

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 17 June 2011

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 17 June 2011

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Radio Advertisement on the Devolution of Policing and Justice

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the cost to their Department of purchasing air time and making the radio advertisement on the devolution of policing and justice which OFCOM recently ruled was in breach of the Communications Act 2003; and how they intend to reimburse the public purse for this expenditure.

(AQW 204/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The total cost of purchasing air time and making the radio advertisement on devolution of policing and justice was £3,539.20.

The OFCOM ruling did not require OFMDFM to reimburse the public purse for this expenditure.

The radio advertisement was part of a community consultation process and our decision to publicise the availability of the Hillsborough Castle Agreement was vindicated by the fact that almost 16,000 people sought copies.

Ethnic Minority Projects

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the funding for this financial year for ethnic minority projects.

(AQW 211/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A formal announcement on the Minority Ethnic Development Fund will be made shortly and successful applicants will receive letters of offer for the first six months of the 2011/12 funding scheme as soon as the necessary formalities have been completed.

Arthur Cottage, Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action their Department can take to assist with the restoration of Arthur Cottage, Ballymena which was recently damaged by fire.

(AQW 327/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It was with great sadness that we heard of the fire damage to Arthur Cottage, near Cullybackey. OFMDFM does not have any funding streams that would be able to support the restoration of the cottage. We have, however, asked Executive colleagues to keep us informed of developments.

Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland

Dr McDonnell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the notifications which have been given to the staff at the Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland (ERINI) since February

2011, including staff who transferred to the organisation in 2004, in relation to (i) the organisation's closure; (ii) the redundancy packages on offer; and (iii) the arrangements in place to deal with any post-closure redundancy matters; and to outline their Department's current position on the closure of ERINI. (AQW 405/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Since February 2011, the Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland staff have been informed of progress in relation to the closure of the organisation by letters from the ERINI board. The Director has also communicated verbally or in writing during that time, with individual staff on related queries.

All staff received a letter from the Board on 30 March 2011 outlining the respective redundancy packages it had recommended to the Department. In addition, this letter confirmed that the period of notice for staff had been extended for a further three months until 22 June 2011 and explained the reasons for the decision. The letter also informed staff that they would be advised of the practical arrangements for the closure of the organisation by management as soon as possible.

The Board sent a further letter on 26 May 2011 to staff who were formerly employed by the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre (NIERC), one of the two bodies involved in the merger which created ERINI. This letter confirmed to staff that the Department, having taken legal advice, had drafted a business case which proposed calculating their compensation packages under the terms of the redundancy schemes applying in the Queen's University of Belfast.

ERINI is a registered company and it will be closed on terms compliant with the prescribed protocols of company law. The Department will work closely with the Board to address any post-closure issues which arise.

The Department is at present awaiting formal approval of its Business Case for the payment of the recommended staff redundancy packages.

Procurement

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to procurement by their Department, (i) on how many occasions, since May 2007, a supplier has been secured before authorisation by the Accounting Officer and why; and (ii) the level of expenditure in each case. (AQW 477/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In relation to procurement, Accounting Officer authorisation is only specifically required for Single Tender Actions.

Since May 2007, OFMDFM secured eight suppliers through single tender action before authorisation by the Accounting Officer was secured. These assignments had a combined value of £373,716. The table below details the level of expenditure in each case.

SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS SINCE MAY 2007 WITH NO PRIOR ACCOUNTING OFFICER APPROVAL

Financial Year	Single Tender Action	Expenditure £
2008-09	Safeguarding Policy	13,510
2008-09	Consultation of Parents	4,500
2008-09	Public Appointment Survey	6,965
2008-09	Review of Capital Asset Realisation Taskforce	51,750
2009-10	Play and Leisure Policy	270,000
2010-11	NI Water Investigation	24,500
2010-11	Software Licence and telephone support	2,150

Financial Year	Single Tender Action	Expenditure £
2010-11	Software Maintenance	341
	Total Expenditure	£373,716

In conjunction with the Minister for Finance and Personnel, we asked Ed Vernon to lead the Capital Assets Realisations Taskforce. The Northern Ireland Water Investigation was taken by us on behalf of the Executive due to the specialist nature of the assignments.

Failure to obtain prior Accounting Officer approval in the remaining cases was an oversight. Retrospective Departmental Accounting Officer approval has been obtained in each case.

Guidelines on the use of single tender actions have been re-issued to all staff in the Department and its Arms Length Bodies. Staff have been reminded that any proposal to procure through Single Tender Action must be supported by a case to the Departmental Accounting Officer, setting out the rationale and justification for doing so. In considering each case, the Accounting Officer takes account of the professional advice of Central Procurement Directorate and the Departmental Solicitors Office of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Departmental Accounting Officer approval is required before awarding any contract through a single tender action.

Legal Advice

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether the legal advice which was sought by the First Minister in December 2009 in relation to the allegations made against him in the BBC Spotlight programme was seen by both Ministers; (ii) whether they will waive the legal professional privilege and publish this advice; and (iii) what expense was incurred in seeking and obtaining this advice and any resulting actions.

(AQW 512/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No legal advice was sought by the First Minister in relation to the BBC Spotlight Programme.

Corporation Tax

Mr McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for (i) an update on discussions their Department has had with Her Majesty's Treasury in relation to Corporation Tax; and (ii) any assessment, that they are aware of, carried out by Treasury on the effect of a reduction in the rate of Corporation Tax for Northern Ireland.

(AQW 546/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We, along with Minister Foster and Minister Wilson, met with David Gauke, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, and Secretary of State Owen Paterson at the start of this year to give them our thoughts on rebalancing our economy. Following our discussions, HM Treasury published its consultation document "Rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy" on 24 March 2011. As part of the process, we attended a consultation event in London on 8 June to discuss with key representatives of UK business the impact of reducing the Corporation Tax rate. Minister Wilson, Minister Foster, the Secretary of State and Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury were also in attendance. This was a positive meeting with the general view that this would increase the attractiveness of the local economy as a location for investment. Another event is planned for Belfast at the end of June.

The consultation period for this report runs to 24 June 2011. The paper considers the impact of lowering the Corporation Tax rate here but also includes consideration of other fiscal measures for example, extension of the National Insurance holiday, enhanced R&D tax credits and increased capital allowances. The HMT report in particular considers the impact on investment locally of lowering the rate.

Community Relations Council

Mr Hussey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to explain the delay in the allocation of funding to the Community Relations Council for victims' groups.

(AQW 559/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The budget was agreed by the Assembly on 9 March 2011. Discussions took place with the CRC to agree and allocate funding. A letter of offer was issued to CRC in April 2011 and all funding for the first quarter has been released.

Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) Bill

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the actual, or estimated, costs of the legal fees from the challenge initiated, and later withdrawn, by the Attorney General for Northern Ireland to the Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) Bill.

(AQW 585/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are advised by the Office of the Attorney General that the estimated legal fees his Office will bear from the Reference initiated and later withdrawn are £4,400.

Investment: Government Funding

Ms S Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps have been taken to resolve the dispute in relation to the British Government's £18 billion investment funding pledge.

(AQO 13/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Following the Spending Review announcement on 20 October 2010, we wrote to the Prime Minister on behalf of the Executive expressing our disappointment at the outcome of the Review and highlighted, in particular, our concern with the Coalition Government's failure to honour the £18 billion capital investment guarantee made by Gordon Brown as Chancellor of the Exchequer on 8 May 2007.

Following the response by the Coalition Government to this and other representations, we instigated, on 10 March, a formal disagreement which has subsequently been taken forward through the procedures set out in the dispute resolution protocol to the Memorandum of Understanding between the devolved administrations and the UK Government. Considerable work has been carried out by the Department of Finance and Personnel and OFMDFM to substantiate in detail this administration's case and to challenge the interpretations which the Coalition Government has placed on the financial data and its assertions regarding the fulfilment of the guarantee.

Detailed discussions have taken place at official level, most recently on 24 May, following which an analysis will be prepared setting out the areas where there is a common understanding and those where disagreement remain. Subject to any further discussions which may be necessary, a report will subsequently be made to Ministers.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much their Department has spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 636/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: OFMDFM has not incurred any expenditure in relation to the rental of storage space for archived departmental documentation.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Brucellosis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farms have been affected, directly or indirectly, by last year's deliberate infection of cattle with brucellosis in County Armagh; and for an estimate of the number of cattle involved.

(AQW 415/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): Approximately 380 farms have been directly involved. These comprise of herds that were immediately adjacent to the breakdown herds in Keady and Lislea and those within the larger Temporary Control Areas. It is estimated that in the region of 14000 cattle have been directly involved.

Indirectly, every farm in the north of Ireland has been affected by the breakdowns in these areas as previously significant progress had been made towards reducing brucellosis to such low levels that an eradication timeline had been envisaged. The breakdowns in 2010 have set that timeline back by 1-2 years.

Brucellosis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is the total cost to date of testing cattle because of deliberate infection with brucellosis in South Armagh.

(AQW 416/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As previously detailed in the reply to AQW 146/11-15, the total cost to date of testing cattle in the area of South Armagh, because of deliberate infection has been in the region of £150,000 to £200,000.

Fish Stocks

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with her ministerial counterparts in Westminster in advance of the annual negotiations in Brussels for the new levels of Total Allowable Catch for fish stocks.

(AQW 461/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There has been no discussion yet on this matter because the scientific advice from ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) will not be published until 29 June. When that is analysed and considered in conjunction with the Commission's policy statement on fishing opportunities we will be in a position to make judgements about what the Commission is likely to propose by way of TACs for 2012. As always the Nephrops TAC for Area VII is key to the prosperity of the local industry and I will impress the importance of this on my fellow Fisheries Ministers during our preparations for the autumn Council negotiations, and I will also discuss this with my Ministerial counterpart in the south.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans are in place to communicate to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs the importance of the involvement of the devolved regions of the UK, and in particular Northern Ireland, in any negotiations on the Common Agricultural Policy.

(AQW 500/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The forthcoming reform of the Common Agricultural Policy is hugely important to the agri-food industry and rural economy in the north of Ireland and I will use all channels at my disposal to ensure that our interests are robustly represented. I have already written to the Defra Secretary of State seeking an early meeting and CAP reform will certainly be on the agenda for that discussion.

The devolved administrations and I believe strongly in the need for a well financed CAP and we will be seeking to ensure this message is heard in Europe. I have already had a telephone discussion with the Scottish Minister, Mr. Richard Lochhead MSP and am committed to meeting with the devolved Ministers in the near future.

I have met my opposite number in Dublin, Mr Simon Coveney TD, and I will continue to discuss CAP reform issues at the North South Ministerial Council meetings.

I intend to visit Brussels in the near future and will take the opportunity to meet with the Commission Services and others.

My officials too are in frequent contact and discussion with their counterparts in both Defra, the other Devolved Administrations and DAFF colleagues in Dublin. I can assure you that Defra is in no doubt as to importance of involving the Devolved Administrations in the on-going CAP reform process.

Less Favoured Area Payments

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the European Commission's policy review of Less Favoured Area payments and the potential impact of changes to these payments.

(AQW 597/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Latest indications are that the European Commission will bring forward a formal legislative proposal on an objective classification system for areas with natural handicaps later this year. Map simulation work for the north of Ireland based on the Commission's initial proposed biophysical criteria suggested that the re-designated areas would be broadly in line with the current Severely Disadvantaged Areas. I will be seeking an approach to designation that is suitable for local conditions and which provides a fair, objective and robust basis for the delineation of areas with natural handicap in the north of Ireland.

The future of LFA support beyond 2013 will depend on the outcomes of both this re-designation exercise and the EU CAP reform process. I am clear in my own mind as to the need for a robust support framework in areas of natural handicap - areas which encompass many of our most valuable landscapes and habitats - and the benefits this support can deliver in terms of environmental outcomes. Therefore, I will certainly be working hard to ensure that the EU framework allows me to address this need.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 623/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department currently leases two storage units for archived documentation, one on a fixed term lease of £6,200 per annum and the other on a fixed term lease of £6,500 per annum. The total amount paid in rent for the last three years was £38,100 or £12,700 each year.

Freedom Foods Market

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what financial support is available to farmers who wish to enter into the freedom foods market.

(AQW 628/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The decision to enter any market is a commercial one for the producer. Freedom Foods is one of a number of farm quality assurance schemes, which in this case is dedicated entirely to animal welfare. Farmers interested in this market should approach supply chain partners to enquire about potential outlets and returns for animals produced to this specification.

Assistance is available within the Rural Development Programme to support farmers seeking to work together to develop their supply chain. The Supply Chain Development Programme includes dedicated facilitation from an agri-business professional along with other elements of support such as training, specialist mentoring and funding for visits to examine existing businesses in this area of interest. The programme could, for example, be used to explore the marketing of products under a brand such as Freedom Food or incorporating Freedom Food as part of a product package.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Display at the Broadway Roundabout, Belfast

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much it cost to commission an artist to create the art display at the Broadway Roundabout, Belfast.

(AQW 407/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The total commissioning costs in respect of the Rise project are £27,587.53. This covered the costs of artist fees, travel and expenses, site costs for interviews, brief development, maquette replacement, advertisement, consultant fees, development design fees for planning pre-contract to winning artist Wolfgang Buttress. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) contributed £20,000 to those costs.

The Department of Social Development is the lead funder in respect of the construction costs of the project although ACNI have also made a contribution to those costs.

Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether and how her Department plans to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth's ascension to the throne.

(AQW 456/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Two exhibitions are planned at the Ulster Museum to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee.

They are, "The Queen: Art and Image" on the 14 October 2011 to 15 Jan 2012 and "Ten Drawings by Leonardo da Vinci: A Diamond Jubilee Celebration" from 15 June – 27 August 2012.

Gilford Library

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will reverse the proposal to close Gilford Library, Co. Down.

(AQW 514/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Following the recent public consultation Libraries NI has agreed to postpone any library closure decisions until September 2011. No final decision has been taken on the location or number of libraries that may be closed.

The possible closure of any public library, whether in a rural or urban environment is of great concern to me. I am acutely aware of the potential impact that such an action can have on the whole community that it serves.

It is therefore essential that the Board and Senior Management Team of Libraries NI take careful consideration of their own initial 'fit for purpose' assessment of individual libraries, and also the information provided to them during the public consultation process, before they come to any final decision.

The ongoing review of the public library estate is fundamentally an operational issue for Libraries NI. Consequently, it would not be appropriate for me to intervene in a closure decision unless there was (1) a clearly definable fault in the decision making process which would result in the removal of a library

from a community or (2) the remaining library services did not meet Libraries NI's statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient public library service'.

Nevertheless, I expect to be kept fully informed on the assessment process (as will the CAL Committee). This will help to ensure that the best decisions are taken in this very challenging financial environment.

Gilford Library

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what assessment has been made by her Department of the contribution Gilford Library makes to the town's community life.

(AQW 515/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The public library service makes a valuable contribution to our local communities and I am fully committed to the provision of a comprehensive and efficient library service.

I am pleased therefore that the date for announcing the results of the review of library services outside the Greater Belfast area has been extended to the autumn 2011. This will probably follow the Libraries NI September Board meeting.

This time extension will allow the considerable amount of relevant information obtained during the consultation process to be carefully considered. At present the consultation responses are being collated and analysed. This information normally covers, amongst other things, the contribution libraries (such as Gilford) make to their community and the potential effect of the service being withdrawn.

At this time no final decisions have been taken. Before this happens I will be briefed by Libraries NI officials on the Board's proposals.

I can assure you that both the CAL Committee and I wish to ensure that the best decisions are made in these difficult financial circumstances.

Gilford Library

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her Department's assessment of the impact the closure of Gilford Library would have on the town's community life.

(AQW 517/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Libraries NI Board and Senior Management Team see the public consultation process as being an essential element in the process of taking decisions that may, positively or negatively, impact communities for years ahead.

The views of those who attended the consultation meetings have been carefully noted and this will greatly assist the Libraries NI Board in their deliberations.

I understand that Libraries NI during the consultation process have collected a considerable amount of relevant information on the impact the closure of a library (such as Gilford) would have on local community life.

Currently the information collected during the Review is being collated and analysed prior to being put to the Board later this year. I would stress that no decision has yet been taken on any of the proposals in the Review.

As Minister I recognise the valuable contribution that the public library service makes to our local (both rural and urban) communities and I am fully committed to the provision of a comprehensive and efficient library service.

Regeneration of Craigavon House, Belfast

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether the regeneration of Craigavon House, Belfast is a priority for her Department.

(AQW 551/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The regeneration of Craigavon House, Belfast is the responsibility of the Somme Association who own the property.

Events Marking Historical Occasions

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the events marking historical occasions that her Department is planning for 2012.

(AQW 552/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: A table detailing events planned by my Department's associated Arms Length Bodies to mark historic events in 2012 is attached at Annex 1.

ANNEX 1

Name of Organisation	Event	Events planned for commemorations	Date/s of organisation's event
Arts Council NI	Titanic Festival of Creative Arts	<p>Titanic Festival will be comprised of the following:</p> <p>A newly commissioned one-man play from James Wilson, a leading Titanic expert.</p> <p>Newly commissioned play involving the Lyric Theatre, which offers an outreach project for schools in Belfast.</p> <p>Requiem for the Lost Souls of the Titanic, a new composition by Philip Hammond</p> <p>A newly commissioned song cycle by composer David Byers, in partnership with Moving on Music.</p> <p>A special art exhibition curated by Peter Richards at the Golden Thread Gallery</p>	9 – 15 April 2012
Libraries NI	Ulster Covenant	Talk by Roger Dixon	2012
	Ulster Covenant	Talk by John Killen	2012
	Ulster Covenant	Exhibition Central Library	2012

Name of Organisation	Event	Events planned for commemorations	Date/s of organisation's event
	Titanic	Exhibition Belfast, Ulster and Irish Section, Central Library	2012
National Museums NI	Titanic	TITANICa: the exhibition TITANICa: the People's Story (and additional public programming at Ulster Folk and Transport Museum)	31st May 2011 onwards
		Art of the Liner: works by Kenneth Shoesmith, exhibition at Ulster Museum	Opens Sept 2012
		Titanic – A Window on Emigration, exhibition at Ulster American Folk Park	Opens March 2012
		Age of Titanic, exhibition at the Ulster Museum (an exploration of the political, economic, social context in the Titanic)	Opens Oct 2012
Northern Ireland Museums Council (NIMC) - Name of Local Museum			
Ballymoney Museum		Events around K.K. McArthur (from Dervock and won the marathon at the 1912 Olympics in Sweden) 2012 ties in with the Olympics), commemorate Ulster Day in 2012	2012
Down County Museum	Titanic	Titanic exhibition in Spring 2012.	2012
Fermanagh Museum	Establishment of Enniskillen	400th anniversary of the establishment of the town of Enniskillen in 2012, there will be an exhibition in 2012	2012
Naughton Gallery	Titanic	Planning events around the Titanic	2012

Name of Organisation	Event	Events planned for commemorations	Date/s of organisation's event
Linen Hall Library			
	Titanic Centenary	Exhibition Talks Tours	2012
PRONI			
	Titanic (1911-1912): Belfast Blitz (April-May 1941)	A century of change, conflict and transformation, 1911-2011 exhibition at PRONI, exploring themes such as economy, society, leisure and governance. Also marks the centenary of the launch and early history of Titanic and the 70th anniversary of the Belfast Blitz.	May 2011 onwards
	Ulster Covenant Centenary Sept 1912	Hosting book launch for Dr Alan Parkinson's publication Friends in High Places – Ulster Resistance to Irish Home Rule, 1912-1914	September 2012
Ulster-Scots Agency			
	Plantation	Proposed drama project on plantation to tour schools	2012. (To be confirmed)
NI Screen Funded Events (see below)			
George Herron – Individual	Titanic	Titanic 3D digital animation tool	2012
Hole in the Wall Gang	Titanic	Save the Titanic script being developed	2012
Awakin Ltd	Titanic	Mobile Phone app	2012
Anderson Spratt Group/WhizzKid	Titanic	Titanic live television event – BBC	14/04/12
Doubleband Films	Ulster Covenant	Documentary for BBC NI	2012

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much her Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 624/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In each of the last three years my Department has spent the following on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation.

2008 - 09	2009 - 10	2010 - 11
£81,518	£111,282	£95,307

Libraries NI

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the annual budget for Libraries NI for the last three financial years.

(AQW 657/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI was established on 1 April 2009. The table below provides the figures for the final budget allocations for 2009/10, 2010/11 and the initial budget for 2011/12.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Libraries NI	£000s	£000s	£000s
Recurrent - DEL	33,194	32,566	31,555
Capital - DEL	4,844	5,617	2,304
AME (non-cash)	6,635	6,144	6,208
Total	44,673	44,327	40,067

Grants

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants administered by her Department are available for groups seeking to work in partnership to lay third generation pitches.

(AQW 666/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is responsible for the development of sport in the North of Ireland including the distribution of funding. Last year, Sport NI launched its Sport Matters: Community Capital Programme aimed at providing funding towards schemes demonstrating facility need within rural, semi rural and urban settings that will increase participation in sport. This included assistance to groups seeking to work in partnership to lay third generation pitches. The Community Capital Programme closed for applications on 1 December 2010 and Sport NI will be working with preferred bidders over the next two years to develop these facilities. There are no other suitable funding programmes open at this time.

Capital Investment

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the capital investment made by her Department and its agencies in (i) facilities to improve participation in sport; and (ii) improvements to spectator facilities at sports venues, over the last four years.

(AQW 702/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is responsible for the development of sport in the North of Ireland including the distribution of funding. Over the last four financial years, Sport NI has provided funding towards the development of facilities to improve participation in sport and to assist with improvements to spectator facilities at sports venues as follows:

Year	Facilities to improve participation	Improvements to spectator facilities
2007/08	£12,684,011	£3,246,466
2008/09	£16,887,564	£2,439,133

Year	Facilities to improve participation	Improvements to spectator facilities
2009/10	£27,499,089	£6,904,004
2010/11	£4,569,952	£2,803,945
Totals	£61,640,616	£15,393,548

Film Industry

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the recent comments by (i) Richard Williams of NI Screen; and (ii) Rick Hill of NI Screen on the waste of resources by her Department in delivering support to the film industry.

(AQW 723/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am committed to ensuring good governance and delivering value for money on behalf of the public.

In 2010 Northern Ireland Screen raised a number of concerns with the Department about governance arrangements and their effect on the organisation's ability to carry out its business. Since then, the Department has worked with Northern Ireland Screen in order to achieve the optimum balance between providing relevant assurances that taxpayers' money is properly used, and enabling Northern Ireland Screen to operate efficiently.

I met the Chief Executive and Chair of Northern Ireland Screen on 1 June as part of a series of meetings with my Department's arms length bodies. I heard a presentation about the activities which the organisation funds on behalf of DCAL and about Invest NI funded film production. I am very supportive of the work which Northern Ireland Screen has been doing in this area.

Film Industry

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what her Department has done to ensure that the appropriate structures are in place between her Department and the film industry to allow the industry to deliver to its maximum potential.

(AQW 724/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Support for the film industry is primarily provided by funding from Invest NI to Northern Ireland Screen. However, as sponsor Department for Northern Ireland Screen, DCAL has worked with the organisation in order to achieve the optimum balance between providing relevant assurances that taxpayers' money is properly used, and enabling Northern Ireland Screen to operate efficiently in support of the screen industries.

I am very supportive of the work which Northern Ireland Screen has been doing in this area and my Department will continue to support the organisation to meet its business objectives across all of its activities.

Department of Education

Nursery School Places

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of applicants for nursery school places, broken down by Education and Library Board area, in each year between 2000 and 2009; and (ii) of these, how many were (a) offered their first choice; (b) offered their second choice; and (c) not offered a place.

(AQW 63/11-15)

Educational Underachievement

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what action he intends to take to address the educational underachievement of pupils who attend (i) inner city schools; and (ii) schools which cater for pupils who live in large housing estates in towns outside Belfast to which people who were formerly resident in Belfast have been rehoused.

(AQW 186/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am committed to working with our stakeholders to address educational underachievement wherever it exists and to deliver improvements for all our young people, regardless of where they live. I especially want to see improved outcomes for young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, whether they live in our inner cities, urban housing estates or our rural communities.

I will be continuing to implement Every School a GoodSchool – a policy for school improvement, which sets out our over-arching approach to raising standards and tackling underachievement in all our schools. It is supported by a range of policies and programmes aimed at raising standards and supporting young people in overcoming barriers to learning they may face, such as socio-economic disadvantage or challenging family circumstances. These policies include the new literacy and numeracy strategy, Count, read: succeed, the revised curriculum, the ending of academic selection and the publication of Transfer 2011, the Extended Schools Programme, the Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion, provision for pastoral care and counselling support, and the Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry-Bright Futures programmes.

Value of Education Among Families and Communities

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education what action he is taking to promote a greater understanding of the value of education among families and communities, and in particular, families from deprived areas.

(AQW 187/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The value of education to individuals, their families and communities and to the development of our economy can not be over-emphasised. I will actively reinforce and promote the value of education in my role as Minister and I hope that others in leadership positions will do the same.

International research shows that top performing education systems serve societies that place a high value on education; research also shows the powerful influence parents can have on their child's achievement. That is why both the school improvement policy and the new literacy and numeracy strategy promote high expectations for all our young people, along with effective engagement between schools, families and communities, especially those from the most deprived backgrounds.

With particular emphasis on deprived areas, the Department is continuing to fund the Extended Schools and Full Service programmes which aim to tackle underachievement and raise standards by fostering a culture where education is valued and schools work in partnership with parents and communities to encourage and support children to realise their full potential.

The Department also has a number of other provisions available to support learning and ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential. These include the provision of free school meals and the clothing allowance scheme (school uniform grant). Free school meals are provided to ensure pupils of nonworking and low income families have access to a nutritionally balanced meal suitable as the main meal of the day whilst the clothing scheme provides these families with assistance towards the cost of school uniforms and clothing for physical education. My predecessor extended the clothing scheme to primary schools in 2009, the first time that such a measure had been taken here. In addition, the eligibility criteria for these provisions were extended last year to ensure that more children will be able to avail of them.

Shared Education

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education to detail any plans he has to promote shared education among different communities.

(AQW 188/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Our education system is enriched by the diversity of school types within it, which is a reflection of parental and learner choice. Greater co-operation and sharing between schools and across sectors is the key to ensuring access to the curriculum for all on the basis of equality. This need not be at the expense of diversity or choice. The Lisanelly site at Omagh will also provided us with a unique opportunity of developing a shared educational campus where controlled and maintained, grammar and non-grammar schools are co-located and can collaborate together while still protecting their chosen ethos. This project offers possibilities for new ways of sharing teaching and learning and sharing facilities amongst schools and with the local community.

I intend to promote sharing and co-operation through the establishment of an Education and Skills Authority which will be responsible for the strategic planning of education provision across all sectors.

In addition, the new Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy (CRED) will enable children and young people to explore issues around diversity both in the classroom and through practical activities and experiences. Key issues and actions within the policy include promoting, sharing and collaboration and encouraging meaningful interaction between children and young people.

The International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme provides support for projects that enable young people to participate in shared educational experiences. As managing agent for the Programme, my Department is well placed to evaluate the benefits of shared education at first hand and to take account of identified benefits for future policy development.

New Builds for Portadown College and Lurgan College

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education for an update on the plans for new builds for (i) Portadown College; and (ii) Lurgan College.

(AQW 205/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Planning for potential new builds for PortadownCollege and LurganCollege has been suspended pending agreement on a strategic plan for the schools in the Craigavon Two Tier System.

The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) has advised that it held a number of meetings with stakeholders on this matter. It has indicated that the meetings have revealed a high level of agreement on the way forward in Portadown and Tandragee but a lack of agreement between schools in the Lurgan area. Given the contrasting levels of agreement and differences in the school populations and demography of the two areas, the Board agreed that the two areas of Portadown/Tandragee and Lurgan should be progressed concurrently but with different approaches.

