



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Ministerial Briefing

30 January 2014

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Miss Michelle McIlveen (Chairperson)
Mr Dominic Bradley
Mr David Hilditch
Mr William Humphrey
Mr Basil McCrea
Mr Michael McGimpsey
Mrs Karen McKeivitt
Mr Oliver McMullan
Mr Cathal Ó hOisín

Witnesses:

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín	Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Mr Peter May	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Ms Joanna McConway	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

The Chairperson: I welcome the Minister; the interim permanent secretary, Peter May; and Joanna McConway, who is head of the north-west team. Thank you for coming this morning. I invite you to make an opening statement.

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): I am grateful that the Committee was able to have us here early, as we have constraints today. I am also grateful for the opportunity to meet the Committee to discuss the progress being made on the development of the three stadiums and my plans for enhancing the economic and social legacy of the City of Culture 2013. I would like to discuss any questions that you may have and better explore ways in which we can maximise the positive impact of the two initiatives and their major importance to social and economic development. You have received the briefing on the two major projects — one is rapidly progressing and the other is in development — which demonstrates the significant contribution that DCAL hopes to make to meet the priorities of the Executive and the Assembly.

As you know, the regional development programme is injecting £110 million into the economy and the construction industry. It is a capital programme delivering world-class stadia to stimulate and showcase our sporting strengths. The finished venues will be amazing, and the focus is on the wider social benefits that will be delivered now and in the future on completion. You will also have noted that we have sought to maximise the potential of social clauses in procurement. Going further, as you know, I have prioritised additional support for the governing bodies.

The Committee has been to Derry on several occasions and will have experienced the success there. I am sure that you will agree that the next important thing for us is the key steps in what is next and how we all build on those opportunities. In the briefing paper, I have broadly outlined the approach that we have taken to maintain the momentum that we have created. Part of the legacy is about maintaining that momentum for the years ahead.

The stadium development programme is progressing well. We have secured budgets and new opportunities for the vision that will be required. We will be seeking additional resources for the north-west and the City of Culture legacy.

This Committee has been a strong advocate of leisure, sport and the creative industries. As I said at the start, rather than going through a pile of information, I am happy to take questions.

The Chairperson: Thank you. With regard to the north-west office, you still say that you are preparing detailed arrangements on costs. Can you give us any indication of the level of funding that will be required?

Ms Joanna McConway (Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The north-west office will mean DCAL having a presence in the north-west, so the associated costs are staff ones. The second part of what the Minister has announced on legacy is the establishment of a new company, which would have a remit to develop creative and cultural support and development in the north-west. That is what we would be bidding for a budget for.

We are looking at the cultural programme from 2013 to consider what projects meet the Department's high-level objectives and are suitable to be continued. We are also thinking about whether the company should also have a budget on which it can make decisions about new interventions and projects. So, all of that needs to come together to create a figure. Obviously, all of that work is going on at the moment.

The Chairperson: So, at this stage, you have no concept of the costs.

Ms McConway: We do not have specific figures. Obviously, the business case is looking at a range of options, from continuing a large number of projects, to having a grant-giving element to the company, right down to it coordinating existing activity.

The Chairperson: With regard to the future of the office, do you see it as part of a project that is time limited, or will it be a permanent fixture in the north-west?

Ms Ní Chuilín: I would like it to be a permanent fixture, but I only have a mandate until the end of this Assembly term. As part of the legacy, not just for the city of Derry but for the north-west, I hope that that will be taken on board by the Executive. I imagine that it would be. As Joanna outlined, the different options around the bid will be detailed in a business case, but I do not see why the office should not be something that will endure, particularly in a region that has not seen the level of investment that it should have over a period of years.

Given the opportunities that we have with RPA and the amalgamations of the councils — we have met and will continue to meet the representatives — it is important that the councils do not see this as something that stops and may start, depending on the complexion of the next Minister.

The Chairperson: DCAL does not have a large budget by any stretch of the imagination. So, by taking on an additional burden, what will be sacrificed?

Ms Ní Chuilín: I do not see it as a burden: I see it as implementing the statutory responsibilities that DCAL has anyway. The City of Culture was time bound, but the legacy should not be, and the Executive agreed with that. Indeed, they supported some small bids, and we are taking them through.

It is not the case that you invest in the north-west and displace investment elsewhere. It should not be like that; it should be about additionality. As you know, the DCAL family is wide and varied, so the issue is about making sure that those services are in that area and that people can avail themselves of them.

Mr Ó hOisín: Go raibh maith agat, a Chathaoirligh. Tá fáilte romhat, a Aire, go dtí an Coiste inniu.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Go raibh maith agat.

