduced accordingly.

The size of the proposed MBT and EfW facilities will only be confirmed when the remaining bidder and arc21 reach the Contract Award stage

arc21 is expected to commit a Guaranteed Minimum Tonnage (GMT) to the procurement. The GMT is the amount that individual Councils will have to agree to commit to the Project annually over the course of the lifetime of the contract. The GMT level will be confirmed should the remaining bidder and arc21 reach the Contract Award stage. The Department is not aware of the GMT figure as this Project is still in commercially sensitive Competitive Dialogue.

The tonnage figures for this project has been closely tracked throughout the procurement process and as tonnage has fallen, due to factors such as economic decline and increased recycling, so too has the amount that the project (and its constituent councils) will commit to the project. The capacity of the proposed EfW plant is therefore considered the correct size for the needs of the project.

Some additional capacity for Commercial & Industrial (C&I) waste streams has been built into the project.

In terms of waste reduction, the key driver is more likely to be how quickly Northern Ireland comes out of the recent recession. The current trend in waste reduction is influenced by our economic fortunes and not necessarily a conscious effort by many householders to reduce waste because it is a good thing to do. Councils will hold back sufficient tonnage to meet their statutory recycling targets.

The arc21 project will contribute to the achievement of higher recycling figures through its front-end MBT (Mechanical Biological Treatment) process.

The arc21 Outline Business Case is based on minimising the amount of waste sent to landfill in accordance with statutory targets. As the overall tonnage of waste arisings in the arc21 catchment area has fallen during the period of procurement, so too has the capacity of the EfW plant. This is one of the checks that are in place to guard against over-provision and to ensure that the EfW plant has the appropriate capacity to handle the solid recovered fuel produced by the MBT process. There will also be some spare capacity for C&I waste.

The Outline Business Case will be updated, including a review of the capacity requirements, by an Appointment Business Case and Final Business Case before the contract can be awarded.

The preferred site is an output from the robust site selection process carried out as part of the legally compliant competitive tendering exercise and in accordance with strict site selection criteria. This is clearly the case that this is of particular public and political interest.

Public consultation is initiated at the point where a bidder decides to make a planning application. This involves advertisement of the planning application, consultation with the local council and advertisement of the Environmental Statement which is the main vehicle for full public engagement in the processing of major applications. This is in line with the relevant EU Directive and local planning regulations.

The individual bidder may initiate additional local and community involvement in the process in line with their own custom and practice.

In relation to the procurement exercise generally, I continue to ensure the Department fully exercises its statutory function and appropriate government oversight.

Taxi Operator Licences

Mr G Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment when he proposes to introduce Taxi Operator Licences. (AQO 1422/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I plan to make final announcements on the introduction shortly.

In coming to the decisions that I will announce, I spoke with many taxi operators and key stakeholders. There will be flexibility in the licensing period particularly for small operators and allow the industry to benefit from the better regulation that operator licensing brings.

Planning Permission

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment whether he is considering changing the present law which states that it is not illegal to build without planning permission.

(AQW 9088/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Currently any individual who undertakes development without planning permission has not committed a criminal offence but has breached planning control and may be subject to enforcement action. The planning enforcement system seeks to remedy breaches of planning control where possible, however, if an individual fails to remedy the situation the Department may take a prosecution through the Courts.

The onus in such cases is on the 'offender' to prove, on the balance of probability, that there was either no breach or that what has been done is lawful. The introduction of criminalisation would shift the burden of proof to the Department with a criminal requirement of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. As the margins between lawful and unlawful development are not always clear cut this could prove to be extremely challenging and undermine, rather than enhance, enforcement activity.

In addition to the consideration of the legal and resource implications of implementation, such a system could have a significant negative impact upon individuals who inadvertently breach planning control and yet could end up with a criminal record.

Enforcement powers have been significantly strengthened over recent years. The most recent changes were introduced under the Planning Act (NI) 2011 which, upon Royal Assent in May 2011, increased maximum fines for breaches of planning control relating to listed buildings and tree preservation orders from £30,000 to £100,000. In December 2011 I also introduced a standardised 5 year time limit for taking enforcement action against breaches of planning control which will allow for greater clarity and a more efficient system of control. Indeed this change was supported by a comprehensive review of pending enforcement cases which resulted in approximately 116 Enforcement Notices being served in the three months preceding the time limit change.

I intend that a Planning Bill currently being drafted will introduce further enforcement powers including further higher maximum fines, higher fees for retrospective planning applications and fixed penalty notices.

I believe that effective enforcement must be seen as a deterrent to individuals who flout planning legislation and I have sent out a strong message to my staff that robust enforcement is an essential element of a balanced planning system. Given the drawbacks associated with criminalisation combined with the recent and planned enhancement to the Department's enforcement powers, I currently do not intend to pursue universal criminalisation of development without planning permission.

Staff Disciplinary Actions

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of staff disciplinary actions taken by his Department in each of the last two years, at Staff Officer level and above, including details of the offence and the disciplinary sanctions applied.

(AQW 9118/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides the number of staff disciplinary actions taken that led to a formal penalty being imposed under the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) disciplinary procedures. Details are provided for cases where the penalty was imposed within the 2010 and 2011 calendar years. The information relates to staff at the Staff Officer grade and above including analogous grades.

	Year	Number of Staff at Staff Officer Grade and Above	Disciplinary Type	Disciplinary Sanctions/Penalties
DOE	2010	5	5 Misconduct	3 Written reprimands. 1 Written reprimand plus a fine. 1 Written reprimand plus compulsory transfer.
DOE	2011	4	3 Misconduct 1 Gross Misconduct	3 Written reprimands. 1 Written reprimand plus compulsory transfer and a one year promotion ban.

Planning Applications

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of the Environment to detail number of planning applications (i) approved; and (ii) refused in the North Down Borough Council area in (a) 2008/09; (b) 2009/10; and (c) 2010/11. **(AQW 9154/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: Table 1: Planning decisions for North Down Borough Council

	Approved	Refused	Total
2008/09	875	55	930
2009/10	646	38	684
2010/11	539	34	573

Source: Planning

Note: This information is available in the Annual Statistical Bulletin and can be accessed on the Planning website.

Modiolus Mussels in Strangford Lough

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment whether minutes were taken during the recent meeting between departmental officials and the European Commission in relation to the modiolus mussels in Strangford Lough, and whether he will publish any notes, minutes and decisions that were taken at the meeting.

(AQW 9398/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I recently gave a full account to the Environment Committee, of my assessment of the position of DOE and DARD in relation to Strangford Lough following the Package Meeting held by the European Commission in January. At this briefing I indicated that the Commission was expected to renew its infringement action against the two Departments shortly. Officials advised the committee on 15 March 2012 that a letter has now been received from the Commission, confirming that the infringement process is now commencing.

The Commission has produced a note of this meeting but has not given the Department its permission to release it.

On receipt of formal correspondence from the Commission commencing infringement action I will inform the Committee immediately.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Civil Service Jobs

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of Civil Service jobs, in each Department, that are located in each (i) constituency; and (ii) council area.

(AQW 6853/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The most recent published information on the number of Civil Service jobs in each of the Northern Ireland Civil Service departments, that are located in each (i) constituency; and (ii) council area are set out in the table below. For the purposes of this AQ, Civil Service jobs has been defined as Northern Ireland Civil Service staff in post (headcount).

NICS STAFF (HEADCOUNT) AT 1 APRIL 2011 BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

	DARD	DCAL	DE	DEL	DETI	DFP	DHSSPS	DOE	DOJ	DRD	DSD	OFMDFM	PPS	OTHER*	TOTAL
Belfast East	841	76	0	45	290	890	607	0	406	85	278	289	0	92	3899
Belfast North	60	1	0	78	0	46	0	151	115	33	740	0	1	3	1228
Belfast South	73	160	2	856	144	1819	5	1003	755	713	3431	26	282	38	9307
Belfast West	0	0	0	88	0	0	0	2	5	5	916	0	0	22	1038
East Antrim	43	0	0	66	0	4	0	26	209	7	59	0	0	0	414
East London-derry	196	0	0	84	0	0	0	467	14	155	102	0	0	1	1019
Ferman-agh & South Tyrone	319	11	0	90	0	0	0	83	24	147	116	0	0	1	791
Foyle	198	0	98	133	4	173	2	76	56	71	749	3	43	0	1606
Lagan Valley	116	0	0	59	0	38	0	265	14	56	50	0	89	0	687
Mid Ulster	155	0	0	54	0	0	0	35	0	49	92	0	0	0	385
Newry & Armagh	217	0	0	105	3	0	0	65	35	106	147	11	15	0	704
North Antrim	118	23	0	88	5	63	0	103	25	187	76	0	60	0	748
North Down	1	0	506	29	0	239	0	6	157	12	48	0	0	0	998
South Antrim	225	0	0	44	0	0	0	32	15	106	55	0	0	0	477

	DARD	DCAL	DE	DEL	DETI	DFP	DHSSPS	DOE	DOJ	DRD	DSD	OFMDFM	PPS	OTHER*	TOTAL
South Down	68	9	0	53	0	2	0	92	16	183	102	0	0	0	525
Strangford	53	0	0	27	0	0	11	55	31	14	44	0	0	0	235
Upper Bann	101	9	0	118	0	67	0	110	36	198	133	0	0	0	772
West Tyrone	174	0	0	73	0	74	0	88	34	247	164	0	62	5	921
Unknown **	5	1	3	0	1	14	5	10	489	31	35	7	1	3	605
Total	2963	290	609	2090	447	3429	630	2669	2436	2405	7337	336	553	165	26359

Notes

- Data sourced from HR Connect & Additional DOJ databases at 1st Apr 2011.
- Figures comprise Staff Headcount for staff working in the 13 Northern Ireland Departments and 'other', as defined below:
- *"OTHER" comprises civil servants working in the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland, the Office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, and staff of The Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland/The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints.
- **"Unknown" are staff whose work location was not recorded at time the information was extracted by the NI Statistics and Research Agency.
- Includes all Permanent NICS staff for whom Work Location information is available with the exception of uniformed Prison Service staff.
- Staff on career break are excluded.

NICS STAFF (HEADCOUNT) AT 1 APRIL 2011 BY COUNCIL AREA (1)

	DARD	DCAL	DE	DEL	DETI	DFP	DHSSPS	DOE	DOJ	DRD	DSD	OFMDFM	PPS	OTHER*	TOTAL
Antrim Borough Council	220	0	0	44	0	0	0	0	15	38	55	0	0	0	372
Ards Borough Council	53	0	0	27	0	0	0	55	31	14	44	0	0	0	224
Armagh City & District Council	91	0	0	35	3	0	0	37	9	59	84	11	0	0	329

	DARD	DCAL	DE	DEL	DETI	DFP	DHSSPS	DOE	DOJ	DRD	DSD	OFMDFM	PPS	OTHER*	TOTAL
Ballymena Borough Council	113	0	0	51	5	63	0	103	25	158	64	0	60	0	642
Ballymoney Borough Council	5	12	0	37	0	0	0	0	0	29	12	0	0	0	95
Banbridge District Council	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	0	10	30	43	0	0	0	116
Belfast City Council	901	237	0	989	383	2755	612	1153	1275	648	5274	315	283	155	14980
Carrickfergus Borough Council	0	0	0	37	0	4	0	6	209	0	25	0	0	0	281
Castlereagh Borough Council	73	0	2	36	51	0	11	3	0	188	46	0	0	0	410
Coleraine Borough Council	188	0	0	45	0	0	0	455	14	136	88	0	0	1	927
Cookstown District Council	57	0	0	16	0	0	0	35	0	12	15	0	0	0	135
Craigavon Borough Council	101	9	0	85	0	67	0	110	26	187	90	0	0	0	675
Derry City Council	198	0	98	133	4	173	2	76	56	71	749	3	43	0	1606
Down District Council	65	9	0	40	0	2	0	92	16	164	86	0	0	0	474
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	84	0	0	44	0	0	0	11	20	53	63	0	0	0	275

	DARD	DCAL	DE	DEL	DETI	DFP	DHSSPS	DOE	DOJ	DRD	DSD	OFMDFM	PPS	OTHER*	TOTAL
Ferm-anagh District Council	235	11	0	46	0	0	0	72	4	94	53	0	0	1	516
Larne Borough Council	43	0	0	29	0	0	0	20	0	7	34	0	0	0	133

NICS STAFF (HEADCOUNT) AT 1 APRIL 2011 BY COUNCIL AREA (2)

	DARD	DCAL	DE	DEL	DETI	DFP	DHSSPS	DOE	DOJ	DRD	DSD	OFMDFM	PPS	OTHER*	TOTAL
Limavady Borough Council	8	0	0	39	0	0	0	12	0	19	14	0	0	0	92
Lisburn City Council	116	0	0	59	0	38	0	265	14	56	50	0	89	0	687
Maghera-felt District Council	98	0	0	38	0	0	0	0	0	37	77	0	0	0	250
Moyle District Council	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Newry & Mourne District Council	129	0	0	83	0	0	0	28	26	47	79	0	15	0	407
Newtown-abbey Borough Council	5	0	0	42	0	0	0	32	6	68	45	0	0	0	198
North Down Borough Council	1	0	506	29	0	239	0	6	157	12	48	0	0	0	998
Omagh District Council	173	0	0	46	0	74	0	88	34	206	121	0	62	5	809
Strabane District Council	1	0	0	27	0	0	0	0	0	41	43	0	0	0	112

	DARD	DCAL	DE	DEL	DETI	DFP	DHSSPS	DOE	DOJ	DRD	DSD	OFMDFM	PPS	OTHER*	TOTAL
Unknown- **	5	1	3	0	1	14	5	10	489	31	35	7	1	3	605
TOTAL	2963	290	609	2090	447	3429	630	2669	2436	2405	7337	336	553	165	26359

Notes

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- **"Unknown" are staff whose work location was not recorded at time the information was extracted by the NI Statistics and Research Agency .
- Includes all Permanent NICS staff for whom Work Location information is available with the exception of uniformed Prison Service staff.
- Staff on career break are excluded.

Inventory of Works of Art

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

(AQW 7554/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information requested has been placed in the library.

Government-Owned Land and Assets in the Upper Bann Constituency

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail all sales of Government-owned land and assets in the Upper Bann constituency in each of the last three years, including the land valuations provided by Land and Property Services and the amounts realised.

(AQW 8181/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There have been 151 sales of Government owned land and property assets in Upper Bann since the start of the 2008 financial year. This includes sales on the open market, transfers between Government bodies and sales through direct negotiations with former owners and adjoining owners.

Land & Property Services (LPS) has a role in most sales of Government land and provide valuations that are often reviewed and revised during the sales process. Before sales are recommended to the disposing body the District Valuer carries out a valuation to confirm if the consideration represents best price.

Information regarding all valuations provided by Land & Property Services for all the sales is not readily available and could only be compiled at disproportionate cost.

Details of all the sales are included in the attached tables 1 to 5.

TABLE 1: SALES IN UPPER BANN 2008-2009

Dept	Branch	Location	Sale Price
DRD	Roads Service	Fortfield, Dromore	£1,200
DRD	Roads Service	Fortfield / A1 Dromore-By-Pass, Dromore	£1
DSD	DSD	Land adjacent Oakfields, Craigavon	£2,100
DSD	DSD	Seagoe Road, Portadown	£11,000
DSD	DSD	Carn Road, Portadown	£985
DSD	DSD	Old Charlestown Road, Portadown	£20,000
DSD	DSD	Robert Street, Lurgan	£4,000
DSD	DSD	Thornleigh, Lurgan	£375
DSD	DSD	Garvaghy Park, Portadown	£238
DSD	DSD	Old Rectory Park, Portadown	£400
DSD	DSD	Edgarstown, Portadown	£1,700
DSD	DSD	Thornleigh, Lurgan	£500
DSD	DSD	Abercorn Park, Portadown	£550
DSD	DSD	Parknasilla Way, Aghagallon	£12,000
DSD	DSD	Taghnevan Walk, Lurgan	£12,000
DETI	Invest NI	Mandeville	£2,250
DETI	Invest NI	Halfpenny Valley	£1,500,000
DETI	Invest NI	Charlestown Road	£307,500
DETI	Invest NI	Craigavon Food Park	£300

TABLE 2: SALES IN UPPER BANN 2009-2010

Dept	Branch	Location	Sale Price
DRD	Roads Service	Ballymagin Road, Magheralin	£500
DRD	Roads Service	Farlough Road, Portadown	£15,500
DRD	Roads Service	Huntly Road, Banbridge	£1,000
DRD	Roads Service	Lurgan Road, Magheralin	£2,000
DRD	Roads Service	Drumgask Road, Craigavon	£1,000
DRD	Roads Service	Ballyoran, Portadown	£500
DRD	Roads Service	Willow Court, Lurgan	£1,400
DRD	Roads Service	Drumgask Road, Craigavon	£5,000
DRD	Roads Service	Castor Bay Road, Lurgan	£1,000
DRD	Roads Service	Fortfield / A1 Dromore-By-Pass, Dromore	£1
DRD	Roads Service	Meadow Lane, Craigavon	£90,000
DRD	Roads Service	Alexandra Avenue, Portadown	£150