The SELB has indicated that it is their intention that any proposals for changes in the controlled sector provision in the wider Craigavon area will be published at the same time.

Board of Governors

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what steps he is taking to review the legal position under which a Board of Governors of a school is held legally responsible for the running of a school, regardless of whether the Education and Library Board has made only one option available to it.

(AQW 229/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have no plans to undertake a review of the Local Management of Schools policy and legislation which makes a Board of Governors responsible for taking decisions in relation to the school for which it is appointed.

The role of an Education and Library Board (ELB) is to provide advice to the Board of Governors to assist the Governors to take decisions which are in the best interests of the school and which will withstand legal challenge. I am not contemplating any change to these arrangements.

Nursery School Places

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) short-term; and (ii) long-term action he intends to take to address the shortage of nursery school places in South Antrim.

(AQW 231/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department, through its Pre-School Education Expansion Programme, aims to provide a year of funded pre-school education for every child in their final pre-school year whose parents wish it.

Funded places are available in statutory nursery schools and nursery units attached to primary schools and in voluntary/private settings.

A Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG) in each Education and Library Board area manages the planning and provision of pre-school places on behalf of the Department.

The North Eastern Education Library Board PEAG has advised that in the South Antrim area, which crosses the boundaries of Antrim and parts of Newtownabbey District Council areas, there is considered to be an over-provision of funded pre-school places.

Telephone Contracts with External Suppliers

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education (i) what advice or guidance his Department gives to schools who are entering into telephone contracts with external suppliers; (ii) what is the average length of the contracts currently in force, broken down by Education and Library Board area; and (iii) whether there are any schools who are continuing to pay charges to now greatly reduced or non-existent service suppliers which are continuing to levy charges lawfully.

(AQW 265/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The Department does not provide advice or guidance to schools entering into telephone contracts with external suppliers. Advice in this regard is provided by the relevant Education Library Board.

Education and Library Boards have confirmed that schools are advised to purchase telephone systems rather than rent, as the purchase option is normally the most cost effective. All Boards have contracts in place under the OGC Framework which covers call and line rental costs. Schools can opt out of this arrangement but the majority of schools within the Board Areas are part of this contract.

- (ii) The average length of the contracts currently in force, broken down by Education and Library Board area has been listed on the table below; and
- (iii) The Boards are not aware of any schools continuing to pay charges to now greatly reduced or nonexistent service suppliers which are continuing to levy charges lawfully.

Education and Library Board	(ii) Average length of contract	(iii) Schools paying charges to reduced or non-existent service suppliers
BELB	2 years	None known
SEELB	2 years	Non known
WELB	Quarterly to Annual	None known
NEELB	1 year	None known
SELB	2 years	None known

Grounds Maintenance in Schools by External Companies

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education (i) how much was spent in each Education and Library Board grounds maintenance in schools by external companies in each of the last five years; (ii) who provided these services and at what cost; and (iii) whether individual schools are permitted to carry out such work by sourcing services themselves.

(AQW 266/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In each of the Education and Library Boards in the last five years the following amounts were spent on grounds maintenance in schools by external companies:-

BOARD	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
BELB	148,000	353,000	364,000	339,000	395,000
WELB	36,694	46,434	42,281	50,468	49,003
NEELB	66,159	84,159	87,867	100,591	95,391
SEELB	74,056	154,756	149,562	184,945	30,975
SELB	72,793	88,398	91,002	99,689	103,282

The table below provides details of who provided these services and the associated costs.

Board	External Company Name	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
BELB	The Landscape Centre	148,000	353,000	364,000	339,000	395,000
WELB	Pellipar Tree Services	11,348	8,765	13,205	11,689	7,674
WELB	RoeValley Tree Services	7,906	11,506	8,153	11,455	13,609
WELB	Northern Tree Surgery	11,725	19,600	16,125	20,331	9,745
WELB	MW Landscape Services	0	0	0	1,979	16,920
WELB	Clive Richardson Limited	5,715	6,563	4,798	5,014	1,055
NEELB	DensHillGarden Services	65,369	80,074	84,862	91,361	89,834
NEELB	PGMGarden Services	790	4,085	3,005	9,230	5,557
SEELB	Clarke Cunningham Sawmill	10,193	192	0	0	0
SEELB	M Large Tree Services	15,049	53,663	17,456	13,899	11,790
SEELB	Northern Tree Services	1,392	0	0	0	0

Board	External Company Name	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £
SEELB	Tony Patterson Sportsgrounds LTD	41,899	85,885	109,862	91,021	11,727
SEELB	Horta-soils LTD	940	940	1,028	483	1,028
SEELB	Hortus Tuus	4,289	3,513	3,518	19,083	1,350
SEELB	Broadleaf & Garden Services	294	0	0	1,495	0
SEELB	Tristan Kinnear	0	10,563	15,054	17,927	5,080
SEELB	Abraham Tree Maintenance	0	0	2,644	0	0
SEELB	Clive Richardson Limited	0	0	0	41,037	0
SELB	Bryan Hynds	13,950	19,420	12,545	13,555	12,255
SELB	C 2 IT	58,843	68,978	78,457	86,134	91,027

- (iii) Individual schools are permitted to carry out such work by sourcing services themselves provided they follow Board tendering procedures and use Board approved contractors in compliance with current procurement legislation.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how much funding his Department allocated to Neighbourhood Renewal in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 301/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) is the responsibility of the Department for Social Development (DSD).

Applications for education related projects are decided on and approved by DSD after consultation with the Department of Education (DE), Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and other stakeholders in education.

DSD approved education projects are then managed by DE through a transfer of funds from DSD to DE. The operational responsibility is undertaken by the ELBs on behalf of DE for the projects.

My Department has managed the following funding on behalf of DSD to NR projects over the last three financial years:

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
£277k	£532k	£701k

Statutory Youth Service Provision

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Education (i) for her assessment of the impact in the last five years that the statutory youth service provision has had on voluntary groups which were already providing youth services in the Ballymote area, Downpatrick; and (ii) whether the statutory youth service provision has been evaluated to ensure value for money.

(AQW 312/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) The South Eastern Education and Library Board is responsible for the delivery of youth services in the Ballymote Area. The Chief Executive of the Board has advised that statutory provision is provided in response to identified need.

The Chief Executive has also advised that in order to secure value for money the SEELB Youth Service have reviewed the need and cost of statutory youth workers hiring alternative premises to the Board owned Ballymote Centre. As a result of this review Ballymote may be used more by the SEELB Youth Service, with the possibility that some voluntary clubs may not be able to use the centre to the same extent as they currently do. SEELB Youth Service will review the support requirements of voluntary clubs affected by this. Voluntary groups providing youth services in the Ballymote area will continue to be supported by the SEELB Youth Service.

- (ii) The Chief Executive of the Board has advised that the SEELB statutory youth service provision was formally evaluated (Best Value) in 2004

National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail his Department's response to the findings of the research project carried out by the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers, 'Teachers' Mental Health: A study exploring the experiences of teachers with work-related stress and mental health problems'.

(AQW 332/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department is very aware of the health and wellbeing issues facing teachers today, and of the importance of addressing them if we are to retain a committed, motivated and healthy teaching workforce.

The Department, the employing authorities and the teacher unions have recently agreed a Strategy for Teacher Health and Wellbeing through the Teacher Negotiating Committee (TNC). I understand that the Strategy has been issued to schools and that the TNC has established a working group to oversee its implementation and delivery.

The Strategy was developed through a process of consultation and the examination of available evidence. The research report on Teachers' Mental Health published by the NASUWT in 2010 was not presented as evidence during the development of the Strategy, nor did NASUWT draw the Department's attention to its publication.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of staff currently employed by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA); and (ii) its annual budget in each of the last five years.

(AQW 333/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) the number of staff currently employed by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment (CCEA)

CCEA employs 356 permanent, fixed-term contract and seconded staff. CCEA also has 178 Administrative Assistants (summer temps) working on the summer examinations processing.

- (ii) its annual budget in each of the last five years

	Resource (see notes)	Capital	Total
Year	£000s	£000s	£000s
2006/07	21527	525	22052

Year	Resource (see notes)	Capital	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s
2007/08	21825	495	22320
2008/09	22602	385	22987
2009/10	21422	215	21637
2010/11	20770	86	20856

Notes:

1. Resource budget reflects net position (ie gross budget less income)
2. Figures include Non cash element in respect of depreciation

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education how much funding his Department has allocated to Neighbourhood Renewal in each year since May 2007, broken down by council area.

(AQW 349/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department for Social Development (DSD) has the lead responsibility for the Executive's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy People and Place.

Applications for education related projects are evaluated and approved by DSD after consultation with the Department of Education (DE), Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and other stakeholders in education. DSD approved education projects are then managed by DE through a transfer of funds from DSD to DE.

Given that DSD has responsibility for Neighbourhood Renewal and you tabled the same question to the Minister for Social Development, the detailed information regarding allocations that you have requested will be provided in a composite response from DSD.

GL Assessment Tests

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what investigations his Department is undertaking in relation to the claims that parents had access to GL assessment tests prior to their children sitting the tests.

(AQW 365/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Schools using entrance tests, in contravention of DE guidance, were advised by the Department of their responsibility to make all reasonable efforts to avoid a breach in test security and to have contingency arrangements in place should such a breach occur.

Further to a statement issued by the Catholic Principals Association my Department received information that has prompted an investigation involving the Catholic Principals Association, the Post-primary Transfer Consortium and also the company that owns the copyright of the test papers used by these schools.

I will inform the Assembly of the outcome of this investigation in due course.

School Transport

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education if he plans to review the three-mile criterion used to assess whether a child is eligible for school transport to a post-primary school, particularly in relation to the safety implications for children who fall marginally short of the three-mile limit.

(AQW 366/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There is no need to review the three mile distance criteria for safety implications.

Parents of a pupil who is not eligible because of the application of the distance criterion, whether marginally short or otherwise, may ask an Education & Library Board to consider the safety implications of the route that the pupil travels to school. Routes are assessed by application of a standard set of criteria referred to as the LARSOA (Local Authorities Road Safety Officers' Association) Guidelines. The guidelines assess a number of aspects of safety on the route, for example, volume of traffic. A pupil who would not otherwise be eligible may receive assistance should the route exceed the limits set out in the guidelines.

Free School Meals

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the application forms for free school meals, if he will consider (i) simplifying the forms; and (ii) allowing the forms to be completed by a third party.

(AQW 371/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) are responsible for administering the award of free school meals in all grantaided schools and the payment of clothing grants which use similar eligibility criteria.

In relation to the matter of simplifying the forms I have been advised that all Boards have agreed on the use of a joint application for Free School Meals and Clothing Allowances for the 2011/12 year.

The use of a joint form means that a common simplified application process is used across all Boards and parents who are eligible to apply for free school meals and clothing allowances are now able to complete one form instead of two separate application forms. Furthermore, the use of a joint form means that parents who previously only applied for one type of benefit e.g. clothing allowance and did not make a claim for free school meals can now be considered for both forms of support. This leads to increased awareness and uptake of the support available and provides additional assistance to families from low income backgrounds.

The application asks for all the relevant facts which ELBs require in order to make a decision on eligibility. It would not, therefore, be possible to simplify the application without leaving out relevant information.

You have also asked about allowing the form to be completed by a third party. There is not a problem with this. However, the applicant is the parent or guardian who has legal custody of the child/children and is currently in receipt of one or more of the qualifying benefits. As such, the applicant has to sign the form.

Protestant Teachers

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what guidance his Department is intending to issue on additional certificates for Protestant teachers who wish to gain employment in Roman Catholic Maintained Schools.

(AQW 374/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Certificate in Religious Education is a mandatory requirement for all those seeking appointment to a permanent teaching position in a Catholic Maintained nursery or primary school in the North of Ireland.

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) provides general information on their website relating to the Certificate including information on routes to obtaining a certificate. In terms of the teacher training colleges, St Mary's students are advised by the college about the requirement and can opt to take the certificate there. Stranmillis students are also advised about the requirement and the college has a partnership with the University of Glasgow which enables students to acquire, through part-time, distance learning, a Certificate in Religious Education, offered by the Glasgow

Faculty's Religious Studies Department. University of Ulster students are advised by the university, of the requirement and their course includes integrated study for the religious certificate which they then receive upon graduating from the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course.

Music Therapy Services

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Education whether his Department received any representations from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety or the Health and Social Care Board before the decision to cut funding for music therapy services for children with severe learning disabilities was announced.

(AQW 375/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I understand that music therapy is a recognised Allied Health Profession and is the responsibility of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSS&PS). The Department of Education has not been contacted by the DHSS&PS regarding funding for music therapy in schools at any time.

I have also sought information from the chief executives of the education and library boards and I understand that they have not received any representations from DHSS&PS regarding music therapy funding.

Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education what action he is taking to ensure that the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register is kept up to date.

(AQW 377/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Belfast Education and Library Board administer the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register (NISTR) on behalf of employers.

As a means of ensuring that information on NISTR is kept up to date, the NISTR Administrators regularly remind teachers on an annual basis to ensure contact details and availability are updated and to contact the NISTR immediately if they are no longer available to undertake substitute teaching. Schools are also reminded on an annual basis that the NISTR system works best when bookings are recorded on the system as soon as possible when a teacher has been engaged for substitute teaching.

NISTR Administrators have recently carried out a number of data cleansing exercises and will continue to carry out such exercises on a quarterly basis.

Administration of Medication in School

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the policy within schools on the administration of medication; and (ii) any proposed changes being considered.

(AQW 387/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department's policy on the administration of medication in schools is contained within the document "Supporting pupils with medication needs". I will arrange for a copy to be placed in the Assembly Library.

There are no current changes proposed to this policy, however, new guidance will be provided should procedures need to be revised. In such circumstances, my Department will work closely with colleagues in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and other key stakeholders who contributed to the development of the guidance.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education whether he is considering taking disciplinary action against any officer employed by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment.

(AQW 391/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Decisions relating to disciplinary action within CCEA, and within other education non-departmental public bodies, are a matter for the individual organisation in the first instance as the direct employer of its officers. Such decisions are of course taken in the context of employment law and also within the context of the organisation's disciplinary and other, relevant, staff-related policies.

Where there is evidence that any officer has engaged in actions that breach those policies, I certainly expect the employing organisation to take appropriate action.

Location of Conferences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to outline the policy on the location of conferences for his Department or its arm's-length bodies.

(AQW 393/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The arrangements for conferences and similar events should reflect the need to ensure value for money in the use of public funds. This is reflected in the Department of Finance and Personnel guidance document Managing Public Money, which my Department and its arm's-length bodies are required to observe. Further guidance, issued by my Department in August 2010, emphasises the need to consider accessibility (in terms of location and access for disabled people) and equality/geographical spread. The guidance requires the costs of hospitality to be limited by optimising the use of facilities within the educational and wider public estate and stipulates that any use of hotels must be based on rigorous processes to prove value for money.

Organisations are also required through their Quarterly Assurance Statements (introduced from April 2010) to provide assurance to the Department on the use of public funds for hospitality. In particular, assurance is sought that there is no extravagance in the use of public funds. The issue is also raised by the Department at the quarterly Governance and Accountability meetings that are held with the Chairpersons and Chief Executives of the Department's arm's-length bodies as part of the formal monitoring of performance and of compliance with governance and financial management requirements.

Maintenance for Schools

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the estimated cost of maintenance for schools in the North Down area in the (a) 2011/12; and (b) 2012/13 academic years; and (ii) the current level of maintenance backlog in these schools.

(AQW 394/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) Based upon the anticipated budget, the estimated cost of maintenance for schools in the North Down area in (a) 2011/12 financial year is £240,000 and (b) the corresponding figure for the 2012/13 financial year cannot be assessed at this stage, as budgets are normally determined on an annual basis.
- (ii) Education and Library Board (ELB) budgets and resource planning are predicted on the basis of financial year rather than academic year; the information provided is based upon financial year.
- (iii) The current level of maintenance backlog in the schools in the North Down area is £9.4 million. I should point out that the new Bangor Grammar School is now under construction and a maintenance backlog figure of £4.8 million for this school is included in the total.

Regulations Which Govern Expenses

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail, for each of the last five years, the changes to procedures or regulations which govern expenses, including hospitality, for his Department or its arm's-length bodies.

(AQW 398/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The arrangements and rules on expenses (including hospitality) that apply to Executive Departments are set out in the documents Managing Public Money; the Human Resources (HR) Handbook; and guidance on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality; which are issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP). A copy of the DE Guidance on Gifts and Hospitality has been placed in the Assembly Library. There have been no significant changes to these arrangements in the last five years.

A letter from the Permanent Secretary to all Chief Executives issued on 25 August 2010 advising that the costs of hospitality must be limited by optimising the use of facilities within the educational and wider public estate and that any use of hotels, etc must be based on rigorous processes to prove value for money. Similar guidance was issued to Departmental staff.

The Youth Council has advised that it follows the Civil Service arrangements and rules on expenses issued by DFP I have arranged to have placed in the Assembly Library copies of the procedures for the Department's other arm's-length bodies. There have been no substantive changes to these arrangements in the last five years.

Emergency Life Support Skills

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education what action his Department has taken in the last year to promote the teaching of emergency life support skills in schools; and what plans he has to encourage this in the future.

(AQW 401/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Revised Curriculum, now being taught to all pupils of compulsory school age in grant-aided schools, provides considerable flexibility for schools to introduce emergency life support skills. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of these skills through the Personal Development and Mutual Understanding in Primary Schools and Learning for Life and Work areas of learning in Post-Primary Schools.

Schools have been provided with guidance material on the development of these vital skills and resources such as the British Heart Foundation's Heartstart Pack have been made available to all teachers. Opportunities for training children, parents and teachers in emergency life support skills may also be provided through the Extended Schools Programme and to young people in youth settings, in response to identified need.

Bangor Central Integrated Primary School

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the planned capital works for Bangor Central Integrated Primary School in the (i) 2011/12; and (ii) 2012/13 financial years.

(AQW 418/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department's capital budget covers both minor works of less than £500,000 as well as major works for the construction of new schools. The South-Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) has confirmed that during 2011/12, subject to the availability of finance, it plans to provide new temporary accommodation at Bangor Central IPS to serve as a dining hall, at an estimated cost of £185,000 (including fees). As the minor works budget is allocated on an annual basis, information regarding the 2012/13 year is not available

A potential major capital works scheme for a replacement school for BangorCentralIntegratedPrimary School is one of a large number of schemes at an early stage of planning and it is currently at Economic

Appraisal (EA) stage and the recommended option is to build a new school on an extended site. However the Department has not agreed to fund the project.

The Executive's Budget highlights significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years and this will impact on the Department's ability to deliver new school building projects. I will wish to consider carefully how the available capital funds should be deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to address the most pressing needs across the schools estate. This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

Unfortunately therefore I cannot provide you with any indication as to if or when a new build for Bangor Central Integrated Primary School might be possible.

Budgetary Deficit

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education to list the (i) primary schools; and (ii) secondary schools in the East Antrim constituency which were in budgetary deficit in each of the last three financial years; and how much the deficit was in each instance.

(AQW 427/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The latest full financial year for which this data is currently available is 2009/10. The Primary and Post-primary schools in the East Antrim constituency with a cumulative delegated budget deficit for each of the three financial years 2007/08 to 2009/10, together with the value of these deficits, are shown in the tables below:

2007/08

DE Reference Number	School Name	Budget deficit carried forward at year-end £
Primary Schools		
301-0817	Greenisland PS	-35,659
301-6038	Hollybank PS	-1,214
301-0880	King's Park PS	-20,076
303-6093	Lourdes PS	-1,186
301-6257	Oakfield PS	-7,734
303-0900	St Anthony's PS, Larne	-35,463
301-0850	Upper Ballyboley PS	-5,422

2008/09

DE Reference Number	School Name	Budget deficit carried forward at year-end £
Primary Schools		
301-0817	Greenisland PS	-39,831
301-6257	Oakfield PS	-49,205
301-0850	Upper Ballyboley PS	-6,969

2009/10

DE Reference Number	School Name	Budget deficit carried forward at year-end £
Primary Schools		
301-0817	Greenisland PS	-39,353
301-0760	Mullaghdubh PS	-1,466
301-6257	Oakfield PS	-52,810
301-0860	Sunnylands PS	-20,501
301-3330	Victoria PS	-5,689
Post-primary Schools		
321-0232	DownshireSchool	-50,124

Woodburn Primary School, Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for Woodburn Primary School, Carrickfergus.

(AQW 428/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The proposed major capital scheme for Woodburn Primary School is one of a large number of schemes at an early stage of planning and which have not been announced for capital investment. Therefore the Department has not agreed to fund the project.

The Executive's Budget highlights significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years and this will impact on the Department's ability to deliver new school building projects.

I will wish to consider carefully how the available capital funds should be deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to address the most pressing needs across the schools estate. This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

Unfortunately therefore I cannot provide you with any indication as to if or when a new build for Woodburn Primary School might be possible.

Educational Underachievement

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education how he intends to tackle the educational underachievement of young people in Protestant working-class communities.

(AQW 443/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am committed to working with our stakeholders to address educational underachievement and deliver improvements for all our young people. I especially want to see improved outcomes for young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

I will be continuing to implement Every School a Good School – a policy for school improvement, which sets out our over-arching approach to raising standards and tackling underachievement wherever it exists. It is supported by a range of policies aimed at raising standards and supporting young people in overcoming barriers to learning they may face, including socio-economic disadvantage. These policies include the new literacy and numeracy strategy, Count, read: succeed, the ending of academic selection, the revised curriculum, the Extended Schools Programme, the developing early years' strategy, the Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion, and the Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry-Bright Futures programmes.

In taking forward these policies, I am keen to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and have recently written to Dawn Purvis to discuss her 'Call to Action' report into educational disadvantage and the Protestant working class.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education whether any disciplinary action has been taken against the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment following its breach of procurement regulations.

(AQW 452/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department's Internal Audit Team carried out a review of public expenditure incurred by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in the area of external events and associated corporate hospitality. The review concluded that, in a number of cases, this expenditure had not represented best practice in relation to procurement processes and had not been carried out in accordance with CCEA's existing procedures and policies.

CCEA is currently subject to an increased level of scrutiny from my Department which includes the attendance of DE officials, in an observer capacity, at meetings of the Council and its Audit Committee as well as regular governance and accountability meetings with the Department. I take the view that this level of scrutiny will need to continue in the months ahead so that I can be assured that the organisation is meeting the high standards of governance that I require and that the public expects. In addition, my Department will conduct a follow-up review of how CCEA has implemented the recommendations in the recent Internal Audit report to ensure that appropriate action has been taken in response to the findings of that report.

Nursery School Places

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) short-term; (ii) medium-term; and (iii) long-term action he intends to take to address the shortage of nursery school places in the South Down area.

(AQW 459/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department, through its Pre-School Education Expansion Programme, aims to provide a year of funded pre-school education for every child in their final pre-school year whose parents wish it.

Funded places are available in statutory nursery schools and nursery units attached to primary schools and in voluntary/private settings.

A Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG) in each Education and Library Board area manages the planning and provision of pre-school places on behalf of the Department.

This year the ELBs ran a two-stage admissions process whereby children in their final pre-school year, who were unplaced in the settings of their initial choice, were given the opportunity to nominate further preferences for available funded places before any underage applications were considered.

The South Down area crosses the boundaries of both the Southern (SELB) and South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) areas.

The SELB PEAG has advised that the SELB area does not extend to the South Down Parliamentary constituency but in geographical terms does cover those parts of County Down that fall within Newry & Mourne Council Area. They

are continuing to address a relatively small residual need in the area by allocating additional funded places to existing playgroups, where registration numbers permit.

The SEELB PEAG consider that there are sufficient places available to meet demand in the Down Council area for which they are responsible.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how much funding his Department has allocated to Neighbourhood Renewal in the North Antrim area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 462/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department for Social Development (DSD) has the lead responsibility for the Executive's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy People and Place.

Applications for education related projects are evaluated and approved by DSD after consultation with the Department of Education (DE), Education and Library Boards (ELBs) and other stakeholders in education. DSD approved education projects are then managed by DE through a transfer of funds from DSD to DE.

Given that DSD has responsibility for Neighbourhood Renewal and you tabled the same question to the Minister for Social Development, the detailed information regarding allocations that you have requested will be provided in a composite response from DSD.

New Builds for Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 14/11-15, given that limited capital funds are deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to secure maximum educational benefits for children and young people, to detail the specific criteria his Department will use in relation to new builds for schools.

(AQW 467/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As stated in my answer to AQW 14/11-15, the work to consider how the available capital funds should be deployed will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

This work will include establishing the priorities for capital investment.

Omagh Integrated Primary School

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposal for a new build for Omagh Integrated Primary School.

(AQW 468/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The proposed major capital scheme for OmaghIntegratedPrimary School is one of the 53 schemes remaining on the Department's Investment Delivery Plan and which has been announced for capital investment. The project is for a new replacement school on a new school site and the Economic Appraisal will require the necessary approval before purchase of the site can be considered.

The Executive's Budget highlights significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years and this will impact on the Department's ability to deliver new school building projects.

I will wish to consider carefully how the available capital funds should be deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to address the most pressing needs across the schools estate. This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

Unfortunately therefore I cannot provide you with any indication as to if or when a new build for OmaghIntegratedPrimary School might be possible.

St Columbkille's Primary School, Carrickmore, Omagh

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposal for a new build for St Columbkille's Primary School, Carrickmore, Omagh.

(AQW 469/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: St Columbkille's Primary School, Carrickmore, Omagh is a maintained co-educational school and is one of the 53 schemes remaining on the Department's Investment Delivery Plan. The project is for a new build on an extended site.

The Executive's Budget, highlights significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years, which will have a detrimental effect on the Department's ability to deliver a school building programme.

I wish to consider carefully how the available capital funds should be deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to address the most pressing needs across the schools estate. This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

Unfortunately therefore I cannot provide you with any indication as to if or when a new build for St Columbkille's Primary School might be possible.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what changes have been made to the catering policies of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment in each of the last five years.

(AQW 507/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: CCEA's interim chief executive has advised me that CCEA's Catering Policy was last reviewed in May 2008. The revised policy strengthened controls over expenditure by increasing the level of approval required to order catering and introduced caveats on certain types of catering during various periods of the year.

The revised guidelines which came into force with effect from 19 May 2008 are to be adhered to by all staff unless specific approval is otherwise given by a member of CCEA's Top Management Team.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) the total amount paid to teachers for attending meetings held or organised by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment; (ii) the average amount of these payments; and (iii) whether these payments are in addition to a teacher's salary.

(AQW 508/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The interim Chief Executive of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has advised the Department that CCEA does not pay teachers for attending meetings unless they relate to examinations and assessment activity.

When teaching staff attend curriculum and assessment training events run by CCEA during school hours, the practice is that schools will be reimbursed where appropriate for the cost of teacher substitution.

In relation to examinations and assessment activity, CCEA does pay individuals including serving teachers, to undertake a range of duties, for example in relation to setting or marking examinations. Payments are based on agreed rates set out in the CCEA fees booklet and are additional to any other source of income which individuals might have.

Currently the payroll and other systems in place do not allow CCEA to differentiate payments between serving teachers in grant aided schools and other staff so the information is not available in the format requested. However, CCEA has been able to provide information on total payments and the number of individuals paid and this is set out in the table on next page.