Mr Ó hOisín: I commend you for your support for all the projects that have gone on in the north-west. Being a north-west representative, I know that you have been very proactive. I even detect a Derry accent sneaking in there.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Not at all.

Mr Ó hOisín: Do you have a time frame for the opening of any project or office in the north-west? There was some conversation at the launch about DCAL roadshows being rolled out over a period to promote the legacy.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Broadly, we hope to have a bid with DFP by the end of this financial year. A bid, as Joanna outlined, entails an awful lot of work on detailing options and costs around each of those options. Being an optimist, my fingers are crossed that everything goes well and that the Executive and Minister of Finance and Personnel support the bid. We need to start work on recruitment and organisation from April onwards, so realistically we are talking about early summer. There are things that we could do, but it would be foolhardy to start announcing aspects of a delivery body in the absence of a secure budget. However, the work has continued and will continue.

Mr Peter May (Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure): We hope to have the office itself up and running for April 2014.

Mr Ó hOisín: You have identified sites as well.

Mr May: We are looking at sites at the moment.

Mr Ó hOisín: And what about the roadshows?

Ms Ní Chuilín: We hope to start those in late February or early March. I am sorry, Cathal, but the first will be in Strabane. Dungiven, Limavady and other areas outside the city of Derry have been committed and contributed to the City of Culture. In respect of those towns and villages, we need to start outside the city to get to people. It is sensible to make sure that people realise that the project is about not just Derry but elsewhere.

The Chairperson: Minister, you say that you hope that the office will be opened in April, but at this stage you are sketchy about budgets and the project moving forward. When will we have a detailed profile of what is being planned?

Ms Ní Chuilín: The short answer is when we have it. As soon as we have it, we will share it with the Committee after our Executive colleagues.

The Chairperson: But at this stage you are still moving ahead with an April opening.

Mr May: As Joanna explained, the office itself is about the DCAL staff, so the costs for the office are only staff costs and any costs for premises. The bigger issue is about costs for the company. As the Minister explained, the business case is being produced for the company, and the company will not be started in April. That will be in the summertime, subject to approval by the Executive. That is why there is that gap, but we are moving ahead first with the north-west office.

The Chairperson: Looking at the stadium development, can you give an update on the letter of comfort that we were to receive from the EU with regard to moving forward with Windsor Park?

Ms Ní Chuilín: We have not received a letter. The upshot of it is that when we receive the letter of comfort from Europe, you will receive the letter of comfort from Europe. We had discussions as recently as last Thursday around the issue of state aid. I am quite optimistic that we are still moving in the right direction. We are finalising outstanding answers to questions from Europe, and the questions are not unreasonable. We are still taking the position that it is not a state aid issue and that we are proceeding as planned.

The Chairperson: Have you been given any indication of timescale for that process to be concluded?

Ms Ní Chuilín: No, but it should be concluded by the end of February.

Mr D Bradley: Maidin mhaith, a Aire.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Maidin mhaith.

Mr D Bradley: Tá céad fáilte romhat go dtí an Coiste. I congratulate everyone involved with the City of Culture and your Department for the great support that it gave. It was a great success. As you say, the legacy is worthwhile, and it is important that it is sustainable. What is your vision for the legacy of the City of Culture, say, five or 10 years on?

Ms Ní Chuilín: Thank you for your sentiments around the City of Culture. As I said to the Chair, my vision is that the legacy will endure and that support for the legacy will endure beyond 2015-16. You have colleagues from that area. It has been said that people did not anticipate that the legacy would endure once the City of Culture was over; some people thought that it might last for a year or two and that would be it. However, the lesson learned from Derry is that the creative base was already there and it just needed some government support and some outside sponsorship.

Some of the bigger projects with an international status have attracted national and international attention, which, in turn, has raised the esteem and expectations of people in that city and the region. For me, not to take that on board, project it and support it in the future would be totally wrong. The details of the very bare minimum will be brought forward when we put our plans to the Executive for approval. Key themes have arisen around the creative industries, music, the arts and production, but social inclusion has been a big theme, particularly around using music as a conduit for social inclusion. People are working on that now, and that will continue and endure well beyond any of the rest of us, which is good.

Mr D Bradley: I want to ask you a question about the new funding model for the Irish language, since you are here. In the Chamber, you said that you expected 25% of the funding to come to this part of the island. Do you favour a consortia approach from the six lead organisations that have been appointed, and, if so, what can you do to ensure that that happens?