Dept	Branch	Location	Sale Price
DRD	Roads Service	Cloncore Road, Portadown	£3,000
DRD	Roads Service	St Patrick's Avenue, Craigavon	£650
DRD	NI Water	Kilmacrue Road, Banbridge	£5,125
DRD	NI Water	Scarva Road, Banbridge	£750
DE	SELB	Ardmore Primary School	£110,000
DSD	DSD	Lake Road, Lurgan	£1,225
DSD	DSD	Land at Oakfields, Craigavon	£6,000
DSD	DSD	Balteagh, Craigavon	£1,500
DSD	DSD	Lisniskey Lodge, Portadown	£1,500
DSD	DSD	Land at Kernan Gardens, Portadown	£750
DSD	DSD	Land at Seagoe Road, Portadown	£10,000
DSD	DSD	Land at Kernan Gardens, Portadown	£400
DSD	DSD	Cycleway at Pinebank, Craigavon	£4,300
DSD	DSD	Market Street, Lurgan	£12,500
DSD	DSD	Pinebank, Craigavon	£500
DSD	DSD	Victor Place, Dollingstown	£1,100
DSD	DSD	Reilly Street, Banbridge	£6,900
DSD	DSD	Meadowbrook, Craigavon	£300
DSD	DSD	Pinebank, Tullygally	£3,453
DSD	DSD	Rosevale Road, Banbridge	£10,000
DSD	DSD	Levin Road, Lurgan	£175
DSD	DSD	Parkmore, Craigavon	£5
DSD	DSD	Dublin Road/ Loughbrickland	£1,000
DSD	DSD	Ardowen, Craigavon	£1,200
DSD	DSD	Churchview, Gilford	£25,000
DETI	Invest NI	Mandeville	£2,250
DETI	Invest NI	Charlestown Road	£20
DETI	Invest NI	Craigavon Food Park	£320

TABLE 3: SALES IN UPPER BANN 2010-2011

Dept	Branch	Location	Sale Price
DRD	Roads Service	Moyraverty West Road, Craigavon	£300
DRD	Roads Service	Derrykeeran Road, Portadown	£2,050
DRD	Roads Service	A1 Dromore-By-Pass, Dromore	£1

Dept	Branch	Location	Sale Price
DRD	Roads Service	Church Street, Dromore	£1,125
DRD	Roads Service	William Street, Lurgan	£125,000
DRD	NI Water	Lenaderg, Banbridge	£7,500
DRD	NI Water	Tandragee Road, Scarva	£27,000
DHSS&PS	NIFRS	Lurgan Fire Station, Hill Street	£200,000
DSD	DSD	Bocombra, Portadown	£37,500
DSD	DSD	Festival Road, Portadown	£540
DSD	DSD	Pinebank, Craigavon	£1,100
DSD	DSD	Greehill Park, Lurgan	£200
DSD	DSD	Lawrencetown	£2,281
DSD	DSD	Ardowen, Craigavon	£1,200
DSD	DSD	Loughbrickland/	£712,648
DSD	DSD	Drumgor Heights	£1,000
DSD	DSD	Greenhill Park, Lurgan	£1,000
DSD	DSD	Parkmore, Craigavon	£1,125
DSD	DSD	West Street, Portadown	£3,000
DSD	DSD	Kenlis Street, Banbridge	£15,000
DETI	Invest NI	Mandeville	£3,750
DETI	Invest NI	Halfpenny Valley	£35,500
DETI	Invest NI	Charlestown Road	£1,500,000
DETI	Invest NI	Craigavon Food Park	£300

TABLE 4: SALES IN UPPER BANN 2011- 29TH FEBRUARY 2012

Dept	Branch	Location	Sale Price
DRD	Roads Service	Cascum Lane, Banbridge	£5,000
DRD	Roads Service	Banbridge Road, Kinallen	£2,000
DRD	Roads Service	Old Manse Road, Banbridge	£9,000
DRD	Roads Service	Union Street, Lurgan	£17,500
DRD	Roads Service	Bannview Road, Banbridge	£500
DRD	Translink	Surplus land at Lough Road, Lurgan	£17,500
DOJ	PSNI	Former PSNI station at Castle Street, Gilford	£130,000
DSD	DSD	Oakfields, Craigavon	£1,350
DSD	DSD	Ballynamoney Lane, Lurgan	£87,000
DSD	DSD	Site at Carbet Road, Portadown	£13,500

Dept	Branch	Location	Sale Price
DSD	DSD	Land adjacent to Gobhan Close, Portadown	£1,500
DSD	DSD	Carbet Road, Portadown	£15,000
DSD	DSD	Drumgor Heights, Craigavon	£35,000
DSD	DSD	Ashgrove Road, Portadown	£2,826

TABLE 5: SALES OF NIHE HOUSES IN UPPER BANN 2008- 29TH FEBRUARY 2012

Dept	Branch	Year and number of sales	Market Value	Sale Price
DSD	NIHE	2008-2009 - 1 Tenanted House Sale	£65,000	£49,600
DSD	NIHE	2009-2010 - 20 Tenanted House Sales	£1,539,000	£1,129,760
DSD	NIHE	2010-2011 - 20 Tenanted House Sales	£1,103,000	£786,814
DSD	NIHE	2011-2012 - 13 Tenanted House Sales	£667,000	£461,140

Note 1 – Sale Prices for Tenanted House Sales are the discounted sale prices.

Market Values for NIHE Tenanted House Sales are not assessed by LPS

Pay Bands

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of people currently working in pay bands (a) 1; (b) 2; and (c) 3 in each Department, broken down by gender.

(AQW 8262/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The total number of permanent staff working in pay bands 1 to 3 in each of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Departments, broken down by gender is set out in the tables overleaf. Data in relation to the Senior Civil Service is not normally disaggregated into pay bands, however the information attached was gathered as a special exercise for the 2010 NICS Gender Review.

NICS PERMANENT STAFF AT PAY BAND 1 BREAKDOWN BY DEPARTMENT AND GENDER @ 1ST JAN 2010

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
DARD	13	3	16
DCAL	2	2	4
DE	5	9	14
DETI	6	2	8
DFP	28	6	34
DEL	2	6	8
DHSSPS	11	10	21
DOE	7	2	9
DRD	13	0	13
DSD	8	5	13

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
OFMDFM	12	8	20
NIO	15	10	25
Total	122	63	185

**NICS PERMANENT STAFF AT PAY BANDS 2& 3
BREAKDOWN BY DEPARTMENT AND GENDER @ 1ST JAN 2010**

	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
DARD	5	0	5
DCAL	2	0	2
DE	5	0	5
DETI	1	0	1
DFP	10	0	10
DEL	1	2	3
DHSSPS	3	2	5
DOE	2	1	3
DRD	2	2	4
DSD	4	1	5
OFMDFM	6	3	9
NIO	5	2	7
Total	46	13	59

Notes:

Data sourced from HRConnect at 1st January 2010.

Excludes Casual staff.

Staff numbers are provided on a headcount basis.

Includes all permanent staff, including those on career breaks and secondment

Postage and Printing Costs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel 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 8425/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department of Finance and Personnel corresponds with elected representatives by email, unless specifically requested otherwise. Elected representatives are advised of the publication of reports by the Department and its arm's-length bodies, by means of a letter detailing how the publication can be accessed and/or downloaded from the relevant website. Hard copies are available for elected representatives on request.

Civil Service: Claims for Property Damage

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the arrangements that are in place which permit civil servants and public servants to claim for damage to their personal property whilst at work; (ii) whether negligence on the part of the employer, employee or agent, is necessary for any such pay-outs, or whether goodwill or no fault payments are available; (iii) what restrictions or exemptions apply; (iv) how compensation is determined; and (v) what compensation has been paid out in each of the last five years, including the largest and smallest amounts paid in respect of individual claims.

(AQW 8531/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The NICS has a policy where a Department may compensate an employee for personal property lost or damaged whilst at work. Each claim is decided on by the employing Department. Compensation is not paid in cases where the employee has been negligent or where the item is covered by insurance for loss or damage. The amount of compensation is calculated as the current cost of replacing the items less an amount representing depreciation or full cost of repair.

A copy of the policy can be found in Chapter 9 (Travel and Subsistence section 9.18) of the NICS HR Handbook available from the DFP website at www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/working-in-the-nics.

The compensation paid out to civil servants in each of the last five years is set out the following table:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total Compensation Paid	4,986.47	863.55	3,662.87	14,493.81	5,535.84
Highest Amount Paid to Individual	1,250.00	143.13	2,825.00	12,500.00	2,000.00
Lowest Amount Paid to Individual	10.00	29.95	13.25	12.00	16.49

Secondment to Trade Unions

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of (a) full-time; and (b) part-time staff who are currently on secondment from his Department, or its arm's length bodies, to each recognised trade union; (ii) the salary scale for each secondee; and (iii) the length of each secondment to date.

(AQW 8778/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are three full-time officers and no part-time officers on secondment from DFP to NIPSA.

One officer is on the salary scale between £23336 and £26086 and two officers are on the salary scale between £18038 and £22180. Two officers have been seconded for 5 years 6 months and one officer has been seconded for 5 years 9 months.

Expected Growth of the Economy

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the expected growth of the economy in 2012/13.

(AQW 8783/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Current global economic conditions are extremely challenging. While some sectors of our local economy are continuing to perform relatively well, it is clear that the recovery for others will take longer.

Towards the end of last year (29 November 2011) the Office for Budget Responsibility revised its growth forecasts for the UK as a whole for 2012 downwards to 0.7%. There are no official regional forecasts for Northern Ireland but if the pace of the UK's recovery overall is slower than previously hoped then this will have implications for the pace of growth in all regions including Northern Ireland.

Procurement Process

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the Central Procurement Directorate's recommended course of action when a failure to disclose relevant information on an application form comes to light during a tender or procurement process.

(AQW 8995/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The action to be taken will be dependant on the nature of the undisclosed information and when it came to light during the procurement process. If it is considered that knowledge of the information would have had an influence on decisions made during the selection or award stages of a tender competition, then those stages of the process may need to be re- assessed or re-run. Each incidence would be treated on a case by case basis, bearing in mind the principles of transparency, fairness and a competitive process.

In addition, under Regulation 23 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended), (the Regulations), a contracting authority which has actual knowledge that a tenderer has been convicted of certain offences including conspiracy, corruption, bribery, or fraud, (as defined in the Regulations), must exclude the applicant from the selection process.

However where an applicant has, for example, been convicted of offences relating to the conduct of his business or has committed an act of grave misconduct in the course of his business or profession, the contracting authority has the option to exclude the applicant from selection.

Monitoring Function for a Scheme

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the criteria used to determine whether a conflict of interest exists when a company, which previously carried out a monitoring function for a scheme, wishes to tender for a replacement or follow-on scheme.

(AQW 8996/11-15)

Mr Wilson: A conflict of interest declaration must be completed by all companies tendering for public procurement contracts.

If a contracting authority becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest, it will consider whether or not the bidder in question should be allowed to participate in the process, depending on the specific circumstances in each case. However it is not proportionate and not lawful to require the automatic exclusion of all such persons without having given them an opportunity to show that there was no risk to competition.

The Chairperson of the selection and evaluation panels must also ensure panel members have no conflict of interest at all stages of the procurement process and complete the appropriate conflict of interest declarations/confidentiality agreements. The purpose of this is to confirm that panel members do not have any external personal, professional or monetary interests in the tenders they are being asked to evaluate.

Should a conflict of interest be identified, the Chairperson will decide on the appropriate course of action, taking account of advice from the Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE), to ensure that there is no distortion of competition and record the outcome.

During the life of a public project managers will also consider the potential conflict of risks in the management of a public project, which will involve a number of stakeholders throughout its life cycle.

Northern Ireland Economy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the potential long-term implications of the Euro crisis to the Northern Ireland economy.

(AQW 9000/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Current global economic conditions are extremely challenging and towards the end of last year (29th November 2011) the Office for Budget Responsibility revised its 2012 growth forecasts for the UK as a whole downwards to 0.7%. In particular, the OBR recognised that the situation in the euro area is likely to undermine confidence and lead to tighter credit conditions for households and firms going forward.

While there are no official regional forecasts for Northern Ireland, clearly any situation such as the euro crisis which impacts on the pace of the UK's recovery overall will have implications for the pace of growth in all regions including Northern Ireland.

However on the assumption that the euro area finds a way through the current crisis that delivers sovereign debt sustainability, the OBR expects the UK economy to grow by 2.1 per cent in 2013, 2.7 per cent in 2014, and 3.0 per cent in 2015 and 2016. And while much uncertainty remains around this, the expectation of a return of stronger growth over the next few years is at least encouraging in these difficult times.

Report on the Inquiry into Public Procurement in Northern Ireland

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to paragraph 258 of the Report on the Inquiry into Public Procurement in Northern Ireland, what guidance his Department gives to a panel assessing a tender which is unsure about any element of an application or an applicant's ability to meet the criteria.

(AQW 9011/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) has published two guidance notes in relation to the selection and assessment of tenders. They are "The Selection and Pre-qualification of Contractors" (Procurement Guidance Note 04/10) and "The Procedures and Principles for the Evaluation of Tenders" (Procurement Guidance Note 02/09).

The guidance sets out a clearly defined process which must be followed by evaluation panels to ensure consistency of approach, transparency and equality of treatment. Tender evaluation panels are required to assess each tender on the basis of the information supplied.

In line with the guidance the Chair of the assessment panel may seek clarification via the Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE) in relation to any element of the application on behalf of panel members, if required. In so doing CoPEs ensure that other applicants are not placed at a disadvantage.

Building Regulations

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when the next major updated building regulations will be published, and whether lessons have been learned from England and Wales.

(AQW 9079/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is proposed to make a major revision to the Building Regulations by 30 March 2012. However this is dependent on final clearances being given, and may be subject to variation.

When reviewing the requirements of the Northern Ireland Building Regulations the Department takes into consideration revisions that have been, or are being, made to the building regulations in England and Wales. Such revisions are made based on the outcomes of research which has been undertaken by the Department for Communities and Local Government on behalf of the UK administrations.

Included in the proposed Northern Ireland (NI) updated regulations, will be amendments to the standards for the conservation of fuel and power, ventilation, sound insulation and reducing the risk of scalding, all of which have already been made in England and Wales. In general, implementation in England and Wales has been positive. If appropriate, the same revisions will be adopted for NI (e.g. the use of accredited details in place of pre-completion sound insulation testing) however it is proposed that some revisions will not be adopted (e.g. removal of internal door closures in flats). There are also circumstances where variation from the England and Wales implementation is justified in the

circumstances which prevail in NI, e.g. installation of carbon monoxide alarms where solid fuel or oil fired appliances are being replaced or installed will extend in NI to all appliances regardless of fuel.

Building Control Data Sharing Pilot

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to the building control data sharing pilot between Belfast City Council and Antrim Borough Council, whether (i) this will be extended to all councils; and (ii) his Department will be issuing guidance.

(AQW 9080/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Land & Property Services (LPS) and Councils Building Control representatives have been reviewing the specification of property survey details required in the rating service and the options for how the details could be provided. The investigations are being conducted through the newly formed Property Services Liaison Group and the outcome will be presented to Building Control Managers at their Annual General Meeting on 19th April 2012.

A key point in the investigations is that LPS has been trying to work across Government so that property information needed for a variety of reasons can be collected by one visit to the property.

Following the Building Control meeting in April, Councils will be invited to comment on their capacity and willingness to provide survey information under the new arrangements. The implementation of the agreed new arrangements across Councils will be subject to acceptable contractual agreements.

Guidance in this matter will be provided to Councils.

EU Fiscal Treaty

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the potential financial implications for Northern Ireland if the electorate in the Republic of Ireland votes against the EU fiscal treaty in the forthcoming referendum.

(AQW 9105/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Irish referendum on the treaty is very much a matter for the Irish Government and electorate to determine.

Should the Republic of Ireland fail to ratify the EU fiscal treaty, it is my understanding that it would be blocked from future EU bailout funding. So there is a clear trade-off in terms of agreeing to tighter fiscal controls and protecting against the risk of any future financial crises.

While there are no direct financial implications for Northern Ireland, obviously we have close links with the Republic of Ireland, particularly in terms of trade and our banking systems. So having a stable and prosperous Irish economy is very much in our interests here in Northern Ireland in both regards.

Hospitality: Spend

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 8071/11-15, whether the figures provided include his Department's arm's-length bodies; and if not, to provide this information for each of the last five years.

(AQW 9266/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The figures previously provided in response to AQW 8071/11-15 include the Department's arms-length bodies, and as such no further information is required.

Individual Voluntary Arrangements

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people in each constituency have entered into Individual Voluntary Arrangements in each of the last three years.

(AQW 9400/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table below shows the number of people entering into Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) broken down by constituency and financial year since 1 April 2008 to 8 March 2012.

Constituency	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12 ⁽¹⁾
Belfast East	31	37	46	78
Belfast North	49	54	74	57
Belfast South	34	41	55	25
Belfast West	20	35	41	40
East Antrim	50	58	57	65
East Londonderry	39	62	35	59
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	19	24	34	42
Foyle	29	35	56	60
Lagan Valley	52	75	70	71
Mid Ulster	18	19	40	47
Newry & Armagh	34	31	45	42
North Antrim	37	45	56	76
North Down	45	65	82	56
South Antrim	32	50	68	77
South Down	25	39	55	75
Strangford	53	49	81	74
Upper Bann	33	63	74	80
West Tyrone	19	32	33	30
Unknown ⁽²⁾	23	10	20	18
Total Number of IVAs	642	824	1022	1072

(1) 2011/2012 IVAs up to 8 March 2012.

(2) The number of IVAs where postcode data was unavailable

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Issuing Pumps to Patients with Diabetes

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why there has been a delay in issuing pumps to patients with diabetes; and what plans he has to speed up this process.
(AQW 9013/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): In June 2009 my Department endorsed National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Technology Appraisal No. 151 which sets out recommendations on the use of insulin pump therapy. The HSC has been working to provide access to insulin pumps in line with the Institute's guidance and significant progress has been made; however due to competing pressures for limited health and social care funding, there are currently waiting lists to start treatment.

Additional funding was secured in 2011-12 for an additional 80 pumps which will be made available for children this year and into 2012-13. I have also allocated additional funding of £2.5 million which has been used to procure an additional 1,100 insulin pumps for adults and children. These will be phased in over the four year period to 2015-16. Nonetheless, the HSC continues to experience a rising demand for clinical and cost-effective treatments and medical devices, and further resources will be required to ensure that the therapies and the associated infrastructure required to support them can be provided.