Activity	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Awarding Fees	£378,009.42	£399,490.52	£428,113.47	£464,267.31	£493,297.29
Centre Inspectors Fees					£3,041.85
Coursework Moderators Fees	£475,200.63	£537,351.87	£563,269.92	£585,361.56	£593,365.72
Examiner Team Training Fees	£45,827.40	£66,451.61	£58,335.42	£66,723.71	£67,301.45
Examiners Setting Fees	£404,852.02	£368,835.16	£424,026.95	£628,434.60	£645,799.54
Marking Fees	£1,931,564.68	£1,925,703.35	£1,955,804.83	£2,017,829.69	£2,076,919.02
Revisers Fees	£350,406.97	£409,235.40	£339,922.40	£583,386.90	£468,409.75
Standardising Fees	£268,617.96	£295,603.05	£300,699.50	£311,181.11	£309,482.80
Superintendents / Invigilators Fees	£423,819.81	£445,587.18	£434,814.57	£462,444.35	£522,508.66
Expenses (primarily mileage, but also includes travel, postage etc)	£593,066.24	£606,982.39	£590,914.87	£580,273.01	£504,794.32
Other Miscellaneous Fees	£428,655.56	£283,305.24	£368,589.45	£265,381.09	£190,991.67
Translators Fees	£1,014.00	£1,450.00			£49,521.74
Writers Fees	£456,915.78	£648,465.25	£673,034.80	£492,566.04	£325,863.86
Grand Total	£5,757,950.47	£5,988,461.02	£6,137,526.18	£6,457,849.37	£6,251,297.67
Count of individuals paid	7050	7694	7911	6661	6926

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education (i) how much the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment has spent on catering in each of the last five years; and (ii) whether there are any restrictions on the venues or companies it can use for catering purposes.

(AQW 511/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

(i) I have been advised by CCEA's interim chief executive that the catering expenditure figures, internal and external, for the period 2007 -2011 are as follows:

Financial Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Internal Catering Costs	£156,743	£151,058	£132,256	£158,699	£145,842	£744,598
External Catering Costs	£178,753	£214,655	£263,318	£223,938	£124,011	£1,004,675
Total	£335,496	£365,713	£395,574	£382,637	£269,853	£1,749,273

(ii) By the nature of its business, CCEA holds a significant number of meetings, internally and externally, in support of the achievement of its operational plan. CCEA has informed me that its Catering Policy was last reviewed in May 2008. The policy strengthened controls over expenditure by increasing the level of approval required to order catering and introduced caveats on certain types of catering during various periods of the year.

CCEA has informed me that all catering at the CCEA premises is provided under contract by the facilities management contractor at an agreed price per item or service level. When an external venue is necessary and a suitable one on the Education and Library Boards' Approved Venues List is not available, CCEA may source an alternative venue with comparable costs. This requires Director level sign off.

I will also ensure that a review takes place to assess how CCEA has implemented the recommendations in the recent report on external events and hospitality expenditure by my Department's Internal Audit Team, to assure me that appropriate action has been taken and that expenditure on hospitality is in line with guidance and at the minimum level possible.

Cullybackey High School

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education for an update on the proposed new build for Cullybackey High School.

(AQW 541/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The proposed project for Cullybackey High School is one of a large number of schemes at an early stage of planning and which have not been announced for capital investment.

The Executive's Budget highlights significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years and this will impact on the Department's ability to deliver new school building projects.

I will wish to consider carefully how the available capital funds should be best utilised to address the most pressing needs across the estate and to secure maximum educational benefits for children and young people.

This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months. I cannot therefore provide you with any indication as to if or when a new build for Cullybackey High School might be possible.

Investment Delivery Plan

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 11/11-15, what is the current position of each of the 53 schemes remaining on her Department's Investment Delivery Plan.

(AQW 560/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current planning stage as detailed in the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Outline Plan of Work (copy attached at Annex A) for the 53 schemes remaining on the Department's Investment Delivery Plan is set out in the three tables below for Primary Schools, Post-primary Schools and Special Schools.

With so many schools seeking capital investment I will wish to consider carefully how to most effectively utilise available capital funds on a strategic basis going forward. This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

Until this work is completed it would be uneconomical to expend further funds on the continued design or planning of schools which could not be progressed within a reasonable timeframe. Hence, projects are being progressed only to completion of their current stage.

It will be necessary to ensure that those schemes ultimately identified as priorities to proceed in planning are supported by an up to date, approved Economic Appraisal.

Primary School Scheme1	Current RIBA Stage
Artigarvan Primary School, Strabane	At Stage D.
Ballykelly Primary School, Limavady	At Stage D.
Dromore Central Primary School	At Stage D.
Ebrington Controlled PS, Derry	Stage C completed.
Edendork Primary School, Dungannon	At Stage C.
Eglinton Primary School	At Stage D.
Enniskillen Model Primary School	At Stage D.
Glenwood Primary School, Edenderry Nursery School	At Stage A/B.
Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt	At Stage C.
Hollywood Primary School, Redburn Primary School, Hollywood Nursery School, Priory College	At Stage C.
Newbuildings Primary School, Derry	At Stage D.
Omagh Integrated Primary School	At Stage A/B.
Springhill Primary School, Belfast	At Stage C.
St Bronagh's Primary School, Rostrevor	At Stage C.
St Clare's Convent Primary School St Colman's Abbey Primary School, Newry	At Stage C.
St Columba's Primary School, Straw	At Stage H.
St Columbkille's PS, Carrickmore	At Stage E/F.
St Conor's Primary School, Omagh	At Stage C.

Primary School Scheme1	Current RIBA Stage
St Joseph's Convent PS, Newry	At Stage D.
St Mary's Primary School, Banbridge	At Stage C.
St Paul's Primary School, Irvinestown	At Stage A/B.
St Teresa's Primary School, Lurgan	At Stage D.
Strandtown Primary School, Belfast	At Stage A/B.
Tannaghmore Primary School, Lurgan	At Stage D.
Victoria Park Primary School, Belfast	At Stage A/B.

Post-PrimarySchool Scheme	Current RIBA Stage
Ballymoney High School	At Stage A/B.
Colaiste Feirste, Belfast	At Stage D.
Dean Maguirc College, Carrickmore	At Stage A/B.
Devenish College, Enniskillen	At Stage A/B.
Foyle & LondonderryCollege	Stage C completed.
Glastry College, Ballyhalbert	At Stage C.
Holy Trinity College, Cookstown	At Stage A/B.
Knockbreda High School, Belfast	At Stage E/F.
Little Flower Girls' School, Belfast	At Stage C.
Loreto Grammar School, Omagh	At Stage A/B.
Lurgan College	Planning suspended. Scheme under review.
Methodist College, Belfast	At Stage A/B.
Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim	At Stage F/G.
Portadown College	At Stage A/B.
Rainey Endowed School, Magherafelt	At Stage A/B.
St Columbanus' College, Bangor	At Stage F/G.
St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel	At Stage E/F.
St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon	At Stage D.
St Patrick's College, Banbridge	At Stage D.
St Patrick's Grammar School, Armagh	At Stage A/B.
The High School Ballynahinch	At Stage A/B.
Victoria College, Belfast	At Stage D.

SpecialSchool Scheme	Stage
Arvalee School & Resource Centre, Omagh	At Stage A/B.
Belmont House Special School, Derry	At Stage A/B.

SpecialSchool Scheme	Stage
Greenwood House Assessment Centre, Belfast	At Stage A/B.
Knockevin Special School, Downpatrick	At Stage C.
Mitchell House Special School, Belfast	At Stage A/B.
Rossmar Special School, Limavady	At Stage A/B.

ANNEX A

RIBA Work Stages			Description of key tasks
Preparation	A	Appraisal	<p>Identification of client's needs and objectives, business case and possible constraints on development.</p> <p>Preparation of feasibility studies and assessment of options to enable the client to decide whether to proceed.</p>
	B	Design Brief	<p>Development of initial statement of requirements into the Design Brief by or on behalf of the client confirming key requirements and constraints. Identification of procurement method, procedures, organisational structure and range of consultants and others to be engaged for the project.</p>
Design	C	Concept	<p>Implementation of Design Brief and preparation of additional data.</p> <p>Preparation of Concept Design including outline proposals for structural and building services systems, outline specifications and preliminary cost plan.</p> <p>Review of procurement route.</p>
	D	Design Development	<p>Development of concept design to include structural and building services systems, updated outline specifications and cost plan.</p> <p>Completion of Project Brief.</p> <p>Application for detailed planning permission.</p>
	E	Technical Design	<p>Preparation of technical design(s) and specifications, sufficient to co-ordinate components and elements of the project and information for statutory standards and construction safety.</p>
PreConstruction	F	Production Information	<p>Preparation of production information in sufficient detail to enable a tender or tenders to be obtained.</p> <p>Application for statutory approvals.</p>
			<p>Preparation of further information for construction required under the building contract.</p>
	G	Tender Documentation	<p>Preparation and/or collation of tender documentation in sufficient detail to enable a tender or tenders to be obtained for the project.</p>
	H	Tender Action	<p>Identification and evaluation of potential contractors and/or specialists for the project.</p> <p>Obtaining and appraising tenders; submission of recommendations to the client.</p>

RIBA Work Stages			Description of key tasks
Construction	J	Mobilisation	Letting the building contract, appointing the contractor. Issuing of information to the contractor. Arranging site hand over to the contractor.
	K	Construction to Practical Completion	Administration of the building contract to Practical Completion. Provision to the contractor of further Information as and when reasonably required. Review of information provided by contractors and specialists.
Use	L	Post Practical Completion	Administration of the building contract after Practical Completion and making final inspections.
			Assisting building user during initial occupation period.
			Review of project performance in use.

The activities in italics may be moved to suit project requirements, ie:

D	<i>Application for detailed planning approval;</i>
E	<i>Statutory standards and construction safety;</i>
F1	<i>Application for statutory approvals; and</i>
F2	<i>Further information for construction.</i>
G+H	<i>Invitation and appraisal of tenders</i>

New Builds for Schools

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Education to provide a list of the proposed new builds for schools which are currently at the feasibility and economic appraisal stage, including how long each new build has been at this stage.

(AQW 564/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has currently 114 proposals seeking funding for new capital builds which have not been announced for such funding. A list of these schemes is below.

Progress of an FS and an EA is dependent on a significant number of variables for example, the volume of revisions required to ensure compliance with all appropriate guidance. As Feasibility Studies (FS) and Economic Appraisals (EA) for major capital schemes come to the Department through different routes, at differing stages of development and may have been through a number of revisions, the Department cannot provide a meaningful comparator for how long each has been at its current stage.

List of proposals seeking funding for new capital builds.

Board area	School Name	Sector	School Ref
BELB	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain	Irish-medium	104-6596
BELB	Edmund Rice CB Primary School and Star of the Sea Primary School	Maintained Maintained	103-0329 103-6464

Board area	School Name	Sector	School Ref
BELB	Holy Cross Boys' Primary School Holy Cross Girls Primary School Mercy Primary School	Maintained Maintained Maintained	103-0194 103-0331 103-6041
BELB	Holy Trinity Primary School	Maintained	103-6623
BELB	Holy Family Primary School	Maintained	103-6566
BELB	Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School	Maintained	103-0313
BELB	St Aidans CB Primary School St Bernadette's Primary School Vere Foster Primary School	Maintained Maintained Controlled	103-0316 103-0317 101-0321
BELB	St Anne's Primary School	Maintained	103-0868
BELB	St Gerard's Education Resource Centre	Special	133-6548
BELB	St John the Baptist Primary School	Maintained	103-6688
BELB	Hazelwood College	Integrated	126-0269
BELB	Malone College	Integrated	126-0294
BELB	St Joseph's College	Maintained	123-0275
BELB	St Louise's College	Maintained	123-0053
BELB	Belfast Royal Academy	Voluntary Grammar	142-0028
BELB	St Malachy's College	Voluntary Grammar	142-0030
BELB	St Mary's CB GS (2 separate schemes)	Voluntary Grammar	142-0021
NEELB	Anahorish Primary School, Toomebridge	Maintained	303-2257
NEELB	Antrim Primary School	Controlled	301-0829
NEELB	Ballyclare Primary School	Controlled	301-0631
NEELB	Ballymena Primary School	Controlled	301-0875
NEELB	Braidside Integrated PS, Ballymena	Integrated	306-6551
NEELB	Castle Tower Special School	Special	331-6676
NEELB	Corran Integrated Primary School, Larne	Integrated	306-6561
NEELB	Crossroads Primary School St Columba's Primary School, Kilrea	Maintained Maintained	303-2218 303-6147
NEELB	Glenravel PS, Martinstown St Mary's PS, Cargan	Maintained Maintained	303-3311 303-0625
NEELB	Kilcoan Primary School Mullagh Dubh Primary School	Other Maintained Controlled	304-0451 301-0760
NEELB	Kilmoyle Primary School, Ballymoney	Controlled	301-0878
NEELB	Millstrand Primary School, Portrush	Integrated	306-6544

Board area	School Name	Sector	School Ref
NEELB	MillquarterPrimary School,	Maintained	303-0438
NEELB	New RowPrimary School, Castledawson	Maintained	303-2109
NEELB	St Joseph's Primary School, Crumlin	Maintained	303-6026
NEELB	St Mary's on the HillPrimary School	Maintained	303-6046
NEELB	St Mary's Primary School, Glenview	Maintained	303-6039
NEELB	St Patrick's Primary School, Portrush	Maintained	303-0547
NEELB	StraidPrimary School, Ballyclare	Controlled	301-0570
NEELB	The Thompson Primary School, Ballyclare	Controlled	301-0779
NEELB	WhiteabbeyPrimary School	Controlled	301-0846
NEELB	WoodburnPrimary School, Carrickfergus	Controlled	301-0696
NEELB	BallyclareHigh School	Controlled	341-0008
NEELB	Ballymena,Academy	Voluntary Grammar	342-0011
NEELB	BelfastHigh School	Voluntary Grammar	342-0077
NEELB	Cambridge House	Controlled	341-0297
NEELB	Carrickfergus Grammar Carrickfergus College	Controlled Controlled	341-0098 321-0091
NEELB	Coleraine College	Controlled	321-0300
NEELB	Coleraine Academical Inst Coleraine HS	Voluntary Grammar Controlled	342-0032 341-0033
NEELB	Dalriada	Voluntary Grammar	342-0012
NEELB	Dominican College, Portstewart	Voluntary Grammar	342-0068
NEELB	St Louis, Ballymena	Voluntary Grammar	342-0010
NEELB	St Mary's, Magherafelt	Voluntary Grammar	342-0080
NEELB	St Killian's College	Maintained	323-0310
NEELB	Ballycastle High School	Controlled	321-0124
NEELB	Cross and Passion College	Maintained	323-0227
NEELB	Crumlin Integrated School	Integrated	325-0149
NEELB	Cullybackey High School	Controlled	321-0172
NEELB	Larne High School	Controlled	321-0038
NEELB	Slemish College	Integrated	326-0289
NEELB	St Benedict's College	Maintained	323-0308
NEELB	St Colm's, Draperstown	Maintained	323-0132

Board area	School Name	Sector	School Ref
SEELB	Ballynahinch Primary School	Controlled	401-1567
SEELB	Ballywalter Primary School	Controlled	401-1566
SEELB	Bangor Central Primary School	Integrated	405-1680
SEELB	Convent of Mercy Primary School St Patrick's Boys' Primary School	Maintained Maintained	403-1384 403-1644
SEELB	Downpatrick Primary School	Controlled	401-6235
SEELB	Killinchy Primary School	Controlled	401-6396
SEELB	St Joseph's Primary School, Crossgar	Maintained	403-1550
SEELB	St Luke's Primary School St Mark's Primary School	Maintained Maintained	403-6081 403-6134
SEELB	Down High	Controlled	441-0085
SEELB	Friend's School	Voluntary Grammar	442-0050
SEELB	Wallace High School	Voluntary Grammar	442-0051
SEELB	Saintfield High School	Controlled	421-0063
SEELB	St Colm's High School, Twinbrook	Maintained	423-0223
SELB	Abercorn Primary School	Controlled	501-1594
SELB	Bunscoil an Luir, Newry	Irish-medium	504-6597
SELB	Christian Brothers Primary School Mount St Catherine Primary School St Malachy's Primary School	Maintained Maintained Maintained	503-1110 503-1126 503-1133
SELB	Gaelscoil Uí Neill, Coalisland	Irish-medium	504-6637
SELB	Hart Memorial Primary School	Controlled	501-1129
SELB	Iveagh Primary School	Controlled	501-1611
SELB	King's Park Primary School	Controlled	501-1124
SELB	Moneydarragh Primary School, St Joseph's Primary School St Mary's Primary School	Maintained Maintained Maintained	503-1516 503-1325 503-6001
SELB	Portadown Integrated Primary School	Integrated	506-6553
SELB	St Joseph's and St James' Primary School	Maintained	503-6675
SELB	St Mary's Primary School St John's Primary School	Maintained Maintained	503-1695 503-1658
SELB	St Mary's Primary School, St Michael's Primary School Foley Primary School	Maintained Maintained Controlled	503-1172 503-1167 501-0909
SELB	St Patrick's Primary School	Maintained	503-1183
SELB	St Peter's Primary School, Moy	Maintained	503-6595
SELB	St Joseph's GS, Donaghmore	Voluntary Grammar	542-0073

Board area	School Name	Sector	School Ref
SELB	DromoreHigh School	Controlled	521-0064
SELB	KilkeelHigh School	Controlled	521-0016
SELB	LismoreComprehensiveSchool	Maintained	523-0213
SELB	MarkethillHigh School	Controlled	521-0083
SELB	Newbridge Integrated College	Integrated	526-0285
SELB	St Catherine's College, Armagh	Maintained	523-0218
SELB	St Joseph's High School, Crossmaglen	Maintained	523-0167
WELB	BroadbridgePrimary School, Derry	Maintained	203-2278
WELB	Bunscoil Cholmcille	Maintained	203-6574
WELB	CraigbackPrimarySchool ListressPrimarySchool MullabuoyPrimary School (Faughanvale Parish)	Maintained Maintained Maintained	203-2277 203-2300 203-3707
WELB	DonemanaPrimary School	Controlled	201-2711
WELB	Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir, Derry	Irish-medium	204-6646
WELB	Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh, Strabane	Irish-medium	204-6638
WELB	HolyTrinityPrimary School,Enniskillen	Maintained	203-6632
WELB	McClintockPrimary School, Seskinore	Controlled	201-2344
WELB	OmaghCountyPrimary School	Controlled	201-2691
WELB	RecarsonPrimary School,Omagh	Maintained	203-2704
WELB	RosemountPrimary School, St Anne's Primary School StEugene's Primary School	Maintained Maintained Maintained	203-0364 203-6069 203-6555
WELB	St Mary's Primary School, Newtownbutler	Maintained	203-1869
WELB	St Paul's Primary School,Irvinestown	Maintained	203-1898
WELB	ChristianBrothersGrammar School	Voluntary Grammar	242-0064
WELB	OmaghAcademy	Controlled	241-0066
WELB	OmaghHigh School	Controlled	221-0125
WELB	Sacred HeartCollege	Maintained	223-0298
WELB	Portora Royal	Voluntary Grammar	242-0042
WELB	Strabane Grammar Strabane High	Controlled Controlled	241-0096 221-0164

Investment Delivery Plan

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Education how projects in the Investment Delivery Plan are prioritised by his Department.

(AQW 565/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As stated in my answer to AQW 210/11-15, the work to consider how the available capital funds should be deployed will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

This work will include establishing the priorities for capital investment based on the most pressing need and maximising educational benefits for young people.

New Builds for Schools

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 210/11-15, in relation to proposed new builds for schools, how his Department identifies 'the most pressing needs' when considering how limited capital funds should be deployed.

(AQW 566/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As stated in my answer to AQW 210/11-15, the work to consider how the available capital funds should be deployed will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

This work will include establishing the priorities for capital investment based on the most pressing need and maximising educational benefits for young people.

Braidside Integrated Primary School, Ballymena

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for Braidside Integrated Primary School, Ballymena.

(AQW 579/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The proposed major capital scheme for Braidside Integrated Primary School is one of a large number of schemes at an early stage of planning and which have not been announced for capital investment.

The Executive's Budget highlights significant reductions in the capital resources for Education over the next four years and this will impact on the Department's ability to deliver new school building projects.

I will wish to consider carefully how the available capital funds should be deployed in a strategic and prioritised basis to address the most pressing needs across the schools estate. This work will be a priority for me and my officials in the coming months.

Unfortunately therefore I cannot provide you with any indication as to if or when a new build for Braidside Integrated Primary School might be possible.

Education: Spend Per Pupil

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education how much is currently spent per pupil on education compared to the rest of the United Kingdom.

(AQW 601/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not hold data on comparative funding levels for other regions.

It is difficult to make meaningful comparisons of per pupil funding across different regions because the other jurisdictions calculate these figures using different categories and different elements within those categories. Differences in levels of delegation and in arrangements for distribution of central funding add a further layer of complexity. Some funding streams do not have equivalents across the countries and differences in spend must be considered in the context of different levels of relative need.

History of the Northern Ireland State

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education whether it is mandatory for all schools to teach the history of the Northern Ireland state in post-primary schools.

(AQW 604/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: History is a statutory requirement at Key Stage 3 and a qualification choice at Key Stage 4.

Under the statutory minimum content all post-primary schools are required to provide pupils at Key Stage 3 with the opportunities to investigate Irish and British historical periods including the long and short term causes and consequences of the partition of Ireland and how it has influenced this State today, including key events and turning points.

Integrated Schools

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education how many schools in the controlled sector could be classed as 'integrated' due to an equal balance of children from the Catholic and Protestant communities attending.

(AQW 605/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Integrated education is defined in legislation as 'the education together at school of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils'. The Department classifies an Integrated school as one which attracts at least 30% of its pupils from the relevant minority community.

Using this classification, in 2010/11 7 Controlled primary schools and 2 Controlled post-primary schools had more than 30% of their pupils from the minority community. Additionally, 6 Controlled Integrated primary schools and 2 Controlled Integrated post-primary schools had more than 30% of their pupils from the minority community.

Religion is recorded as specified by the pupil, or parent of the pupil. Approximately 17% of pupils in Controlled primary schools and 11% of pupils in Controlled post-primary schools have their religion recorded as 'not known/not stated/no religion'. Similarly, 19% of pupils in Controlled Integrated primary schools and 13% of pupils in Controlled Integrated post-primary schools have their religion recorded as 'not known/not stated/no religion'.

Emergency Life Support Skills

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education (i) what plans there are to ensure that emergency life support skills are taught in all schools; and (ii) how many schools currently teach emergency life support skills.

(AQW 612/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The revised curriculum is now in place in grant aided schools and is designed to provide schools with considerable flexibility (within the broad framework set out in legislation) to introduce topics, make connections and draw on a wide range of resources from a range of sources to meet the needs of their pupils.

The revised curriculum provides opportunities for schools to introduce the teaching of life support skills through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding at primary level and through Learning for Life and Work at post-primary level. Guidance and resources are available to support schools which wish to teach these important skills and I would encourage schools to avail of this. However, I am conscious that schools are working hard to embed all aspects of the revised curriculum and to ensure a particular focus in raising standards in literacy and numeracy, and I do not intend to make changes that would place additional demands on teachers at this time.

The Department does not require or record information on the number of schools teaching emergency life support skills.

GL and AQE Transfer Tests

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education how many grades were upgraded, as a result of the existence of exceptional circumstances, in the GL and AQE transfer tests in the Belfast Education and Library Board area in the 2010/11 academic year.

(AQW 614/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In accordance with my Department's policy on post-primary transfer, which is not supportive of unregulated testing, no information is collected about any aspect of tests conducted in contravention of that policy. This information is only available from those involved in unregulated testing.

Business Education Unit

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education to provide a breakdown of the budget allocated to the Business Education Unit for the 2011-15 period.

(AQW 618/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not have a specific Business Education Unit. Business education is now an integral part of the revised curriculum delivered through the areas of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) at primary level and Learning for Life and Work (LLW) at post-primary.

Schools receive delegated budgets to enable them to deliver all aspects of the curriculum, including the PDMU and LLW areas of learning. Additional funding has also been set aside for programmes designed to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship and to introduce young people to the world of work.

Funding for these areas is confirmed and allocated on an annual basis. In 2011/12 the Department expects to allocate in the region of £1.050m supporting activities relating to enterprise and entrepreneurship and £500,000 supporting activities relating to work experience and career-related activities.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Education (i) to provide details of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment's plans to move jobs from the Western Education and Library Board offices in Derry and Omagh, to offices in Belfast; and (ii) for his assessment of this decision.

(AQW 629/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: CCEA's interim Chief Executive has informed me that CCEA has office space in the North West Teachers' Centre, the Omagh Library Complex and Newry Teachers' Centre. However, in light of business need and budget constraints, CCEA has made the decision not to renew the arrangements for the rental of the three off-site spaces beyond 30 June 2011.

CCEA anticipates that the 3 staff concerned will continue to work within the organisation and consultation about the new working arrangements is continuing.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Education how much his Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 644/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education has not paid rent for storage space for archived departmental documentation in the last three years.

New Builds for Schools

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education to detail the new builds for schools which are (i) currently underway; or (ii) due to start in the next 12 months.

(AQW 661/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are currently 17 major capital school building projects where construction work is underway. These are detailed below.

School Name	Project	Capital Cost £M
Controlled Schools		
Banbridge Academy	Extension & Refurbishment	17.9
Magherafelt H.S.	New school on existing site	10.5
Whitehouse P.S. Newtownabbey	New school on existing site	3.6
Magherafelt P.S. & Nursery School	New schools on new site	4.67
Taughmonagh P.S. Belfast	New school on existing site	3.1
Torbank Special School	New schools on new site	10.5
Sub-total		50.27
Maintained Schools		
St Joseph's P.S. Madden	New school on existing site	1.3
St Colman's P.S. Lambeg	New school on extended site	2.6
Coranny & Cornagague P.S.	Amalgamation to form a new school on a new site	1.58
St Mary's P.S. Newcastle	New school on extended site	3.1
Carrick P.S. Warrenpoint	New school on extended site	2.9
Dromintee P.S. Killeavey	New school on extended site	2.1
St Oliver Plunkett P.S. Forkhill	New school on new site	1.5
Sub-total		15.08
Voluntary Grammar		
Bangor G.S.	New school on new site	13.98
Strathearn G.S.	New school on extended site	13.4
Sub-total		27.38
Irish Medium		
Scoil na Faiseoige	New school on existing site	1.67
Sub-total		1.67
Integrated Schools		
Lagan College Belfast	Extension & Refurbishment	24.9
Sub-total		24.9

In addition to these 17 projects it is anticipated that one further project for St Columba's Primary School, Straw, which was included in the capital announcement of August 2010, will commence construction work shortly, subject to a satisfactory outcome to a flood risk assessment currently being carried out.

At this point in time there are no further new builds scheduled to start in the next twelve months.

Given the current financial position I wish to consider how the limited capital funds available should be deployed in the coming years to address the most pressing needs and to secure maximum educational benefits for children and young people.

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 163/11-15, to detail (i) the subject matters on which the consultants were engaged; (ii) the consultants engaged; and (iii) the costs incurred on each project.

(AQW 699/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the project title, the consultants engaged and the costs incurred in each financial year from 2007-08 to 2010-11 are provided in the tables below.

Although the original request was for details from May 2007, the total expenditure for 2007-08 includes April 2007 expenditure as departmental records are held in financial years.

Figures for 2010-11 are provisional and subject to the audit of year end accounts.