Ms Ní Chuilín: Thanks for your question. Twenty-five per cent of the work of the core-funded bodies has to be in the North. I felt that some of the groups missed an opportunity to take a consortia approach. They resisted the change in core funding arrangements for a long time, but that is their prerogative. The consortia approach will be taken and there will be lead organisations that will work with groups in the North. That is a formal partnership that would have been put in as part of the bid, but there is nothing to stop any group coming together at this stage to share their skills and expertise with the lead groups; not to do that would be a wasted opportunity.

Mr D Bradley: Is there anything that you can do as Minister to ensure that the lead organisations that have been appointed will adopt that approach?

Ms Ní Chuilín: I know that you are committed to the language, and it is a lifetime commitment, so I want to give you an assurance. The change manager should be in post this week, and they will meet Foras na Gaeilge this week to finalise the plan for the change management process. I expect to meet Foras na Gaeilge within a fortnight to see how that is working out and to see those plans. I would like to see it working out on the ground and for it to be tested robustly to see what it looks like on the ground. Like you, I have worked with groups for a long time in this area, and I know that good work happens and continues to happen despite challenges. I will be looking to see if that is going to be reflected across the board, and if it is not, how it will be reflected across the board. It is important that the work of maintaining, enhancing and protecting the language through the six lead organisations happens here and that it is not lacking because those organisations are based or headquartered in Dublin. They are all-island groups, and I would like to see that work across the island and see what it is going to look like.

Mr D Bradley: I want to ask you about the fact that Mr Molloy has moved on to take up a new post. Are you convinced that you have the necessary expertise in Mr Molloy's absence to manage the stadia scheme?

Ms Ní Chuilín: The short answer is yes. We are currently looking at structures and additional resources, and Noel's departure will be factored into that. We have a very good staffing structure in

place to make sure that there are seamless links in the work of the regional stadia. I am sure that you have met Noel as part of the stadium programme. He is very impressive and came with a big reputation, but so did the people who he is working with. Those skills and expertise have been passed on, and we are lucky enough to have those skills and expertise in DCAL, but we are looking at arrangements and what we do to fill any gaps on his departure.

Mr D Bradley: Would you consider appointing someone to replace Mr Molloy to make up any skills gap that might exist?

Ms Ní Chuilín: We are looking at all that, Dominic. We are looking at any additional resources that we may need. In fairness, Noel is helping us with that. He will be available, albeit not on a daily basis, and there will be an arrangement made with the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) on the basis that we need additional expertise. I am very content.

Mr D Bradley: Are you saying that an announcement will be made?

Ms Ní Chuilín: No, I am saying that we are currently looking at arrangements. I do not feel that I need to make an announcement on Noel's replacement at this stage.

Mr D Bradley: But there is a possibility that you may have to —

Ms Ní Chuilín: Yes.

Mr May: There may be some specialist skills that we need going forward. The programme is at a slightly different place now because the funding agreements and contracts are in place for Windsor and Casement. Ravenhill is a long way down the path. We are looking at the precise skills set that we need going forward and how best to fill that. We are in discussions with SIB, and we should be able to resolve those fairly quickly.

Mr D Bradley: Go raibh míle maith agat.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Failte romhat.

Mr Hilditch: Apologies for being late. Tomorrow is the deadline for licensing at the IFA, so it was a long night, with another one to go. I missed any introductory remarks. I want to follow on from that question and ask about the stadia. I am getting the message that we are moving on as planned.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Yes, we are.

Mr Hilditch: To that effect, the draw for the Euros is next month, and Northern Ireland is probably around pot 5 or so. So, we are definitely guaranteed two major nations coming and potentially a third one. Have there been any discussions about alternative venues? Windsor being as it is, if there is any work going on at all, it will be considerably reduced. Those matches would be due to start around September, which will push in fairly quickly.

Ms Ní Chuilín: To be frank, I have not had any discussions with Patrick Nelson, Jim Shaw or Les about any alternative places for matches. I will be meeting them all fairly soon, and I anticipate that it will be raised. If it is not, I will raise it to make sure that there is an assurance that we have facilities to host other nations and that we are not embarrassed. Is that your worry?

Mr Hilditch: Yes, it is.

Ms Ní Chuilín: I think that it is a fair enough concern.

Mr Hilditch: Matches have gone to venues in England and Scotland previously, and we have lost out here in Northern Ireland. We need to make sure that we overcome any barriers.

Ms Ní Chuilín: That is fair enough. In fact, I will write and ask him, on the back of your question, and I will share that information with the Committee. Is that fair enough?

Mr Hilditch: That would be good. As I said, the draw is next month.

The Casement situation has been getting a bit of media attention in the past few days. Are there expectations of any civil challenge in that area?