Current Positions in Hospitals

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current number of positions 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 9058/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the number of funded positions within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care at the above grades, by hospital, is given in the table below.

Number of funded posts for Consultants, Specialty Registrars, Foundation House Officer 2 and Foundation House Officer 1 within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care by Hospital as at March 2012

Trust	Hospital	Whole-time Equivalent			
		Consultant	Specialty Registrar	Foundation House Officer 2	Foundation House Officer 1
Belfast	Royal Victoria	280.50	355.40		45.00
	Belfast City	195.88	153.10		34.00
	Greenpark	41.09	37.20		3.00
	Mater	36.13	43.00		15.00
	Joint Hospital Teams	52.66	76.68		0.00
	Community Facilities	14.25	0.00		0.00
Northern	Antrim	123.30	104.23	28.00	27.00
	Causeway	50.32	33.00	13.00	14.00
	Holywell	21.75	9.50	0.00	0.00
	Mid Ulster	3.00	2.00	0.00	0.00
	Whiteabbey	1.70	0.00	0.00	0.00
South Eastern	Ards	8.60	0.00	2.00	0.00
	Downe	14.83	9.00	6.00	6.00
	Lagan Valley	26.07	9.80	4.00	9.00
	Ulster	144.05	137.20	32.01	28.00

Trust	Hospital	Whole-time Equivalent			
		Consultant	Specialty Registrar	Foundation House Officer 2	Foundation House Officer 1
Southern	Craigavon Area	122.44	120.10	28.00	21.00
	Daisy Hill	41.97	35.60	7.00	12.00
	St Luke's	8.60	5.60	2.00	0.00
	South Tyrone	3.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Lurgan, Armagh Community and Other Community	5.90	3.60	0.00	0.00
Western	Altnagelvin	141.19	143.00		24.00
	Erne	44.95	34.00		10.00
	Tyrone County	6.00	0.00		0.00
	Community Facilities	26.70	19.00		0.00

Source: Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts – Figures have not been validated by the DHSSPS.

Notes:

- 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.
- Belfast and Western Trusts encountered a coding issue between Specialty Registrars and Foundation House Officers Year 2, therefore due to the timescale for answering this AQW, these two staff groups have been combined.
- Belfast Trust advised that splitting those staff working in Joint Hospital Teams into individual hospitals would involve a large-scale exercise which would involve allocating the number of hours spent at each individual hospital for each doctor / dentist within the team.
- Some of the Trusts have also provided information for their community facilities.

Public Health Agency

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the appointments of two local government representatives to the Public Health Agency, to detail (i) whether the positions were advertised; (ii) how many applications were received, broken down by membership of political parties; (iii) how many applicants were interviewed, broken down by membership of political parties; and (iv) why representatives from different political parties were not appointed, **(AQW 9116/11-15)**

Mr Poots:

- The appointment of two (2) Local Government Representative Members to the Public Health Agency was advertised by way of an "Information Flyer" which was issued to each individual District Councillor throughout the 26 District Councils. The Flyer was also issued to the Chief Executives of all District Councils requesting that they bring the information to the attention of the District Councillors serving in their area. A copy of the "Information Flyer" was also sent to the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA).
- A total of 21 applications were received. The table below shows a breakdown by membership of political parties.

Political Party	Number of Applications
Alliance	1
Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	6
Green Party	1
Independent	1
Sinn Fein (SF)	3
Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP)	5
Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)	4
Total	21

- (iii) A total of twelve (12) applicants were interviewed. The table below shows the number of applicants interviewed and a breakdown by membership of their respective political party.

Political Party	Number of Applicants Interviewed
Alliance	1
Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	4
Green Party	1
Independent	Nil
Sinn Fein (SF)	Nil
Social Democratic & Labour Party (SDLP)	4
Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)	2
Total	12

- (iv) The appointments to the Public Health Agency were made in accordance with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland and as with appointments to all Health and Social Care bodies, is a matter of Ministerial choice. Initially two applicants from two different political parties were appointed, however one of those was unable to accept the appointment due to health problems.

Voluntary Redundancy within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the estimated number of people who might take voluntary redundancy within Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's (a) Income Department, should the office relocate to Omagh; and (b) Payment Department, should the office relocate to Ballymena; (ii) number of people who might take voluntary redundancy within the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area as a result of the office relocations in the Shared Services proposals; and (iv) to provide an estimate of how much the redundancy might cost in total, as a result of the shared services proposals.

(AQW 9120/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Belfast HSC Trust has advised me that they are in the midst of a process of staff engagement in relation to these issues and are unable to give any estimates until the outcome of the consultation is known.

Programme for Government

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether he considered including community resuscitation in the Programme for Government; and (ii) for his assessment of the British Heart Foundation's campaign for the inclusion of a community resuscitation strategy in the Programme for Government.

(AQW 9132/11-15)

Mr Poots: You will have noted the concerted effort, across the Executive, to restrict the Programme for Government Targets to a smaller number that are sharply focused and outcome based.

The Programme for Government is concerned with major strategic developments rather than existing provisions. Standard 9 of the Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing Service Framework requires Health and Social Care professionals to work with schools, workplaces and communities to raise awareness of, and access to, emergency life support skills. The implementation of this standard will mean that many more people will have access to ELS training.

In addition a regional business case application to fund Community Development Resuscitation Officers in each Trust is currently with the Health and Social Care Board for consideration.

Hewlett Packard

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 8019/11-15, to detail (i) Hewlett Packard's role in this project; (ii) whether it was awarded the contract on the basis that it will be the prime contractor; and (iii) the selection process.

(AQW 9176/11-15)

Mr Poots: Hewlett Packard's role in the Northern Ireland Electronic Care Record project is to provide procurement services under the Technology Partner Agreement. The Agreement is a framework aimed at providing an efficient and effective route to the procurement of a broad range of ICT equipment and services. Hewlett Packard's role in the procurement of the Northern Ireland Electronic Care Record will be to engage with the supplier to provide the technical solution.

The framework was awarded to Hewlett Packard in August 2009 following a fully compliant OJEU procurement under the Public Contract Regulations 2006 which was conducted using the competitive dialogue procedure provided for in those regulations. The framework was let for a period of 4 years and will be due for renewal in 2013.

Emergency Life Support Skills

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) whether his Department has any intentions of collaborating with the Department of Education to seek to introduce the compulsory delivery of Emergency Life Support Skills in schools, workplaces and communities; and (ii) a timescale for the implementation of the strategy.

(AQW 9240/11-15)

Mr Poots: Compulsory teaching of Emergency Life Support (ELS) skills in schools is a matter for the Minister for Education to consider.

Standard 9 of the Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing Service Framework requires Health and Social Care professionals to work with schools, workplaces and communities to raise awareness of, and access to, emergency life support skills. The implementation of this standard will mean that many more people will have access to ELS training.

I will be meeting the Minister for Education in the near future to discuss a range of matters that are of mutual interest and we will be discussing ELS training in schools at that meeting.

Vetting and Barring Scheme

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of (i) the Vetting and Barring Scheme; and (ii) the maintenance of the Independent Safeguarding Authority's barred lists for the children and vulnerable adult sectors.

(AQW 9270/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Vetting and Barring Scheme was introduced for the purpose of strengthening child and adult protection arrangements in certain work place situations, that is, those situations which provide significant access to children and vulnerable adults. I remain committed to the Vetting and Barring Scheme and to its implementation on a cross-border basis. We are in the process of putting in place legislation, which will support changes to the Scheme recommended by a review of the Scheme conducted in 2010. In my view, those changes will achieve a more balanced approach, which continues to have the protection of children and vulnerable adults as its core aim.

The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) assumed responsibility for barring decision-making from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Department of Education in March 2009 under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. Subject to the conclusion of the successful passage of the Protection of Freedoms Bill at Westminster, the ISA will be subsumed into a new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) later this year. Northern Ireland Ministers have agreed that the barring function of the Disclosure and Barring Service will extend to Northern Ireland, undertaking the role previously undertaken by the ISA. As is currently the case with the ISA, Northern Ireland will have representation on the Board of the new DBS.

Paediatric Dental Services at the Tyrone County Hospital in Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) why the Western Health and Social Care Trust is proposing the withdrawal of the paediatric dental service at the Tyrone County Hospital, Omagh; and (ii) why the decision has been taken without any prior consultation.

(AQW 9300/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Health and Social Care Trust has advised that no paediatric services have been withdrawn from Tyrone County Hospital, however for reasons of patient safety day case paediatric surgery including dental surgery is currently the subject of review. The outcome of that review and any proposals for the future delivery of paediatric surgical and dental services will be shared with political representatives and interested parties and consultation will take place if required.

Paediatric Dental Services at the Tyrone County Hospital in Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the proposed withdrawal of the paediatric dental service at the Tyrone County Hospital, what additional resources will be put in place at the Erne Hospital, Enniskillen and Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry, to cater for 2-14 year olds from Omagh who require multiple teeth extractions.

(AQW 9304/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Western Health and Social Care Trust that the paediatric dental service continues to be provided at Tyrone County Hospital but as is the case with paediatric surgery at the Hospital the service is currently the subject of a clinical incident review. I understand the outcome of that review and any proposals for the future delivery of paediatric surgical and dental services will be shared with political representatives and interested parties as required.

Paediatric Dental Services at the Tyrone County Hospital in Omagh

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the proposed withdrawal of the paediatric dental service at the Tyrone County Hospital and given that 239 children used this service last year, for his assessment of the potential waiting times for children from the

Omagh area if the service is withdrawn, considering that the current waiting times at the Erne Hospital, Enniskillen and Altnagelvin Hospital, Londonderry, exceed six weeks.

(AQW 9305/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am advised by the Western Health and Social Care Trust that if a paediatric dental patient had to be referred to the Erne at present they would be offered an appointment within 2 – 3 weeks. If a paediatric dental patient had to be referred to Altnagelvin at present they would be offered an appointment within 3 weeks. The Trust is increasing the number of paediatric dental patients being seen on the current lists. They have an additional session in the Erne Hospital with the possibility of another additional session per month if required.

Physiotherapy Graduates

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 8238/11-15, what specific actions his Department is taking to assist physiotherapy graduates who are currently unemployed.

(AQW 9309/11-15)

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.

Trusts have a limited number of substantive posts for physiotherapy graduates and the Department is currently assessing the commissioning position for the 12/13 academic year.

Northern Ireland Care Record Outline Business Case

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 8019/11-15 (i) whether the contract awarded to Hewlett Packard, as part of the Northern Ireland Electronic Records Project, was put out to tender, and if not, to explain the rationale for this decision; (ii) how much Hewlett Packard has estimated that it will charge his Department for carrying out the work; and (iii) how much it has billed his Department to date.

(AQW 9328/11-15)

Mr Poots: The contract awarded to Hewlett Packard was as a result of a tendering exercise. Hewlett Packard will charge £33k for carrying out the work, none of which has been billed to date.

Deaths by Suicide

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many people aged (a) under 25; (b) between 25-34; (c) between 35-44; and (d) 45 and over committed suicide in each of the last three years, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area; and (ii) of these, how many were being treated for (i) alcohol; and (b) drug dependency.

(AQW 9335/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) The below table gives the number of deaths registered due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury'¹ and 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted'² by age group for each year between 2008 and 2010 by Health and Social Care Trust.

- 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: NUMBER OF REGISTERED DEATHS DUE TO 'SUICIDE AND SELF-INFLICTED INJURY' AND 'UNDETERMINED INJURY WHETHER ACCIDENTALLY OR PURPOSEFULLY INFLICTED' BY AGE GROUP AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST, 2008-2010.

Registration Year	Age	Northern Ireland	Health and Social Care Trust				
			Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western
2008	All Ages	282	68	55	37	69	53
	Under 25	48	13	7	7	12	9
	25-34	60	21	11	7	14	7
	35-44	75	18	13	14	17	13
	45+	99	16	24	9	26	24
2009	All Ages	260	72	54	32	47	55
	Under 25	42	8	10	6	7	11
	25-34	59	21	14	5	10	9
	35-44	63	19	13	11	9	11
	45+	96	24	17	10	21	24
2010	All Ages	313	79	65	65	51	53
	Under 25	71	24	13	16	5	13
	25-34	57	13	10	14	9	11
	35-44	65	13	19	11	12	10
	45+	120	29	23	24	25	19

- (ii) Information relating to the number of death due to suicide by people who were being treated for alcohol or drug dependency is not available.

Schmallenberg Virus

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has had with officials within his Department, and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the potential risk to public health posed by the Schmallenberg Virus; and what protective measures his Department has or plans to put in place as a result of the threat of an outbreak.

(AQW 9363/11-15)

Mr Poots: At national level a multidisciplinary expert group has assessed the likely risk to human health of Schmallenberg virus. This assessment, dated 24 February 2012, is on the Health Protection Agency's website at: http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1317132996975

In its assessment the expert group recognises that many uncertainties exist about this new virus, and considers that on the basis of current evidence it is unlikely that it poses a risk to human health. This assessment will be kept under review as more information becomes available. However, given the evolving situation and the limited evidence currently available, the group recommends surveillance of those groups of people who are at the highest risk of exposure, including occupational groups such as farmers, veterinarians and other workers handling affected animals.

DHSSPS officials have discussed Schmallenberg virus with the Chief Veterinary Officer and with the Public Health Agency (PHA). Notices about the disease have been posted on the websites of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute. Should

an outbreak occur in livestock in Northern Ireland, PHA will put in place surveillance arrangements similar to those that are now in place in England.

Human Papilloma Virus

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department intends to introduce screening for the Human Papilloma Virus in all Health and Social Care Trust areas. (AQW 9366/11-15)

Mr Poots: The UK National Screening Committee (NSC) is an expert body which advises all four UK Health Departments on all aspects of screening policy. The NSC is currently considering Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) testing as part of the Cervical Cancer Screening Programme and will be making a recommendation later this year.

In the interim the Department has requested the Public Health Agency to develop proposals and associated costs of HPV testing if a decision is taken for it to be introduced in Northern Ireland. A draft paper was discussed at a meeting of the Northern Ireland Screening Committee in January and the Committee asked for further details to be added to the paper. A final paper will be sent to the Department for consideration once the Public Health Agency has updated the report.

The Western Health and Social Care Trust is also undertaking a pilot on HPV testing within the cervical screening programme. This will provide useful information on the implications of introducing such a test in Northern Ireland.

A decision on the introduction of HPV testing to the Northern Ireland Cervical Screening Programme will then be taken once all this work is complete.

Defibrillators

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many defibrillators there are in Northern Ireland. (AQW 9368/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is not known how many Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) there are in Northern Ireland as there is no register of AEDs.

The best information available is from a survey carried out by one healthcare professional approximately three years ago, which indicated that there were more than 800 AEDs in different locations across Northern Ireland including businesses, community settings and sporting organisations.

Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan. (AQW 9369/11-15)

Mr Poots: The regional multi-agency Sexual Health Improvement Network, established to oversee and drive forward the implementation of the Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan, is progressing action in the areas of prevention, training, services and research. Such action includes the introduction and establishment of the HPV immunisation programme; the rerun of the first phase of the public information campaign targeted at 17-24 year olds to raise awareness of sexual health issues, promote safer sex and empower young people to delay first sexual experience; and ongoing action to deliver information, education and personal development programmes and outreach preventative programmes.

The Network has also identified key areas for action and is currently addressing these through sub-groups set up specifically to consider STI/HIV prevention in high risk groups; sexual health services in

Primary Care; Looked after Children as a vulnerable group at high risk of teenage pregnancy and STIs; and support to teachers and schools regarding Relationship and Sexuality Education

Ear Syringe Machines

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how he ensures that there is adequate provision of ear syringe machines in health centres; and (ii) for his assessment of the proposal not to replace the existing machine in Antrim Health Centre.

(AQW 9397/11-15)

Mr Poots: The provision of ear syringing is a decision for each GP practice based in Health Centres. Although this treatment is usually carried out by Trust employed staff, it is at the request of the GP. The GP practice alone is responsible for purchasing the necessary equipment and consumables required to carry out this service, and I understand replacement equipment has been ordered by the GP practices and that it should be delivered by the end of March, if not sooner.

Use of Ionized Water

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the Health Service uses ionized water; and to outline the benefits of using ionized water.

(AQW 9425/11-15)

Mr Poots: Health and Social Care Trusts have indicated that they do not use ionized water. Ionized water is marketed with claims of a number of health benefits however there is no clinical evidence to support these claims.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ionized_water - cite_note-latimes-0#cite_note-latimes-0

Children with Down's Syndrome in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust Area

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of children with Down's Syndrome in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area, broken down by area of birth.

(AQW 9430/11-15)

Mr Poots: As these figures are not available centrally within the Department, they were requested directly from the Northern HSC Trust. In response, the Trust provided the figures detailed in Tables 1 and 2 below. It is not possible to detail the figures in Table 1, by area of birth. However the figures in Table 2, detail children aged between 0-19 with Downs Syndrome born in the Northern Trust by area of birth, as at 9 March 2012.

TABLE 1: CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 0 - 19 YEARS WITH DOWNS SYNDROME RESIDENT IN NORTHERN TRUST AS AT 9 MARCH 20121

Residence Area	Total
Coleraine	24
Ballymoney	9
Moyle	4
Antrim	21
Ballymena	22
Larne	15
Carrickfergus	10
Magherafelt	22

Residence Area	Total
Cookstown	12
Newtownabbey	36
Northern Trust	175

1 Figures supplied by the Northern HSC Trust have not been validated by the DHSSPS.

TABLE 2: CHILDREN AGED BETWEEN 0 - 19 YEARS WITH DOWNS SYNDROME BORN IN THE NORTHERN TRUST AS AT 9 MARCH 2012¹

Birth Area	Total
Coleraine	21
Ballymoney	9
Moyle	-
Antrim	18
Ballymena	22
Larne	11
Carrickfergus	10
Magherafelt	23
Cookstown	12
Newtownabbey	36
Unknown	-
Northern Trust	168

1 Figures supplied by the Northern HSC Trust have not been validated by the DHSSPS.

'-' less than 5 children

Cervical Screening Programme

Ms Lewis asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many women have been diagnosed with cervical cancer as a result of the Cervical Screening Programme in each of the last three years.