Project Title	Name of consultancy firm	Expenditure 2007/08 £
Governor Handbook	B Burnison A Rainey S McCall J Beattie	21,900
DE Catering Advisor	Mrs Patricia McCusker	9,374
Preparation and production of a revised Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	Dan McCall	12,294
Evaluation of FullServiceSchool Project	Bearing Point	47,475
SpecialistSchool Assessment Panel	M Murray B Salisbury G McCafferty R Fitzpatrick G Tigchelaar D Thompson R Downey S McElwee M Cowan	28,000
liP re-accreditation	Kenny Consultancy	900
Independent Validation of the Operational Requirement for the Teachers' Pensions Replacement System	Software Quality Systems Ltd	8,750
Support to assist with the implementation of RPA	PA Consulting	10,090

Project Title	Name of consultancy firm	Expenditure 2007/08 £
Development of RPA Outline Business Case	Deloitte	39,761
Review of Irish Medium Education	Deloitte MCS Ltd	13,704
ICT Audit	PWC	32,250
Communications Support	PA Consulting	9,350
HR Support	Deloitte	26,000
Communications Research	Central Survey Unit	10,000
Independent Strategic Review of Education	Bain Review Team	20,820
Post-primary Facilitation Exercise	Mr A McVeigh	1,368
Network Health Check	Echelon Consulting Ltd	2,590
Preparation of Outline Business Cases for 2004 Announced Schools Sector PPP Projects	PriceWaterhouse Coopers	24,245
To facilitate the Department of Education with Public Consultation Meetings on, English as an Additional Language (EAL) - Draft Policy	Flex Language Services, University of Ulster	16,673
Chartermark Re-Assessment	EMQC	825
Dev of ETI Communication Styles	Mind Associates Ltd	5,871
Independent Evaluation of the Inspection Process	PriceWaterhouse Coopers	29,929
Frameworks Project	EC Harris LLP	210,283
Frameworks Project	Addleshaw Goddard LLP	80,872
Frameworks Project - Court Proceedings	Addleshaw Goddard/Chandler KBS	356,162
Revision of DE Circular 99/10: Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection	Betty Robinson	6,596
Audit of the Youth Estate	Grant Thornton	40,922
Consultation with children, parents and staff in early years settings	NIPPA	700

Project Title	Name Of Consultancy Firm	Expenditure 2008-09 £
Consultation with Children and Young People on draft Education (Pupil Records and Reporting) Regulations	Barnardo's	6,000
Consultation with Parents on draft Education (Pupil Records and Reporting) Regulations	Parenting Forum/ Parents' Advice Centre	7,400

Project Title	Name Of Consultancy Firm	Expenditure 2008-09 £
Children and Young People Consultation: Literacy & Numeracy Strategy	Barnardo's	10,000
Consultation with Parents: Literacy & Numeracy Strategy	Parent Advice Centre	7,400
Effective Use of Data	PriceWaterhouse Coopers	43,400
Audit of ESAIT accommodation	Deloitte	23,728
Organisational Design	PA Consulting	49,450
Independent evaluation of the inspection process	PWC	54,952
Revision of DE Circular 99/10: Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection	Betty Robinson	3,121
Independent Advisor to Consider Discretionary Cases relating to the Unsuitable person's (to work with children) List	Richard Black	9,747
Developing Policy Codes for use by the proposed Education and Skills Authority	Jackie Simpson	1,968
Design and establishment of nominal ledger for MCA	PriceWaterhouse Coopers	1,122
Provision of staff training on payroll fundamentals and training on the maintenance of the payroll system	PriceWaterhouse Coopers	1,122
Installation of Servers	DELL	14,039
Legal assistance for Frameworks	Addleshaw Goddard	48,191
Legal assistance for legislation	Addleshaw Goddard	6,079
Procurement assistance Modernising Schools Programme	EC Harris	258,329
Legal assistance for legal challenge	Addleshaw Goddard	38,982
Technical assistance for legal challenge	Rowell Wright	15,239
Technical assistance for legal challenge	EC Harris	24,623
BalmoralHigh School - options for future use	KPMG and A&L Goodbody	50,137
Examination of the Review of Irish Medium Education's TOR vi: A Study of the outcomes of Government's financial investment in Irish-Medium Education over the last 5 years	Deloitte MCS Ltd	3,397
DE School Meals Adviser	Patricia McCusker	9,197

Project Title	Name Of Consultancy Firm	Expenditure 2008-09 £
Review of North South Co-operation on Educational Exchanges and Supporting Mechanisms	Matt Murray & Pauline Gildea	17,906
Audit of the Youth Estate	Grant Thornton	34,827
FullServiceSchool Evaluation	FGS McClure Watters (formally Bearing Point)	47,475
Audit of Teacher Training for CR Review	Bearing Point	8,716
CR Review	FGS McClure Watters	36,785
Provision of HR expertise for the RPA Programme in Education	Vivienne Walker	11,496
Scoping Study of the Financial Management Processes within DE	Deloitte	6,052

Project Title	Name of consultancy firm	Expenditure 2009-10 £
Readiness change	Milward Brown	2,015
Implementation of RPA Programme	QBM	7,400
Chartermark Re-assessment	EMQC	800
PEHAW Homework diary inserts	Papermouse Design Work	2,275
Child Protection Training	Marcella Leonard	2,300
Schools Modernisation Programme	Addleshaw Goddard	8,698
Security validation of new systems	CLASS Consultancy	4,163
Diversity training needs in early years sector, schools and youth	FGS McClure Watters	3,678
ESAIT delivery models and location options	Deloitte	44,088
ESA Corporate identity and education brand	Hamill Bosket	2,750
ESA Corporate identity and education brand	Tandem Design	3,755
ESA Corporate identity and education brand	Frank Design and Communication Ltd	3,750
ESA Corporate identity and education brand	McCadden Design	3,960
Provision of an assessment centre ESA	PriceWaterhouse Coopers	60,854
Child Protection Training	Marcella Leonard	672
Parenting Forum	Parents Advice Centre	1,250
Strategic HR/Workforce issues	Vivienne Walker	10,113
Determination of terms and conditions of ESA directors	Hays Group	12,315

Project Title	Name of consultancy firm	Expenditure 2009-10 £
Discretionary cases relating to working with children	Richard Black	5,645

Project Title	Name of consultancy firm	Expenditure 2010-11 £
CRED Public Consultation	Participation Network	6,704
Revisions to Homework Diary Inserts	Papermouse Design	1,860
Mandatory CLAS Consultancy - required to validate security of new systems	Goldblatt McGuigan	2,812
Governance and Accountability Training Seminars	Brian Whalley	11,742
Customer Service Excellence Model (2010-2013)	EMQC Ltd	2,014
Lisanelly Shared Educational Campus Project	Arthur Cox	8,260
Lisanelly Shared Educational Campus Project	KPMG	22,658
Turbaries	Jacqui Simpson	3,500
Controlled Schools Sectoral Body Work Group	Chambre of Public Affairs	2,806

School Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 970/10, to detail the rate per thousand of primary school pupils who have less than eighty-five percent attendance, broken down by (i) each local council area; and (ii) electoral ward within each local council area; and what actions are being taken to reduce levels of absenteeism. [R]

(AQW 705/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

The Department now has three years detailed information which will facilitate more in-depth analysis of patterns, levels of absence, type of absence, reason for absence by Education & Library Board and school management type as well as pupil characteristics, such as age, gender, ethnicity and free school meal entitlement. This will inform how current approaches to tackling poor attendance might be more effectively tailored and targeted on types of absence or particular areas or schools and when there is a need to be more innovative.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) receives referrals from schools when pupils' attendance is a cause for concern or when attendance drops below 85%. The EWS supports schools, advises on attendance policy and strategies and offers interventions such as the Primary Attendance Matters (PAM) programme where the school is helped to analyse its attendance data, identify issues and explore ways of tackling them within their own resources. It also offers the programme, "The Big Move", to prepare Year 7 pupils for transition to post-primary school.

My Department regards non-attendance at school as a symptom of an underlying problem and additional steps are being taken to address the issues which are faced by vulnerable groups such as Traveller pupils and looked after children.

School Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 971/10, to detail the rate per thousand of 15 to 17 year old pupils who have less than eighty five percent attendance, broken down by (i) local council area; and (ii) electoral ward within each local council area; and what action is being taken to reduce levels of absenteeism.

(AQW 706/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

The Department now has three years detailed information which facilitates in-depth analysis of patterns, levels of absence, type of absence, reason for absence by Education & Library Board, school management type as well as pupil characteristics, such as age, gender, ethnicity and free school meal entitlement. This informs how current approaches to tackling poor attendance might be more effectively tailored and targeted on types of absence or particular areas or schools and when we need to be more innovative.

Young people who see their time at school as relevant are more likely to stay engaged with education and more likely to succeed and do well. This in turn contributes to raising standards and impacts positively on the economy. The post 14 curriculum is designed to offer pupils access to a broad and balanced curriculum which meets their needs, interests and aspirations with clear progression pathways.

My Department regards non-attendance as a symptom of an underlying problem and additional programmes are in place to address the issues which are faced by vulnerable groups such as Traveller pupils, looked after children and school age mothers. Research commissioned by the Department on attendance at post-primary school by looked after children has recently been completed which will inform future guidance to schools.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) receives referrals from schools when pupils' attendance is a cause for concern or when attendance drops below 85%. The EWS also supports schools through proactive work on attendance strategies and advising on attendance policy.

School Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 972/10, to detail the rate per thousand of post primary school pupils who have less than eighty five percent school attendance, broken down by (i) local council area; and (ii) electoral ward within each local council area; and what action is being taken to reduce levels of absenteeism.

(AQW 707/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

The Department now has three years detailed information which will facilitate more in-depth analysis of patterns, levels of absence, type of absence, reason for absence by Education & Library Board, school management type as well as pupil characteristics, such as age, gender, ethnicity and free school meal entitlement. This will inform how current approaches to tackling poor attendance might be more effectively tailored and targeted on types of absence or particular areas or schools and when there is a need to be more innovative.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) receives referrals from schools when pupils' attendance is a cause for concern or when attendance drops below 85%. The EWS also supports schools through proactive work on attendance strategies and advising on attendance policy.

My Department regards non-attendance as a symptom of an underlying problem and additional programmes are in place to address the issues which are faced by vulnerable groups such as Traveller pupils, looked after children and school age mothers.

Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Education to detail the areas from which pupils come to attend Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim.

(AQW 716/11-15)

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

WARDS AND DISTRICT COUNCILS RESIDED IN BY PUPILS ENROLLED IN PARKHALLINTEGRATEDCOLLEGE – 2010/11

District Council	Ward	Total enrolment
Postcode not provided/unknown/not recognised		15
Antrim	Aldergrove	26
Antrim	Balloo	31
Antrim	Ballycraigy	79
Antrim	Clady	14
Antrim	Cranfield	9
Antrim	Drumanaway	8
Antrim	Farranshane	39
Antrim	Fountain Hill	72
Antrim	Greystone (Antrim)	40
Antrim	Massereene	78
Antrim	Parkgate	6
Antrim	Randalstown	9
Antrim	Shilvodan	13
Antrim	Springfarm	71
Antrim	Steeple	72
Antrim	Stiles	60
Antrim	Templepatrick	*
Ballymena	Broughshane	*
Ballymena	Glenwhirry	*
Ballymena	Harryville	*
Ballymena	Kells	21
Belfast	Crumlin (Belfast)	*
Belfast	Legoniel	*
Lisburn	Glenavy	5
Newtownabbey	Ballyclare North	*
Newtownabbey	Hightown	*
Newtownabbey	Mallusk	*

District Council	Ward	Total enrolment
Total		682

Source: School census

* denotes fewer than 5 pupils

Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Education for a breakdown of the community background of the pupils attending Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim in each of the last three years.

(AQW 717/11-15)

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

RELIGION OF PUPILS ATTENDING PARKHALL INTEGRATED COLLEGE 2008/09 – 2010/11

Religion1	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11
Protestant	568	547	555
Catholic	20	15	18
Other Christian/Non-Christian/ No religion/religion not known	119	115	109
Total	707	677	682

Source: School census.

Note:

1. Based on information provided by pupils' parents.

Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Education how much the new school build at Parkhall Integrated College, Antrim will cost.

(AQW 719/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The current estimated cost of a new build school for Parkhall Integrated College, as included in the Economic Appraisal, is £21.1m.

The Economic Appraisal is, however, subject to ongoing review until a contract is awarded. This is to ensure that it is up to date and that the project continues to represent value for money. Hence the cost for the project may vary until then.

Gaelscoil na mBeann, Kilkeel

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) pupils; and (ii) teachers at Gaelscoil na mBeann, Kilkeel.

(AQW 749/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There were 5 pupils and 1 full-time teacher at Gaelscoil na mBeann at the time of the 2010/11 school Census conducted in October 2010.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education when he plans to reconstitute the South Eastern Education and Library Board.

(AQW 751/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have no plans at present to reconstitute the South Eastern Education and Library Board. I will keep the position under review taking account of the likely timescale for the establishment of a new Education and Skills Authority.

Irish Language School in Kilkeel

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Education what is the average annual cost of educating a pupil at the Irish language school in Kilkeel.

(AQW 761/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Gaelscoil na mBeann is the only IrishMediumSchool in Kilkeel and the status of the school is currently independent. As such the school does not qualify for any grant-aided funding from my Department.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Education, in light of the delay in the implementation of the reforms under the Review of Public Administration, what level of funding has been agreed for each Education and Library Board.

(AQW 865/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The funding that has been provided for each Education and Library Board for the 2011-12 financial year is detailed on the table below:

	Block Grant	Earmarked	Total £000's
BELB	61,515	30,088	91,603
NEELB	85,460	14,757	100,217
SEELB	75,781	29,000	104,781
SELB	88,159	18,008	106,167
WELB	74,166	60,824	134,990
Total	385,081	152,677	537,758

Note: There are still some funds in respect of earmarked initiatives to be allocated in the current year, with an approximate value of £20 million.

Department for Employment and Learning

Further Education Colleges

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether Further Education Colleges are subject to the same quality inspection checks as schools offering GCSE's and A-Levels.

(AQW 274/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Further Education Colleges are subject to the same inspection framework used by the Education and Training Inspectorate, as is applied in schools offering GCSEs and A-Levels.

I should add that the primary focus of Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland is to offer a wide range of economically focused professional & technical qualifications, tailored to meet local needs.

As a result, Colleges in the main do not focus on providing GCSEs or A-Levels. However, a significant number of young people from schools attend college in the evening to top up the provision in A-Level teaching.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much funding his Department has allocated to Neighbourhood Renewal in each year since May 2007, broken down by council area.

(AQW 350/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning does not fund any services, either fully or partly, under Neighbourhood Renewal. It does, however, deliver a range of programmes related to employment and skills which aim to address disadvantage and are targeted at the needs of individuals, many of whom live in Neighbourhood Renewal areas.

Further and Higher Education

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the future of private finance initiatives in relation to further and higher education.

(AQW 370/11-15)

Dr Farry: Further Education colleges must, as part of Treasury Guidance, consider all procurement options including Public Private Partnerships.

Decisions on procurement methods are based on value for money considerations and funding from my Department is subject to full economic appraisals.

As autonomous bodies, Higher Education Institutions are also able to enter into contracts with private sector providers to form Public Private Partnerships. These too are subject to full economic appraisals and value for money consideration. Decisions about future private finance initiatives in both further and higher education will therefore be considered on a case by case basis.

Stranmillis University College

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he intends to maintain the Christian ethos of Stranmillis University College.

(AQW 390/11-15)

Dr Farry: I will assume that the question refers to the position should the proposed merger with Queen's University Belfast proceed.

This issue was discussed in some detail with Stranmillis, Queen's and the Transferor Representatives' Council prior to the launch of the public consultation. In addition, legal advice was also sought on the matter. The resulting proposal, as outlined in the consultation document, is to provide for relevant key stakeholders to have a direct advisory role in the proposed Stranmillis School of Education at Queen's. This would mean the establishment of a Stakeholder Forum on which interested parties, including the Transferors, will have appropriate guaranteed representation. The Stakeholder Forum would have an advisory and consultative role in the governance of the new School of Education. Moreover, Queen's has also given an assurance that there will be no change to the teaching of the agreed Religious Education curriculum should the proposed merger take place and a sufficient number of teachers will be trained to deliver the agreed curriculum in any school in Northern Ireland.

Emergency Life Support Skills

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department has taken in the last year to promote the teaching of emergency life support skills in all further and higher educational facilities; and what plans he has to encourage this in the future.

(AQW 400/11-15)

Dr Farry: While my Department sets the strategic direction for the Further Education Sector, each College is responsible for its own curriculum offer including the teaching of emergency life support skills. However, I can advise that all Further Education Colleges offer courses in emergency life support skills in a wide range of locations, including College campuses, community venues, family centres and businesses. Such provision is included in a portfolio of Emergency First Aid Courses ranging from short courses such as Public First Aid, to accredited qualifications such as emergency first aid at work.

Further Education Colleges have promoted the teaching of emergency life support skills by using initiatives from organisations such as the British Heart Foundation using the programme 'HeartStartSchool'. Colleges select specific staff as trainers in basic life support (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation, Heart Attack Signs and Symptoms, dealing with bleeding and choking). Colleges are planning to develop further the number of trained staff in this area, and to include Emergency Life Skills training in the majority of students' induction to College in September 2011.

At Queen's University, emergency life support skills are taught to all first year medical, dental, nursing and midwifery students. The University also has around 330 staff first aiders who are trained in emergency life support skills.

At the University of Ulster, all pre-registration nursing students are taught emergency life support skills based on nationally agreed Resuscitation Council guidelines. Students enrolled on Allied Health Professional courses at the University are also provided with training in basic life support skills including cardiopulmonary resuscitation in their first year of study.

StranmillisUniversityCollege proactively promotes First Aid training for staff and students, particularly through its Students' Union. Similarly, at St Mary's UniversityCollege, the Students' Union organises a Paediatric First Aid Course on an annual basis which is delivered and accredited by the Order of Malta.

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much his Department has spent on external consultants in each financial year since May 2007.

(AQW 410/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department has spent the following amounts on external consultants in each financial year since May 2007.

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 (Draft)
£'000	453	556	303	292

Kilcooley Women's Education Centre, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to review funding for the Kilcooley Women's Education Centre, Bangor.

(AQW 412/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Kilcooley Women's Education Centre was one of numerous organisations that received support from the Training for Women Network (TWN), an umbrella organisation that was funded under the first call for funding for the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme, 2007-13.

TWN applied for funding under the recent second call for funding, and stated that they would deliver employability training initiatives at a local level through eight partner organisations, including the Kilcooley Women's Centre. However, their application did not score sufficiently highly to be awarded funding under this competitive process. TWN appealed this decision unsuccessfully. The recent second call for applications is now closed and no further applications may be considered.

My Department does not have any statutory basis or remit to core fund any voluntary or community organisations to deliver training or education and has provided no direct funding to the Kilcooley Women's Education Centre.

Educational Attainment

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to improve educational attainment for people from Protestant working class communities.

(AQW 413/11-15)

Dr Farry: As I explained in a recent response to a similar question, by aiming to meet the needs of individual learners my Department's education and training programmes are designed to improve educational achievement across Northern Ireland, including in Protestant working class communities.

As I outlined in the Assembly debate on this topic on 31 May, relevant Departmental programmes include: Training for Success, which guarantees a training place for 16 and 17 year olds, including those who have disengaged from learning; Essential Skills provision, to raise the levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT competence of young people and adults; a wide range of courses in FE colleges, again for school leavers and adults, delivered on a full-time and part-time basis, and with an access programme designed specifically to encourage and support disengaged adults back into learning (FE programmes include a range of professional and technical courses from entry level through to Level 4, delivered in a variety of settings and including Essential Skills, employability skills and access to university courses); the Apprenticeship programme, and programmes designed to raise the skill and qualifications levels of the existing workforce; projects to promote higher education among working class young people (for example "Discovering Queens" and Ulster University's "Step Up Programme", both designed to encourage aspiration towards university education particularly in disadvantaged areas), a key priority that will be strengthened through the Department's widening participation strategy which will aim to raise the aspiration of young people to progress to higher education; and the Steps to Work programme, which provides a range of assistance to unemployed and economically inactive people, including access to Essential Skills provision and to short accredited training courses.

The Department is also leading on the development of a cross-Departmental strategy to address the issue of those not in education, employment or training, the so called NEETs group. Working in partnership with others, this strategy will aim to reduce the number of young people who are most at risk of remaining outside education, employment or training. Closely linked to this work, is collaboration between Further Education colleges and post primary schools in delivering a stimulating and relevant educational experience for 14 to 19 year olds in school, through the Entitlement Framework. A key aim is to raise the educational achievement of young people before they leave school.

Entry to, and participation on, these programmes is accompanied by relevant advice and guidance, either from the Department's staff, or from education and training providers. A high priority of all of these programmes, and the advice given, is to widen participation in learning that leads to recognised qualifications, and this will continue to be a priority for me and for my Department.

While there is, clearly, no room for complacency, I indicated in the debate some encouraging trends in the participation in education on the part of those from deprived areas that are predominantly Protestant. In particular, the fact that in the three year period to 2009/10 there was a 10% increase in FE enrolments, a 71% increase in Essential Skills enrolments, and a 7% increase in higher education participation.

In the Assembly debate, there was a strong recognition that while my Department and the Department of Education have important lead roles to play in this area, there is a complexity of wider societal

factors that will have to be addressed by other Departments and their agencies, if these issues are to be addressed effectively. Therefore, I look forward to continuing to work with others in this important area.

Corporation Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of whether Northern Ireland has, or will have, the skills required to ensure increased foreign investment, as predicted by the Economic Advisory Group, should there be a reduction in the level of corporation tax.

(AQW 438/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Economic Advisory Group paper identifies corporate tax as an important factor in attracting inward investors; however it is not the sole factor. Research shows that, increasingly in the global marketplace, it is skills, innovative capacity and work readiness that businesses are seeking as they make their investment location decisions.

Any reduction in the corporation tax rate will have maximum economic impact when it sits within a business-friendly environment. In practice, for many businesses, this means access to a highly skilled and innovative workforce, and considerable work is underway to ensure that Northern Ireland proves an attractive proposition for such investors.

My Department and Invest Northern Ireland are working very closely together under the Assured Skills programme to ensure that the skills of our workforce match the requirements of Foreign Direct Investment companies.

Support from the Assured Skills programme recently played a strong part in convincing Heritage International Fund Managers Limited, a fund administration services company, to invest in Northern Ireland. Their decision was strongly influenced by the availability of well qualified and skilled staff as well as the competitive cost environment.

In addition, it is important that we continue to refine our offering to match the profile of those companies that we are trying to attract. We are currently undertaking a research project in conjunction with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to assess the future prospects for improving the quality of foreign direct investment to Northern Ireland.

The recently updated Skills Strategy: "Success through Skills – Transforming Futures" will also help ensure we have the right skills to grow the Northern Ireland economy. The Strategy looks at our current skills base, examines the skills we will need in the future and highlights areas for action, such as higher level skills, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic skills and Management and Leadership skills.

To achieve this, the implementation plan for the Strategy will increasingly focus on the up-skilling of those people already in the workforce; and, as the economy grows, on attracting moderate levels of appropriately skilled people to Northern Ireland.

European Union Monitoring Committee Report's Working Definition of Anti-Semitism

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the message sent out to ethnic minorities by the University and Colleges Union's decision to condemn and disassociate itself from the European Union Monitoring Committee Report's working definition of Anti-Semitism; and whether he plans to call the Union to account for this action.

(AQW 442/11-15)

Dr Farry: The University and Colleges is an independent union.

There is no place for racism of any form, including anti-Semitism, in further and higher education, or in society. Our further education colleges and higher education institutions have measures in place to ensure that their students are not subject to threatening or abusive behaviour on campus. They have access to a strong legislative framework and guidance to help them deal effectively with instances

of intolerance, racism and harassment on campus. I expect them to vigorously tackle these issues when they arise. Institutions and students have recourse to the law to tackle anti-Semitism, and the institutions themselves are accountable to the courts for their actions in relation to equality and tackling harassment.

I will continue to encourage and support our institutions to ensure that they provide a welcoming learning environment for all people, regardless of their identity or background.

Foreign Students

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many foreign students were attending university in 2008/09.

(AQW 450/11-15)

Dr Farry: In the 2008/09 academic year there were 5,235 students enrolled at Northern Ireland Higher Education institutions whose domicile was outside the United Kingdom. Of these 5,235 students, 3,685 were domiciled inside the European Union.

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

1. These figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.
1. Foreign students are defined as those who are domiciled outside of Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Proposed Merger of Queen's University and Stranmillis University College

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what the estimated cost is of the proposed merger of Queen's University and Stranmillis University College.

(AQW 451/11-15)

Dr Farry: It is my understanding that should the merger proceed, it will be neutral in budgetary terms for my Department. Both Stranmillis University College and Queen's University are funded on the basis of student numbers and research activity carried out. There are no proposals that the number of students at the merged institution will be greater than the number attending both institutions at present. My Department will also need to await the outcome of the next research assessment exercise, expected to be completed in 2014, to learn if there is any impact on overall research funding.

Further Education: Maintenance

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department is making any bids through the June monitoring round for essential maintenance to Further Education Colleges.

(AQO 66/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department has made a capital bid for £2m in June Monitoring in respect of essential minor works required in the Northern and Southern Regional Colleges where there has been no significant investment in many campuses of their estate. In contrast, there has been an extensive capital programme in recent years to improve the quality of the accommodation across the other Further Education Colleges to meet the needs of industry. A Strategic Outline business case to rebuild both the Northern and Southern Colleges' estates has been recently approved by the Department of Finance and Personnel. Clearly, until this major capital project work is completed, ongoing maintenance/minor works is required.

Agency Workers

Mr Cree asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the estimated cost to private sector employers and recruitment agencies of implementing the EU Agency Workers Directive.

(AQO 68/11-15)

Dr Farry: Although the final policy on the transposition of the Directive has not yet been agreed, the impact assessment which accompanied the Department's consultation indicates that private sector employers face annual increased costs of £27.6m, whilst recruitment agencies face annual increased costs of £0.7m. These costs have been calculated on the basis of a 12 week qualifying period for equal treatment.

If the Directive is transposed without this qualifying period, the cost would be £66.1m for private sector employers and £1.9m for recruitment agencies.

For private sector employers, the majority of these costs are made up increased wages, whilst for recruitment agencies the costs mainly comprise administrative burdens.

University of Ulster: Magee Campus

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the viability of expanding the University of Ulster's Magee Campus and whether an expansion would help achieve inclusivity and equality.

(AQO 69/11-15)

Dr Farry: Clearly an expansion at the Magee Campus would be viable if the University of Ulster could attract sufficient students who meet the entrance criteria and secure a sustainable funding stream to meet the infrastructural and teaching costs involved. Under the existing arrangements the costs which would fall to the public purse of an additional 1000 students at Magee would be in the region of £8m annually. It is not immediately apparent, however, how that level of additionality could be found within the resource envelope made available to me by the previous Executive and Assembly.

Regarding inclusivity and equality I am of the view that any investment in Higher Education will help promote those goals. We have a very good track record to date with participation rates among students from socio-economic backgrounds the highest in the UK and the development of a Widening Participation Strategy will seek to maintain that position.

Essential Skills

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the Essential Skills Strategy.

(AQO 70/11-15)

Dr Farry: The revised Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland 'Success through Skills – Transforming Futures' recognises that while there has been progress in raising Northern Ireland's skills profile, more needs to be done to ensure that it is able to compete globally. This will require a substantial increase in the number of people having skills and qualifications at the higher levels. My department has therefore set goals within the Skills Strategy to address the issue of increasing the numbers of participants achieving qualifications at all levels including at Level 2 and Essential Skills, and the rate at which qualifications are achieved.

The 'Essential Skills for Living' Strategy, launched in 2002, continues to address the literacy, numeracy and ICT needs of adults within Northern Ireland. Essential Skills are promoted in a wide range of settings, including the voluntary and community sector, the workplace, prisons and with other hard to reach groups. It is also incorporated, where appropriate, into my Department's further education and training programmes.