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have heard potential challenges being mooted in the media. I have not seen those yet. There is always potential for people who want to take further action; whatever that action is, I am not too sure. I am very respectful of people's rights in whatever progress they make up to a point, but I have not received any formal notification of any civil action or anything else.

Mr Hilditch: I know that I missed the City of Culture side of things. I want to say that, per square mile in Northern Ireland, we are very well cultured. We are probably the envy of most other European nations, but we have to make sure that any legacy can roll out through other parts of the Province. You might have made a comment on that.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Yes, we did, and it was around, for example, Dungiven, Limavady, Strabane and Coleraine and making sure that the towns and villages and the hinterlands around the city of Derry are included. However, the organisations that were involved in that obviously operate across the North. Certainly, with regard to creativity and collaborations on music, theatre and the arts, I look forward to those being brought to smaller places and to communities and neighbourhoods availing themselves of the joy of participating in some of those events.

I am from north Belfast, and I had never been to a tattoo before, but I enjoyed the Walled City Tattoo, and I know that others from across the North visited it. That was a collaboration as well. It was not just the Ulster-Scots culture; people who have Irish as their culture were involved in the music, song, dance and language. That sort of collaboration is one example, and I think that you will see something similar across many places and constituencies in the future.

Mr Hilditch: I want to go back to the topic of football; I have another question. The additional funding that was sought for Windsor Park — I should probably declare an interest — will not be to the detriment of local soccer, as such, will it? Does it sit separately from any potential future funding for local soccer?

Ms Ní Chuilín: It is separate.

Mr McGimpsey: I have a couple of questions. My first is about Windsor Park. You will remember that questions were raised about rules pertaining to European finance, governance and so on. There were also questions about changes to IFA governance. Are those issues all resolved? You said to me in the House that we were on time and on the money for 2016 or 2015. Are we quite comfortable now with what is in place, and is it now a matter of simply delivering the construction project?

Ms Ní Chuilín: First of all, in relation to the European state aid issue, let me repeat the response that I gave to the Chair and the rest of the Committee. I am content with our position on the questions that were raised by Europe. We have stated our case very well that this is not a state aid issue. I hope that we will know the outcome of that sooner rather than later. I have had no indication at this stage that that will not be the case.

In relation to Windsor Park and the social clauses, as part of our programme of work for February and March, we will be launching the social clauses on their completion. We are actually completing them as we speak; it will be done within the next fortnight. We are launching those social clauses — what they are, what they look like, and what the relationship with the community will be in the case of both Casement Park and Windsor Park. We have been working with some of the community partners. In your constituency, the South Belfast Partnership Board and others have been involved. Belfast City Council has been integral in this as well, particularly in relation to the Olympia leisure centre and the rest.

I know that it is your constituency. People have been waiting a long time for a significant investment in that area. There has been a steady increase in expectations, particularly those of the long-term unemployed, of finding some opportunity in the development of Windsor Park and the Olympia. That is what we are hoping to capture with the social clauses. A certain percentage of people who are long-term unemployed have to be involved; there have to be apprenticeships; and there need to be community benefits, including working with P6 and P7 schoolchildren.

The IFA has done an excellent job in promoting health initiatives as part of the social benefits. Some of the work that it is doing on mental health is exemplary. That sort of support, wrapped around the work that is already being done in the community, is giving a bit more visibility. These are not just stadia: we need to provide benefits for people, as well as capital or job opportunities. So, that will continue, and it will be finalised and announced no later than the middle of March.

Mr McGimpsey: My other issue is Sandy Row Amateur Boxing Club and boxing in general. We had the independent working group with us last week, and we went through its report. In places, it is a damning report, with lines coming through about sectarian and racist abuse, massive under-representation from boxers and boxing clubs perceived to be from a Protestant/unionist background, instances of abuse not being isolated and saying effectively that the organisation is not fit for purpose and requires root-and-branch reform. I know that you have welcomed the report publicly.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Yes.

Mr McGimpsey: What is the next step? We will have the Irish Amateur Boxing Association (IABA) with us —next week, I think — and I know that Sport NI will play a role. What is your role? How will you ensure that we get what we all want, which is a healthy and representative boxing community? Steps need to be taken, and, as we plan to put large amounts of taxpayers' money into the sport, penalties need to be enforced.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Absolutely.

Mr McGimpsey: How will it all gel? The GAA went through a similar process and manages itself very well, the IFA did the same and rugby also took steps. What do you see as your role in ensuring that boxing modernises itself?

Ms Ní Chuilín: Thank you for your question and your continued support of boxing. I also plan to meet the Irish Amateur Boxing Association and the Irish Sports Council — the report has been shared with the Irish and British sports councils. I intend to meet the IABA to work out its implementation plan for the report and discuss the way forward.