(AQW 9447/11-15)

Mr Poole: It is not known how many women have been diagnosed with cervical cancer as a result of the Northern Ireland Cervical Screening Programme, as smear tests for those women who present with symptoms are processed in the same way as those smears carried out through screening.

The most recent available full-year data on the incidence of cervical cancer are for 2009. The table below gives figures for the period 2007-2009.

NUMBER OF CASES OF CERVICAL CANCER BY YEAR OF DIAGNOSIS

Year of diagnoses	Number of cases
2007	89
2008	127

Year of diagnoses	Number of cases
2009	119

Source: Northern Ireland Cancer Registry

Shared Services

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what discussions he has had with the Minister for Regional Development in relation to the provision of public transport between Belfast and Omagh to facilitate staff who are relocated; (ii) whether he anticipates any compulsory redundancies as a result of Shared Services within (a) the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Income Department and the Payments Department; and (b) the rest of the Health Service; and (iii) whether staff in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust will be offered the possibility of transfer to another department or location.

(AQW 9469/11-15)

Mr Poots: The answer to each question posed is as follows:

- (i) There have been no discussions with the Minister for Regional Development in respect of public transport links to any of the proposed shared service locations. The provision of transport will be a matter for consultation with the trade unions following a final decision on the shared services locations. A full range of transport options including car sharing, excess travel allowances, and use of Translink schemes will be considered for effectiveness and value for money;
- (ii) There are no plans for compulsory redundancy; and
- (iii) All affected staff have the right to follow their jobs. That course may not suit everyone, but every effort will be made to facilitate redeployment to posts close to current locations.

Rare Diseases

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he plans to launch a consultation on a local policy for rare diseases.

(AQW 9481/11-15)

Mr Poots: The 2009 European Commission Recommendation on Rare Disease obliges Member States to put in place a plan or strategy on rare diseases by 2013 which integrates all current and future initiatives at local, regional and national levels in the field of rare diseases. The UK Plan for Rare Diseases is being jointly produced by the four nations of the UK and a UK-wide public consultation was launched on 29 February 2012.

All responses to the consultation are being submitted directly to the Department of Health in England to co-ordinate on behalf of the four UK Health Departments. These responses, including those from Northern Ireland, will be assessed by all four Health Departments to inform the final version of the plan and resulting implementation plan.

Paediatric Dental Services at the Tyrone County Hospital in Omagh

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the withdrawal of Paediatric Dental Services at the Tyrone County Hospital in Omagh, why the Western Health and Social Care Trust made a decision to withdraw the service without any consultation; and if he will make the necessary arrangements to have appropriate anaesthetist cover at Tyrone County Hospital so that this important service can be reinstated immediately.

(AQW 9502/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Western Health and Social Care Trust has advised that the paediatric dental service continues to be provided at Tyrone County Hospital but as is the case with paediatric surgery at the Hospital the service is currently the subject of a clinical incident review. I understand the outcome of

that review and any proposals for the future delivery of paediatric surgical and dental services will be shared with political representatives and interested parties as required.

Air Ambulance Provision

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 3038/11-15, whether the Health and Social Care Board undertook a feasibility study on a helicopter emergency medical service; (ii) when the study was completed; and (iii) when and where the findings will be published.

(AQW 9625/11-15)

Mr Poots: I can confirm that, at my predecessor's request, the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) commissioned consultants to undertake a feasibility study on the need for and sustainability and affordability of an HEMS/air ambulance for Northern Ireland. The HSCB expects the consultants to present a final report in April this year after which it will be submitted to my Department to consider. The Department will then decide what arrangements should be made for publication.

Department of Justice

Offence of Causing Death by Careless Driving

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6590/11-15, the answer to which was incomplete in relation to those processed through the courts on a charge of causing death by careless driving how many (i) pleaded guilty; and (ii) were acquitted.

(AQW 7567/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The offence under Article 11A, Road Traffic Act 1988, by virtue of Article 52 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, is 'Causing death or grievous bodily injury by careless driving or inconsiderate driving'. It only applies to offences committed after 16th July 2008.

Since this offence was created, full information is only available for the years 2009 and 2010:

	2009		2010	
	Crown Court	Magistrates' Court	Crown Court	Magistrates' Court
Prosecuted	4	12	15	55
Guilty Plea	4	9	13	31
Convicted	4	9	14	33
Guilty of lesser offence	0	2	0	7
Acquitted	0	1	1	15

Statement by Dr Michael Maguire

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, since Dr Michael McBride's statement in 2009 that "there is a continuing gap between the Prison Service's stated intention and the delivery on-the-ground of meaningful outcomes for prisoners, especially at Maghaberry Prison" and that room remains for recommendations to be implemented in the "spirit" in which they were intended, which recommendations have been implemented in Maghaberry Prison; and what difficulties arose in relation to the full implementation of the recommendations.

(AQW 8530/11-15)

Mr Ford: The comments quoted would appear to be those of Dr Michael Maguire, as set out in the CJINI report of “An Inspection of the Treatment of Vulnerable Prisoners by the Northern Ireland Prison Service” published in December 2009.

CJINI conducted a follow-up of this inspection in 2011 and published a further report in January 2012. Of the six recommendations fully accepted by the N.I. Prison Service, CJINI inspectors concluded that one had been achieved, four partially achieved and one not achieved.

The ‘not achieved’ recommendation is a corporate issue relating to improving the recording of constructive activities. Good progress has been made in recent months in providing more meaningful data to the Prison Service Management Board.

Three of the ‘partially achieved’ recommendations are also corporate issues relating to action plans, safer custody and personal officers respectively. Efforts are now being made to more closely scrutinise inspection recommendations rather than simply accept them all; it is accepted that further work is required to ensure that prison staff focus more on outcomes rather than processes when dealing with prisoners at risk of self harm; and the Director General has advised Dr Maguire that the work of personal officers will be taken forward as part of the new roles for Prison Officers under the umbrella of the SEE Programme.

The remaining ‘partially achieved’ recommendation relates to the establishment of a prisoner forum at Maghaberry Prison. Prisoner forums do now take place in each residential unit and as a single forum for the whole prison in the chapel (except for separated prisoners and those prisoners held in Braid House) each month.

Use of Private Investigators

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 8124/11-15, to outline the exceptional circumstances that would merit the use of private investigators; and to detail the protocol that exists to manage this process.

(AQW 8865/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of the circumstances where private investigators would be used as each case would be considered on its own merit. Since July 2011 the approval of the Director of Human Resources has been required before an authorisation can be given.

Prison Service: Private Investigators

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 7354/11-15, whether the private investigation firms that were used were vetted by the PSNI and given security clearance to carry out the investigations.

(AQW 8869/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Service has no record indicating that the firms used had obtained PSNI security clearance.

Prison Service: Private Investigators

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 8126/11-15, how many of the seven employees are still members of the Prison Service staff; and what disciplinary action was taken against each staff member as a result of the investigations.

(AQW 8870/11-15)

Mr Ford: Only one of the seven employees is still a member of the NI Prison Service. Disciplinary action was initiated against one member of staff but the case was not proven.

Prison Service: Private Investigators

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 8126/11-15, who authorised the use of the private investigators; and in what years.

(AQW 8871/11-15)

Mr Ford: Authorisation to use private investigators was given as follows –

Year	Authorised by
2006	Head of Personnel/Director of Personnel
2008	NIPS Claims Unit
2009	NIPS Claims Unit
2009	NIPS Claims Unit
2009	NIPS Pay and Employee Relations Branch
2010	NIPS Pay and Employee Relations Branch
2010	NIPS Pay and Employee Relations Branch

Complaints Against Prison Service Officers

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice how many (i) complaints from prisoners; and (ii) grievances from fellow officers, have been received about the behaviour of Prison Service officers in each of the last three years.

(AQW 8928/11-15)

Mr Ford: The number of complaints/grievances received about the behaviour of Prison Service officers in each of the last 3 years is set out below:

Year	No. of Complaints/Grievances Prisoners Visitors Total
2009	151 *not available 151
2010	373 9 382
2011	641 24 665

* The figures for visitor complaints are only readily available from August 2010

Human Rights Violations in Prisons

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the level of human rights violations in prisons.

(AQW 8929/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service is subject to ongoing and regular scrutiny from a number of outside bodies who are concerned with the treatment of offenders. I am not aware of any reports of human rights violations against prisoners in our care.

Offensive Weapons in Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 8082/11-15, to list the type of offensive weapons seized in each prison facility.

(AQW 8930/11-15)

Mr Ford: The type of offensive weapon found in each prison facility is as follows:

Establishment	Description
Maghaberry	Improvised shank
	Shank made of sharpened toothbrush
	Razor blade used to self harm
	Adapted spoon
	Knife
	2 blades in toothbrush
	Broken snooker cue
	Torn coke can
	Football sock with tin concealed inside
	Plastic knife with edge sharpened into pointed teeth
	Sharpened metal spike
	Spiked bricklaying tool
	Double razor bladed shank
	1 large eraser with 3 blades
	Large bent piece of metal
	Metal blade stuck to lollipop stick
	Improvised knuckle duster
	Razor blade melted into handle of the razor
	Pen with razor melted into one end
	Stanley knife blade
	Piece of wood sharpened to a point – found in double cell
	Sharpened plastic
	Screw nail with moulded Pen shaft.
Magilligan	4 inch long metal blade
	Double blade melted into razor handle
	Stanley knife
	Unauthorised tool
	6 inch nail sharpened to a point
	razor blades
	Toilet brush handle
	Large nail
	Shank made from dental tool
	2 blades and melted plastic knife

Establishment	Description
Magilligan	Plastic curtain rail with 3 screws attached
	2 razor blades melted onto a toothbrush handle
	Unspecified
Hydebank Wood	Metal rod
	4 inch screw
	Metal bar
	Knife
	Shank
	Unspecified
	Sharpened toothbrush
	Razor blades attached to toothbrush
	Replica firearm made from clay
	Razor blade in pen holder
	Razor blade

Incident in HMP Maghaberry on 30 July 2011

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the incident in HMP Maghaberry on 30 July 2011 (i) what damage was caused; (ii) what was the cost of repairing the damage; (iii) in what section of the prison the incident occurred; (iv) whether any staff were injured; (v) how many prisoners were involved; and (vi) what action was taken against those involved.

(AQW 9003/11-15)

Mr Ford: Maghaberry prison has no record of an incident taking place on 30 July 2011 that involved damage to property by prisoners, injury caused to staff or prisoners or would have breached the good order and safety of the prison.

Detecting Drugs in Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 8058/11-15, to list the types of drugs seized in each prison facility.

(AQW 9007/11-15)

Mr Ford: The type of drugs seized in each prison facility as a result of the searches outlined in AQW 8058/11-15 are as follows:

- Maghaberry – amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cannabinoids, cocaine, opiates, steroids and non specified drugs.
- Magilligan – amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, buprenorphine, cannabinoids, cocaine, opiates, steroids and non specified drugs.
- Hydebank Wood – amphetamines, benzodiazepines, cannabinoids, cocaine, steroids and non specified drugs.

Non-Jury Court Cases

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice how many non-jury court cases have taken place in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 9072/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the number of non-jury cases disposed of in the Crown Court each year from 2002.

NON-JURY CASES AND DEFENDANTS DEALT WITH IN THE CROWN COURT

Year	Defendants	Cases
2002	113	72
2003	111	71
2004	77	65
2005	90	49
2006	91	61
2007	113	64
2008	72	33
2009	41	17
2010	28	17
2011 ^[1]	24	15

[1] 2011 figures are provisional.

Ulster Farmers' Union

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Justice what initiatives his Department has introduced which have involved the Ulster Farmers' Union.

(AQW 9085/11-15)

Mr Ford: The forthcoming Community Safety Strategy will support efforts to make rural communities safer through preventing and reducing rural crime.

Following consideration of the Strategy by the Justice Committee and Executive, my officials will be working with other Departmental officials to develop a Community Safety Strategy Action plan. Consideration will be given to the delivery partners that are needed for all the strands of the Strategy, including that on rural crime. We would anticipate that the delivery partners will include other Government departments as well as the voluntary and community sector, and potentially the UFU.

The new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, due to be established in April 2012, will have a key role in engaging and empowering individuals and communities to find solutions to locally identified concerns. Organisations representing the rural community can take the opportunity to engage with their local Policing and Community Safety Partnership, ensuring that their voice is heard.

There have been a number of events that the Ulster Farmers Union (UFU) have been directly involved in, including an advice centre on rural crime prevention, led by Larne District Policing Partnerships (DPP) and the PSNI in Larne, which was held on 5 December 2011. Another one was held in Larne on 14 March 2012.

In Ballymena there was a rural crime seminar held in November 2011 which was a partnership between the UFU, PSNI, Ballymena DPP & CSP. There was also a trailer marking event held in December 2011 with a further event on 13 March, all of which the UFU have been involved in.

There have been trailer marking events held throughout Northern Ireland which have involved the UFU including the PSNI's Farm Security Initiative.

Community Safety Partnerships have run events that have not directly involved the UFU but UFU have been kept up to date and local farmers have attended.

I met with Ulster Farmers Union to discuss Rural Crime and Policing on Tuesday 28 June 2011. The issue of not securing firearms was covered and remains a major concern. If a firearm is stolen as a result, the certificate holder is in breach of FAC conditions. In these circumstances the Chief Constable will revoke the FAC. The UFU members were encouraged to remind their colleagues of the law and guidance on firearms.

Non-Jury Court Cases

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many non-jury court cases, outside of petty sessions, have taken place in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 9097/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the number of non-jury cases disposed of in the Crown Court in each year from 2002.

NON-JURY CASES AND DEFENDANTS DEALT WITH IN THE CROWN COURT

Year	Defendants	Cases
2002	113	72
2003	111	71
2004	77	65
2005	90	49
2006	91	61
2007	113	64
2008	72	33
2009	41	17
2010	28	17
2011 ^[1]	24	15

[1] 2011 figures are provisional.

Non-Molestation Orders

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many Non-Molestation Orders have been issued in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 9101/11-15)

Mr Ford: Full year figures are only available since 2008 when the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service's Integrated Courts Operating System was introduced and collated electronic records.

The table below sets out the total number of Non-Molestation Orders issued in each of the last four years.

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total	7,759	7,370	6,598	7,028

Notes:

- (i) 2011 data is provisional.
- (ii) Includes interim and final orders.
- (iii) More than one order may be made in an individual case.

Car-Jacking

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Justice what action his Department is taking to tackle car-jacking crime.

(AQW 9129/11-15)

Mr Ford: Carjacking was the subject of a No Named Day Motion in the Assembly on 28 February and the details requested are contained within the Hansard record of that day, which is widely available.

The issue of car-jacking is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board. However, I have met with the Chief Constable about this issue and I have offered him all the necessary support of the Department in his efforts to tackle this crime.

Crimes Against Elderly People

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Justice what action his Department is taking to tackle crimes against elderly people.

(AQW 9130/11-15)

Mr Ford: The safety of older and vulnerable people and ensuring they can live their lives free from the fear of becoming a victim of crime is a key priority for my Department and the wider Executive, as set out in the draft Programme for Government.

In Northern Ireland crimes against older people, especially violent crimes are relatively rare. Statistics show that people aged 65 or over are least likely to be the victims of violent crime, accounting for less than 2% of such victims last year though they constitute 14.5% of the population. However, I recognise that despite these statistics older and vulnerable people still have very real concerns about crime. My Department has taken a number of actions which will support the work of the wider justice agencies and Government in tackling crimes against older and vulnerable people and addressing the fear of crime.

They include the development of a comprehensive Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending. The framework aims to fundamentally reshape our approach to tackling the factors leading people into the criminal justice system and the obstacles which hinder them from getting back out of it. This is a broad project, with far-reaching links across a number of Executive Departments. The target for the publication of the draft framework is April 2012.

A new Community Safety Strategy, which will be published in the coming months, will include proposals which build on existing successful initiatives at regional and local level such as community safety wardens, intergenerational projects and Neighbourhood Watch schemes to address fear of crime and provide reassurance to the most vulnerable.

The introduction at a local level of the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships will be central to the delivery of local actions to support older and vulnerable people.

In addition, the Lord Chief Justice has recently announced a priority list of areas where sentencing guidance for the judiciary will be developed. The principles underlying sentencing, expressed in this

guidance, will include attacks on the vulnerable, including older people, as an aggravating factor in sentencing decisions. Alongside this work I have been considering a range of potential mechanisms by which greater transparency, consistency and understanding of sentencing practice might be achieved. I hope to announce proposals in the near future on how best these might be delivered in a way that will promote public confidence.

Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice in how many cases was legal aid granted to a party undertaking a judicial review on a planning decision by the Department of the Environment, in each of the last five years; and what is the cost of each case to date.

(AQW 9138/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission has identified four cases where legal aid has been granted for judicial review of planning decisions by the Department of Environment in the last five years. Payment has been made in three of the four cases as follows:

Financial Year	Total Paid
2009-2010	£1,200
2011-2012	£2,514
2011-2012	£4,312
Total Paid	£8,026

Prisoners on Day Release

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many prisoners, including those in young offenders and juvenile justice facilities, have been charged with committing a criminal offence whilst on day release in each of the last twelve months, broken down by facility.

(AQW 9145/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information in the form requested is not readily available for prisoners or young offenders within the Prison Service and could only be obtained/compiled at disproportionate cost.

In relation to Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre, there is no information that can be provided due to current court reporting restrictions.

Anonymity Before Trial

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice why anonymity before a trial is not granted to people accused of sexual offences, as is the case in England.