To date, just over 59,000 individuals have achieved almost 104,000 Essential Skills qualifications, contributing to the early achievement of a key PSA target and providing learners with the skills they need to progress at home and at work.

A full library of up to date reports detailing the performance of Essential Skills can be accessed at: <http://www.delni.gov.uk/essential-skills-factsheets.htm>

Further Education: Construction Workers

Ms Gildernew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what initiatives have been undertaken by Further Education Colleges to help unemployed construction workers to re-skill or diversify.

(AQO 71/11-15)

Dr Farry: Further Education colleges offer an extensive range of full and part time courses to prospective students including the unemployed.

Further Education colleges have been running a number of specific programmes that have targeted the unemployed, including construction workers, such as: Kickstart to Work, Kickstart IT, Steering to Success, Employ Me, Step Up to Sustainable Employment, Wind Turbine Training for Electricians and general re-skilling/up-skilling courses in renewable technologies.

Some of these programmes, for example the European Social Fund programme, Employ Me developed by Southern Regional College, are targeted at reskilling those made redundant in the construction industry.

Further Education colleges are also involved with the delivery of the NVQ strand of the Department's Steps to Work programme.

Employment Programmes: Benefits

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what measures his Department is taking to deal with changes to the benefits system resulting in people moving off Incapacity Benefit and onto Department-led job programmes.

(AQO 72/11-15)

Dr Farry: Approximately 76,000 individuals will have their claim to Incapacity Benefit reassessed over a 3 year period beginning in 2011/12.

It is estimated that 39,000 clients on Employment and Support Allowance and around 7,500 Jobseeker's Allowance claimants will be required to engage with my Department over this period.

Officials have been working closely with their colleagues in the Social Security Agency to ensure there is appropriate advice, support and guidance to clients at every stage of this process.

My main priority is to increase employability for this client group through tailored assistance by trained Employment Service Advisers and access to a wide range of work-focused support through the Steps to Work programme and the Disablement Employment Service programmes.

Higher Education: Postgraduate Awards

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what level of funding his Department is providing for Postgraduate Awards in the 2010/11 academic year.

(AQO 73/11-15)

Dr Farry: In the 2010/11 academic year, my Department is funding 795 postgraduate students at Queen's University and the University of Ulster. To date my Department has made payments of £16.2m in respect of postgraduate students and anticipates making further payments of £11.4m. This would equate to total funding of £27.6m in the current academic year.

DEL: Welfare Reforms

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consideration he has given to the impact of the proposed welfare reforms on his Department.

(AQO 74/11-15)

Dr Farry: I am acutely aware of the impact of welfare reform on my Department. The outcome for budget 2010 provided insufficient resources to enable me to provide the additional resources necessary to take forward the welfare reforms I have therefore submitted two bids in the June monitoring round which are critical.

£2.5 million pounds is urgently needed to allow the Department to develop and deliver an improved pre-work programme service to the unemployed and economically inactive.

In addition £3.7 million is needed to provide appropriate support to help those people get back into work who are affected by the Incapacity Benefit/Income Support Reassessment programme which is currently underway.

Northern Ireland's needs are greater than the rest of the UK. The unemployment rate for 18 – 24 year olds in Northern Ireland is 20.3% compared to the UK average rate of 17.8%. The economic inactivity rate is 27.8% compared to a UK average of 23.2%. These figures make a compelling argument for more investment in back to work support locally compared to Great Britain.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) how much Invest NI has invested in venture capital funds; and (ii) how much money has been recovered by Invest NI on funds, in which Invest NI or the Industrial Development Board had invested, which were either closed or on fund closure distributions.

(AQW 258/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): Crescent Capital II was set up in March 2004. It is a £22.5 million fund and Invest NI is a 33.3% investor alongside a number of private investors. The Fund is still operational. Funds will not be recovered by Invest NI until the end of the 10 year fund life.

Invest NI invested £4.875m in Crescent Capital II in the last 5 years as follows:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
£'000	-	1,500	750	2,250	375	4,875

Within NISPO, (NI Spin-outs), £5m has been committed to the Invest Growth Fund of which £2.15m has been drawn down. Two £1m university funds were launched in 2009 and this funding has been drawn down by the universities.

Invest NI invested £2.15m in NISPO in the last 3 years as follows:

	2009	2010	2011	Total
£'000	400	500	1,250	2,150

Invest NI is the only investor in these funds and the funds are still active

Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether it is general practice for Invest NI to be a subordinate investment partner when investing public money in venture capital funds; and if so, why this is the case.

(AQW 259/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's approach to 'Access to Capital' is to intervene to provide funds and facilitate the development of the venture capital and debt finance markets in Northern Ireland where there is identified market failure in the provision of funding for small companies.

There are structural problems associated with the Northern Ireland economy that have an impact on suppressing demand for equity finance and deterring investors. These problems, including the peripherality of Northern Ireland, its small business population and high levels of economic inactivity, have all had a negative impact on the demand for early stage and development venture capital.

Given that Northern Ireland is a small regional economy, these structural problems are unlikely to change in the short term, and in recognising this, the purpose of the proposed publicly backed VC initiatives is to continue to stimulate the VC market.

The EU Commission recognises that there is market failure in early stage venture capital in all regions of the UK with the exception of London and SE England. In line with other UK funds established around the same time as Crescent II, government intervention was required, in the form of subordinated investment at fund level.

The proposed new £30m Development Fund must raise £20m of private sector funding within the limited partnership, with a maximum of £10m (33%) of its funding from Invest NI. The review of market failure focussed on the difficulty of raising private investment in a regional fund of this nature. It was concluded that, in order to raise £20m of private funding, the public sector element required to be subordinated.

It is not general practice for Invest NI to be a subordinated investment partner in venture capital funds and the proposed Co-investment fund will invest with the private sector on equal terms. There is no subordination.

Invest NI's Subordinated Investor Policy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) to detail the cost to the public purse of Invest NI's subordinated investor policy in each of the last five years, including funds closed in the last five years but where the investment was made by Invest NI or the Industrial Development Board prior to this five year period; and (ii) how investments which show no return are shown in their accounts;

(AQW 260/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Crescent Capital II investment fund is the only active fund in which Invest NI has a subordinated investment.

Crescent Capital II was set up in March 2004. It is a £22.5 million fund and Invest NI is a 33% investor alongside a number of private investors. The initial cost to Invest NI was therefore £7.5m.

Invest NI invested £4.875m in Crescent Capital II in the last 5 years as follows:

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
£'000	-	1,500	750	2,250	375	4,875

When the Crescent Capital II investment fund is closed, returns will be made to the investor and if a shortfall is realised, the cost of Invest NI's investment will be reported.

Each year, Invest NI reports a 'fair value' assessment of its investments in its published Annual Report and Accounts.

Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in each of the last five years, how much has been written off by Invest NI as venture capital investments that reaped no return.

(AQW 261/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has not written off any venture capital investments in the last five years.

Ballycastle to Campbelltown Ferry Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what financial assistance her Department has provided to the Ballycastle to Campbelltown ferry service; and (ii) for her assessment of the importance of this route to the tourist industry.

(AQW 302/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Scottish Government leads on the Ballycastle to Campbelltown ferry service matter and they are responsible for taking it forward.

However, I, and my Scottish Government Ministerial counterparts, remain supportive of the provision of a vehicle and passenger ferry service between Ballycastle and Campbelltown, but because of continued budget pressures a reinstatement has not yet been possible. Therefore, as a vehicle and passenger ferry service has not been reinstated no financial assistance has been provided.

In policy terms the restoration of the passenger and vehicle ferry service is currently a Priority 2 within the CausewayCoast and Glens Tourism Masterplan 2004-2013, aligned to the Masterplan's objectives of increasing tourists and sustainable tourism in the area, subject to normal public expenditure funding processes.

I recognise the benefits that the recently commenced new 12 passenger, privately funded ferry service will bring to the route.

Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) how much Invest NI invested in the Crescent Capital I fund as venture capital; (ii) how much, on the fund's closure was (a) distributed to private investors; and (b) returned to Invest NI ; and (iii) how much Crescent Capital received in management fees.

(AQW 352/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Neither Invest NI nor its predecessor, IDB, invested in Crescent Capital I.

Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) how much Invest NI invested in the Crescent Capital II fund as venture capital; (ii) whether, as with the Crescent Capital I fund, this investment was based on Invest NI being a subordinated investment partner.

(AQW 353/11-15)

Mrs Foster: To date Invest NI has invested £6.75m of the total fund of £22.5m.

The investment from Invest NI was based on Invest NI being a subordinated investment partner.

Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) how much Invest NI intends to allocate to the (a) Co-Investment Fund; and (b) Development Fund in the 2011-15 period; and (ii) whether it intends to be a subordinated investment partner in these funds.

(AQW 354/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- (a) The proposed £7.2m Co-investment Fund, is an example of public and private investment on a pari passu (equal terms) basis ie no subordination. Invest NI intends to allocate £4.5m to the Co-investment fund in the period 2011-2015.
- (b) The proposed £30m Development Fund must raise £20m of private sector with a maximum of £10m (33%) of its funding from Invest NI. The Invest NI contribution will be on a subordinated basis, that is the private sector investors will receive a return on their investment ahead of the public sector. This subordination of public sector funding was considered necessary in order to secure the required level of private sector funding. Invest NI intends to allocate £5m to the Development Fund between 2011-2015.

Northern Ireland Electricity's Pension Deficit

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail her Department's understanding of the arrangements that were in place to address Northern Ireland Electricity's pension deficit when the Electricity Supply Board purchased NIE.

(AQW 355/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The amount of revenue which Northern Ireland Electricity's networks business earns is subject to price controls which are set by the Utility Regulator following consultation with the company and other interested stakeholders. The current price control period, which was already in place at the time of ESB's purchase of NIE and which runs until March 2012, provides an allowance for pension contributions and Northern Ireland Electricity is expected to manage pension costs within that allowance.

The Utility Regulator is currently assessing the costs associated with the next price control period, which will run from 2012 until 2017. The issue of pension cost recovery will be fully considered as part of this price control process.

Northern Ireland Electricity's Pension Deficit

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the Electricity Supply Board was given any guarantee that Northern Ireland Electricity's £40 million pension deficit would be recovered from its customers, rather than being a liability attached to the purchase of NIE.

(AQW 384/11-15)

Mrs Foster: No.

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much her Department has spent on external consultants in each financial year since May 2007.

(AQW 411/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department's expenditure on external consultants in each of the last four years is set out below. The 2007-08; 2008-09; and 2009-10 figures are based on accounting information that has been subject to audit. The 2010-11 accounting information has not been subject to audit. Expenditure is in relation to financial years 1st April to 31st March.

Financial Year	2010-11	2009-10	2008-09	2007-08
External consultancy Expenditure	£1,960,466 (unaudited)	£2,166,671	£1,331,925	£1,302,205

Corporation Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she intends to ask the Economic Advisory Group to investigate the economic impacts of alternatives to a reduction in the level of corporation tax, such as investment in the Green New Deal.

(AQW 439/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A further forward work programme for the Economic Advisory Group is due to be agreed after the summer and the Group and I will discuss what it should contain.

Foyle Cup's Application for Funding

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she will review the NI Tourist Board's decision to reject the Foyle Cup's application for funding for this year's tournament.

(AQW 444/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Foyle Cup applied to the new NITB funding scheme but did not score well enough in the process to be awarded funding. An Appeals Panel met on the 12th May to review the application. The appeals panel upheld the original decision. None of the panel members were involved in the original selection process.

As the Foyle Cup is primarily a sporting event, I have asked my officials to discuss alternative funding arrangements with Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL) and Sport NI.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she has taken to address the concerns of small and medium sized enterprises in Fermanagh, as outlined in a research paper presented to the Minister by the Fermanagh Economic Development Organisation on 9 March 2011.

(AQW 470/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The research paper, which I found to be very comprehensive, covers a range of themes and actions and I understand that members of the Fermanagh Economic Development Organisation (FEDO) team have already met with Invest NI's Chief Executive to discuss their findings.

A number of organisations including Invest NI, Fermanagh District Council, FEDO, the SouthWestCollege and the Department for Employment and Learning have also met to discuss the research paper and proposed actions in more detail. I welcome such a partnership approach to implementing activities at a local level, and I understand that, having considered the proposed actions, the group will direct requests for support to the most relevant government departments.

Indeed I understand that a comprehensive application relating to certain aspects of the paper is currently being prepared for consideration by both my Department and Invest NI. I would welcome such an application and I can assure you that both organisations will give it full consideration and will continue to work to ensure the proposed actions are fully implemented.

CEO of Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) when the contractual term, which necessitates the bonus for the CEO of Invest NI, approved by her in May 2011, came into existence; and (ii) what are the exact details of this contractual term.

(AQW 523/11-15)

Mrs Foster: (i)The contractual term commenced on 1 April 2009, on appointment of the Chief Executive.

(ii) The contractual term is that contained in the "Information for Applicants" at the time of recruitment, namely, "The position will command a remuneration package comprising a basic salary of £160k and the potential for a bonus of up to 30% of salary."

The actual bonus amount is determined according to the achievement by the Chief Executive of targets/objectives which are set in advance and subsequently assessed by the Board of Invest NI on an annual basis. No bonus is payable if performance is assessed to be below 60 %. Based on this assessment, the Chairman of Invest NI makes a recommendation to the Minister, whose approval is required.

Broadband in the Rathlin Island Area

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if her Department plans to upgrade broadband in the Rathlin Island area to fibre optic.

(AQW 528/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department currently has no plans to fibre upgrade the broadband connection to Rathlin Island. A fibre upgrade would require the installation of a subterranean cable which would be prohibitively expensive. Broadband access to Rathlin is currently fed using a radio link from Ballycastle exchange to a Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexer (DSLAM) on the island. While the radio link has recently been upgraded, this only impacts on the resilience and capacity of the link and does not impact on the broadband speeds to consumers on the island. However, it is advised that the DSLAM has sufficient capacity to serve the current needs of consumers.

Grants for Small Businesses

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what grants are available for people who wish to start up a small business.

(AQW 530/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI provides a range of financial assistance to support the establishment and growth of new export focussed businesses. 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.

Invest NI's Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) provides information, advice and the capability development that enables people to plan and help achieve successful locally focussed Start-Up businesses.

Social enterprises can attract a grant of up to £10,000 towards business start-up costs including salary, marketing, equipment and overheads via the Social Entrepreneurship Programme.

The Short Term Employment Scheme (STES) has been developed to provide a range of grant based employment support. These include grants of between £1,000 - £1,500 for business starts in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and for individuals not being in employment, education or training (known as NEETS).

Further Information can be found on Invest NI's Website www.investni.com

Potential Inward Investors

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of potential inward investors that have visited the East Derry area in the last 12 months; (ii) the number of jobs envisaged as a result; and (iii) the number of similar visits planned in the next three months.

(AQW 536/11-15)

Mrs Foster: During the past twelve months, two potential inward investment companies have visited the East Londonderry constituency. Invest NI's overseas Sales and Marketing teams also visited the area in March 2011 and met with local stakeholders to gain a greater understanding of the area's unique selling proposition.

It is not possible to align individual visits with specific employment related Foreign Direct Investment projects and companies will often visit potential locations several times before making a decision to invest. Securing an inward investment project is the end point of an extensive negotiation process and it may often be 18 to 24 months before an investor makes a final decision on the location and it is only at this point that Invest NI can report on the number of jobs proposed.

At present, there is one further company planning to visit the East Londonderry constituency in the next three months.

Agri-Food Sector

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans her Department has to work alongside the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to create jobs within the agri-food sector.

(AQW 575/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Last June, in conjunction with the former DARD Minister, I launched the Focus on Food growth strategy for the Agri-food sector. This strategy was prepared in collaboration with DARD and the Agri-food sector and outlines a number of key performance targets and areas of action for the further development of the sector going forward. My Department plans to continue working closely with DARD on the delivery of this strategy.

I also recently announced the introduction of a new Short Term Employment Scheme which outlines a range of measures designed to help rebuild the Northern Ireland economy, including one specifically aimed at increasing employment in the food processing sector.

The Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme, which is administered by DARD, is also actively promoted to Invest NI's client companies and Invest NI is currently working with colleagues in DARD to process over 70 project applications that were received under the Scheme in May.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board's Campaigns

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration she has given to increasing the number of regions to be featured in Northern Ireland Tourist Board's campaigns.

(AQW 583/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) remit is to promote the whole of Northern Ireland to both the domestic and Republic of Ireland markets with a view to increasing visitor numbers and spend. Each year, NITB undertakes a series of seasonal marketing campaigns in both markets. Products and regions featured are based on what motivates our key customer segments which have been identified through substantial research.

These award winning campaigns have successfully driven both domestic and Republic of Ireland visitor numbers and spend over recent years with both markets performing extremely well. Last year's campaigns cumulatively delivered a return on investment of £8 for every £1 invested.

Broadband Services in Rural Areas

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what financial assistance has been allocated to telecommunication providers to enable all rural areas to receive broadband; and (ii) for her assessment of the level of broadband service currently available in rural areas.

(AQW 610/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Since 2004 DETI has invested some £25m to deliver improvements in the internal connectivity of the telecommunications infrastructure across all of Northern Ireland enabling the delivery of broadband services, via a mix of technologies and from a range of suppliers, with speeds ranging between 512 kilobits per second and 100 megabits per second. This includes £9.23m invested in the Local Broadband Access Contract, £13.6m allocated to the Next Generation Broadband project, £1.027m in support of

satellite broadband provision and £890k allocated to projects being taken forward under the Northern Ireland Broadband Fund. It is not possible to define how much funding was made available for rural areas under the Local Broadband Access Contract. However, this investment ensured that a basic broadband service was accessible across all of Northern Ireland. Two-thirds of the monies allocated to the Next Generation Broadband Project are focused on rural areas. Furthermore, both the satellite provision and the initiatives taken forward under the Northern Ireland Broadband Fund are aimed entirely at broadband access for rural areas.

Due to these interventions, it remains the case that, since December 2005 broadband services with download speeds of 512kbps or more have been available across the whole of Northern Ireland from a range of local, national and international suppliers using a range of technologies.

Exports

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what action her Department is taking to support exports; and (ii) for her assessment of the current growth of exports.

(AQW 626/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department, through Invest NI, has a comprehensive range of initiatives available to help Northern Ireland companies research, explore and sell in export markets.

Measures focused on capability development, provide companies with the opportunity to participate in organised workshops, covering a range of export related topics and access to a consultancy service providing practical advice to both new and existing exporters. Companies can also avail of the opportunity to participate in Invest NI's annual programme of trade missions to established export markets across Europe and the Middle and Far East, as well as to a number of high growth emerging markets such as Brazil, South Africa, Russia and Kurdistan.

Invest NI has established a number of in market support networks with experienced trade advisers based in key export markets who can provide companies with market research, practical advice and guidance in exporting to those markets. In addition, Invest NI's Business Information Centre, at its headquarters in Belfast offers businesses access to a comprehensive range of worldwide business directories, company databases, market research and business related information.

In terms of the current state of our exports, the latest data shows that whilst manufacturing exports from Northern Ireland amounted to £5.2 billion in 2009/10, this represented a decline of 8.5%, compared to growth of 8.2% in the previous year. However, this is to be expected in the context of the prevailing economic conditions of the time, particularly given that sales to the Republic of Ireland, one of our key export markets, decreased by £99 million (6.3%) that year. The Republic of Ireland accounts for over one quarter (28.5%) of all manufacturing exports from Northern Ireland and the ongoing economic and financial crisis there is likely to have continued implications for exports from Northern Ireland.

On a more positive note, some sub-sectors have continued to achieve export growth despite challenging economic conditions, with pharmaceutical exports increasing by one third (34.0%) in 2009/10. The Other Transport Equipment and Chemicals sub-sectors also recorded increases of 28.2% and 11.3% respectively.

The service sector also continues to provide opportunities for export growth, particularly those elements of the sector that have been identified as having high potential. Exports from these high potential sub-sectors have increased by 70% over the last five years, with business and management consultancy showing particularly strong growth, with their exports more than doubling over this period.

Despite its size, Northern Ireland remains a relatively export orientated economy, our exports as a percentage of Gross Value Added are 18.2%, compared to the UK average of 17.9%, and, in export terms, we are ranked seventh highest of the twelve UK regions.

Local Economy and Tourism in the Ballycastle Area

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans her Department has in relation to the local economy and tourism in the Ballycastle area, in the next 12 months.

(AQW 627/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am fully committed to the development of tourism across Northern Ireland and recognise the contribution it can make to economic growth and I have agreed to meet you to discuss hotel provision on the NorthCoast in general and Ballycastle in particular.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board through the Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Masterplan and Tourism Development Scheme are currently investing in facilities in Ballycastle to support its development as a key visitor resort along the Causeway Coastal Route (CCR). These include infrastructural and interpretation improvements at key sites such as Ballycastle Seafront and Ballycastle harbour and ferry terminal which will improve the sense of welcome and visual attractiveness of the area.

In addition, work commenced on the development of a Marina amenity facility at Ballycastle harbour in January 2011 and is scheduled for completion towards the end of the year. The development will provide washing, changing and toilet facilities for those arriving at Ballycastle by boat. The development is part of the larger Sail West programme of activities across Northern Ireland, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland which has been part funded by my Department through the Interreg IVA Programme.

I have also been invited to officially launch Moyle District Council's Tourism Development Strategy and Action Plan 2011 – 2011. As a key part of the Causeway Coast & Glens Masterplan this will provide the framework for tourism development going forward. In this context I would encourage local councils within the CausewayCoast and Glens destination to engage strategically and adapt a collaborative approach to tourism development within the area in the context of Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much her Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 646/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has spent the following in each of the last three years on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation.

Financial Year	2008 – 2009	2009 – 2010	2010 – 2011
Spend	£41,872.37	£34,897.77	£18,720.65

Mobile Phone Roaming Charges

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions her Department has had with stakeholders in the telecommunications industry in relation to the removal of mobile phone roaming charges across the Island of Ireland.

(AQW 655/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Since 2007 roaming tariffs for voice and SMS services across all of Europe have been capped under EU regulations. The European Commission has set a target for the difference between national and roaming charges to approach zero by 2015. Significant progress has been made in relation to pricing in what is a privatised and independently regulated industry. I met the Northern Ireland Director of OFCOM earlier this year and urged the Regulator to do more to address the deficit in mobile coverage in Northern Ireland. Officials also regularly meet with OFCOM and industry on a range of telecoms matters, including mobile coverage and continue to monitor developments and reactions to the EU proposals.

Broadband Access

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action has been taken to improve broadband access for the rural community in East Antrim.

(AQW 694/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In December 2009, DETI embarked on the Next Generation Broadband Project. The aim of this project, which is being delivered by BT, is to bring higher speed broadband services to 85% of businesses by 2011 however through the wholesale arrangements set down by the contract, residential consumers can also access to these higher speed services through the new fibred access points. Cabinet upgrades have been completed across some 27 areas in the East Antrim constituency making available broadband services with potential download speeds of up to 40Mbps. Details of where these upgrades are located can be found at www.fasterbroadbandni.com or www.nibroadband.com.

It is recognised that, due to distance from a cabinet, not all premises will benefit from the technology deployed under the Next Generation Broadband Project. For that reason, through a contract with Avanti Communications, DETI has ensured that a satellite broadband service offering download speeds of between 512Kbps and 3Mbps remains in place.

In addition, the NI Broadband Fund, launched in August 2008, provides support for businesses and organisations wishing to promote solutions for delivery of commercial, high speed broadband services in rural locations. Five calls for projects have been completed under this competitive fund to date with a sixth anticipated in the summer of this year. In each instance when calls are launched, as well as advertising in the press, Departmental officials alert the Chief Executives and Economic Development Officers in all District Councils providing them with an opportunity to work with local service providers to develop applications seeking support for localised broadband solutions.

Milk Cup Funding

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action she can take to review the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's decision to reject this year's Milk Cup funding application.

(AQW 710/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Milk Cup applied to the new NITB funding scheme in February 2011. The scheme was heavily oversubscribed and funding was allocated to those events which scored the highest marks against the pre-set criteria. Unfortunately the Milk Cup did not score well enough in the process to be awarded funding. As the Milk Cup is primarily a sporting event, I have asked my officials to discuss alternative funding arrangements with Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL) and Sport NI.

Corporation Tax: Investment

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of whether a reduction in corporation tax would increase inward investment.

(AQO 87/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My independent Economic Advisory Group published research on this matter on 26 May 2011. The research shows that corporation tax is a material factor for the attraction of the inward investment. It indicated that a reduction in corporation tax would significantly increase investment and jobs in Northern Ireland, with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) accounting for over 40% of the net additional jobs.

My Department has also commissioned FDI Intelligence to undertake a wider research project into FDI. Within this wide research an assessment is also being made of the potential increase in FDI jobs from a reduction in corporation tax. The emerging results from this research are broadly consistent with the EAG paper.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department has taken, and plans to take, to address the current structure of Air Passenger Duty and the disadvantage it creates between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 765/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I and Executive colleagues have raised the impact of Air Passenger Duty (APD) on Northern Ireland with HM Treasury Ministers. While it was disappointing that the Budget 2011 did not announce a reduction in APD, HM Treasury have frozen APD rates and are consulting on the structure of the duty.

The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) is leading on the Northern Ireland response to the HM Treasury consultation. My officials have been working closely with counterparts in DFP to ensure that the Northern Ireland Executive puts a strong case to HM Treasury in respect of the impact of APD on Northern Ireland.

Enterprise Zone

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on discussions she has had with Her Majesty's Treasury in relation to making Northern Ireland an economic enterprise zone.

(AQO 85/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Discussions with Her Majesty's Treasury with respect to enterprise zones have been in the context of rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy. This would include lowering the rate of Corporation Tax and introducing other measures that have the potential to stimulate growth in the Northern Ireland economy.

The Coalition Government published a consultation paper on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy on 24 March 2011. The Consultation will close on 24 June 2011.

The First and Deputy First Ministers, the Finance Minister and I met with Her Majesty's Treasury and business representatives to discuss this important issue on 8 June 2011.

Corporation Tax: Select Committee Report

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the recent report from the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee 'Corporation Tax in Northern Ireland'.

(AQO 86/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I welcome the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report which took evidence from business people, trade unions, economists and politicians.

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee report states that maximising Northern Ireland's competitiveness must be the goal of the Executive. Their report concludes that "on balance we believe there is a convincing case for reducing the corporation tax rate in Northern Ireland".

This conclusion was very also much in tune with the research produced by my own Economic Advisory Group. They found that reducing Corporation Tax here would help us move toward living standards experienced elsewhere in the UK, through attracting more investment and creating more job opportunities, which in turn would benefit many in our community.

Air Passenger Duty

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact of the current level of Air Passenger Duty on the economy.

(AQO 82/11-15)

Mrs Foster: As a consequence of our geographical location, we rely heavily on air access.

Air Passenger Duty impacts on all business sectors and in particular on long haul flights which are important for Foreign Direct Investment and tourism. The current rates of Air Passenger Duty are the highest in Europe and place Northern Ireland at a significant disadvantage.

The negative impact of Air Passenger Duty on Northern Ireland is increased because of competitive pressure from the Republic of Ireland. This has become even more acute following the Irish Government's decision to reduce and possibly remove altogether, their equivalent tax.

Her Majesty's Treasury is currently consulting on the structure of Air Passenger Duty. I and my Executive colleagues will ensure that a strong message is sent to Treasury that this negative tax needs to be revisited.

Employment: 16-24 Year-olds

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what measures her Department is taking to create jobs specifically for 16-24 year olds.

(AQO 83/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has a range of initiatives to assist people of all ages, including those currently out of work, to become self employed and start their own businesses.