It is well known that boxing has yielded more medals than any other sport across this island. I believe that I have had a very healthy focus in my support of boxing. Prior to that, it was one of the sports about which it could be said that people enjoyed the success but did very little about. This is not meant as a slight on the boxing clubs, but conditions in the clubs are not fit for purpose.

You mentioned governance arrangements and the plans of the Irish Amateur Boxing Association, the Ulster Boxing Council and, thereafter, the county boards. We need to see what their plans are: what they look like; how they will support clubs on the ground — really support clubs on the ground; what resources they will put into that support; and what continued role we will have. I intend to have oversight until someone tells me that everything is in place, that we are good to go and that there is additional funding to meet the needs of the boxing clubs *[Inaudible.]* We have put significant funding into boxing but not in comparison with other sports. The £3.2 million invested in boxing is a lot of money. However, it is a very small amount compared with other sports that have not yielded as many medals, if we use that as a barometer. Belfast City Council has a boxing development manager and a support manager. We will work with them and give any other support that we can, particularly to the Ulster Boxing Council, to make sure that all the county boards across the North are supported. Only when clubs have that support will we see their appreciation, and they may even feel that they are being supported rather than scrutinised.

I believe that the whole Sandy Row Boxing Club issue has put clubs in a position in which they are being scrutinised for something that was not of their making. I think that everybody wants to move forward collectively.

Mr McGimpsey: I welcome that. The point is, of course, that they should move forward together. Sandy Row Boxing Club blew the whistle and so was disaffiliated. That was on the basis that it did not have proper Access Northern Ireland clearance when, in fact, it is compliant. Becoming compliant is just a matter of phoning Access Northern Ireland and giving a name and number, and you get a yea or a nay.

Sandy Row Boxing Club is in one of the most disadvantaged areas in Belfast, yet it is thriving. It has over 200 members but has been disaffiliated. I expect to hear from the IABA next week how it will

address that. It should very much be part of its governance arrangements that such an arbitrary action against the club will not and cannot be repeated. I hope that I will be able to get more detail next week. The situation is not simply an anomaly; it is an injustice.

Ms Ní Chuilín: First, any sectarianism in sport has to be condemned. I want that on the record. The boxing community, throughout the worst years and decades of the conflict, provided support and guidance to young people from all sides of the community, more so than any other sport across this island. I did not disaffiliate Sandy Row; Sandy Row did not affiliate with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association, so —

Mr McGimpsey: It was affiliated — the association disaffiliated it.

Ms Ní Chuilín: OK, but if that can be sorted out with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association, the club can move forward, and that is what it needs to do.

Mr McGimpsey: It needs to cancel the disaffiliation; otherwise this division will get worse.

Ms Ní Chuilín: I do not see any reason for its affiliation not to continue if it is child protection compliant, has governance in place and has, just like any other club that wishes to receive funding, everything that it needs. If it does all that and affiliates with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association, that will be a good thing.

Mr McGimpsey: I do not want to hog the session, but there is another point. The rule is affiliation, but that is not a rule that applies to, for example, Derry City Football Club, which is not affiliated to the IFA but receives funding. A club's standing outside the sporting body is not consistent with what happens in other sport. I just make that point, and it is one that I will raise again in the future.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Thanks for your questions.

Mr Humphrey: Minister, on the legacy of Londonderry as the City of Culture, what progress is being made on the relationships between your Department and councils in the north-west on both sides of the border? Joanna, when you were last here, you talked about Donegal as well.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Derry City Council produced its legacy plan, and we made an announcement on aspects of legacy on 20 November. We are working on projects with Derry City Council. The council is also working with DETI, DSD and OFMDFM, and that work needs to continue. Our contribution to legacy is additionality, and the aim is to ensure that, as we stated earlier in response to Cathal Ó hOisín, I think, it involves not only Derry City Council but other councils that will be amalgamated under RPA: Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle; and Strabane and Derry. So the conversations with councils are continuing, and they are vital because people have big expectations that, particularly after RPA, there will be better investment from their new council. We need to see what that looks like and what we can do collectively.

Mr Humphrey: There are no figures yet.

Ms Ní Chuilín: No, there are not. The only figure that we have so far is our £2 million investment in sports complexes at Daisyfield in Derry, the Coleraine Showgrounds and Dungiven. Our announcement last November contained the skeleton of some of the key projects, but, as you can imagine, there is a list of projects, particularly from the community, that need to be assessed. If they are viable, we need to consider what options we take forward for funding and what options we take forward in conjunction with other Departments and other bodies. It is really important to take time to get that right because, for example, even groups in neighbourhood renewal areas have gone through a lot in trying to ascertain and cost what they want to do collectively across the communities with which they work. All of that is being brought together and factored in. As Joanna said, we are looking at options, and those will be costed. It is detailed work, but we hope to have it completed, sent to the DFP and then in front of the Executive fairly soon.