(AQW 9146/11-15)

Mr Ford: In its programme for government published in May 2010, the UK Government announced its intention to extend anonymity in rape cases to defendants in England and Wales. However, in November 2010, following publication of a report of an independent assessment of relevant research, the Government announced that it was dropping its plans as there was insufficient empirical evidence to support the introduction of defendant anonymity.

I have no plans to introduce defendant anonymity in such cases.

Pearson Review Team Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the Prison Service has accumulated a bank of experienced investigators to use in disciplinary hearings, as was recommended in the 2009 Pearson Review Team Report.

(AQW 9151/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service has a pool of experienced investigators to draw from for disciplinary investigations. The Prison Service is currently setting up a new Professional Standards Unit which will further improve the disciplinary process.

Prison Officers: Voluntary Staff Exit Scheme

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many prison officers have applied the Voluntary Staff Exit Scheme; (ii) how many of these prison officers will depart under the scheme; (iii) when those prison officers will leave their posts; (iv) how and when the prison officers who applied for the Scheme were informed of the timescale for their departure or otherwise; and (v) to which tax and National Insurance liabilities these prison officers will be subject.

(AQW 9163/11-15)

Mr Ford: 544 members of the Northern Ireland Prison Service applied for the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme (VER). 224 applications have so far been approved of which 151 will leave on 31 March 2012. The departure of 73 individuals has been delayed for operational reasons. The remaining 320 of the applications received remain under consideration.

In accordance with the VER launch documentation which issued on 8 November 2011, NIPS wrote to all staff who applied for the exit scheme on 1 March 2012 informing them that the Voluntary Early Retirement Panel had met, and advising them of the panel's decision.

Those leaving the Northern Ireland Prison Service under the terms of the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme must be taxed in accordance with the rules of H M Revenue and Customs. Consequently, any member of staff with a leaving date of 31 March 2012 will be taxed in the 2011/12 tax year.

Staff under state pension age will pay National Insurance Contributions in the 2011/12 tax year.

Fire at Maghaberry Prison

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Justice to outline the details and circumstances of the fire in a prison cell at Maghaberry Prison on 29 February 2012.

(AQW 9164/11-15)

Mr Ford: On 29 February 2012 at approximately 20.30 hours a prisoner set fire to his prison cell in the Care and Supervision Unit at Maghaberry Prison. As a precautionary measure, six prisoners were taken to an outside exercise yard and held there for a short period of time until the building was declared safe by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. No prisoners were injured. One officer was taken to hospital with smoke inhalation but was discharged soon after. The damage sustained to prison property was minimal and was quickly cleaned and returned to service.

Complaints against Judiciary

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Justice to detail the procedure for making a complaint about remarks made by members of the Judiciary to defendants and witnesses during court cases and in court judgements.

(AQW 9172/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Lord Chief Justice has statutory responsibility for determining complaints about the conduct of judicial office holders. The procedure is prescribed in the Lord Chief Justice's Code of Practice on Complaints. Hard copies are available on request, alternatively this can be viewed on the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website:-

(<http://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/AboutUs/MakingAComplaint/ComplaintAboutJudicialOfficeHolder/Pages/default.aspx>)

Staff Disciplinary Actions

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of staff disciplinary actions taken by his Department in each of the last two years, at Staff Officer level and above, including details of the offence and the disciplinary sanctions applied.

(AQW 9187/11-15)

Mr Ford: Due to the low number of staff within the DOJ at Staff Officer level and above who have had disciplinary sanctions applied, the information requested will not be released. This is to protect the identity of the individuals concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Courthouse Closures

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the impact on travelling arrangements under the proposed closure of court houses, given that the Minister for Regional Development has stated that he has no powers to support a transport service dedicated solely to people using the courts.

(AQW 9194/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Hearing Centre consultation exercise invited views on the impact that the proposed closures would have on court users. The availability and cost of public transport has been raised both in written responses and at public meetings. I wish to consider all of the matters raised by consultees, including an assessment of the impact of the proposals on travel arrangements, before making a decision.

Institutional Abuse

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many people have been convicted of institutional abuse in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 9195/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no definition of institutional abuse in law and no mechanism to register offences under the category of institutional abuse. Court conviction datasets therefore do not allow for the identification of these offences.

Courts Estate

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice what is the expected timeline for the assessment of the Courts Estate, now that the consultation process has ended.

(AQW 9222/11-15)

Mr Ford: I plan to publish a consultee response document on the Hearing Centre Consultation by the end of June 2012.

Bench Warrant and Arrest Warrant

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether, in order to avoid confusion, particularly in statistical collation, he will dispense with the terms of Bench Warrant and Arrest Warrant and introduce one title to be used by all courts.

(AQW 9258/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is customary to refer to warrants issued in the Crown Court as 'Bench Warrants', and to refer to warrants issued in the Magistrates' Courts and in the County Court as 'Arrest Warrants'. I do not have any plans to alter this practice. However, where appropriate, and in the interests of clarity, I will arrange for the different categories of warrant to be shown as a composite statistics in answers to Assembly Questions.

Custody of Mr Thomas Ward

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether Thomas Ward engaged in any Sex Offender Treatment Programmes whilst in custody for his previous offence.

(AQW 9259/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested constitutes sensitive personal data as defined at section 2 of the Data Protection Act 1998. The disclosure of such information is likely to breach the data subject's rights under the Act and would be incompatible with the Data Protection Principles. The information cannot therefore be provided as requested.

Pearson Review Team Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 7767/11-15, AQW 7685-11-15 and AQW 8494/11-15, for his assessment of the answers in relation to the findings contained in the 2009 Pearson Review Team Report which state that the Prison Service needs a fair, swift and certain disciplinary system with zero tolerance for criminal offences of any kind.

(AQW 9260/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Prison Service is currently reviewing its existing disciplinary system. As part of that process it will consider the options available in terms of disciplining staff convicted of committing criminal offences.

Bangor Taxi Marshall Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what funding is available for the continuance of the Bangor Taxi Marshall Scheme; and whether this funding can be drawn down by Police and Community Safety Partnerships to ensure that there is no gap in funding from 31 March 2012.

(AQW 9279/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Bangor Taxi Marshall Scheme is currently funded through the North Down Community Safety Partnership and is an initiative delivered through funding provided by my Department for Community Safety Wardens.

My Department has already written to North Down Borough Council to advise that funding for Community Safety Wardens will be made available for 2012/2013 financial year. It will be a matter for the Council, in conjunction with the Policing and Community Safety Partnership which will be established from 1 April 2012, if they wish to continue funding for the Taxi Marshall Scheme.

Northern Ireland Prison Service: Employment Contracts

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Justice to outline the contracts of employment given to the (i) Director General; and (ii) Change Manager when they were appointed to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

(AQW 9291/11-15)

Mr Ford: Colin McConnell was appointed as Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service from 4 January 2011, on secondment from the National Offender Management Service.

Colin Bennett was employed by the Strategic Investment Board on a fixed term contract for 3 years and seconded to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Driving Without Insurance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 8663/11-15, and given the confirmation that aiding and abetting crime is a criminal offence, whether this matter will now be reported to the PSNI with a view to prosecution.

(AQW 9330/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service did not and does not consider that there was evidence of a criminal offence having been committed by staff, and concludes that the matter was appropriately dealt with under the internal discipline procedures.

Case of Gerry McGeough

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much has been paid to date in legal aid for the defence of, and the actions taken by, Gerry McGeough; and for an estimate of the final total figure.

(AQW 9334/11-15)

Mr Ford: All claims have been received and paid in respect of representation at the Magistrates' Court. The total amount paid was £7,996.98 (excluding VAT of £1,399.47) to Mr McGeough's solicitor and £1,704.25 (excluding VAT of £298.24) to counsel.

Fees have also been paid to Mr McGeough's solicitor for three High Court Bail applications amounting to £2,191.33 (excluding VAT of £383.49).

To date claims for advice provided under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) amount to £1,775.03 (excluding VAT of £310.63 and disbursements of £102.82).

Claims received and paid for representation at the Crown Court amount to £130,000 (excluding VAT of £26,000 and disbursements of £6,851.67) to Mr McGeough's solicitor and a total of £35,000.00 (excluding VAT of £7,000.00), has been paid to counsel.

Fees in respect of advice and assistance in relation to a Court of Appeal application amounting to £363.77 (excluding VAT of £72.75 and disbursements of £419.64) have been paid.

Civil legal aid fees have also been paid, in respect of a judicial review, amounting to £1880.92 (excluding VAT of £329.05 and disbursements of £660.65) to Mr McGeough's solicitor and £1539.00 has been paid to counsel.

No additional bills are expected.

Human Trafficking

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice how many convictions for human trafficking have been secured in each of the last three years.

(AQW 9401/11-15)

Mr Ford: Human trafficking offences may be prosecuted under the relevant sexual exploitation offence in Sections 57(1)(a), 57(1)(b), 58(1) and 59(1) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Paying for the sexual services of a prostitute subjected to force may be prosecuted under Section 53(a) of the same act.

Data for the calendar years 2007 to 2010 (the last year for which data are available) record one conviction in 2008 for the offence of 'Trafficking within the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation (by another)'.

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Probation Hostels

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total number of probation hostels in (i) North; (ii) South; (iii) East; and (iv) West, Belfast.

(AQW 9465/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no probation hostels in Northern Ireland. The Probation Board for Northern Ireland works in close partnership with a range of voluntary and community organisations, and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive through Supporting People, to offer accommodation to offenders.

There are four approved premises in Belfast;

North Belfast:	There are two hostels in North Belfast, one of which is temporarily closed for refurbishment.
South Belfast:	There are two hostels in South Belfast.
East Belfast:	None.
West Belfast:	None.

Ballymoney Police Station

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice to detail the rationale behind the decision to close the existing Ballymoney Police Station and build a new station on a new site.

(AQW 9468/11-15)

Mr Ford: The management of the police estate is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Athletics Association

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice what role his Department has in promoting the change in the name of the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Athletics Association.

(AQW 9490/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department has no role in promoting a change in the name of the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Athletics Association.

Royal Ulster Constabulary Athletic Association

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Justice what funding his Department provides to the PSNI for the Royal Ulster Constabulary Athletic Association; and whether he intends to withdraw any funding should the Association not change its name.

(AQW 9503/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) – and not the Department of Justice – funds the Royal Ulster Constabulary Athletic Association (RUCAA). The role of my Department has been to approve PSNI's requests to make payment, as the amounts are in excess of PSNI's delegated expenditure limits.

Whilst it is entirely a matter for the members of the RUCAA to determine what name the association is known by, I would support a change to the Police Athletic Association which would reflect the membership of the Association in an inclusive way.

Department for Regional Development

Terrorist Commemorations

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how many terrorist commemorations to (i) Republicans; and (ii) Loyalists exist on property owned by his Department, and its arm's-length bodies, broken down by council area.

(AQW 2507/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): I wish to apologise to the Member for the delay in answering this question. My Department does not maintain details of the terrorist organisations associated with illegal commemorations on property owned by it, or its arm's length bodies.

However, my Department's officials have advised of 34 such commemorations and I can confirm that 18 are located in the Newry and Mourne council area, 7 in the Fermanagh council area, 2 in the Limavady council area and 1 in each in the Armagh, Cookstown, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Omagh, Strabane and Derry City council areas.

Republican Banners and Posters Advertising a Clonoe Martyrs Commemoration

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development what action is being taken to remove the republican banners and posters, advertising a Clonoe Martyrs commemoration, from departmental property in Counties Tyrone and Armagh.

(AQW 7765/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has investigated this matter. Advice has been sought from the PSNI and further liaison will continue. The safety of Roads Service staff at all times will be paramount.

Bicycle Racks on Buses

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he would consider following the example set by the transportation authorities in Victoria, Canada and Maine, USA in providing funding to install bicycle racks onto buses, to encourage cycling and to facilitate a more integrated transportation network.

(AQW 8250/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is committed to encouraging cycling as outlined in the ongoing consultation on 'Building an Active Travel Future for Northern Ireland'. This draft strategy sets out the framework to help people choose more sustainable and active travel modes. A key aim is to encourage cycling and links to public transport as part of a more integrated transportation network. Capital funding for measures to encourage active travel is available under the active travel demonstration projects. This includes the potential of funding for cycle stands.

Translink has previously given consideration to the fitting of cycle racks to buses. However, the company decided not to do so because of a number of safety concerns.

The company's main safety issue with rear fitting racks is that they are fitted in a blind spot for the driver. It is also their view that the size and height of most front fitting cycle racks would obscure a substantial part of the driver's field of vision. Most service buses in Northern Ireland have deep front windscreens. Typical buses in North America have smaller windscreens where a cycle rack would not impinge on the driver's sight lines.

NI Water Tender C071

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development to confirm that, as part of the post-tender award of NIW contract C071, bonus payments of a minimum of £1500 per year were to be made available for embedded contract staff who achieved high standards, under the performance management system.

(AQW 8814/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it does not recognise the term 'embedded contract staff'. Employees of contractors engaged by NIW under tendered contract arrangements are not deemed NIW employees. As such, their contractual terms are a matter between themselves and the employing organisation.

As part of performance management arrangements included in the contract, the contractor engaged by NIW under tender C071 initially agreed to pay a collective annual bonus of a minimum of £1,500.

However, following an internal review of this process, it was identified that NIW may be required to become engaged with an element of the performance management process. Given that the contract staff were not employees of NIW it was consequently agreed with the contractor that it would not be possible to implement the performance management arrangements.

NI Water Tender C071

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development to confirm if the Head of the Mechanical and Electrical function within NI Water met with elected representatives of the embedded contract staff, engaged under NI Water tender C071, on the 27 January 2012; (ii) to detail the reasons for this meeting; (iii) who requested the meeting; (iv) the outcome of the meeting; and (v) whether the CEO of NI Water was aware of it.

(AQW 8815/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it does not recognise the term “embedded contract staff”. Employees of contractors engaged by NIW under a tendered contract arrangement are not deemed NIW employees. NIW has confirmed that (i) its Head of Mechanical and Electrical Services did meet with some contractor employees on 27 January 2012, but they were not acting in the capacity of “elected representatives” for contract staff. (ii) The meeting was to discuss issues raised by the contractor employees about the Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment (TUPE) transfer of contractor employees as a result of the award of a new technical support contract C527. (iii) The meeting was requested by a contractor employee. (iv) The Head of Mechanical and Electrical Services acknowledged the points raised by the contractor employees but advised that the TUPE transfer was a matter for the contractor not NIW. (v) The Chief Executive was not aware of this routine meeting with contractor employees.

Unadopted Roads

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what roads in the (i) Ballymena; (ii) Ballymoney; and (iii) Moyle council areas have not been adopted; and which of these has an outstanding road bond.

(AQW 9002/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department’s Roads Service has advised that:-

(i) Roads not yet adopted by Roads Service in Ballymena District Council Area:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ■ Bonded Sites – Not Adopted | ■ Adj to Carndale Meadows, Ballymena |
| ■ Brooklands, Ahoghill | ■ Glenleslie Road, Clough |
| ■ Maine Grove, Cullybackey | ■ Main Street, Portglenone |
| ■ Grange Cottages, Toomebridge | ■ Fisherstown, Cargan |
| ■ Old Galgorm Manor, Ballymena | ■ Ravel Manor, Cargan |
| ■ Millwater Lodge, Ahoghill | ■ Parkmore Drive, Ballymena |
| ■ Carndale Meadows, Ballymena | ■ Meeting House Meadows, Ahoghill |
| ■ Three Trees Manor, Broughshane | ■ Phoenix Fields, Ballymena |
| ■ Craginamaddy Heights, Cargan | ■ Caherty Road, Broughshane |
| ■ Tullymore Gardens, Broughshane | ■ Westbourne Avenue, Ballymena |
| ■ Crebilly Road, Ballymena | ■ Galgorm Road, Ahoghill |
| ■ Belgrano, Ahoghill | ■ Riverdale Park, Portglenone |
| ■ Millwater Court, Ahoghill | ■ Wellington Crescent, Ballymena |
| ■ Sandhurst Manor, Galgorm | ■ Grange View, Toomebridge |
| ■ Woodside Road, Ballymena | ■ Ardnagreena, Ballymena |

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ■ Taylorstown Hill, Toome | ■ Glenravel Road, Martinstown |
| ■ Rectory Gardens, Broughshane | ■ Parkgate Road, Kells |
| ■ Clarence Street, Ballymena | ■ Cushendall Road, Ballymena |
| ■ Leighinmohr Avenue, Ballymena | ■ Old Antrim Mews, Ballymena |
| ■ Garvaghy Crescent, Portglenone | ■ Brookfield Gardens, Ahoghill |

Unbonded Sites - Not Adopted

- Cushendall Road, Ballymena

(ii) Roads not yet adopted by Roads Service in Ballymoney District Council Area:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ■ Bonded Sites – Not Adopted | ■ Jubilee Court, Ballymoney |
| ■ Greengage Lane, Ballymoney | ■ Carrowdoon Park, Dunloy |
| ■ Ashlea, Ballymoney | ■ Edenmore, Ballymoney |
| ■ Drumnamallaght Park, Ballymoney | ■ Castlecatt Road, Dervock |
| ■ Bannfields, Ballymoney | ■ Millbrooke Manor, Ballymoney |
| ■ Mill Cottages, Stranocum | ■ Churchfields, Rasharkin |
| ■ Shelton Meadows, Loughguile | ■ Stroan Road, Dervock |
| ■ Knockeden Avenue, Ballymoney | ■ Cairnhill, Dunloy |
| ■ The Birches, Rasharkin | ■ Millbrooke Manor, Ballymoney |
| ■ Tullyview, Loughguile | ■ Off Bann Road, Ballymoney |
| ■ Springhill Manor, Cloughmills | ■ Milltown Avenue, Ballymoney |

(iii) Roads not yet adopted by Roads Service in Moyle District Council Area:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Bonded Sites – Not Adopted | ■ Off Leyland Road Ballycastle (Stage 1) |
| ■ Caman Drive, Ballycastle (Stage 1) | ■ Richies Wood, Bushmills (Stage 1) |
| ■ Caman Close, Ballycastle (Stage 2) | ■ Richies Wood Bushmills (Stage 2) |
| ■ Caman Gardens, Ballycastle (Stage 3) | ■ Park Manor Ballycastle (Stage 1) |
| ■ Off Leyland Road, Ballycastle (Stage 1) | ■ Off Priestland/Craigaboney Road Bushmills (Stage 2) |
| ■ Off Leyland Road, Ballycastle (Stage 2) | ■ Off Priestland/Craigaboney Road Bushmills (Stage 3) |
| ■ Off Leyland Road Ballycastle (Stage 3) | ■ Cregagh View Knocknacarry (Stage 1) |
| ■ Off Leyland Road Ballycastle (Stage 4) | ■ Off Craigaboney/Priestland Road Bushmills (Stage 1) |
| ■ Off Leyland Road Ballycastle (Stage 5) | ■ Clare Court Ballycastle (Stage 1) |
| ■ Off Main Street Mosside (Stage 1) | ■ Caman Gardens Ballycastle (Stage 1) |
| ■ Off Main Street Mosside (Stage 1) | ■ 22/26 Castle Street Ballycastle (Stage 1) |
| ■ Off Hillside Road Ballycastle (Stage 1) | ■ 22/26 Castle Street Ballycastle (Stage 2) |
| ■ Clare Court Ballycastle (Stage 1) | ■ Off Leyland Road Ballycastle (Stage 1) |
| ■ Clare Court Ballycastle (Stage 2) | |
| ■ Knockmore Road Mosside (Stage 1) | |
| ■ Off Whitepark Road Ballycastle (Stage 1) | |

Unbonded Sites - Not Adopted

- Mill Farm Mosside (Stage 1)
- Mill Farm Mosside (Stage 2)
- Riversdale Mosside (Stage 1)
- Castlecatt Road Bushmills (Stage 1)
- Toberdoney Road Liscolman (Stage 1)

Gatwick Set of Trains

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 8109/11-15 and AQW 8102/11-15, for his assessment of the situation where the detail of the amount of public funds spent on the acquisition of the Gatwick trains, and the associated work, is not available to the public; and what steps he will take to ensure that there is transparency on this issue.