A key initiative is the Youth Enterprise Programme, which is aimed at 16 to 24 year-olds and provides tailored, enhanced enterprise support at the pre-start and growth stages. The core focus of the Programme is to support young people to think about and act on business start up and growth.

The new Short Term Employment Scheme also includes a specific measure targeted at young people who are not currently in employment, education or training. This will offer a fixed grant of £1,500 to provide an additional incentive to start a business. The grant will be awarded on completion and approval of a business plan on Invest NI's 'Go For It' Programme.

Natural Gas Network

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department plans to progress the expansion of the natural gas network.

(AQO 84/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I intend to issue a public consultation later this month. This will seek views from key stakeholders on the potential for extending the natural gas network to further areas in the West and North West of Northern Ireland and other new areas, such as East Down. Extending the gas network would increase consumer choice and reduce dependence on coal and oil. There are, however, many issues to be considered, not least how any extension of the gas network might be funded.

Green New Deal

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the steps Invest NI has taken, and intends to take, to help in the delivery of the Green New Deal.

(AQO 88/11-15)

Mrs Foster: An Inter-departmental Working Group chaired by the Department of Social Development has been established to take work on Green New Deal forward.

I have also recently met with the Minister for Social Development to discuss the proposals from the Green New Deal.

Business: Bureaucracy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the positive impact that the proposed reduction in EU red tape for small business may have on our companies.

(AQO 89/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Economic success for Northern Ireland depends on businesses developing products and pursuing markets. Any reduction in the regulatory burden facilitates this. Since many of the regulations affecting businesses originate at EU level, any improvements there are particularly to be welcomed.

Green Economy

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department will implement a strategy to develop the green economy.

(AQO 90/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The framework for the new Economic Strategy, which is currently being developed by the Executive Sub-Committee on the Economy, has identified the important contribution made by the green economy in encouraging business growth and growing the private sector.

Within my Department, Invest NI has developed a strategy to maximise the return to Northern Ireland from heightened global activity in the development and deployment of renewable energy and resource efficient technologies. This includes identifying opportunities in the renewable energy sector and promoting and implementing energy and resource efficiency measures within business.

Department of the Environment

Quality of Beaches

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment, following the recent failure of some beaches to meet water quality standards (i) if he has any plans to improve the quality of beaches, including Ballyholme Beach, Bangor; and (ii) to detail the level of funding allocated to improve the quality of beaches in the 2011-15 period.

(AQW 329/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Water quality at Ballyholme and Newcastle beaches failed to meet the EC Bathing Waters Directive requirements for 2010.

Following detailed pollution investigations, the failures at Ballyholme were attributed to heavy rainfall exposing known inadequacies in the Bangor sewerage system. The discharges from the Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) at Newcastle and the associated storm overflows have resulted in the beach at Newcastle failing to meet the mandatory requirements of the Directive.

My Department's Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) continues to press Northern Ireland Water (NIW) to give a high priority to the upgrade of sewage infrastructure in these areas.

Within available funding, NIW is taking forward a capital programme of sewer upgrades within the Bangor Catchment over the next three years, at a cost of approximately £7 million. This work included upgrades and rationalisation of combined storm overflows (CSOs) at Carnalea, Rathmore Stream, Belfast Lough, LukesPoint, Clandeboye Stream, Orlock/Sandeel, Seacliff and Bangor Marina.

As part of the NIW Public Private Partnership (PPP) programme approximately £44 million of capital monies has been spent on the new North Down/Ards Wastewater Treatment Works at Donaghadee. This includes the construction of Donaghadee and Millisle Pumping Stations and pumping mains, as well as the long sea outfall some 600m off the Briggs Rocks.

NIW is presently completing a capital upgrade programme on the Newcastle sewerage system with a spend of approximately £5 million. This work includes rationalisation of the overflows within the system, structural upgrades and the provision of storm attenuation in CastlePark. In addition it is anticipated that a start will be made this year to the upgrade of Newcastle Wastewater Treatment Works within an approximate spend of £10 million

Arthur Cottage, Ballymena

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the recent fire at Arthur Cottage, Ballymena, to detail the assistance his Department intends to provide to Ballymena Council for the rebuilding of the cottage.

(AQW 331/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department has already taken action. NIEA's Conservation Architect for the area visited the site shortly after the fire and has been in liaison with Council Officials. He reports that the building is capable of restoration and that Council Officials are currently in talks with their insurers.

NIEA holds a detailed photographic archive record of the building which is available to the Council and their architects to help with an accurate restoration of lost parts of the building. NIEA's Conservation Architects will also be available to help advise on appropriate work.

Given that the building was insured, we expect costs to be covered by the Council's insurance.

Arthur Cottage, Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department intends to take to assist in the restoration of Arthur Cottage, Ballymena, which was damaged by a fire.

(AQW 344/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department has already taken action. NIEA's Conservation Architect for the area visited the site shortly after the fire and has been in liaison with Council Officials. He reports that the building is capable of restoration and that Council Officials are currently in talks with their insurers.

NIEA holds a detailed photographic archive record of the building which is available to the Council and their architects to help with an accurate restoration of lost parts of the building. NIEA's Conservation Architects will also be available to help advise on appropriate work.

Given that the building was insured, we expect costs to be covered by the Council's insurance.

Tree Preservation Orders

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to increase fines imposed on people who breach Tree Preservation Orders.

(AQW 385/11-15)

Mr Attwood: On 4 May the Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 increased the maximum fine on summary conviction for certain offences relating to the contravention of a tree preservation order from £30,000 to £100,000.

MOT Tests

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how much revenue has been generated for his Department from MOT tests in each of the last three years.

(AQW 386/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The total revenue generated in each year was as follows:

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
£21,160,638	£21,844,696	£23,138,451

The figures are for full tests and retests for private car, motor cycle and large passenger carrying vehicles which are tested under the Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

Vehicle testing is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment and is delivered by its Driver & Vehicle Agency. The MOT service operates under Trading Fund arrangements where the financial objective is to recover the costs of the services provided, and the fees charged to customers are set accordingly. Income from vehicle testing must therefore be used for the purposes for which the fund was established, as defined in the Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency Trading Fund Order (Northern Ireland) 1996.

Fishing, River, Water and Marine Matters

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment whether he would consider establishing a review committee to look at how best to co-ordinate fishing, river, water and marine matters within one Department.

(AQW 402/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I will consider how best to co-ordinate fishing, river, water and marine matter in the context of the forthcoming Marine Bill and my commitment to review the role and functions of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency. However, I understand the argument that it would be beneficial to better co-ordinate, even integrate, the fishing, river, water and marine functions in one Department or one body.

Noise Levels of Car Exhausts

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to combat the nuisance caused by excessively loud car exhausts.

(AQW 425/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have no plans at present to introduce new measures to combat the nuisance caused by loud car exhausts. Car exhaust systems must comply with the noise requirements of the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 (as amended). These require car exhaust systems and silencers to be maintained in good and efficient working order and not to be altered after the date of manufacture so as to increase the noise made by the escape of exhaust gases. Breach of such requirements is a road traffic offence enforceable by the PSNI and punishable by a fine of up to £1000.

In addition, the Driver and Vehicle Agency will refuse to issue an MOT test certificate under the Motor Vehicle Testing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 if a vehicle exhaust is obviously not fitted or approved by the manufacturer, for example if it is clearly non-standard and over-sized or if the noise emitted from the system is unreasonably above the level expected.

Noise Levels of Car Exhausts

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what power the Executive has to introduce legislation to limit the noise levels of car exhausts.

(AQW 426/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Power to introduce legislation to limit noise levels of car exhausts is contained in the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The Order enables my Department to make regulations in respect of the construction, weight, equipment and use of vehicles, including vehicle noise emissions.

In exercise of this power the Department has made the Motor Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 which contain provision for the control of car noise emissions.

These comply with European Community requirements.

Fuel Laundering

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the investigations into the impact that the fuel laundering operation and large quantities of toxic sludge in ditches at Drumacon could have on Lough Ross, given that water from the lake is processed for public consumption.

(AQW 465/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) continues to liaise closely with Northern Ireland Water (NIW) and the authorities in the Republic of Ireland to ensure that the public drinking water source at Lough Ross is protected.

NIW is content that the risk of contamination is low, as raw water abstracted from Lough Ross into Carron Hill Water Treatment Works is taken from below water level (oil floats on the water surface) and the potential discharge point is across the lake, and so some distance from, the abstraction point.

NIW has also increased the routine drinking water quality monitoring following this incident. This monitoring has, to date, shown no impact on drinking water quality from this incident.

I have asked for a weekly update on the situation and to be advised immediately if there is any deterioration in conditions.

Northern Ireland Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact of the removal of the Northern Ireland Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme on the viability of the quarry industry in border constituencies, including Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

(AQW 483/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since 2004 my Department has administered the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme introduced by Treasury in London. This scheme provides 80 per cent relief from the Levy for quarry operators in the North. My Department's primary function is to ensure that the quarrying and aggregates extraction industry complies with planning and environmental regulatory requirements associated with the scheme. I am aware that site operators, particularly those located close to the border, are at a financial disadvantage since the recent suspension of the scheme by HM Treasury, because there is no equivalent tax payable by the industry located in Ireland.

I can assure the member that my Department's officials are working closely with officials in the Department of Finance and Personnel and the Treasury in London to assist the review being undertaken by the European Commission which I hope will lead to the approval of a new relief scheme. I share many of the concerns of those in the business about the adverse impact of the ending of the relief.

Ditches at Drumacon, Castleblayney

Mr Irwin asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the possible damaging effects on the Lough Ross ecosystem of the fuel laundering operation and the large quantities of toxic sludge in ditches at Drumacon, Castleblayney.

(AQW 504/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Fuel laundering is a significant environmental issue in Northern Ireland. It is common for fuel laundering chemicals and waste to be dumped on waste ground or by the roadside. Remedying environmental problems caused by fuel laundering constitutes a significant and ongoing burden on the public purse.

Although the site of the diesel laundering plant was in Co. Monaghan, it falls within the catchment of Lough Ross, in Northern Ireland. The lough is used as a source for public drinking water supply by Northern Ireland Water (NIW), serving a significant area of South Armagh. Any materials on the site therefore had the potential to reach Lough Ross.

There was a secondary potential source of pollution associated with this incident, from a lorry and trailer carrying a tank at Blaney Road, Crossmaglen. This location is also within the Lough Ross catchment. Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) attended this scene and deployed pollution prevention equipment to protect nearby waterways in the event of any oil escaping while they fought the fire.

When Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) staff arrived at the site they confirmed that there was no evidence of any oil or other pollutant having escaped, however, they deployed additional oil booms at several points downstream in the waterway. This was carried out as a precaution because, even though no oil or other pollutant was escaping, NIEA staff were aware that a nearby waterway led to Lough Ross.

NIEA staff have continued to monitor the area and have confirmed that no visible pollution reached any surrounding waterways and that no significant pollutant now remains on the site where the lorry burned out.

NIEA takes routine water quality samples from Lough Ross on a monthly basis, to fulfil the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). Full ecological surveys are undertaken every three years which include assessment of macroinvertebrates (aquatic insects), phytoplankton, diatoms and macrophytes (aquatic plants). Monitoring indicates that the main pressure on the ecological status of the lake is nutrient enrichment.

The effects on the ecosystem of pollution cannot be predicted. This will depend on whether any of the pollutant enters watercourses feeding Lough Ross, the extent of any contamination, flow and weather conditions. Experience of oil or fuel related pollution incidents in rivers indicates that macroinvertebrates may be affected significantly, and recovery may take several years. Monitoring at the lough will be kept under review, and any indication of pollution will be investigated.

NIEA and NIW continue to liaise closely with counterparts in the Republic, including the Environmental Protection Agency and Monaghan County Council, to ensure any pollution threat at the original source of this incident in Castleblaney is fully resolved. It is important to note that neither NIEA nor NIW has any jurisdiction on this site; and that it is for the relevant ROI authorities to address any remaining issues on the site.

NIW advise that there are no issues with the drinking water quality at present. They are content that the risk of contamination of raw water abstracted into Lough Ross is low because water is abstracted from below water level (oil floats on the water surface) and the potential discharge point, of any contaminants from this incident, is across the lake, and so some distance from the abstraction point.

NIW have also increased their routine drinking water sampling and monitoring following this incident. This monitoring has, to date, shown no impact on drinking water quality.

MOT Tests

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of the Environment how many vehicles failed an MOT test in each of the last three years; and what percentage of the total number of vehicles that underwent the test failed.

(AQW 535/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The details for the requested period are tabulated below. For the purposes of this response, the Question is taken to refer to private cars.

Year	Number of Failed Tests	% of Failed Tests
2008/09	122,767	21.08

Year	Number of Failed Tests	% of Failed Tests
2009/10	129,844	21.48
2010/11	137,582	22.51

Listed Buildings

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of listed buildings in the North Down area; and (ii) the listed buildings that are located in the (a) Bangor; (b) Donaghadee; and (c) Holywood areas.

(AQW 613/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Based upon the 1974 ward boundaries, which is how my Department holds such records, the total number of listed buildings in the North Down Borough Council Area is 256. The North Down constituency includes two electoral wards of Ards Borough Council in Donaghadee which contain a further 58 listed buildings. This gives a total of 314 listed buildings in your constituency.

You will be aware, however, that there has been boundary changes since 1974 and therefore this figure should not be taken as definitive in relation to the current boundaries. For that reason I have appended, for your information, a table which shows the number of the listed buildings within each ward of the North Down and Ards Borough Council Areas.

In regard to the Bangor and Holywood areas, such boundaries are not defined as a sub-set of the Listed Buildings database and as a result I am not able to provide detailed information beyond that given below for their (historic) electoral wards.

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

HB23 - North Down		
1	Groomsport	13
2	Churchill	1
3	Ballyholme	1
4	Ballymagee	1
5	BangorHarbour	24
6	Conlig	4
7	BangorCastle	24
8	Whitehill	0
9	Rathgael	0
10	Clandeboye	18
11	Silverstream	0
12	Spring Hill	0
13	Bryansburn	1
14	Princetown	16
15	Crawfordsburn	23
16	Craigavad	17
17	Loughview	6

HB24 - ARDS		
1	Portaferry	73
2	Kircubbin	22
3	Ballyhalbert	5
4	Grey Abbey	62
5	Carrowdore	6
6	Donaghadee North	26
7	Donaghadee South	32
8	Loughries	10
9	Movilla	5
10	Glen	3
11	Scrabo	16
12	Ulsterville	0
13	Central	43
14	Comber North	0
15	Comber South	32
16	Ballygowan	13
17	Killinchy	31

HB23 - North Down		
18	Cultra	29
19	Hollywood Demesne	12
20	Hollywood Priory	66
	Total	256

HB24 - ARDS		
	Total	379

Proposed Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment whether he can confirm that (i) his predecessor's press release of 31 August 2010 in relation to his intention to approve plans for an incinerator at Glenavy has no legal standing; and (ii) that a Notice of Opinion has not been issued in relation to the planning application.

(AQW 635/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) While the press release issued by the former Minister of the Environment on 31 August 2010 indicated his intention in the two Rose Energy planning applications at that time, it does not represent a formal planning decision of the Department of the Environment.
- (ii) I can confirm that a Notice of Opinion in relation to the two Rose Energy planning applications has not been issued.

High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the implementation of the High Hedges Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

(AQO 95/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Assembly amended the High Hedges Bill to require the Department to introduce subordinate legislation to limit the maximum level of fee a complainant should pay and to allow for the transfer of the fee to the hedge owner.

Both the primary and subordinate legislation are required to provide the full operational regime so the primary cannot be commenced until the subordinate legislation is ready.

As some of the proposed subordinate legislation has not been consulted on a public consultation will be required and both sets of Regulations will need to pass through the Assembly processes.

I am currently considering a timetable for delivery. I am very aware of the length of time primary and secondary legislation can take generally and I am attempting to identify how to proceed quickly and properly in progressing this case. I will advise the Environment Committee in due course.

Local Government: Review of Public Administration

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the time frame for the completion of the Review of Public Administration.

(AQO 96/11-15)

Mr Attwood: With your permission Mr Speaker, I propose to answer Questions 6 and 8 together.

The reform of local government is a key priority and remains very much at the top of my agenda. I am aiming to get the Executive's agreement to a timetable for reorganisation as soon as possible.

I believe early decisions are needed to create certainty across the local government sector and with those Departments that wish to transfer functions.

My objective is to move forward decisively, improve services and drive positive reform. I will be working hard in the coming days to achieve the right results.

Planning: Rural Areas

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of whether the current planning policy accommodates non-farming rural people who wish to live in the countryside.

(AQO 97/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Current planning policy does accommodate non-farming rural people who wish to live in the countryside. The policies which do this are contained in Planning Policy Statement 21 which deals with sustainable development in the countryside. I have met officials on this issue, have instructed that potential and valid flexibilities in the operation of the policy are developed to identify where inconsistencies of application may exist and generally assess how to move forward positively on the matter.

Local Government: Review of Public Administration

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Review of Public Administration including the reduction in the number of local councils from twenty-six to eleven.

(AQO 98/11-15)

Mr Attwood: With your permission Mr Speaker, I propose to answer Questions 6 and 8 together.

The reform of local government is a key priority and remains very much at the top of my agenda. I am aiming to get the Executive's agreement to a timetable for reorganisation as soon as possible.

I believe early decisions are needed to create certainty across the local government sector and with those Departments that wish to transfer functions.

My objective is to move forward decisively, improve services and drive positive reform. I will be working hard in the coming days to achieve the right results.

Waste Management

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment to outline his proposals in relation to waste management and whether he intends to introduce a single waste management authority.

(AQO 100/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am committed to improving waste management, and I am pleased to advise that my Department is implementing a range of interventions. These include the Rethink Waste capital and revenue funds, the Waste and Resources Action Programme and a national Rethink Waste communications campaign. I will also be considering the responses received to the current consultation on a new recycling policy. Additionally I am supportive of the work of the North South Market Development Steering Group to drive forward a programme for developing markets for recycled materials across the island. I shall be discussing this matter with my Ministerial Colleague in the South at a Bi-lateral on 1 July 2011.

Northern Ireland's Waste Management Strategy 2006-20 is the policy basis for Northern Ireland's waste programme. The Waste Programme Board, which I now chair, undertook a recent review of the strategy and identified a revised prioritised programme of actions and interventions for key areas of the waste agenda. My Department will work closely with key internal and external stakeholders to ensure that this new programme captures all the right targets and is achievable given current resource constraints.

The Strategic Waste Infrastructure Programme remains an integral element of the waste programme and is essential to enabling compliance with landfill diversion targets and the avoidance of financial

penalties for non-compliance. I will continue to deploy available resources in the most cost-effective manner to ensure that Waste Infrastructure Programme objectives are met.

I believe that there is strong justification for the creation of a Single Waste Authority. Any discussion must be based on evidence. My predecessor asked officials to prepare a detailed economic appraisal to identify the most efficient way to deliver waste management functions, and I agree with this approach. The results of that economic appraisal should be available shortly and I will consider its conclusions carefully before deciding on the way forward.

Marine Management

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will consider including the establishment of a marine management organisation in the proposed Marine Bill.

(AQO 101/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I will introduce the Marine Bill to the Assembly at the earliest possible opportunity. In this context, I will give further consideration to the best delivery arrangements for marine management in Northern Ireland, as the Bill progresses. I met with a range of external groups on 13 June 2011 to identify further possible additions to the draft Bill currently being prepared to ensure that the Bill is as expansive, farsseeing and challenging as possible.

Tyre Storage Depot, Mayobridge

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to address the health and safety issues at the premises at Chapel Road, Mayobridge, which holds half a million tyres.

(AQO 102/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The operator at Chapel Road, Mayobridge has a waste management licence which permits him to accept up to 7,000 tonnes of waste tyres at the site per year.

The licence includes a number of conditions to manage and control the safe storage, recycling and disposal of waste tyres. NIEA staff also regularly assess fire break separation, security and access and the operator's fire/emergency action plan. The Agency works closely with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and local Environmental Health Department.

NIEA has suspended the site licence on two recent occasions. At present a partial Suspension Notice applies to the site which permits the company to maintain a viable business and at the same time reduce the quantity of stockpiled tyres on the licensed site and an unauthorised adjoining area.

NIEA has entered into an agreement with the company to implement a remediation plan for the site. This agreement includes measures in relation to health and safety and importantly includes a plan to reduce the total number of tyres held on site. A fire safety plan has also been commissioned for the site as well as additional security. The Health and Safety Executive has been informed and have visited the site under their remit.

Over the past 8 months the company has considerably reduced the number of tyres on the site and currently there are approximately 2,200 tonnes or about 264,000 tyres. The agreement in place requires the company to reduce the tonnage to about 700 tonnes by August 2011. NIEA has regular review meetings with the company to assess progress. Should they fail to meet this target within the specified timescale, NIEA will determine if further regulatory action is required.

The Agency believes that unauthorised storage of tyres has taken place and in line with our Enforcement and Prosecution Policy has sent a file on the case to the Public Prosecution Service. The PPS has still to make a decision on whether to proceed with prosecution. I will advise members of developments in this matter.

The Department has also taken enforcement action under planning legislation seeking the cessation of the importation of tyres onto the unauthorised part of the site and the removal of all tyres externally stored at the site.

The company has submitted a planning application including an Environmental Impact Statement to regularise the situation and seeks planning approval to develop a tyre recycling facility on the entire site. The Department is giving the application careful consideration.

CO2 Emissions

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment what new initiatives his Department intends to introduce to help reduce CO2 emissions.

(AQO 103/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Reducing our CO2 emissions and helping to address climate change is a cross-cutting issue and is an enormous challenge for all of us. It is crucial therefore that we act in a joined up manner not just for the benefit of the environment, but also for our economic and social well-being. I believe that tackling climate change provides us with an opportunity to protect our built and natural heritage while at the same time delivering a more resource efficient, sustainable economy and a fairer society. That is why one of my first actions as Minister has been to ask my officials to consider how government currently delivers its climate change responsibilities and to identify areas where further legislation might be of benefit.

I have also sought and will consider the advice of the independent Committee on Climate Change and the experience of other administrations in developing and delivering climate change policy through legislation. My early view is that we should put climate change targets in the face of a Climate Change Bill and that the targets should be rigorous and challenging.

This week, I will Chair the first meeting of the Cross-Departmental Working Group on Climate Change, to agree a workplan for 2011/2012. This group will provide a platform to continue to develop and progress a holistic approach to tackling climatic change. It will analyse sectors and policies; making recommendations where needed to ensure we not only reduce CO2 emissions but also agree an adaptation plan for Northern Ireland which will address the identified risks from the predicted climatic change.

The overall outcome that I am seeking is a series of interventions that will help protect the environment while maximising the social and economic benefit to be derived from it. This in turn will deliver opportunities to drive a fundamental restructuring of the economy with a renewed focus on resource efficiency and innovation to promote business efficiency and the development of a green economy. I have also instructed officials in a very tight timeframe to identify how DOE and other departments might push opportunities and practises to significantly further embrace green energy.

Planning: Sprucefield

Mr Givan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Sprucefield planning application.

(AQO 104/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The planning application was referred to the Planning Appeals Commission by my predecessor in December 2009 for a public local inquiry. The holding of this inquiry has been delayed by judicial review proceedings, centred on questions relating to the adequacy and advertising of the environmental information submitted with the application. Both judicial reviews have now been withdrawn.

My officials wrote to the applicants on 26 January 2011 requesting additional environmental information to progress the inquiry.

The applicants have until 26 June 2011 to submit this material and the PAC have been advised of the likely timescale for the receipt and advertising of the information.

Following receipt of this additional information, my officials will assess the material and, if considered satisfactory, will write to the PAC asking that arrangements for the resumption of the inquiry be put in place. While the PAC will be asked to place the application in first place on my Department's priority

list of Article 31 cases referred to the Commission, it is unlikely that the inquiry will resume before September/October this year.

Following the receipt of the PAC's report on the public inquiry, I will make my decision on the application as soon as possible.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Local Banks

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the response of the local banks to the needs of businesses in the current economic climate.

(AQW 383/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Ensuring that Northern Ireland has a competitive banking sector that meets the needs of businesses and consumers remains, strategically, a very important issue as our economy struggles to recover from the recession and I have been liaising with the local banks and the British Bankers Association (BBA) in this regard for some time now.

In that context, I have previously welcomed the actions identified in the BBA Business Finance Taskforce report to improve access to finance and improve customer relationships. However, while I view this report as a positive step forward, I wrote recently to the BBA to indicate that I remain somewhat disappointed about the pace of implementation.

Furthermore, the lack of regular information on bank lending in Northern Ireland remains a constraint to our understanding of the current situation in this regard and I have also stressed how important it is that this is provided urgently. This will help provide a clearer picture of the extent to which the availability of finance is supporting economic recovery in Northern Ireland.

Unpaid Rates

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the amount of unpaid rates in each council area in each of the last five years.

(AQW 399/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The rates unpaid by District Council area at the end of each rating year are published in the Land & Property Services Annual Report and Accounts. LPS systems are not able to provide a breakdown by District Council area prior to 2008. The LPS Annual Report and Accounts for 2010-11 is currently being finalised and is expected to be laid in the Assembly at the end of June.

The figures shown on the attached table are cumulative figures of debt outstanding at each date and include debt carried forward from previous years.

Land & Property Services continues to pursue all unpaid rates, whilst recognising the genuine financial difficulties being experienced by many ratepayers. The Agency seeks to agree payment arrangements with ratepayers where possible but will otherwise take legal action against debtors.

District Council	Debt as at 31st March (£'000)		
	2008	2009	2010
Antrim	2,782	2,915	4,086
Ards	4,057	4,653	5,534
Armagh	3,474	3,679	4,375
Ballymena	3,259	2,900	3,599

District Council	Debt as at 31st March (£'000)		
	2008	2009	2010
Ballymoney	1,087	1,019	1,328
Banbridge	2,167	2,325	2,743
Belfast	43,496	46,526	52,514
Carrickfergus	1,603	2,528	2,622
Castlereagh	3,647	2,891	4,614
Coleraine	3,395	3,454	3,674
Cookstown	1,612	1,345	1,426
Craigavon	6,726	6,011	8,189
Derry	8,332	9,682	10,094
Down	3,966	4,202	5,627
Dungannon & S.Tyrone	2,645	2,477	3,080
Fermanagh	2,891	3,207	3,309
Larne	1,310	1,595	1,454
Limavady	1,355	1,683	1,881
Lisburn	7,073	8,523	10,131
Magherafelt	1,288	1,370	1,613
Moyle	583	711	816
Newry & Mourne	6,521	6,989	8,587
Newtownabbey	5,108	6,329	6,827
North Down	4,905	5,314	7,199
Omagh	2,659	2,311	2,986
Strabane	2,056	2,479	2,160
Totals	127,997	137,117	160,468
Cash Unallocated to Ratepayer Accounts	-4,218	-649	-3,507
Totals	123,780	136,468	156,962

The figures may not total exactly due to rounding.

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department has spent on external consultants in each financial year since May 2007.

(AQW 406/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Expenditure by my Department on external consultants in each financial year since May 2007 is set out in the following table. The information provided is for complete financial years beginning on 1 April each year.

Financial Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Expenditure on external consultants £m	6.3	4.5	1.1	0.1 *

* The 2010/11 expenditure is provisional and is subject to validation and finalisation of the departmental resource accounts and test drilling exercise.

Barnett Consequentials

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what are the Barnett Consequentials for his Department arising from Legal Aid funding in England.

(AQW 424/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Changes in Legal Aid funding in England are one of many components which impact on the Barnett determined public expenditure allocations to Northern Ireland. Allocation of these Barnett consequentials is for the Executive to determine.