Mr Humphrey: I echo what you said about the IFA and education. I think that it has done a fantastic job.

Ms Ní Chuilín: It has.

Mr Humphrey: The Windsor Park announcement that you made in the run-up to Christmas was welcomed, I imagine, by all Linfield and Northern Ireland supporters —

Ms Ní Chuilín: Yes, but not by the rest.

Mr Humphrey: Sorry?

Ms Ní Chuilín: Not by the other supporters.

Mr Humphrey: Obviously, some have different views.

On the redevelopment of Windsor Park, your Department, the IFA and Belfast City Council have been discussing replacing the Olympia centre with a new leisure centre at the front of the Alex Russell stand and creating "Windsor Way" as a much more attractive way to get into the ground from Boucher Road. Is that progressing, Minister?

Ms Ní Chuilín: Yes, it is. Peter, you had meetings a few days ago —

Mr May: I met the chief executive of Belfast City Council earlier this week, and I think that we are making good progress towards an agreement. It will take us a few more months to get to the point where everything is signed and sealed, but I think that there is good intent on all sides.

Mr Humphrey: In light of the concerns that my colleague Mr Hilditch highlighted in connection with the qualifiers coming up in September, I am pleased to hear that.

I am a North Belfast representative. How is the boxing strategy work that your Department is doing in conjunction with the council's boxing strategy going? I work closely with boxing clubs in our constituency, Minister, including the Cairn Lodge club, where there are huge issues. When can we expect money to be put into those clubs?

Ms Ní Chuilín: They will probably have already received some small capital moneys for headgear, shields, gloves and punchbags. I hope to have sight soon of a report from the technical exercise that we did on the facilities. That relates to the latter end of the capital investment and will probably be the most significant. When I have read the report, an announcement will be made on what clubs will get.

As you will appreciate, many clubs' facilities are not fit for purpose, but some of them are really, really bad. We intend to look at those first and try to work up support and a plan for how to fund the rest later. However, I am absolutely committed to trying to ensure that I fund what I can in this mandate and get the remainder of the support needed in the next comprehensive spending review (CSR) period. It is important to recognise that, particularly for young men in exclusively working-class areas, boxing has been a lifesaver, as indeed has sport generally. Given the challenges in some areas of Belfast, particularly at challenging times of the year, boxing and other sporting providers have not only kept kids out of the criminal justice system but provided mentoring and support to keep them in the sport, as a result of which some have flourished. So it is important that the commitment, work and investment that we have made thus far continue in the future.

Mr B McCrea: I apologise for missing your opening statement, Minister. I hope that I do not ask questions that you have dealt with. What do you think is the appropriate relationship between politicians and culture and arts?

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am not sure what that means. I think that the appropriate relationship is that we support organisations. I think that you are asking me, without actually saying it, whether politicians should be involved in censorship. If that is your question, my answer is no.

Mr B McCrea: There are some obvious issues with that. I would like to hear your vision, as Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, of how you think that the relationship should be in an ideal world between you, as the lead politician, and the sector.

Ms Ní Chuilín: You missed me saying at the start of the meeting, without being patronising or twee, that I recognised that the Committee has been a strong advocate for the arts, sports and leisure. The Committee, through its reports on the creative industries and on sport and other activities, has led by example. I believe that, since coming to the Department, I have also been a strong advocate for the

arts, so much so that I have always looked for opportunities to ensure that we not only give good, positive support to the arts but, where possible, collectively argue for additional support. Some are still of the view that the arts are a luxury rather than a right, and we need to challenge that. I am sure that you will not be surprised that some still make the argument that it is better to put money into education and hospitals first and, if there is any left in the kitty, put that into the arts — I totally reject that notion.

My support is visible and will continue, and it will do so on the basis that, without the arts, more of us would be attending hospital or our GP. Without the arts, we would become totally unnourished, pale, insipid and boring. Others may say that we are all of those things now, but the arts have made us and our families and our communities [*Inaudible.*] That needs to continue in all its shapes and forms. If people decide to avail themselves of certain aspects of the arts, that is their choice. If people decide not to avail themselves of it, that is also their choice.

Mr B McCrea: What is your relationship with the Department for Employment and Learning, which recently announced some initiatives in Bangor concerning the creative industries? We were blindsided by the announcement. There were other announcements about E3 and such like. What are your views on those?