(AQW 9021/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In answer to AQW 8109/11-15 and AQW 8102/11-15, I informed the Member that the information requested for specific costs relate to contracts Translink has entered into with other commercial organisations which are bound by confidentiality. The contracts involved were competitively tendered in line with EU procurement rules.

While this remains the case in relation to the detailed costs, in the interest of transparency, I can advise you that my Department provided overall funding of approximately £1.5 million for the original purchase and conversion of the Gatwick trains in 2001 and the subsequent purchase and conversion of the Driver Van Trailer referred to previously in AQW 8109/11-15.

AQW 2507/11-15

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development to explain the delay in answering AQW 2507/11-15; and when he will provide the answer.

(AQW 9025/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 2507/11-15.

Planning and Design of Roads

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost in professional fees for the planning and design of roads which have not yet been constructed, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 9040/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the expenditure on professional fees for the planning and design of roads, which have not yet been constructed, in each of the last ten years, are provided in the table below:

Year	Spend On Professional Fees For The Planning And Design Of Roads Not Yet Constructed
2002/03	£0
2003/04	£85,000
2004/05	£383,000
2005/06	£1,405,000
2006/07	£4,345,000
2007/08	£7,725,000
2008/09	£17,445,000
2009/10	£20,750,000
2010/11	£13,806,000

Year	Spend On Professional Fees For The Planning And Design Of Roads Not Yet Constructed
2011/12	£10,824,000 (to the end of January)

It should be noted that a major road scheme typically takes six to seven years of development from inception to construction.

The marked increase in expenditure in recent years reflects the significant increase in investment in our roads infrastructure envisaged. Expenditure from 2008/09 onwards reflects the significant work to bring forward the A5 and A8 schemes, which are now confirmed to proceed to construction, and other schemes, such as the A6 (Londonderry to Dungiven and Randalstown to Castledawson), which are planned for construction in the draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (2011/21) period.

Road Schemes in the North Down Constituency

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the road schemes that are planned to be carried out in the North Down constituency in 2012/13.

(AQW 9051/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The detailed budget for the 2012/13 financial year has not yet been finalised and it is, therefore, not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

I would remind the Member that, when works programmes are finalised, information on proposed roads schemes for each financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

Road Bonds

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the total value of Road Bonds that are being held; (ii) who is liable for the bonds on inactive sites; and (iii) to detail the present owner of each inactive site.

(AQW 9087/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the total value of Road Bonds currently held is £112.5 million.

With regard to liability for the bonds on inactive sites, I am further advised that Road Bonds are held by the surety for the developer, but control of an inactive site would lie with the "responsible person" as defined in the Private Streets Order 1980. Depending on the state of progress on a particular site, the site could be under the control of the developer, an administrator or in the case of an Article 11 Notice having been served, the Department.

With regard to the present owner of each inactive site, this information is not readily available, as Roads Service may only be aware of the developer's name or who holds a bond, neither of whom may be the present owner.

A5 Dual Carriageway: Contractors

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 8320/11-15, what certainty attaches to the £330 million quoted as the cost involved, if there are no contract prices agreed for the two announced sections of the A5.

(AQW 9090/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that £330 million is the estimated cost of the A5 scheme being taken through to construction later this year. As with the majority of construction projects, the actual

cost will not be apparent until the scheme is completed and accounts settled. The estimated cost has been compiled in accordance with best practice methods using the expertise of our scheme designers, cost consultants and the contractor who will carry out the works.

A5 Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 8321/11-15, how much of the £330 million is allocated for (i) land acquisition; (ii) design; (iii) construction; and (iv) other outlay, in each section.

(AQW 9091/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I should explain that the £330 million funding package agreed by the Executive is allocated on a total scheme basis.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that the current best estimates on allocations for the two sections of the A5 scheme are detailed in the table below.

BREAKDOWN OF ALLOCATIONS FOR LAND ACQUISITION, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND OTHER COSTS FOR THE TWO SECTIONS OF THE A5 SCHEME

	Section 1 - £m	Section 2 - £m	Total - £m
Land (including blight)	32	20	52
Design	10	15	25
Construction	115	110	225
Other Costs	13	15	28
Total	170	160	330

Asbestos Pipes in the Water Network in the Omagh Area

Mr McElduff asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) to detail the length of the asbestos pipes in the water network in the Omagh area; (ii) for his assessment of any associated health risks; and (iii) whether he has any plans to replace the asbestos pipes.

(AQW 9095/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) there are 81.5 kilometres of asbestos cement pipes providing drinking water in the Omagh area, representing around 5% of all water mains in the area.

- (ii) NIW is satisfied that there are no associated health risks with the use of asbestos cement pipes to supply drinking water. The World Health Organisation has undertaken a number of studies on the subject and concluded that, while inhaled asbestos is a known health risk, there is no consistent or convincing evidence that ingested asbestos is hazardous to health. The health concerns regarding asbestos cement pipes are related to occupational exposure during their manufacture, installation and disposal and these are covered by industry regulations. Any work undertaken by NIW staff on asbestos cement pipes is in accordance with legislative requirements and associated Health and Safety guidance.
- (iii) As the use of asbestos cement pipes for the supply of drinking water is not a health concern, there is no specific programme to replace them. Asbestos cement water mains will therefore be replaced progressively as part of NIW's ongoing Water Mains Rehabilitation Programme. Decisions on mains replacement are taken on the basis of normal serviceability criteria such as water quality, the number of burst mains per kilometre, low water pressure or the number of interruptions to the supply to customers.

Penalty Charge Notices

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development how long is the observation period for a traffic attendant to ascertain if loading or unloading is taking place before a Penalty Charge Notice can be issued.
(AQW 9114/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that at locations where parking restrictions apply and loading and unloading is also permitted, a Traffic Attendant will observe a vehicle for five minutes to establish if loading or unloading is taking place, before issuing a Penalty Charge Notice. However, for goods vehicles, the observation period is extended to 10 minutes.

Portavo Reservoir

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development when NI Water will dispose of Portavo Reservoir; and what method of disposal will be used.
(AQW 9152/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it no longer has any strategic interest in Portavo Reservoir and has declared the property surplus to requirements. NIW is currently researching a number of issues relating to the disposal of the reservoir and no decision on the method of disposal will be taken until this is completed.

Road Humps

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the criteria that is used to determine whether an area will have road humps installed.
(AQW 9165/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the criteria used to determine whether an area will have road humps installed are:

- collision history;
- traffic speed and volume; and
- local environmental considerations in terms of the presence of shops, public buildings, schools, hospitals, etc. These give an indication of the likely vulnerable road user movements and therefore the risk of road collisions.

The policy also recognises that different types of traffic calming features are appropriate at different locations and this is reflected in the assessment. However, the implementation of traffic calming measures in any area will also be dependent on the availability of resources.

Granite Kerbstones from Castle Avenue, Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development why the granite kerbstones in Castle Avenue, Belfast were removed and replaced with concrete kerbstones.
(AQW 9167/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that when assessing Castle Avenue for inclusion in a resurfacing programme, it found the existing kerblines to be a mix of concrete and granite kerbstones. Many of the existing granite kerbstones were weathered and unusable once removed and would have required extensive redressing before reuse. To have replaced the existing kerbstones with granite kerbs would have added significantly to the costs of the scheme and jeopardised its delivery in this financial year. Therefore, Roads Service decided to replace all kerbstones with new concrete kerbstones. Any reusable granite kerbstones have been added to our stockpile for use in appropriate areas in the North Belfast area.

Granite Kerbstones from Castle Avenue, Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development to where the granite kerbstones that were removed from Castle Avenue, Belfast, were relocated.

(AQW 9168/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the reusable granite kerbstones removed from Castle Avenue are being stored in its depot at Corporation Street and are available for use, where required, at other appropriate locations in North Belfast.

Granite Kerbstones from Castle Avenue, Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development what was the total cost of replacing the granite kerbstones with concrete kerbstones in Castle Avenue, Belfast.

(AQW 9169/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the cost for removing and replacing all kerbstones in Castle Avenue was approximately £4,700.

Granite Kerbstones from Castle Avenue, Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development how the removal of the granite kerbstones, from Castle Avenue, Belfast, is consistent with the preservation and protection of the built heritage of such an area.

(AQW 9170/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: While I appreciate that in some areas residents have an affinity to the old granite kerbs, my Department's Roads Service has advised that it is not always possible for engineering and economic reasons to use them when carrying out refurbishment work.

In the case of Castle Avenue, to replace the existing granite kerbstones and precast concrete kerbs with granite kerbs would have added significantly to the costs of the scheme and jeopardised its delivery in this financial year.

Although I appreciate the views of local residents, it is not always possible to retain the use of old granite kerbing when carrying out footway refurbishment. In this regard, Roads Service concentrates its effort on retaining granite kerbing on main arterial routes or in Conservation Areas. I am advised that Castle Avenue does not fall into either of these categories.

NSL

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what action he is taking to ensure that NSL is not setting its wardens minimum daily ticket quotas, as was the case in the Kensington and Chelsea Council area; (ii) whether he has raised this issue with NSL; and (iii) how many complaints have been made to his Department regarding such a policy since NSL was awarded the contract.

(AQW 9198/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that while Traffic Attendants are expected to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to vehicles that are illegally parked, my Department's contract with NSL does not stipulate 'ticket quotas'. Therefore, no payments are made to NSL or to individual Traffic Attendants based on the number of PCNs issued. Indeed, NSL has recently restated that ticket quotas are not used in Northern Ireland.

I would like to assure you that all aspects of the operation of the parking enforcement contract in Northern Ireland are subject to ongoing oversight and management by Roads Service officials. Roads Service receives and processes considerable volumes of correspondence about PCNs and parking enforcement on a daily basis. Officials respond to enquiries, complaints, or allegations concerning 'ticket quotas' by referring to the terms of the Roads Service contract with NSL.

As I am sure the Member will appreciate, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on any NSL contracts or operations in London Boroughs or Local Authority areas elsewhere.

Roads: Gritting List

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to list the roads in the North Down area which are used by no more than 1500 vehicles per day and are currently on the gritting list.

(AQW 9201/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service salts seven designated routes from the Balloo Depot in Bangor, covering the Council areas of North Down, Ards and parts of Castlereagh and Belfast. These routes were established a number of years ago but it is considered that Rhanbuoy Road and Rhanbuoy Park, Craigavad and Ballymenoch Road, Holywood may have traffic volumes less than 1500 vehicles per day. These roads, which equate to approximately 1% of the salted network in North Down, will be re-assessed before the commencement of the 2012/13 winter service season.

Proposals to Dispose of Reservoirs

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposals to dispose of reservoirs.

(AQW 9281/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it has a number of reservoirs which are surplus to requirements and it proposes to dispose of them over the next number of years. Disposal of the reservoirs will be in accordance with NIW's disposal strategy which may entail placing them on the open market. Any sale would be dependent on a number of factors, not least the market at the time and any expression of interest. In disposing of surplus lands NIW must ensure it gets the best price for the property, achieves value for money and high standards of propriety.

Hospital Appointments

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development what action has been taken to reverse the decision to not allow people in rural areas to use community transport for attendance at hospital appointments.

(AQW 9282/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There has been no change to my Departments approach to funding services under the Rural Transport Fund (RTF) and provided by Rural Community Transport Partnerships. Each partnership provides services based on a specific geographical area in line with the aims of the RTF to facilitate transport in rural areas. It is important to point out that vehicles available to the partnerships have to be available to within that geographic area to facilitate all user needs as far as possible.

Under the 'Dial a Lift' scheme the Partnerships have always been able to provide transport to local GP surgeries, dentists and local clinics. My Department agreed with the Partnerships in 2010 that they may provide transport to local hospitals for members who do not qualify for DHSSPS assistance with travel. This position remains unchanged.

This service should not be seen as a substitute for health funded transport, which is the statutory responsibility of the DHSSPS under the auspices of the Patient Care Service. The Patient Care Service (a tier of the NI Ambulance Service) provides non-emergency patient transport services across Northern Ireland.

I recognise the need for my department to interact with the DHSSPS on these important issues. A process has started at official level and it is hoped this will allow these issues to be progressed within statutory and budgetary constraints.

Suburban Railway Passenger Journeys

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of suburban railway passenger journeys on the (i) Portadown; (ii) Bangor; (iii) Larne; (iv) Londonderry; and (v) Portrush lines in each of the last five financial years.

(AQW 9344/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below details the number of passenger journeys on the requested lines in each of the last five financial years:

	2006/07 '000	2007/08 '000	2008/09 '000	2009/10 '000	2010/11 '000
Bangor	1,957	2,064	2,237	2,323	2,410
Portadown	2,505	3,009	3,201	3,051	3,078
Larne	1,720	1,905	2,076	2,085	2,111
Londonderry	1,021	1,175	1,402	1,311	1,477
Portrush	518	466	489	483	529

Note: the figures are supplied by Translink but are not official statistics.

Department for Social Development

Civil Service Posts in Council Areas

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 7857/11-15, (i) why information on departmental staff positions is not held by council area; and (ii) in what geographical format his Department can provide the information.

(AQW 8735/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The system on which my department holds staffing information does not require data to be recorded by council area and so my department does not have a ready means to collect and report data in the form requested.

My department can provide information on the deployment of staff-in-post based on address information. The same information cannot be provided with the same degree of precision for the distribution of Civil Service posts in my department which is what was requested in AQW 7857/11-15 because that figure will include posts which at that point in time are vacant and for which no address information can be held.

I have provided in the tables below information on the distribution of staff in the grades requested in AQW 7857/11-15, across the Department's office network. Table 1 provides headcount figures, while Table 2 provides full-time equivalent figures by office location.