Barnett consequentials are non-hypothecated, i.e. they do not go automatically to their equivalent spending areas within Northern Ireland. However, due to the ring fencing arrangements, agreed by the Executive for the Justice Budget during the Budget 2010 process, Barnett consequentials arising directly from the change in planned spending on comparable Home Office and Justice services in England were applied to the budget for the Department of Justice.

Civil Service: Sick Leave

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the levels of sick leave within the Civil Service in each of the last three years, broken down by community background.

(AQW 433/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Detailed information on sick absence rates in the Northern Ireland Civil Service is contained in regular reports from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Copies of the reports up to 2009/10 are available from the Agency and can be viewed at

http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/Analysis_of_Sickness_Absence_0910.html.

Community background information is collected to enable the Northern Ireland Civil Service to fulfil its obligations under the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998, which are to submit an annual monitoring return to the Equality Commission and to carry out regular reviews of the workforce composition and employment practices. Community background data is also used to monitor the effectiveness of NICS' policies on equality of opportunity. The examination of sick absence levels by community background is not relevant to the management of sickness absence and is not carried out.

Cycle to Work Scheme

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the extra costs required for the full implementation of the Cycle to Work Scheme to which he referred in his letter of 31 May 2011.

(AQW 434/11-15)

Mr Wilson: To introduce a NICS wide Cycle to Work Scheme would cost around £100,000, £10,000 more than the original estimate, with additional running costs of £30,000 a year for the duration of the scheme. It was initially anticipated that start up costs would be negligible and that no running costs would be incurred, as this would form part of the salary sacrifice scheme which was already in place.

Corporation Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether there are any estimates of the administrative costs associated with the collection of corporation tax should the rate of tax be reduced. (AQW 436/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Government consultation document on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy indicates that Northern Ireland would be expected to bear the additional cost of administering the regime where Corporation Tax is devolved. However, it stated that it was not possible at this stage to assess exactly what the HMRC costs of administering any devolved Northern Ireland tax would be.

Identifying and agreeing these costs will be a key element of the negotiations we will need to have with the Treasury before any decision can be reached on devolving Corporation Tax.

Corporation Tax

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for the estimated indirect cost to the local economy of a reduction in the block grant that would result from a reduction in corporation tax. (AQW 437/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Government consultation document on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy outlines the potential public expenditure costs and additional investment that could be expected as a consequence of reducing Corporation Tax in Northern Ireland.

However, it does not provide an estimate of the overall economic impact of reducing Corporation Tax, nor does it separately identify the economic consequences of reducing public expenditure. These are key issues on which the Government is seeking views as part of the consultation process.

However, the report published by the Economic Advisory Group on 26 May 2011 suggests that reducing Corporation Tax in Northern Ireland would have a net positive impact on the local economy in terms of both employment and output. In particular, the report estimates that an average of 4,500 net additional jobs per year could be created in the longer-term.

Drivers of Ministerial Cars

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how arrangements for the appointment, status and payment of drivers of ministerial cars differ from those which existed before devolution was established in May 2007; and the reasons for any changes and when any changes took place.

(AQW 472/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I understand that before devolution was established in May 2007, direct rule Ministers were driven by the Police.

For most of the previous Assembly mandate, 8 Ministers were driven by official drivers from the Ministerial car pool and 5 Ministers had drivers supplied and funded by their party.

On 1 April 2011, responsibility for Ministerial transport was transferred to individual departments. It was agreed that, when not needed for Ministerial purposes, the car would be available for other Departmental use, including the transport of officials. This allowed the officials' car pool to be discontinued.

Currently within DFP the Ministerial driver is a civil servant, appointed in the normal way and funded by my department.

Department Staff

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of people employed at each pay grade in each Department, broken down by community background.

(AQW 481/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information requested is set out in the attached tables. They show the position as at 1 January 2011 and include all Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) permanent staff. In addition to staff in the general service grades all departments employ staff in other disciplines that have their own grading structures. The tables therefore show all staff by general service and analogous grades. In order to protect the community background of individuals, cell sizes less than 10 cannot be released. Due to the small number in the 'Not Determined' category it has been merged with the next lowest category for the department.

The information contained in the tables should be treated with caution. There are variations in the community background profile between various grades and departments. However, for the purposes of the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 the NICS is treated as a single employer. The NICS submits a single monitoring return to the Equality Commission each year and every three years carries out a review of the whole organisation. The NICS has common grade structures, employment policies and recruitment and promotion systems. The scope of individual departments to influence the community background profile of their staff is very limited as it is illegal to select individuals for appointment, promotion or transfer on the basis of their community background.

NICS PERMANENT STAFF BY DEPARTMENT BROKEN DOWN BY ANALOGOUS GRADE AND COMMUNITY BACKGROUND @ 1ST JANUARY 2011

		Department: DARD		
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	133	142	275
	DP	140	104	244
	SO	312	213	525
	EOI/EOII	456	442	898
	AO	186	249	435
	AA	113	143	256
	Industrial	199	243	442
	Group Total	1539	1536	3075

Department: DCAL				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	14	14	28
	DP	15	22	37
	SO	27	27	54
	EOI/EOII	41	39	80
	AO/AO	36	38	74
	Industrial	13	10	23
	Group Total	146	150	296

Department: DE				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	56	61	117
	DP	55	26	81
	SO	51	28	79
	EOI/EOII	109	61	170
	AO	88	56	144
	AA	33	11	44
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	392	243	635

Department: DETI				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	41	20	61
	DP	76	37	113
	SO	49	47	96
	EOI/EOII	119	80	199
	AO	73	39	112
	AA	34	15	49
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	392	238	630

Department: DFP				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G5+	26	15	41
	G6/G7	169	157	326
	DP	275	225	500
	SO	344	252	596
	EOI/EOII	540	444	984
	AO	453	485	938
	AA/Industrial	142	83	225
	Group Total	1949	1661	3610

Department: DEL				
		Community Background		
		Protestant/Not Determined	Catholic	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	36	32	68
	DP	61	56	117
	SO	91	104	195
	EOI/EOII	413	618	1031
	AO	265	384	649
	AA	39	44	83
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	905	1238	2143

Department: DHSSPS				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	64	68	132
	DP	90	71	161
	SO	100	74	174
	EOI/EOII	105	74	179
	AO/AA	91	32	123
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	450	319	769

Department: DOE				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	74	83	157
	DP	179	158	337
	SO	252	265	517
	EOI/EOII	303	325	628
	AO	471	461	932
	AA	93	78	171
	Industrial	33	24	57
	Group Total	1405	1394	2799

Department: DRD				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	62	38	100
	DP	121	97	218
	SO	193	151	344
	EOI/EOII	306	334	640
	AO	132	167	299
	AA	176	174	350
	Industrial	305	237	542
	Group Total	1295	1198	2493

Department: DSD				
		Community Background		
		Protestant/Not Determined	Catholic	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	49	65	114
	DP	81	122	203
	S0	201	246	447
	EOI/EOII	1135	1504	2639
	AO	1614	2147	3761
	AA	290	323	613
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	3370	4407	7777

Department: OFMDFM				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G5+	16	11	27
	G6/G7	31	21	52
	DP	33	37	70
	S0	45	38	83
	EOI/EOII	52	33	85
	AO/AA	52	24	76
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	229	164	393

Department: DOJ				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G5+	20	12	32
	G6/G7	88	51	139
	DP	149	91	240
	SO	234	185	419
	EOI/EOII	393	255	648
	AO	560	338	898
	AA/Industrial	97	43	140
	Group Total	1541	975	2516

Department: PPS				
		Community Background		
		Protestant/Not Determined	Catholic	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G7+	34	36	70
	DP	51	65	116
	SO	11	14	25
	EOI/EOII	62	46	108
	AO	69	80	149
	AA	41	56	97
	Industrial	0	0	0
	Group Total	268	297	565

Department: All				
		Community Background		
		Protestant	Catholic/Not Determined	Group Total
		Headcount	Headcount	Headcount
Analogous Grade	G5+	149	103	252
	G6/G7	759	728	1487
	DP	1309	1128	2437
	S0	1898	1656	3554
	EOI/EOII	3990	4299	8289
	AO	3965	4537	8502
	AA	1078	989	2067
	Industrial	590	523	1113
	Group Total	13738	13963	27701

Northern Ireland Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what impact the removal of the Northern Ireland Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme has had on the Executive's capital budget.

(AQW 482/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There will be no direct impact on the Executive's capital budget. However, as the quarry industry will have to absorb this "additional cost", it is possible that aggregates prices will increase, and as the public sector is the industry's biggest customer, this could potentially impact on planned public works.

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what legislation his Department intends to introduce (i) 2011/12; and (ii) this mandate.

(AQW 488/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In addition to the normal Budget Bills, proposals for primary legislation are currently being developed in relation to rating and superannuation issues.

Further proposals may be brought forward later in the mandate to give effect to new or changes to existing policies.

Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the discussions his Department has had with the British Government regarding the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme.

(AQW 492/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have been concerned for some time now about the impact the suspension of the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme (ALCS) is having in Northern Ireland and have raised the need for an early replacement scheme with Treasury Ministers on several occasions since the EU Court decision last September. I reiterated this concern during my meeting with Justine Greening (Economic Secretary

to the Treasury) on 16 March 2011 and stressed again the need for the Government to urgently address this issue given the very damaging effect it is having on our local industry.

The Economic Secretary assured me that HM Treasury are committed to securing a replacement ALCS. However, we now know that the European Commission will be carrying out a full review of the Scheme, and it therefore remains vitally important that every effort is made to work with the Commission and encourage them to complete their review as soon as possible. Both DFP and Treasury officials will do all that they can to facilitate this and meet regularly.

I was pleased that the Chancellor announced in Budget 2011 that the scheduled increase in the aggregates levy rate from £2.00 to £2.10 has been delayed following the suspension of the ALCS. The Chancellor also confirmed that provision for any replacement scheme would be made in the 2011 Finance Bill. This is an important step which means that the introduction of a replacement scheme would not be delayed by the need for UK legislation at a later stage in the process.

I can assure you that my Department and will continue to work with HM Treasury to ensure that a replacement scheme is put in place as soon as is practically possible.

Grant Programmes

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what investigations have taken place to assess the amount of money that could be saved if the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Education were to work in co-operation with the Department for Regional Development's existing grant programmes instead of each operating completely autonomous programmes.

(AQW 493/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I understand that this question relates to the provision of transport. The Department of Finance and Personnel's Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU) has been working closely with the Department of Education and the Education and Library Boards on a number of areas of education expenditure, including the provision of school transport. The Stage One Study, which has been completed, is available on the Department of Education's website, and has revealed variations in unit cost in relation to the provision of school transport. Further work is currently in hand to explain these variations and determine ways in which best value for money can be achieved. The interface with other transport providers is a part of this work.

It is of course incumbent on all departments and agencies on an ongoing basis to ensure that they achieve best value for money across all programmes and services.

Rating Re-valuation

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when a rating re-valuation of all non-domestic properties will (i) take place; and (ii) be completed.

(AQW 505/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is currently intended for the next non domestic revaluation to come into effect on 1 April 2015. This would see Northern Ireland aligning with the next revaluation of non domestic properties in the rest of the UK, which is also due to occur at that time.

This is a matter that is likely to require Executive endorsement and this will be sought before work begins in a year or two's time.

The actual process of valuing non domestic properties will be undertaken by the valuation side within Land and Property Service in advance of the 1 April 2015 effective date.

Local Banks

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what assessment he has made of the current approach taken by local banks to lending to local businesses.

(AQW 518/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Ensuring that Northern Ireland has a competitive banking sector that meets the needs of businesses and consumers remains, strategically, a very important issue as our economy struggles to recover from the recession and I have been liaising with the local banks and the British Bankers Association (BBA) in this regard for some time now.

Anecdotal evidence - the reports I received from business organisations and constituents - still suggests that the availability of credit remains constrained and that the cost of credit can sometimes be prohibitive. Data for the UK as a whole would confirm this.

In that context, I have previously welcomed the actions identified in the BBA Business Finance Taskforce report to improve access to finance, to improve customer relationships, and to improve information on bank lending and performance. However, while I view this report as a positive step forward, I wrote last month to the BBA to indicate that I remain somewhat disappointed about the pace of implementation.

Furthermore, the lack of regular information on bank lending in Northern Ireland remains a constraint to our understanding of the current situation in this regard and I have also stressed how important it is that this is provided urgently. This will help provide a clearer picture of the extent to which the availability of finance is supporting economic recovery in Northern Ireland.

Fleet Transport

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cost of providing cars for (i) Ministers; (ii) Junior Ministers; (iii) civil servants; and (iv) others in each of the last three years; and to outline any planned investment in fleet transport over the next twelve months.

(AQW 524/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The overall costs of providing cars for Ministers, Junior Ministers and civil servants for each of the last 3 years are detailed in the attached table. The figures which include drivers' salaries, fuel and vehicle maintenance, cannot be split by user category. Cars were not provided for the fourth category 'others'.

A new fleet of 13 Ministerial vehicles has very recently been procured. The total capital and 3-year servicing costs are £252K. There are no current plans to invest in any further fleet transport over the next twelve months.

Year	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Total Running Costs (salary costs, fuel costs and car maintenance)	£433k	£441k	£470k

Procurement Cards

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many taxpayer-funded procurement cards are in use by departmental officials across the Civil Service and in arm's-length bodies.

(AQW 556/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Department of Finance and Personnel (including its arm's-length bodies) currently holds three taxpayer-funded procurement cards.

This response is provided for the Department of Finance and Personnel only, as information on the procurement cards held across the wider Civil Service and arm's-length bodies is not held centrally. The Member should contact individual departments for their information.

Invest NI: CEO

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 1/11-15, (i) whether, after he rejected the business case presented on 14 April 2011, any further business case or request for approval was presented to his Department in relation to a proposed bonus for the CEO of Invest NI; and (ii) when such a case was presented and what was the outcome.

(AQW 573/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Following my rejection of the business case presented on 14th April 2011, my Department have not received any further proposal or business case for the CEO of Invest NI.

Ballymena Health and Social Care Centre Business Case

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the proposed Ballymena Health and Social Care Centre business case, which is now with his Department for consideration.

(AQW 714/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Ballymena Health and Social Care Centre business case was received in my department on the 9 June 2011. My officials are currently examining the business case to ensure that the project represents value for money and is affordable within the DHSSPS's capital and revenue allocations. My department has a target to respond to business cases within a three week period and the Ballymena Health and Social Care Centre business case will be processed in that time frame provided there is no need for further information or clarification from DHSSPS.

Corporation Tax

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he, or any of his officials, have had discussions with the Attorney General for Northern Ireland regarding the legality of the potential devolution of corporation tax varying powers to the Assembly.

(AQW 737/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My department has not taken specific advice from the Attorney General regarding the legality of the potential devolution of corporation tax varying powers.

Should the UK Government agree to devolve the power to vary corporation tax to the NI Executive, it is commonly accepted that this would be dependent on new / amended national taxation and devolution legislation being put in place by Westminster.

Corporation Tax

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what advice his Department has sought from Her Majesty's Treasury and Revenue and Customs regarding the framework for the potential devolution of corporation tax varying powers to the Assembly.

(AQW 738/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Government consultation document on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy includes references to a number of implementation options and administration issues should the decision be made to devolve the power to vary the corporation tax rate.

Officials have discussed all of these different implementation and administration issues with HM Treasury and HMRC colleagues during the preparation of the consultation document.

Agreeing a satisfactory resolution to these issues will be a key element of the negotiations we will need to have with the Treasury.

Civil Service Standards of Conduct

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the Civil Service Standards of Conduct, including how and at what levels they are applied.

(AQW 804/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Standards of Conduct policy for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) can be found in the Staff Handbook which can be viewed on the Department of Finance and Personnel website. The policy is applicable to all levels of staff in the NICS. The link to the policy is <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/6.01-standards-of-conduct.pdf>

Corporation Tax and End-year Flexibility

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the discussions he has had with Her Majesty's Treasury in relation to corporation tax and end-year flexibility arrangements.

(AQO 108/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The First Minister, deputy First Minister, DETI Minister and I met with David Gauke and Owen Paterson in February and March of this year, to discuss the then draft Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy paper, which is currently out for public consultation, ending on 24 June 2011.

At these meetings, we made it clear that the UK Government needed to work with the Executive to look at the different options for varying corporation tax. We also identified a need to examine the costs which remain very high, and at the upper end of previous estimates, and also asked that the paper be more explicit about the benefits we might expect. Further work is needed in these areas and we will continue to engage with the Treasury in this regard following the close of the consultation.

More recently we attended a consultation event in London on 8th June that was chaired by the Exchequer Secretary where we heard views from multinational businesses and other private sector stakeholders on the impact they believed a reduction in corporation tax would have on the attractiveness and the ease of doing business in Northern Ireland.

With regards end-year flexibility arrangements, I have already written to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury expressing my concerns on the proposed Budget Exchange system. I have also proposed an alternative scheme, which I believe will do much more to incentivise good financial management. I have arranged to meet with the Chief Secretary on 29 June to discuss the issue. I expect we will have a further discussion at the Finance Ministers quadrilateral meeting next month as the Ministers in Scotland and Wales have similar concerns.

Corporation Tax

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the most recent negotiations he has had with Her Majesty's Treasury in relation to corporation tax.

(AQO 114/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The First Minister, deputy First Minister, DETI Minister and I met with David Gauke and Owen Paterson in February and March of this year, to discuss the then draft Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy paper, which is currently out for public consultation, ending on 24 June 2011.

At these meetings, we made it clear that the UK Government needed to work with the Executive to look at the different options for varying corporation tax. We also identified a need to examine the costs which remain very high, and at the upper end of previous estimates, and also asked that the paper be more explicit about the benefits we might expect. Further work is needed in these areas and we will continue to engage with the Treasury in this regard following the close of the consultation.

More recently we attended a consultation event in London on 8th June that was chaired by the Exchequer Secretary where we heard views from multinational businesses and other private sector stakeholders on the impact they believed a reduction in corporation tax would have on the attractiveness and the ease of doing business in Northern Ireland.

Rates: Development Sites

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he will consider the introduction of a rating element to be paid on gap sites or locations where buildings have been demolished in anticipation of property development but which have remained undeveloped for more than one year. (AQO 107/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Proposals to implement a tax on previously developed or derelict land were examined as part of the Executive's 2007 Rating Review.

Given the reversal in property market conditions in 2008 the decision was taken not to proceed. This decision was taken because of concerns that it would add to land holding costs and therefore impact on the construction sector, which has suffered significantly as a result of the downturn. The conditions are no better today and I think that this decision should still stand.

There would also be major practicable difficulties in extending the rating system to cover redevelopment sites or land. Rating has always been based on existing (or in some cases previous) use and an owner could easily avoid the imposition of any significant rating charge by declaring the land to be a car park or some other low value alternative use. There could also be wider complications in terms of the valuation that would be attributed to these sites, how this would align with the normal basis of rental value and also the absence of market rental evidence to underpin the assessments.

It is my Department's considered view, therefore, that the rating system could not accommodate such a charge and what would be required would have to be a new tax. This view is shared by the Department of Communities and Local Government in Whitehall, which has responsibility for business rates policy for England, as that Department also looked into the matter a couple of years ago.

EU Funding

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps have been taken to maximise the level of funding from the European Union.

(AQO 113/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Firstly, I would like to confirm the position on the Northern Ireland EU Structural Funds Programmes—the budgets for these Programmes are a fixed allocation. We will continue to work to maximise our drawdown of this funding; the Departments and Bodies delivering these programmes will ensure that the full value of each Programme is drawn down. To date, all Programmes have met and exceeded their annual EU spending targets.

The 2011-15 Executive Budget commits Northern Ireland departments to increasing drawdown of discretionary European funds by 20% over the next four years. The Barroso Task Force Working Group (BTWG), under the chair of OFMDFM Junior Ministers, is working to establish how best to pursue and benefit from European funding, policies and networking opportunities.

The INTERREG IVB and C programmes are good examples of DFP efforts to increase Northern Ireland's uptake of EU funds beyond our own local Structural Funds programmes. These Programmes have an eligible area made up of several member states or, in the case of the INTERREG IVC Programme, all 27 member states. All regions within a Programme's eligible area can submit project ideas for possible funding but only the best projects are accepted. The number of projects with Northern Ireland partners approved under the IVB and IVC Programmes under the current programming period (42) is already more than double the number approved under the last programming period (17).

Lone Pensioner Allowance

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the uptake of the Lone Pensioner Allowance.

(AQO 115/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Since its introduction by the Executive on 1 April 2008, the total amount of money awarded to ratepayers (both owner occupiers and in the rented sector) as at 29 May 2011 under the Lone Pensioner Allowance was £15,337,928

The scheme is available to all pensioners aged 70 or over living alone, and almost 30,000 have benefitted since 2008, at an average award level of £170 per year.

I believe that the scheme has been an important element of the rating reforms implemented by the Executive. The scheme is not means tested. I encourage all eligible ratepayers to apply for this allowance, which provides a relief of 20% on rate bills. Land & Property Services, working

closely with other parts of government and with the voluntary sector, continues to encourage take up of the scheme. Land & Property Services provides updated information on awards under the scheme on its website.

DFP: Arm's-length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people are employed by the arm's-length bodies for which his Department has responsibility.

(AQO 116/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There are currently 11 people employed by arm's length bodies for which my Department has responsibility.

9 people are employed in the Public Service Commission for NI, 1 person is employed as the Lay Observer for NI and 1 person is employed in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme for NI Governance Group.

Civil Service: Sickness Absence

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action he intends to take following the report by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency which shows that the level of sickness absence in Departments equates, in pay terms, to a £22.9 million loss of productivity.

(AQO 117/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Tackling the high level of sickness absence across the NI Departments has been one of my key priorities since first becoming Minister for Finance and Personnel.

A comprehensive action plan, building on the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee, is in place to address sickness absence across all departments and the robust application of the recently revised Sickness Absence and Inefficiency Sickness Absence policies will help to drive down absence rates, thereby reducing costs and improving productivity.

Long-term absence generates huge costs, both in financial and human terms. We know that the main reason for long-term sickness absence relate to illnesses such as anxiety, stress and depression. This is now a widespread issue affecting much of the public and indeed the private sector and the NICS is not immune.

We are focussing specifically on the effective management of long term absence in order to see a meaningful and sustained improvement in the level of sickness absence.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) Conference

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he is aware of the recent Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) conference which was held in Westminster and the subsequent meeting which was attended by researchers from the conference and MPs; and whether any of his departmental officials attended either of these events or have assessed the findings.

(AQW 348/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): I am aware that the Invest in ME conference took place in Westminster on 20 May. Departmental officials did not attend the conference or the subsequent meeting

The conference focused on clinical and research issues. Publications referring to work on the XMRV virus and ME continue to be scrutinized by scientists and clinicians globally and there is consensus in the literature about the need for more high quality research until a clear answer is achieved.

While this research is as yet inconclusive both regarding the cause of ME and how the virus is transmitted, in Northern Ireland we will continue to assess developments to ensure that future education and clinical practice are influenced by the emerging evidence.

Emergency Life Support Skills

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department has taken in the last year to promote the teaching of emergency life support skills in schools, workplaces and communities; and what plans he has to encourage this in the future.

(AQW 395/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department published the Cardiovascular Service Framework for Health and Wellbeing in June 2009. Standard 9 states that Health and Social Care Professionals should work with schools, workplaces and communities to raise awareness of and access to emergency life support (ELS) skills.

A number of models to raise awareness of and provide training in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) are in operation in Northern Ireland within Health and Social Care Trusts and other statutory, community and voluntary organisations. The Public Health Agency in co operation with HSC Trusts and voluntary providers is developing a regional business case for the next HSC commissioning plan 2012/13 to ensure that the various programmes currently in place are coordinated and integrated to provide quality-assured training in CPR equitably across the province.

The Department has also recently started a pilot scheme to train volunteers in Emergency Life Support skills and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator. The pilot scheme which is aimed at people involved in sport, will be evaluated in early 2012.

In relation to the workplace, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment has advised that the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982 require employers to make suitable first aid provisions in all workplaces and this may require the appointment of one or more trained first aiders. Changes will be introduced from 1 September 2011 that will make it easier for small businesses to avail of training in basic first aid, including resuscitation.

I understand the Minister for Education will provide an answer in relation to schools and the Minister for Employment and Learning will respond in relation to further and higher educational facilities.

Dental Registration Fees

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety the services to which additional money raised from dental registration fees will be directed.

(AQW 396/11-15)

Mr Poots: Income derived from all RQIA regulatory activities, such as registration and inspection, is used to off-set the amount of funding provided by the Department and required by RQIA to fulfil its responsibilities as regulator.

HM Treasury guidance recommends that full recovery of regulatory costs should be the Government's aim.

Dental Registration Fees

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will consider a review of dental registration fees and the time-limit to register with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority.

(AQW 397/11-15)

Mr Poots: As regards a review of dental registration fees I refer you to my answer contained in AQW 285/11-15.

The time-limit to register was set by the regulator, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), in order to secure the prompt return of registration application forms and help manage the regulation process. Principals in dental practices who have not yet returned a completed application for registration should contact RQIA and arrange a revised date for return of the application where appropriate.

Local Care Homes

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what procedures are in place in local care homes to prevent the kind of abuse to which residents in Winterbourne View in England were subjected.

(AQW 419/11-15)

Mr Poots: In Northern Ireland all nursing and residential care homes are regulated by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and are subject to a minimum of two inspections per year. Where concerns arise, RQIA has power to carry out further unannounced inspections at any time of the day or night.

Each home is required to have appropriate policies and procedures in place in relation to both staffing and the protection of vulnerable adults. During inspection RQIA may review records in relation to these policies.

Homes have a legal responsibility to notify any serious injury to a resident or any event which adversely affects the care, health, welfare or safety of any resident, any accident in the home or any allegation of misconduct by those managing the home or working in the home.

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department has spent on external consultants in each financial year since May 2007.

(AQW 430/11-15)

Mr Poots: Since 2007/08 the expenditure incurred by my Department on external consultants (including Health Estates Agency, prior to its amalgamation into the Department from 1 April 2009), is as follows.

Financial Year	Core Department (£)	Health Estates (£)	Total Annual Expenditure (£)
2009/10	651,390	Not Applicable	651,390

Financial Year	Core Department (£)	Health Estates (£)	Total Annual Expenditure (£)
2008/09	606,066	146,445	752,511
2007/08	2,034,151	278,410	2,312,561

The expenditure for 2007/08 reflects the full financial year i.e. from the 1 April 2007.

Final expenditure on external consultancy for 2010/11 is not yet available.

Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many new referrals have had appointments with a Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three years.

(AQW 446/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of new outpatient attendances with a Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three years is outlined in the table below:

Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
No. of new outpatient attendances ¹	1,661	1,499	1,670

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

- 1 Data relate to the number of new outpatient attendances. The number of new outpatient attendances will not necessarily equate to the number of individuals attending a new outpatient appointment during the period as individuals may attend more than once.

Children with Chronic Orthopaedic Problems

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children with chronic orthopaedic problems have been seen by a Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area in each of the last three years.

(AQW 447/11-15)

Mr Poots: Patients can be seen by a Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon as either an outpatient or an inpatient.

The Belfast HSC Trust has advised me that the number of (i) new and review outpatient attendances and (ii) inpatient admissions with a Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three years are as follows:

- (i) The number of new and review outpatient attendances with a Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon at the Belfast HSC Trust: 2008/09 to 2010/11¹

Year	No. of new outpatient attendances	No. of review outpatient attendances	Total no. of outpatient attendances
2008/09	1,661	5,762	7,423
2009/10	1,499	5,502	7,001
2010/11	1,670	5,346	7,016

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

- 1 Data relate to the number of outpatient attendances. The number of outpatient attendances will not equate to the number of individuals attending an outpatient appointment during the period as individuals may attend more than once.