Ms Ní Chuilín: It is not that I was blindsided; I was not aware. The announcements were made, and I welcomed them because I think that collaboration between the Executive and sectors, particularly those for the development of the creative industries and the arts, is good. I have a good working relationship with the Department for Social Development on developing community support for sport, and using both Departments to deliver fuller investment is a wise thing to do. I do not think that Stephen Farry is out to pull a stroke on anybody; I think that he is looking at his responsibilities as a Minister and making investments accordingly.

Mr B McCrea: Minister, the Committee visited the Barbican and various other areas, where we heard about the necessity of having clusters and working together. Do you have a concern that you can spread it —

Ms Ní Chuilín: Too thinly?

Mr B McCrea: — in too many areas?

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have met Stephen Farry to talk about a few issues, and we have discussions with DEL officials. I have had discussions with Stephen on, for example, apprenticeships to do with the development of regional stadia. On the creative industries, we have looked at issues such as how further education and lifelong learning can complement each other. Those areas are our responsibility, and we should be doing that anyway, irrespective of what happens. A geographic spread is positive, not for the sake it but when it is done in a strategic way that has an impact and an outcome. One of the biggest frustrations from that sector, and across the board from all Ministers, is that there is loads of process but very little outcome. I want us all to work better together to have a better outcome, and I think that that is what we are doing. I was not aware of the announcements that Stephen had made, but I thought that they were good.

Mr B McCrea: Might it not have been better to have had a strategic plan for the development so that people were informed of it?

Ms Ní Chuilín: I do. We are all guilty of making mistakes at times. I am not saying that what Stephen did was a mistake, but it is odd that people in the community were not aware of it, and it is certainly odd, given that this Committee did a substantial body of work on its report, was not aware of it either. It is odd that, as Minister with responsibility for the creative industries, I was not aware of it. However, I still welcome the outcome.

Mr B McCrea: My final question is on tourism. The Giro d'Italia is coming, and there may be other big sporting announcements. How do you see the relationship between DETI and your Department?

Ms Ní Chuilín: We have a very good relationship. There has been a strong overlap since 2012, particularly in preparation for the Olympic and Paralympic torch runs and associated events. The World Police and Fire Games was another good example, as was the City of Culture, with DCAL in Derry, not to mention the ongoing and additional success that was announced this morning

[Inaudible.] That is good collaboration between Departments. They are working well together, and there is good evidence of it.

Mr B McCrea: Given your remit for culture, arts and leisure and their big impact on tourism, might you take more of a lead in those matters, or do you see tourism as an economic development issue?

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Giro d'Italia and, more locally, the North West 200 are certainly under the remit of DETI as *[Inaudible.]* events company. DETI is looking after events, and the Giro d'Italia is an event, albeit one with a strong sporting element. I plan to meet Arlene Foster again to discuss not only that but other ongoing work that we have been doing together. Events are with DETI, but that does not mean that DCAL sits back and waits for DETI to promote tourism and sport. We are involved. We take a collaborative approach, which is the right thing to do and the right way to go.

Mr B McCrea: Finally, how do we spread the City of Culture legacy beyond the city of Derry? Does the voluntary arts sector have any role in taking up that challenge?

Ms Ní Chuilín: You probably missed Cathal Ó hOisín asking me the same question earlier.

Mr B McCrea: Apologies.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Although it was based in the city of Derry, other areas participated and got involved. Indeed, the voluntary arts have relationships right across the north-west. We are looking at all of Derry's hinterlands, including Strabane, Limavady, Coleraine and Dungiven, to ensure that they are part of the legacy and involved in managing the outcome for them. It is crucial that people do not regard the legacy as one for the city of Derry alone.

Mr B McCrea: A voluntary arts gentleman told the Committee that they were looking at a voluntary arts festival based in Ballymena.

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have not met that gentleman yet. The City of Culture did not mean that activities, initiatives and events that happened in places like Ballymena, Ballymoney or Ballintoy stopped. Artists, creative thinkers, entertainers and performers travel not just the length and breadth of this island but of many other islands. Look at Colmcille, the Turner prize, Lumiere and the return of Other Voices this month. It is important that the Ballymena gentleman can participate and avail himself of such events. There is absolutely nothing stopping him.

In my view, the voluntary arts sector and the voluntary and community sector were the story and are the legacy of the City of Culture — they want to make sure not only that such big-ticket events are remembered but that their work, collaborations and commitment are recognised and supported beyond 2013.