TABLE 1 – HEADCOUNT

Location	Grade 6	Grade 7	DP	S0	E01	E02	A0	AA
Antrim	0	1	1	3	5	19	27	10
Armagh	0	0	0	1	4	27	43	13
Ballymena	0	1	4	3	7	17	28	4
Ballymoney	0	0	0	1	2	9	6	0
Ballynahinch	0	0	0	0	1	7	12	2

Location	Grade 6	Grade 7	DP	S0	E01	E02	A0	AA
Banbridge	0	1	1	6	6	14	17	3
Bangor	0	0	0	1	2	19	23	3
Belfast	10	67	164	313	466	1289	2502	353
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	1	1	8	16	2
Coleraine	0	1	2	4	13	22	39	9
Cookstown	0	0	0	0	0	4	9	0
Londonderry	0	2	10	25	40	198	388	81
Downpatrick	0	0	0	1	2	16	17	4
Dungannon	0	1	1	3	5	19	33	6
Enniskillen	0	0	0	2	2	19	25	7
Kilkeel	0	0	0	0	1	4	7	3
Larne	0	0	0	1	2	8	16	5
Limavady	0	0	0	0	1	3	8	0
Lisburn	0	0	0	1	1	19	32	10
Lurgan	0	0	0	1	2	15	27	6
Magherafelt	0	0	0	1	4	26	42	6
Newcastle	0	0	0	1	1	8	14	3
Newry	0	1	1	1	4	20	35	10
Newtownards	0	0	0	0	2	19	20	4
Omagh	0	0	0	3	7	31	38	3
Portadown	0	1	1	2	7	12	28	5
Strabane	0	0	0	1	3	17	22	3

TABLE 2 – FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT

Location	Grade 6	Grade 7	DP	S0	E01	E02	A0	AA
Antrim	0	1.00	1.00	2.80	4.60	16.59	23.15	9.05
Armagh	0	0	0	1.00	3.70	24.83	37.19	12.24
Ballymena	0	1.00	4.00	3.00	6.79	15.39	24.10	4.00
Ballymoney	0	0	0	1.00	2.00	6.98	5.81	0
Ballynahinch	0	0	0	0	1.00	5.73	11.12	2.00
Banbridge	0	1.00	1.00	6.00	5.20	13.42	15.40	3.00
Bangor	0	0	0	1.00	2.00	16.64	21.37	2.81
Belfast	10.00	65.25	158.37	301.82	428.03	1184.74	2332.65	332.23
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	1.00	1.00	7.47	13.70	1.80

Location	Grade 6	Grade 7	DP	S0	E01	E02	A0	AA
Coleraine	0	1.00	2.00	4.00	12.66	20.55	34.11	7.69
Cookstown	0	0	0	0	0	3.80	7.58	0
Londonderry	0	2.00	9.38	24.15	38.41	181.46	357.19	74.61
Downpatrick	0	0	0	1.00	1.81	14.14	15.98	4.00
Dungannon	0	1.00	1.00	3.00	4.79	17.30	26.63	5.38
Enniskillen	0	0	0	2.00	2.00	15.89	20.47	7.00
Kilkeel	0	0	0	0	1.00	4.00	6.24	2.20
Larne	0	0	0	1.00	2.00	6.94	13.77	3.60
Limavady	0	0	0	0	1.00	2.60	7.56	0
Lisburn	0	0	0	1.00	1.00	17.74	28.70	9.60
Lurgan	0	0	0	1.00	2.00	13.73	22.66	5.40
Magherafelt	0	0	0	1.00	3.81	21.53	34.39	5.40
Newcastle	0	0	0	1.00	1.00	7.00	12.02	3.00
Newry	0	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.81	19.61	31.03	9.28
Newtownards	0	0	0	0	2.00	17.24	19.13	3.81
Omagh	0	0	0	3.00	6.24	25.56	30.91	3.00
Portadown	0	1.00	1.00	2.00	6.92	10.96	25.72	5.00
Strabane	0	0	0	1.00	2.77	14.49	18.69	3.00

Housing Executive Properties: Heating

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) the average cost of (a) heating installations; (b) oil heating installations; and (c) natural gas installations in Housing Executive properties; and (ii) how many of the installations were for (a) oil heating; (b) oil heating in a gas enabled area; and (c) natural gas connections, broken down by district office area.

(AQW 8794/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Nelson McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested. In relation to (i), the Housing Executive has advised that the average cost of a heating installation for the last three years is as follows:-

- 2009/10 £5,575
- 2010/11 £5,539
- 2011/12 £5,679

These figures cannot be separated into oil and gas installations.

In relation to (ii), the table below details the number of oil and gas heating installations by Housing Executive district office area. It is not possible to determine exactly which oil installations occurred in gas-enabled areas on a scheme by scheme basis. However, the majority of Housing Executive stock is located in urban areas which are gas enabled.

District Office	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
	Gas	Oil	Gas	Oil	Gas	Oil	Gas	Oil
West Belfast	115	7	113	10	133	5	97	1
South Belfast	35	0	49	0	62	1	51	0
North Belfast	92	1	493	0	217	1	175	1
East Belfast	51	1	45	0	23	0	71	1
Shankill	90	11	108	8	68	3	76	1
Antrim	186	48	407	27	92	6	104	6
*Ballycastle	0	75	0	4	0	26	0	25
Ballymena	30	29	29	19	206	11	66	8
Ballymoney	7	21	1	89	20	35	1	6
Carrickfergus	44	4	52	3	41	2	73	4
Coleraine	41	39	5	18	1	15	31	5
Larne	42	3	19	5	1	32	52	2
Newtownabbey ¹	147	13	39	2	44	1	16	4
Newtownabbey ²	75	5	44	15	4	2	88	51
Bangor	229	16	99	9	78	8	215	7
Castlereagh	56	3	82	8	31	7	84	5
Downpatrick	1	62	2	117	2	103	2	124
Lisburn Antrim St	35	38	81	52	160	27	84	47
Lisburn Dairyfarm	49	5	73	7	120	3	17	1
Newtownards	93	38	118	38	91	30	31	20
Armagh	0	35	0	28	0	27	37	24
Banbridge	83	72	58	53	6	23	7	37
Dungannon	0	108	0	43	1	59	1	101
*Fermanagh	0	99	0	82	0	62	0	26
Newry	4	85	68	61	11	39	70	79
Portadown	0	15	1	26	143	16	164	2
Lurgan	51	28	62	48	45	45	32	18
*Cookstown	0	15	0	39	0	28	0	37
Limavady	1	34	4	30	48	10	3	28
*Magherafelt	0	90	0	25	0	7	0	104
*Omagh	0	8	0	19	0	14	0	72
*Strabane	0	67	0	77	0	15	0	93

District Office	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
	Gas	Oil	Gas	Oil	Gas	Oil	Gas	Oil
Collon Terrace	103	33	77	28	53	18	149	17
Waterloo Place	53	44	62	24	84	4	234	9
Waterside	82	31	146	32	113	7	135	10

* Gas not enabled in these District Office areas

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Social Housing

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development how many families that have applied for social housing in each of the last three years have been assessed as requiring a (a) four; (b) five; or (c) six bedroom house.

(AQW 8884/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is only available in the format requested for the last two financial years. The table below details the number of applicants who have been added to the Waiting List over the last two years requiring (a) four; (b) five; or (c) six bedroom accommodation: -

Year	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed
2009/10	352	26	2
2010/11	383	31	3

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Neighbourhood Renewal Capital Projects

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how many Neighbourhood Renewal capital projects are anticipated in the 2011-15 budget period.

(AQW 8915/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development is contractually committed to progress 57 Neighbourhood Renewal capital projects across Neighbourhood Renewal areas within Northern Ireland during the 2011/12 financial year. Some of these projects will continue into the 2012/13 financial year. There are a further 6 projects planned for the 2012/13 financial year, however, these will be subject to the necessary approvals being in place. At this stage there are no firm commitments in place for capital spend for the 2013/14 or 2014/15 financial years.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Social Development, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) how many people have had their initial Disability Living Allowance claim disallowed; (ii) of those who appealed, how many were (a) successful; and (b) unsuccessful; and (iii) the percentage of appeals that were successful, broken down by (a) constituency; and (b) council area.

(AQW 8941/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) Table 1 below details the total number of Disability Living Allowance initial claims that were unsuccessful in each of the last three years.

TABLE 1

Year	Unsuccessful applications
2008/09	12,000
2009/10	12,016
2010/11	9,978

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- (ii) Appeals are received from applicants who have been unsuccessful in their application for Disability Living Allowance (nil award) and also from those who have been awarded the benefit but are dissatisfied with the level of award made. Information on Disability Living Allowance appeals is recorded on an overall number basis and not distinguishable by the circumstances of the decision under appeal therefore it is not possible to quantify how many unsuccessful applicants subsequently progressed to appeal. Table 2 below details the number of Disability Living Allowance appeals determined and the outcomes in each of the last three years.

TABLE 2

Year	Number of Appeals Determined in the Appeal Service	More Advantageous Decision	Less Advantageous Decision
2008/09	5,753	1,942	3,811
2009/10	5,147	1,836	3,311
2010/11	4,607	1,651	2,956

- (iii) The data held by the Appeals Service IT System cannot be broken down by constituency or local council area.

Employment and Support Allowance

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Social Development, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) how many people have had their initial Employment and Support Allowance claim disallowed; (ii) of those who appealed, how many were (a) successful; and (b) unsuccessful; and (iii) the percentage of appeals that were successful, broken down by (a) constituency; and (b) council area.

(AQW 8942/11-15)

Mr McCausland:

- (i) The table below provides a breakdown of the total number of claims where entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance has ceased in each of the last three years. In some instances, customers may have lost their entitlement on more than one occasion and therefore the Department cannot provide the specific information requested.

Year	Employment and Support Allowance*
Apr 09 to Mar 10	12,827
Apr 10 to Mar 11	17,672

Year	Employment and Support Allowance*
Apr 11 to Nov 11	12,770

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*The figures provided have been derived from scans of the Department's Matching Intelligence Database Analysis and General Matching Service systems and include cases where a customer has been found fit for work, has failed to attend a medical assessment or has not provided the required information. The figures also include claims where entitlement has ceased following changes in a customer's circumstances including when a customer returns to work, claims an alternative benefit or the death of a customer.

- ii) The information requested regarding appeals is not available in the format requested. However, details of all appeal results, which includes claims where entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance has ceased, is set out in the table below:

Year	Appeals upheld in customer favour	Appeals upheld in Department's favour	Total Appeals results
2009-10	354	861	1215
2010-11	1410	3374	4784
2011-Jan 2012	1639	3000	4639
Total	3403	7235	10638

- iii) The information requested is not available by constituency or council area.

Selling Fresh Farm Produce at the Roadside

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development what licences or permits are required for an individual to sell fresh farm produce at the roadside.

(AQW 8956/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Selling farm produce at the roadside is regulated under the Street Trading Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. Under this Act a street extends to any road, footpath, or public place. A person engaged in street trading is required to have a street trading licence issued by the district council in which the trading is taking place.

Selling Fresh Farm Produce at the Roadside

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development what penalties or enforcements are applicable to individuals who sell fresh farm produce at the roadside without the appropriate licence or permit.

(AQW 8957/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is an offence for a person to engage in street trading without a licence issued by the council in which the trading is taking place or to contravene the conditions of a licence in relation to the trading location or the days and times during which trading can take place. An authorised officer of a council or a police constable may seize goods and any receptacle or equipment being used in the course of the trading, and on summary conviction of any of the above offences a court may impose a fine of up to £1000.

Flexibility Within the Confines of Parity

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has had any discussions with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland regarding the nature of the significant flexibility which he has stated exists within the confines of parity.

(AQW 8973/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I can confirm that I have had a number of discussions with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Owen Paterson, Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform (Lords), and Maria Miller, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Disabled People on a range of issues arising from the Coalition Government's Welfare Reform programme. These discussions have included the potential for flexibilities, within the confines of parity, to meet specific challenges that may arise from the implementation of the proposed Welfare Reform changes in Northern Ireland.

I have also written to the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith, MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and I am intending to meet with Lord Freud in London next week.

Disability Access

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development whether access for people with disabilities to The Appeals Service, Cleaver House will be taken into account when planning any changes to Donegall Square, Belfast.

(AQW 8974/11-15)

Mr McCausland: On 21 February 2012 I announced the appointment of a Design Team to develop a number of options to improve the public realm within the vicinity of Donegall Square in Belfast City Centre. The Design Team will be carrying out extensive consultation with key stakeholders, including representatives of disabled people, before I select a preferred option for the area. Access requirements for people with a disability to the Appeals Service in Cleaver House and indeed all premises/businesses in the project area will be given a high priority during the development of the various design options.

Funding Allocated to Citizens Advice

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of funding allocated to Citizens Advice in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 9066/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department funds Citizens Advice (CAB) organisations at a regional level to ensure provision of infrastructure support to local CAB offices, and at frontline level to ensure delivery of advice services in line with Departmental priorities. The Social Security Agency also funds benefit programmes through the regional Citizens Advice NI, who then allocate these funds to their front line Citizens Advice offices. It would not be meaningful to break this information down by constituency as the registered address of the organisation does not always reflect the constituencies in which support and services are delivered. Funding to CAB at regional level in the last five years is as follows:

	Regional Support	SSA Programmes
2007-08	552,268	166,920
2008-09	636,038	287,030
2009-10	652,853	137,907
2010-11	669,806	260,855
2011-12	649,898	262,338

DSD funding for frontline advice services is made through the Community Support Programme. This programme is delivered by 26 local councils who have responsibility for commissioning local advice services from a range of providers, including CAB, to meet the needs of their own area. The

Department does not have information on individual council allocations to CAB through this programme, nor is it possible to break this down by constituency. However, I can provide details of DSD's funding allocation for advice services to each council. In addition to the Community Support Programme, DSD provides funding for frontline advice projects through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Funding for advice provision through each council is set out below.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMME FUNDING FOR ADVICE SERVICES:

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Antrim Borough Council	16,883	25,208	22,883	22,883	47,743
Ards Borough Council	26,194	57,573	52,194	52,194	67,089
Armagh City & District Council	20,186	49,470	40,186	40,186	40,186
Ballymena Borough Council	25,229	38,229	29,539	39,539	39,359
Ballymoney Borough Council	8,171	7,014	12,244	12,244	12,244
Banbridge District Council	12,657	45,987	42,657	42,657	42,657
Belfast City Council	309,725	555,815	469,902	469,902	469,902
Carrickfergus Borough Council	11,300	11,884	22,142	22,142	22,142
Castlereagh Borough Council	23,121	27,596	32,571	32,571	32,571
Coleraine Borough Council	24,184	59,377	40,102	40,102	40,102
Cookstown Borough Council	16,619	58,860	51,619	51,619	51,619
Craigavon Borough Council	46,839	46,839	58,169	58,169	58,169
Derry City Council	107,491	318,799	107,491	107,491	107,491
Down District Council	22,631	47,882	47,882	47,882	47,882
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	17,970	54,814	33,887	33,887	33,447
Fermanagh District Council	17,244	48,744	39,244	39,244	39,244
Larne Borough Council	11,881	20,536	20,536	20,536	20,536
Limavady Borough Council	15,181	15,181	23,181	23,181	23,181
Lisburn City Council	69,099	109,098	109,098	109,098	109,098
Magherafelt District Council	11,994	398,994	35,994	35,994	35,994
Moyle District Council	9,457	12,844	12,844	12,844	12,844
Newry & Mourne District Council	49,922	79,922	79,922	79,922	79,922
Newtownabbey Borough Council	30,991	56,423	49,686	49,686	56,423
North Down Borough Council	22,653	42,653	48,758	48,758	48,758
Omagh District Council	25,229	50,229	25,229	25,229	40,000
Strabane District Council	47,149	47,149	72,899	72,899	72,899
Total	1,000,000	1,927,120	1,590,859	1,590,859	1,656,682

Neighbourhood Renewal funding for advice services:

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Limavady Borough Council	-	18,475	18,986	19,512	19,128
Derry City Council	118,373	231,726	238,137	244,726	243,297
Strabane District Council	-	-	-	-	42,221
Total	118,373	250,201	257,123	264,238	304,646

Additionally CAB has also received funding from DSD through a range of funding programmes not directly related to advice provision e.g. volunteering small grants scheme, Modernisation Fund. Funding from these sources to CAB, by council area, in the last five years is as follows:

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Belfast City Council	110,807	100,008	96,270	3,729	
Ballymena Borough Council			700		
Carrickfergus Borough Council	920	740			
Larne Borough Council			700		
Lisburn City Council			854		
Newry & Mourne District Council			500		
Strabane District Council	1,000				
Total	112,727	100,748	99,024	3729	Nil

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Staff Disciplinary Actions

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of staff disciplinary actions taken by his Department in each of the last two years, at Staff Officer level and above, including details of the offence and the disciplinary sanctions applied.

(AQW 9126/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A total of 4 staff in the Department for Social Development, at Staff Officer level and above, were disciplined in the last two years. Details of the offences and the disciplinary sanctions applied are set out in the table below.

Year	Offences	Sanctions
2010	Breach of Official Instructions/ Breach of Procedures Criminal Conviction Misuse/Abuse of Internet and Email	Formal Written Warning and ban from promotion Written reprimand Demotion, Final Written Warning and ban from promotion
2011	Misuse of Official Equipment	Written reprimand and fine

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Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development how many successful applications for the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme were from the (i) Carrickfergus; (ii) Larne; and (iii) Newtownabbey areas. (AQW 9131/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Formal approval to commence boiler replacement works have been issued to 142 households in the Carrickfergus, Larne and Newtownabbey District Council areas. To date 100 new boilers have been installed. The table below provides a breakdown for each area.

	Formal Approvals	Completions
Carrickfergus	18	16
Larne	26	17
Newtownabbey	98	67
Total	142	100

I would urge anyone still waiting for work to be carried out in their home to make contact with their preferred installer urgently to ensure the work is completed as soon as possible as the pilot will close on 31 March 2012.

Housing Executive: Temporary Accommodation

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many private properties in the North Down area are currently being used as temporary accommodation by the Housing Executive. (AQW 9162/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as this is not collated in relation to the North Down area. However, the Housing Executive currently uses 24 private landlord properties as temporary accommodation in their Bangor District office area.

Centralisation of Jobs and Benefits Offices

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has plans to centralise any Jobs and Benefits Offices. (AQW 9171/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am committed to maintaining a strong network of front line offices throughout Northern Ireland. Customers will continue to be able to access social security services from the existing network of Jobs & Benefits and Social Security offices.

Cancer Patients

Mr Cree asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration has been given to the need to interview cancer patients, who are in hospital undergoing chemotherapy treatment, to determine if they remain eligible to receive benefits under Welfare Reform. (AQW 9264/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As part of his second independent review of the Work Capability Assessment, Professor Malcolm Harrington asked Macmillan Cancer Support to look in detail at how the Work Capability Assessment assesses people with cancer and to provide him with recommendations for further improvements. In response to Professor Harrington's findings, the Department has undertaken

a public consultation process seeking views from cancer patients and other interested groups on the proposed changes to the Work Capability Assessment for cancer patients. The consultation process formally ends on 9 March. In view of the consultation the Department has no plans at this stage to interview cancer patients for Work Capability Assessments.

Recommendations made by Professor Harrington are also being taken into account when developing Personal Independence Payment, which will replace Disability Living Allowance for working age customers (age 16 -64) from 2013. The proposals for Personal Independence Payment are that no customers will be required to undergo an assessment by an Independent Health Professional while an inpatient in hospital.