Mr McMullan: Minister, I congratulate you on the report on boxing. Part of my question was answered earlier. Do you agree that not only do the statutory bodies and amateur boxing have to look at the report but that it is also the responsibility of community leaders and elected representatives to lead from the front and set an example to younger people in ridding sport of sectarianism? That is not in the report, although I brought it up at a meeting last week, and the presenters of the report agreed with me.

Ms Ní Chuilín: In short, yes, we all have a responsibility to make sure that we support not only boxing but many other sports. However, this report was about boxing. I believe that the meetings that we have with the Irish Amateur Boxing Association and the meetings that will occur with others involved in bringing investment to boxing should concentrate on the children, the young people, the coaches and the clubs that are involved, and we should give them our unequivocal support. It would not do them justice to do anything else. I believe and hope that we will all take that attitude and move forward.

Mr McMullan: Will funding be available to the Irish language sector, including the core funding groups?

Ms Ní Chuilín: The project funding that the core groups availed themselves of will continue. There were reports in the media that that might stop, but that is not my understanding. The 2012-13 and 2013-14 budgets concentrate on Irish language development, Irish language officers, festivals,

publications and signage. The money is for project funding, and I have no indication that it will not be available.

Mrs McKeivitt: I apologise to the Minister for missing her opening statement. Traffic was bad on the Hillhall Road.

Foras na Gaeilge's statement said that the lead organisations must employ staff in both jurisdictions. There is no specification or guidance on the number of posts to be filled or whether workers in the North should have the same experience and skills as those in the South. Given that there is no level of pay-grade guidance for the workers recruited in the North, I believe that there is a real danger of a leadership gap and of people with the right skills not being recruited. What measures will you take to address the risk, and when will the details be announced?

Ms Ní Chuilín: I will meet Foras na Gaeilge within the next fortnight. The change managers should be in place this week, and the plans for the way forward should be completed this week. I will discuss those plans with Foras na Gaeilge. Your colleague Dominic asked a similar question on the percentage of core funding in the North. Therefore, I will ask all those questions, but I do not have the details yet. I have the comfort and assurance of the statement, as you do. It is my job to scrutinise that, and I will do that very robustly. I will try to ensure that the skills need that has been identified will be met by people with the skills and the wherewithal to deliver that service. That is crucial.

Mrs McKeivitt: I will move on to boxing. Last night saw the distribution of Newry and Mourne District Council's civic awards, and boxing clubs were recognised. You mentioned an announcement some time ago on funding for boxing. Most boxing clubs are waiting for funding. Given that the Sacred Heart and the Bosco club were recognised last night with awards, how close are you to distributing the funds?

Ms Ní Chuilín: I hope to have sight soon of recommendations for the remainder of the capital programme. William Humphrey asked the same question earlier. I have visited the Sacred Heart and Bosco boxing clubs and seen the conditions that they work in. I have also met the clubs' people and their families, and the areas are the richer for them. However, they certainly need capital support. As I said to William, because some boxing clubs are in a much worse state than others, I intend to prioritise those in a really poor state and work back from that. I am sure that the member will appreciate and support that. I am committed, as I think are many members, to maintaining that support beyond this mandate, and that will be detailed in the next CSR. That is because, currently, boxing clubs — this is no reflection on the people, coaches, families or children — have some of the worst facilities in sport. It will take years of investment to tackle that and turn it around. Therefore, I am committed not only to making a good start but to ensuring that there is a middle and an end to it all.

Mr Hilditch: I want to come back to the point that Basil raised about the Giro d'Italia. I am not clear about the structure. I know that DETI is the lead Department and that DCAL and DFP are involved. I understand that, as of the middle of this week, no one had spoken to anybody with overall management responsibilities for the estate here, and we are only three months away from what will be one of the biggest days that this estate will have. There will be 4,500 workers on site. Does DCAL have any influence on the infrastructure or management side of things?

Ms Ní Chuilín: No. The operational end of the Giro d'Italia is with DETI.

Mr Hilditch: You mentioned that you were meeting the other Ministers, and it may be a point that —

Ms Ní Chuilín: I will be talking to my Executive colleagues today, and I can certainly mention it. However, they will be aware of it and dealing with it as we speak. I mean —

Mr Hilditch: As of the start of the week, when I was visiting other buildings here, no one had spoken to anybody about it, so it was just —

Ms Ní Chuilín: I will certainly raise it.

Mr Hilditch: — that it will be on a Friday, which is a working day.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Absolutely. I will certainly raise it.

Mr Hilditch: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Minister, I am conscious of your time. The Committee looks forward to further engagement with you and to the detailed outworkings of the business plan for the north-west office and the legacy project moving forward, as well as further updates on stadium development. In the next number of months, we will look to you to further update the Committee. Thank you.

Ms Ní Chuilín: Thank you.