As part of the Departments continuing focus on benefit uptake, Macmillan Cancer Support has recently been funded, through the Innovation Fund for Increasing Benefit Uptake, to test a fresh approach to working in hospitals and in the community with those newly diagnosed with cancer, those living with cancer and those caring for someone with cancer.

Funding for Community Based Initiatives

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total level of funding his Department allocated for community based initiatives in 2007/08; 2008/09; 2009/10; and 2010/11 in the (i) Erne North; (ii) Erne West; and (iii) Erne East wards in Co Fermanagh.

(AQW 9274/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Government Funders Database records the following funding allocated by my Department to community organisations in the Erne North; Erne West; and Erne East electoral areas. This funding has been administered through the following programmes; Community Volunteering Scheme 2006/2010, Local Community Fund 07/08, The Modernisation Fund Capital, Community Regeneration and Improvement Special Programme (CRISP), Volunteer Bureau Initiative 10/11 and Supporting People.

	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Electoral Area				
Erne North	£27,968.07	£53,271.00	£5,975.00	£1,471.00
Erne West	nil	£165,367.77	£535,790.43	£1,748.00
Erne East	nil	£1,200.00	£700.00	£68,687.72
Total	£27,968.07	£219,838.77	£542,465.43	£71,906.72

In addition, the Voluntary and Community Unit has provided funding through the Community Support Programme, administered through Fermanagh District Council, for the Fermanagh Council Area.

Funding Programme	2007/2008	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Community Support Programme	£97,830.00	£100,247.00	£147,383.00	£105,549.00
Total	£97,830.00	£100,247.00	£147,383.00	£105,549.00

Social Housing Development Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development (i) when the Social Housing Development Programme for the next three years will be approved; and (ii) how soon after its approval construction will commence.

(AQW 9285/11-15)

Mr McCausland: While I am now in receipt of a draft Social Housing Development Programme I am disappointed it remains incomplete and is simply not yet approvable. This is unacceptable and I have advised the Housing Executive of this. Further meetings have been arranged and I remain hopeful of publishing the new 3 year programme in April/May, subject to the Housing Executive completing the necessary work to allow me to make a proper assessment.

In terms of construction starting, that will depend on the progress Housing Associations have made on their sites in terms of procurement and planning etc. However the budget for next year is already in place so there is nothing to stop construction work proceeding on approval of the Programme, subject of course to the necessary approvals being in place.

Outer North Youth Arts and Culture Programme

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development whether funding for the Outer North Youth Arts and Culture Programme will be extended until 31 March 2013 to enable Greater Shantallow Community Arts to seek a new funder.

(AQW 9288/11-15)

Mr McCausland: All applications for Neighbourhood Renewal funding will be assessed in line with the relevant eligibility criteria and against the stated objectives of the programme. An application seeking funding for a city wide youth service project has been received by my Department's North West Development Office and is currently being assessed. In developing this project proposal the four Londonderry Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships have engaged with those currently providing youth provision, including the Greater Shantallow Community Arts organisation. The need identified for the area covered by that organisation has been incorporated into the city wide project proposal now being assessed. This assessment will be completed by the end of March and a decision issued as appropriate.

One-Off Fuel Allowance Payment

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the one-off fuel allowance payment, to detail (i) the rationale in deciding the qualifying benefits; and (ii) who was consulted before the decision was made.

(AQW 9339/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In December 2011, the Department for Social Development was designated by the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister to make a Fuel Allowance Payment. The Fuel Allowance Payment was made from the Social Protection Fund which was established by the Northern Ireland Executive in March 2011 to mitigate against the impact of the financial cuts on the most vulnerable in our society. There was a limited amount of money available and the Northern Ireland Executive wanted to make the payments to as many vulnerable people as possible. The Executive agreed to make payments to people in receipt of Pension Credit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance Income Based or Income Related Employment Support Allowance on one day, within the qualifying week which was from 12 to 18 December 2011. My department automatically issued payments to eligible people and any person who has not received a payment but believes they are entitled can contact NI Direct on 0300 200 7870. The Department for Health and Social Services was also designated to make a fuel payment to people undergoing treatment for cancer.

Housing: Repossessions

Mr McClarty asked the Minister for Social Development whether he would consider introducing the same safeguards in regard to repossessions that currently exist in Great Britain.

(AQO 1503/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In common with the rest of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland already has a number of initiatives, overseen across a number of Departments, in place to help those facing repossession such as: -

- Under my Department, there is Support for Mortgage Interest, for homeowners receiving certain social security benefits;
- My Department also funds a range of Debt Advice Services; the Mortgage Debt Advice Service, operated by Housing Rights Service. The Law Centre, Advice Northern Ireland and Citizens Advice Bureau also help people with other debt problems, which often have knock-on effects on their ability to pay their mortgage;
- Housing Rights Service also provides in-court support and representation services funded through charitable sources;
- Under the Department of Justice, the Court Pre-Action Protocols which require lenders to exercise a degree of forbearance before seeking a court order for repossession;

While I have previously expressed my support for the introduction of a Mortgage Rescue Scheme (which other regions of the UK currently have in place) in the Assembly, I believe it would either help only a small proportion of those facing repossession, or would be extremely expensive to operate. I am conscious that, when allocating money, the Executive must weigh-up other needs, such as those presented by education and health

To illustrate, the National Audit Office published an evaluation report on the Mortgage Rescue Scheme in England in May 2011 which outlined that the scheme there delivered 2,600 completed rescues between January 2009 and March 2011, less than half of those expected when the scheme was launched. Initial projections for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme in England estimated it would rescue 6,000 households. In only completing 2,600 rescues, and increasing the funding by 40% after launch from £205 to £285 million, the evaluation report suggested the long-term costs of each rescue outweighed the measurable benefits and did not deliver value for money;

The Department for Communities and Local Government spent on average £93,000 for each rescue completed – it expected to spend £34,000. The main reason being that most completed rescues were the mortgage to rent type, with only a minority being shared equity.

The scheme, therefore, did not sustain the level of homeownership for those in difficulty that was originally anticipated.

Welfare Reform: Under-Occupancy

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has asked for an impact assessment to be carried out on the consequences of implementing the under-occupancy element of Welfare Reform.

(AQO 1515/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Member will be aware that the Welfare Reform Bill at Westminster has now received Royal Assent and that in line with the parity arrangements that exist for Social Security matters, I will soon be bringing my proposals for reform in Northern Ireland to this Assembly.

The 'under-occupancy' element that the Member refers to is one of a number of changes that are being introduced to modernise support for Housing Benefit in Great Britain and, in bringing forward my Welfare Reform Bill I will be seeking to replicate these measures. The proposal, put simply, is that those in receipt of Social Security benefits should only receive assistance according to their housing needs. The policy change is designed to ensure that benefits payable are more closely aligned to housing need and to promote fairness for the taxpayer by ensuring that those on benefits are required to take decisions as to their accommodation in the same way that those in work and in particular those on low incomes must. I will be considering how that proposal, together with other measures being considered will impact here in Northern Ireland. My officials have carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) which has been out to public consultation and I will be looking closely at what

respondents to that consultation have raised in respect of the proposed reforms. Given the scale of the proposed reforms and the fact the Bill itself is in effect an enabling Bill with the detail of particular changes being spelled out in Regulations, I would envisage that further work on 'Equality' screening may be necessary as Regulations are brought forward.

Housing Benefit has been the subject of much debate in recent times and I am personally acutely aware of concerns around further change. My officials will continue to gather data to inform decisions on specific reforms, including the 'under-occupancy' element, and to assess the potential impact here in Northern Ireland.

Housing Executive: Economy 10 Heating

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the negotiations that his Department has had with Power NI and others on the development and implementation of Economy 10 heating for Housing Executive properties.

(AQO 1507/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Neither my Department nor the Housing Executive have had any negotiations with Power NI on the development and implementation of Economy 10 heating for Housing Executive properties. At the present time Economy 10 is not a tariff that is available in Northern Ireland and if it was introduced here the Housing Executive has advised that it might provide a benefit to only a small percentage of their tenants. In fact electrical heating has not proven to be popular with Housing Executive tenants and many households have lobbied to have it replaced.

The Housing Executive has been replacing electrical heating where gas or oil is a technically practical option. They have reduced the number of homes heated by electrical heating from 26,000 to 8,500, with a further 2300 properties in their provisional programme for the incoming financial year. The Housing Executive's heating policy is that gas remains the only option offered in areas where gas is available. Where gas is not available other options such as oil or wood pellet boilers are considered. In properties where these options are not technically feasible, for example certain multi-storey blocks, tenants are offered a more energy efficient electrical heating system.

The apparent reduction in the use of the Economy 10 tariff in Britain and the fact that electricity suppliers in Northern Ireland have never indicated any intention to consider introducing it here suggests that discussions on the matter are unlikely to succeed.

Universal Credit Bill

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister for Social Development when the Universal Credit Bill will be introduced.

(AQW 9571/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I intend shortly to seek Executive Agreement to my proposals to bring forward a Welfare Reform Bill for Northern Ireland. The Welfare Reform Bill will contain enabling provisions introducing Universal Credit.

Retail Sequencing Policy: Belfast City Centre

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Retail Sequencing Policy for Belfast city centre.

(AQO 1512/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department's retail sequencing policy has delivered the £400 million Victoria Square scheme and our next step is to deliver the proposed £360 million investment for the Royal Exchange project subject to discharging all statutory, contractual and funding approvals for the project. I will announce the timetable for moving forward the Royal Exchange site as soon as my Department is in a position to do so.

Welfare Reform Legislation

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development what decisions have been made, by the Executive Sub-Group on Welfare Reform, on dealing with the worst excesses of the Welfare Reform legislation.

(AQO 1513/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Executive Sub-Committee on Welfare Reform has met on four occasions over the last number of weeks and has considered a range of issues relating to Welfare Reform. At one of its meetings the Sub-Committee discussed areas where flexibilities should be actively pursued with Department for Work and Pensions Ministers. Work is also ongoing with the Department for Work and Pensions to seek clarification on how existing Northern Ireland specific requests will be handled and to determine whether there will be any additional costs.

The Sub-Committee have also considered a wide range of issues around the Welfare Reform Programme including passported benefits, a replacement discretionary fund for Social Fund and rates relief in Northern Ireland. The Sub-Committee has an active work programme and will report regularly to the Executive Committee.

Community and Youth Groups: Cathedral Quarter, Belfast

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on his decision to uplift the level of grant from £300 to £1000 for small community/youth groups that are working in the Cathedral Quarter, Belfast.

(AQO 1514/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department has issued a news release inviting community organisations to submit applications for funding from the Laganside Community Activities Grant for the year starting on 1 April 2012. Public notices inviting applications will also be published shortly in the press. This increase is designed to encourage community organisations within the 14 Laganside Wards to use the amenities as I am concerned that the uptake of this grant by the community has been low in recent years. The grant will have a total allocation of £50,000 in 2012/13 and could deliver up to fifty community activities.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development how many boilers were replaced under the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme.

(AQO 1516/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I launched the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme in June 2011 and £2 million was allocated to deliver the pilot. 1,330 inefficient boilers will be replaced in the pilot scheme. The pilot has been very popular and the Housing Executive is no longer taking applications for the pilot. The pilot scheme will be subject to a full evaluation which will inform the design of any future scheme. I would urge anyone still waiting for work to be carried out in their home to make contact with their preferred installer urgently to ensure the work is completed as soon as possible as the pilot will close on 31 March 2012.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Parliament Buildings: Demand for Crèche Facilities

Ms Boyle asked the Assembly Commission if it would undertake a survey of Members and staff in Parliament Buildings to assess the demand for crèche facilities.

(AQW 8949/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): As a responsible employer, the Assembly Commission provides a range of “family friendly” policies to support its staff. These include childcare support and flexible working arrangements. Childcare support for Members is also available although the qualifying criteria and the quantum are established by the Independent Financial Review Panel.

In the current economic climate, the Commission has no plans to undertake a survey of Members or staff to assess the level of demand for crèche facilities as the Commission’s budget for the Spending Review period to 2014/15 does not include any provision for the cost of such a facility.

Parliament Buildings: Demand for Crèche Facilities

Ms Boyle asked the Assembly Commission whether it will consider providing crèche facilities at Parliament Buildings to encourage more women to get involved in politics.

(AQW 8950/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission has a statutory duty under section 40 (4) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to “provide the Assembly, or ensure that the Assembly is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly’s purposes”. In the absence of a specific direction from the Assembly to the contrary, the Commission does not consider that its role extends to encouraging the involvement of any specific section of the community in politics.

Retirement of Former President Mary McAleese

Mr McKay asked the Assembly Commission what consideration has been given to commissioning a piece of art to mark the retirement of former President Mary McAleese, given her key role in the peace process and that she is a native of Belfast.

(AQW 9069/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): In June 2009, the Assembly Commission agreed a policy to procure portraits for Speakers, First Ministers and deputy First Ministers on their retirement from office. The Commission has not, to date, given any further consideration to expanding this policy to include the commissioning of additional portraits.

Staff who Work Outside Parliament Buildings

Mr Beggs asked the Assembly Commission why staff who work outside Parliament Buildings are unable to join a Childcare Voucher Scheme and are excluded from its Childcare Scheme. [R]

(AQW 9109/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The Assembly Commission does not employ staff who work outside Parliament Buildings. However, it is recognised that many Members employ staff whose salary payments are processed by the Commission on behalf of Members. It is for Members to establish the terms and conditions of employment for their staff and those terms and conditions may include provision for financial support to meet the cost of childcare.

At present, the Commission’s payroll processing service on behalf of Members does not include a fully integrated Childcare Voucher Scheme. However, an exercise to replace the payroll system is at an advanced stage and Members will be notified of the options for childcare support for their staff later this year. Any new system implemented by the Commission will not include a centrally provided childcare scheme as that will remain the responsibility of individual Members.

As the Commission does not employ staff outside Parliament Buildings, the issue of exclusion of staff from the Commission’s childcare scheme does not apply. As noted above, a Member is free to operate a childcare scheme similar to that operated by the Assembly Commission if he or she so wishes.

Cost of Administering the Childcare Scheme

Mr Beggs asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) the current annual cost of administering the Childcare Scheme; (ii) the number of staff who benefit from the Scheme; (iii) the number of staff who work outside Parliament Buildings and could avail of a Childcare Voucher Scheme; and (iv) the savings for (a) employees; and (b) the Commission if staff who work outside Parliament Buildings were able to avail of a Childcare Voucher Scheme if one were introduced. [R]

(AQW 9110/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):

- (i) The administration costs of the Childcare Scheme are carried by the Commission's Finance and Human Resources Offices and the annual cost (based on staff hours worked) equates to approximately £3,200 per annum. The total cost of payments made to staff and Members under the scheme for the 2011/12 financial is estimated at £263,000k.
- (ii) There are currently 104 members of staff and 22 MLAs who benefit from the childcare scheme.
- (iii) The Assembly Commission does not employ staff outside Parliament Buildings. However, Members employ staff in their constituency offices and, at present, there are approximately 285 such employees. It is entirely for a Member to decide on the terms and conditions of his or her employees and whether those terms and conditions should make provision for financial support for childcare costs.
- (iv) The taxation implications for Members' employees who avail of a qualifying Childcare Voucher Scheme are complex and depend on the level of salary of the employee and the level of financial support offered by a Member. In general, an employee paying tax at the basic rate and receiving childcare vouchers under a qualifying scheme at the limits set by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs could save approximately £78 per month in statutory deductions. If all Members introduced a qualifying childcare scheme for all of their 285 employees, a total saving in deductions for all employees of £263,000 could be achieved. However, this would require all Members to establish (and all employees to participate in) a qualifying childcare scheme. A Member who operated such a scheme could save approximately £34 per month per employee in employer's national insurance contributions leading to a notional saving of £116,000 per annum for all Members for all employees. This level of saving would not accrue to the Assembly Commission as it has no responsibility for the terms and conditions of employment of Members' employees.

Childcare Voucher Scheme

Mr Beggs asked the Assembly Commission (i) when it was first approached by staff or MLAs in relation to enabling staff who work outside Parliament Buildings to avail of a Childcare Voucher Scheme; and (ii) why there has been a delay in introducing such a scheme. [R]

(AQW 9111/11-15)

Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):

- (i) The Assembly Commission does not employ any staff who work outside Parliament Buildings and the Commission does not operate a Childcare Voucher Scheme for its staff. The Assembly Commission cannot provide an exact date when it was first approached by MLAs to enable their staff who work outside Parliament Buildings to avail of a Childcare Voucher Scheme.
- (ii) The Assembly Commission operates a payroll service to process salary payments to Members' employees. It is for Members to establish the terms and conditions of employment for their staff and those terms and conditions may include provision for financial support to meet the cost of childcare. The Commission has no plans to introduce a Childcare Voucher Scheme for Members' employees although it is implementing a revised payroll system that it is hoped will enable Members to set up whatever childcare arrangements they see fit.

Her Royal Highness Princess, Anne Visit to Parliament Buildings

Mr Wells asked the Assembly Commission why the Royal Standard was not flown during the visit of Her Royal Highness Princess, Anne to Parliament Buildings on 7 March 2012.

(AQW 9483/11-15)

Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission): The flying of flags at Parliament Buildings is regulated by the Flags (NI) Order 2000.

The Order prescribes the dates during the year when the Union flag should be flown, and also provides some guidance in relation to the flying of the Royal Standard and other flags.

The Order states that the Royal Standard should only be flown if Her Majesty the Queen is visiting.

The Regulations make no reference to the flying of personal standards of other members of the Royal Family, and in any event no such request was made to the Assembly by the organisers of the recent visit by the Princess Anne.

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Published by Authority of the Northern Ireland Assembly,
Belfast: The Stationery Office

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ISSN 1463-7162

Daily Editions: Single copies £5, Annual subscriptions £325

Bound Volumes of Debates are issued periodically during the session: Single copies: £90

Printed in Northern Ireland by The Stationery Office Limited

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ISBN 978-0-339-70243-1



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