(ii) The number of inpatient admissions with a Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon at the Belfast HSC Trust: 2008/09 to 2010/11

Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Total number of inpatient admissions	419	405	368

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

- 1 Data relate to the number of inpatient admissions. The number of inpatient admissions will not equate to the number of individuals admitted for inpatient surgery during the period as individuals may be admitted more than once.

Craigavon Area Hospital

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when work will commence on the two new operating theatres proposed for the Craigavon Area Hospital; and when the work will be completed.

(AQW 458/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am not yet in a position to confirm when work on the two new theatres will commence. The Southern Health and Social Care Trust is currently finalising the tender process. Once the main contractor is appointed, it is estimated that construction work will take approximately 18 months to complete.

Heart and Circulatory Disease

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what actions his Department has taken in the last three years to reduce heart and circulatory disease.

(AQW 466/11-15)

Mr Poots: Primary prevention campaigns and programmes aimed at the known risk factors of cardiovascular diseases (smoking and obesity) have been in place for a number of years.

The Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) within the General Medical Services contract has an emphasis on both the minimisation of risk factors for heart and circulatory disease and on the secondary prevention of heart and circulatory disease. In addition, a three year Directed Enhanced Service which supports the Service Framework for Cardiovascular Health and Well-being was introduced in 2008/09.

The Cardiovascular Service Framework, introduced in 2009 sets out comprehensive pathways and standards for prevention, early diagnosis, treatment, long term management, and palliative care in relation to cardiovascular disease. The Public Health Agency leads on implementation of the Cardiovascular Service Framework in collaboration with other stakeholders. Specific actions have included,

- Stroke Competency Framework
- Stroke Units
- Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA services)

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what legislation his Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) this mandate.

(AQW 487/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is my intention to introduce primary legislation in relation to the following areas including Mental Capacity, Pharmacy Control of Entry, Ophthalmic Services, Tobacco Retailer Sanctions, Public Health, Adoption and the devolution of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007. It will also be necessary to make some amendments to existing legislation such as the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (NI) 2008, the Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (NI) 2009 and the Fire and Rescue Services (NI) Order 2006.

At this stage, the likelihood is that the primary legislation will not be introduced in 2011/12, but will be introduced during the course of this Assembly mandate.

It is also my intention to introduce subordinate legislation in 2011/12 arising from the Sunbeds Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, both of which were passed by the Assembly in the previous mandate.

There may also be a need to introduce subordinate legislation during the course of this Assembly mandate arising as a result of some of the primary legislation. However, at this point, it is not possible to be precise as to the nature or volume of such legislation.

Waiting Time to Foster a Child

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average waiting time to foster a child in each Health and Social Care Trust area in each year since their formation.

(AQW 495/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures detailing average waiting times to foster a child in each Health and Social Care Trust each year since their formation are not available centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate costs.

Antrim Area Hospital Carpark

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what length of time a visitor to Antrim Area Hospital has to leave the car park after paying for their parking ticket; and for his assessment of this time-frame, given that many people using the car park have mobility issues.

(AQW 503/11-15)

Mr Poots: The length of time allowed between paying for a car parking ticket and leaving the car park is 15 minutes. Help is available through an intercom system at entry and exit points of the car park and at the pay stations to assist anyone with mobility problems.

Joint Protocol Between the PSNI and Social Services Gateway Teams

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times the joint protocol between the PSNI and Social Services Gateway Teams was applied in (i) 2009; and (ii) 2010.

(AQW 506/11-15)

Mr Poots: Figures detailing how many times the joint protocol between the PSNI and Social Services Gateway Teams was applied in 2009 and 2010, are not available centrally in this format.

Statistical bulletin, 'Children Order Statistical Tables for Northern Ireland 2009/10' details the numbers of Child Protection Joint Protocol Investigations carried out between the PSNI and HSC Trusts during the year ending 31 March 2010. This bulletin is available from the DHSSPS website at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/stats_research/stats-cib-3/statistics_and_research-cib-pub/children_statistics/stats-cib-children_order.htm

Previous editions of this bulletin, including that for 2008/09, are available from the same website.

Figures detailed in these two bulletins indicate that Child Protection Joint Protocol Investigations increased by 26% (151) from 572 in 2008/09 to 723 in 2009/10, and as a proportion of all Child Protection Investigations, those involving Joint Protocol increased by one percentage point from 20% to 21% respectively.

Multiple Sclerosis Services in Upper Bann

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the provision of Multiple Sclerosis services in the Upper Bann constituency.

(AQW 519/11-15)

Mr Poots: Clients residing in the Upper Bann constituency have access to the full range of core community health and social care services. These include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, community nursing, speech and language therapy, dietetics, social work and social care, podiatry, domiciliary care, day care and daytime opportunities, and respite. They also have access to Thompson House and Forster Green hospitals for assessment and rehabilitation, and there is an MS Nurse Specialist based within the Southern HSC Trust who can provide specialist support as required.

Muckamore Abbey

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether patients in Muckamore Abbey will be forced to be resettled against their own, or their families', wishes.

(AQW 547/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department continues to work with the Health and Social Care Board, (HSCB) Health and Social Care Trusts (the "Trust") and the Department for Social Development to resettle all those patients currently in long stay learning disability hospitals, the key consideration being that their lives will be improved by the process.

The principle of "betterment" remains the key consideration for the Trusts in the resettlement of individuals in the community and that includes full discussion with the individual, family and carers on accommodation arrangements, support for independent living and the range of health and social care services which are required.

Clinicians and professional staff from the learning disability hospitals are of the opinion that, with the appropriate level of care and support, all patients could and should live relatively independent lives within the community. However, the Trusts will continue to respect the wishes of patients and their families in dealing with each individual case.

Muckamore Abbey Patients

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his Department's plans for the resettlement of Muckamore Abbey patients.

(AQW 548/11-15)

Mr Poots: Priority for resettlement was given at Executive level in 2008 through the Programme for Government target that by 2013, anyone with a learning disability is promptly and suitably treated in the community and no-one remains unnecessarily in hospital.

By 31 March 2011, 116 long stay patients had been resettled from learning disability hospitals to appropriate places in the community compared to the March 2006 total.

My Department continues to work with the Health and Social Care Board, Health and Social Care Trusts and the Department for Social Development to resettle all those patients currently in long stay learning disability hospitals, the key consideration being that their lives will be improved by the process.

This year I am allocating £6.8m towards the resettlement of 60 people across all of the learning disability hospitals in Northern Ireland. I am advised that the majority of those will be from MuckamoreAbbeyHospital.

Sign Language Interpreting Sessions

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many bookings for sign language interpreting sessions were taken by Hands that Talk under their contract with the Western Health and Social Care Trust in (a) 2009/10; and (b) 2010/11; (ii) how many of these sessions were carried out by interpreters registered with the National Registers of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and Deafblind People (NRCPD) as (a) a Member of the Register of Sign Language Interpreters; and (b) a Junior Trainee Interpreter; and (iii) how many of the sessions were carried out by interpreters not registered with the NRCPD.

(AQW 572/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of bookings for sign language interpreting sessions taken by Hands That Talk under their contract with the Western Health and Social Care Trust was 330 in 2009/10 and 351 in 2010/11. All of these sessions were carried out by interpreters registered by NRCPD as a Member of the Register of Sign Language Interpreters.

Suicide Support Groups

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his Department's policies and practices for ensuring that suicide support groups are established in every part of Northern Ireland where a need exists; and what financial support is available to such groups to provide an adequate service for users.

(AQW 581/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department allocates £6.7m per annum for the provision of suicide prevention services. This includes £3.2m for the implementation of the Protect Life Strategy and £3.5m for the operation of Lifeline service. Around £2.7m of this is allocated to community groups to support community-led suicide prevention services.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) works with local implementation groups in the five Health Trust areas to develop community action plans which are then funded from the Protect Life budget. Local implementation groups include representation from the statutory and voluntary/community sectors, and from families bereaved by suicide.

The PHA and the Health and Social Care Trusts employ suicide prevention co-ordinators in each of the Trust areas. Part of the remit of these posts is to ensure that suicide prevention services are available locally, and to support the establishment and operation of community-based groups to address suicide in their areas.

Emergency Life Support Skills

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to increase emergency life support skills training in schools, workplaces and communities.

(AQW 582/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department published the Cardiovascular Service Framework for Health and Wellbeing in June 2009. Standard 9 states that Health and Social Care Professionals should work with schools, workplaces and communities to raise awareness of and access to emergency life support (ELS) skills.

A number of models to raise awareness of and provide training in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) are in operation in Northern Ireland within Health and Social Care Trusts and other statutory, community and voluntary organisations. The Public Health Agency in co operation with HSC Trusts and voluntary providers is developing a regional business case for the next HSC commissioning plan 2012/13 to ensure that the various programmes currently in place are coordinated and integrated to provide quality-assured training in CPR equitably across the province.

The Department has also recently started a pilot scheme to train volunteers in Emergency Life Support skills and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator. The pilot scheme which is aimed at people involved in sport, will be evaluated in early 2012.

In relation to the workplace, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment has advised that the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982 require employers to make suitable first aid provisions in all workplaces and this may require the appointment of one or more trained first aiders. Changes will be introduced from 1 September 2011 that will make it easier for small businesses to avail of training in basic first aid, including resuscitation.

I understand the Minister for Education will provide an answer in relation to schools.

McKinsey Report

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of how the recommendations contained in the McKinsey Report compare to his stated intention to 'promote greater involvement of frontline professionals in decision making and service development'; and how he will ensure that the views and contributions of frontline staff are included in his plans for the future of the Health Service.

(AQW 611/11-15)

Mr Poots: The McKinsey report provides firm evidence that there is scope for greater productivity while delivering cash releasing efficiencies but this is only one body of work which will inform my decisions on plans for the future of Health and Social Care services. I will also want to take full account of the recommendations emanating from the forthcoming PEDU Review, to which I am fully committed, and which I expect to get underway shortly and also the recent work carried out by Professor Appleby. I am determined to develop a clear and sustainable strategy to maximise the outcomes of health and social care, focusing on: prevention and public health; quality of care and; containing costs.

Greater collaboration and involvement with frontline professionals is at the heart of my plans. I want to drive up the quality of services and improve outcomes for patients and clients and that will require the commitment and support of everyone involved, from those involved in support roles such as portering, cleaning and security to those delivering care and treatment at the coal face. I am keen to ensure that the views, experience and expertise of all staff are harnessed to best effect in shaping policies to improve Health and Social care.

In the days and weeks ahead I will be meeting with a wide range of interested parties - from representatives of the professions to patient and client groups - and directly seeking their views. In due course, my plans will be subject to appropriate public consultation exercise during which the views of all interested parties on the future of the health service will be gathered and taken into account in decisions on the way ahead.

Archived Departmental Documentation

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department spent on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation in each of the last three years.

(AQW 622/11-15)

Mr Poots: Over the last three years my Department has not incurred any expenditure on renting storage space for archived departmental documentation.

Sensory Processing Disorder

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) children; and (ii) adults have been diagnosed with Sensory Processing Disorder in each Health and Social Care Trust area in each of the last five years.

(AQW 679/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not available.

Southern Cross Healthcare

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he is aware of any proposed changes to the rental fees to be paid to Southern Cross Healthcare; and for his assessment of the impact this will have on care homes.

(AQW 688/11-15)

Mr Poots: The level of tariff paid to care homes is a matter for local negotiation between the HSC and care home providers. There are currently no plans to change the level of tariff paid to Southern Cross.

Southern Cross Healthcare Group

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the impact on care provision arising from of the decision by Southern Cross Healthcare Group to reduce its staff numbers and service provision.

(AQW 722/11-15)

Mr Poots: All registered residential care and nursing homes are required by legislation to employ an appropriate number of staff to enable them to meet the health and welfare needs of residents. Homes are subject to a minimum of two inspections per year by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) which monitors compliance with this legislation.

Southern Cross is currently engaging with staff on how the company can be run more efficiently and redundancies are one potential outcome of this process. Regardless of outcome, Southern Cross will not be exempt from the requirement to ensure that each home has an appropriate number of staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its residents and the RQIA will remain in close contact with the company to ensure this is the case.

Secure Accommodation Units

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of Secure Accommodation Units and the number of people each unit can facilitate.

(AQW 752/11-15)

Mr Poots: My understanding is that you are asking specifically about children's Secure Accommodation Units, and I can advise you that the only such unit in Northern Ireland is Lakewood Regional Secure Care Centre, within the South Eastern HSC Trust.

Lakewood will house sixteen 11 to 18 year old children when at full capacity, on both a short and long term basis.

Accident and Emergency Cover at the Mater Hospital, Belfast

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he can confirm that there will be full and continued Accident and Emergency cover at the Mater Hospital, Belfast in view of the speculation of its imminent closure.

(AQW 817/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not made any decisions regarding the re-configuration of health and social care services. I shall be looking at issues which impact on the provision of treatment and care in the Trusts. I want to assure the public that the safety and quality of services will be my first concern. My focus will be on improvement in health outcomes for the population of Northern Ireland.

Department of Justice

PSNI: Equal Pay Dispute

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what progress has been made in reaching the equal pay dispute of Civil Servants seconded to the PSNI and the Northern Ireland Office.

(AQW 330/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): In respect of staff in the Department of Justice with previous service in PSNI and the Northern Ireland Office, it remains my position that no legal liability has been established which would justify making an equal pay settlement. However, it is also my position that my officials should meet with the trade union NIPSA if they have further or new issues to discuss.

In respect of police staff, the Department of Finance and Personnel have advised that as pay and grading delegation was granted to the Northern Ireland Office (including Police Staff) in 1996, no liability exists in respect of equal pay when comparing PSNI support staff and civil servants.

In respect of both civil servants and police staff, cases have been lodged in the County Court.

Local District Policing Partnerships

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the effectiveness of the local District Policing Partnerships.

(AQW 347/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Policing Board (the Board) has a statutory responsibility to assess the effectiveness of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) in performing their statutory duties.

To fulfil this requirement, the Board undertakes an ongoing performance assessment of each DPP and Belfast Sub-Group against an agreed DPP Effectiveness Framework.

In August 2010, the Board's Community Engagement Committee (CEC) considered an annual assessment of the work of DPPs and Belfast Sub-Groups for the 2009/10 reporting year. The Board subsequently published a summary report in relation to DPP performance during the 2009/10 reporting year.

Information from the report confirms that;

- A total of 20 DPPs and Belfast Sub-Groups met between 10 and 12 of the 13 targets assessed,
- 8 DPPs met either 8 or 9 targets from the 13 targets assessed, and
- 1 DPP met less than 7 targets from the 13 targets assessed during the 2009/10 reporting period.

Prisoners

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of (i) prisoner fatalities; and (ii) prisoners who escaped detention from (a) 12 April 2009 until he took up office; and (b) from 13 April 2010 to 12 April 2011.

(AQW 358/11-15)

Mr Ford:

(i) **Prisoner Fatalities**

(a) From 12 April 2009 to 11 April 2010, there were four prisoner fatalities, two by natural causes, one suspected suicide and one prisoner who died while in police custody.

(b) From 12 April 2010 (when I took up office) to 11 April 2011, there were three prisoner fatalities, two by natural causes and one suspected suicide.

(ii) **Escapes from Detention**

(a) From 12 April 2009 to 11 April 2010, one prisoner escaped from detention at Hydebank Wood.

(b) From 12 April 2010 to 11 April 2011, one prisoner escaped from an outside hospital, where he was receiving treatment.

Both prisoners who escaped from detention have been returned to custody.

In addition to this three prisoners were erroneously released from custody in late 2010. Devidas Paliutus is currently being held on a murder charge in the Republic of Ireland, having elected to be tried there. The two other prisoners have both been returned to custody in Northern Ireland.

Injunctions or Super-injunctions

Mr Givan asked Minister of Justice, for each of the last five years, (i) how many injunctions or super-injunctions have been granted to convicted criminals who (a) have served their sentence; or (b) are currently in prison; and (iii) to detail how many have received legal aid for these applications and at what cost.

(AQW 369/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be compiled at disproportionate cost.

Case Number 11/000893

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17/11-15, whether a defence bill was submitted to Legal Aid for costs of £10,205, and how this figure was reached in line with the Legal Services Commission rates.

(AQW 376/11-15)

Mr Ford: The bill in respect of the Crown Court trial has not yet been submitted.

The fees in respect of the committal proceedings, in case number 11/000893, were paid in April and detailed in the table below. There are no further claims due for the committal hearing. The fee payable is made up of the standard fee for the category of case, together with travel and mileage being payable in addition to that fee in accordance with the Magistrates' Courts and County Court Appeals (Criminal Legal Aid) (Costs) Rules (NI) 2009.

	PC	VAT	Total
Committal fee	820.00		

	PC	VAT	Total
Travel	115.52		
Mileage	68.56		
Total	1004.08	200.82	1204.90

Case Number 10/111192

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether the costs for the defence in case number 10/111192 have been submitted to Legal Aid for payment; and if so, (i) when they were submitted; (ii) when it will be paid; and (iii) how much will be paid.

(AQW 414/11-15)

Mr Ford: All of the legal bills for the defence costs of case 10/111192 have not yet been submitted.

The bill for defence costs in the Crown Court trial was submitted in February 2011. The total fees, which were authorised and paid in March 2011, were £6,383.17 (including VAT of £1,063.86).

The bills for the defence costs in the Magistrates Court have not yet been submitted. The estimated costs remain in the region of £1,500 (including VAT).

Legal Aid

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Justice to list the categories under which legal aid is paid; and how much has been paid out under each category in each of the last five years.

(AQW 420/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below represents a five year period of expenditure covering five categories of legal aid. Figures were provided by the NI Legal Services Commission.

Year	Criminal £m	Legal Advice and Assistance £m	ABWOR £m	Children Order £m	Civil £m	Total Expenditure £m
2005-2006	30.6	2.6	1.6	3.1	20.1	58.0
2006-2007	41.7	3.2	1.4	4.6	18.5	69.4
2007-2008	44.5	2.6	1.7	4.0	19.2	72.0
2008-2009	50.6	3.6	1.6	5.2	22.1	83.1
2009-2010	60.0	3.5	1.8	5.5	26.1	96.9

Criminal Legal Aid

Criminal legal aid provides free legal representation to an accused person facing criminal charges in the Magistrates' Court, appeals to the County Court and for trials in the Crown Court. It is available for adult and youth defendants and is granted by the Judiciary subject to two tests being met, namely the accused has insufficient means and it is in the interests of justice that free legal aid should be granted.

Legal Advice and Assistance

This is popularly known as the "Green Form Scheme" and allows a person to obtain preliminary legal advice from a solicitor on any point of Northern Ireland Law.

Assistance by Way of Representation (ABWOR)

ABWOR is an extension of the Advice and Assistance scheme and allows a solicitor, and in some instances counsel, to provide representation to an assisted person in a number of civil proceedings in the Magistrates' Courts

The Children Order(Northern Ireland) Order 1995

Funding for proceedings under the Children (NI) Order 1995 is provided as either ABWOR (Assistance By Way of Representation) or civil legal aid, depending on the court before which the proceedings are brought.

Civil Legal Aid

Civil legal aid provides legal representation in civil court proceedings, primarily in the County Court and High Court. Access to civil legal aid is determined by the NI Legal Services Commission.

Legal Aid

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how the amount spent on Legal Aid in the last available financial year compares with (i) England; (ii) Scotland; (iii) Wales; and (iv) the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 421/11-15)

Mr Ford:

	Total Legal Aid Expenditure	Population millions	Per Capita Spend
England and Wales	£ 2149m	54.4	£ 39.50
Scotland	£ 150.5m	5.4	£ 27.87
Northern Ireland	£ 96.9m	1.8	£ 53.83
Ireland	€ 87.00	4.2	€ 20.71

Figures are for the year 2009/10, except for the Republic of Ireland, which are for the calendar year 2010.

Orders of No Order (Final Order)

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice (i) why there was an increase in the number of Orders of No Order (Final Order) made by Courts in the first quarter of this year; and (ii) what was the subject of each original application.

(AQW 471/11-15)

Mr Ford: A total of 46 (All figures are provisional until the publication of the annual Judicial Statistics) orders of 'No Order' were made in the period October to December 2010 compared to 60¹ orders of 'No Order' in the period January to March 2011. The number of No Orders made will fluctuate over different periods. In the same period there was a 15% decrease in the number of final orders made.

The table below provides a breakdown of initiating applications which resulted in an order of "No Order" in the period January – March 2011.

	Number
Article 50 Care Family Proceedings Court	6

1 Includes EdenderryNursery School, HolywoodNursery School and PrioryCollege

	Number
Article 8 Family Care Centre	4
Article 8 Family Proceedings Court	33
C2 Application – leave granted to commence proceedings	1
Contact with a child in care Family Care Centre	2
Declaration of parentage	1
Extend Education Supervision Order	4
Application for Prohibited Steps	6
Extend Emergency Protection Order	3
Total	60

The provisional quarterly bulletin for October to December 2010 recorded a nil return for the number of 'No Orders' made. The 'No Order' statistics were incorporated under the 'Other Orders' category in error. This error would have been identified in the annual validation exercise and has now been rectified for all quarterly bulletins.

Contact Orders

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice, given that there were 815 Contact Orders made during the first quarter of this year, why there were 2.420 interim Contact Orders made.

(AQW 473/11-15)

Mr Ford: Interim orders are often used by the court to establish the level and frequency of contact suitable in each case. As a consequence there may be a number of interim orders made for an individual case before the final contact order is made.

Contact Orders

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many of the 815 Contact Orders that were made in the first quarter of this year were applied for by (i) mothers; (ii) fathers; and (iii) others.

(AQW 475/11-15)

Mr Ford: The familial designation of a person applying for a contact order is not readily available and could only be obtained/compiled at disproportionate cost.

Legal Aid

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total cost of legal aid in each of the last five years.

(AQW 486/11-15)

Mr Ford:

TOTAL COST OF LEGAL AID IN EACH OF THE LAST 5 YEARS

Financial Year	Legal Aid Fund Expenditure £'m	Grant in Aid Expenditure £'m	Total Expenditure £'m
2006/07	69.4	5.5	74.9
2007/08	72.0	5.7	77.7
2008/09	83.1	6.7	89.8

Financial Year	Legal Aid Fund Expenditure £'m	Grant in Aid Expenditure £'m	Total Expenditure £'m
2009/10	96.9	7.4	104.3
2010/11	93.3	7.8	101.1

The figures used in the above table are the cash expenditure figures. The expenditure has been provided for the administrative costs of Legal Aid (Grant in Aid) and the expenditure for the Legal Aid Fund.

Separated Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 3264/11, whether the definition of a separated prisoner remains unchanged.

(AQW 513/11-15)

Mr Ford: The definition of a separated prisoner, as detailed in AQW3264/11, has not changed.

Mobile Phones for Community Police Officers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 21/11-15, (i) who meets the running costs and call charges of the mobile phones supplied to Community Police Officers by the District Policing Partnerships; and (ii) to detail the running costs and call charges to date.

(AQW 516/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have been advised that the running costs and call charges of the mobile phones supplied to Community Police Officers by the District Policing Partnerships are met by the PSNI, and costs and charges to date are therefore an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Legal Costs of the Colin Howell Cases

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice (i) for an update on the legal costs of the Colin Howell cases; and (ii) what steps have been taken, or will be taken, to recover these costs from Mr Howell's estate.

(AQW 537/11-15)

Mr Ford: The total amount of fees paid to date in respect of Colin Howell's representation in the Magistrates' Courts is £32,050.35 (exc VAT of £4,507.30). There is still an outstanding bill to be paid and therefore the total cost will be greater. These bills cover his representation in respect of the charges of murder and sexual assault.

The Legal Services Commission has still not received any bills for assessment in relation to the Crown Court murder trial. The Commission has not amended its provisional estimate that the cost of this case is unlikely to be less than £24,000 (inc VAT).

The Commission has also not received any bills for assessment in relation to the Crown Court trial for the subsequent sexual assault charges. The provisional estimate for this trial indicates that the cost is unlikely to be less than £15,000 (inc VAT).

At present there is no facility to recover legal aid costs from Colin Howell. An enabling power was included in the Justice Act (NI) 2011 to facilitate the introduction of Recovery of Defence Costs Orders, but this will not apply retrospectively to the Howell case.

Agreement Ending Roe House Protest

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the proposed new search facility outlined in the text of 'Agreement Ending Roe House Protest'.

(AQW 543/11-15)

Mr Ford: In line with the agreement of 12 August, a new search facility for separated prisoners, located within the Bush and Roe House complex, became operational on 17 November 2010. This facility has removed the requirement for routine full body searching of separated prisoners moving between areas within the prison.

All separated prisoners entering and leaving the Bush and Roe complex are required to be searched in the new facility. The search is "airport style" requiring outer clothing and shoes to be removed, a rubdown search of the person carried out and the use of technical aids to assist with the detection of contraband.

Sex Offender

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 99/11-15, for his assessment of (i) how such a vague address can ensure public safety given that the address cannot be constantly policed or patrolled; and (ii) whether a park is a suitable place for the sex-offender to reside given his previous record.

(AQW 595/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Sexual Offences Act 2003 allows the naming of a location of a place where an offender can regularly be found. A park bench falls within that category. If the person cannot be found at the location notified, then he may be committing an offence.

The risk from sex offenders in the community is assessed and managed under multi agency public protection arrangements, the focus of which is to reduce the risk an individual may pose. Risk management plans are specific to each individual offender and, therefore, address all circumstances in relation to the risk posed.

I cannot comment on individual cases.

Legislation

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice what legislation his Department intends to introduce in (i) 2011/12; and (ii) the following years of this mandate.

(AQW 640/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is one bill currently at the preparation stage which I plan to bring forward in 2011/12. The Compliance Bill, a working title at the moment, will ensure that Northern Ireland is compliant with Human Rights requirements in two specific and separate areas: DNA and fingerprint retention; and sex offender notification.

There are three other bills at a more formative stage that I plan to bring forward later in the current mandate. Firstly, a strategic Justice Bill designed to deliver faster, fairer justice; secondly, new mental capacity legislation, on which my Department is working closely with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety; and thirdly, a Bail Bill, proposals for which are being prepared by the Northern Ireland Law Commission.

Prisoner Assessment Unit

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice when staff first raised concerns about the issues at the Prisoner Assessment Unit which ultimately led to its closure.

(AQW 648/11-15)

Mr Ford: Staff first raised concerns following two unconnected incidents which took place on 7 and 17 of April which involved a breach of prison rules by several prisoners at the Prisoner Assessment Unit. The prisoners involved in these incidents were subsequently returned to Maghaberry Prison.

A third incident, again involving a breach of prison rules, took place on Sunday 18 April and was brought to the attention of Maghaberry Senior Management on 21 April.

Following this, a decision was taken immediately to temporarily close the Unit to facilitate a thorough review and investigation into each of the incidents.

Prisoners

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW159/11-15, at which of the three stage testing in the community was the prisoner who was returned to Maghaberry Prison in April 2011, (AQW 652/11-15)

Mr Ford: The prisoner in question was in Phase Two of the pre-release scheme prior to recall. He was working in the community from Monday through to Friday, whilst residing at the PAU. Due to lack of hostel placements in the community he resided in the PAU at the weekend, during which he was allowed periods of daytime Unaccompanied Temporary Release.

Legal Aid Dispute

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to barristers and the Legal Aid dispute, whether prospective barristers sourced from England will be able to practise in Northern Ireland; and how will they be able to take instructions from solicitors who are also involved in the dispute.

(AQW 653/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are no major impediments to stop a barrister normally based in England from coming to practise in Northern Ireland. There are a number of instances where barristers from England have appeared before the courts here. My officials have written to 664 barristers, including 21 barristers from outside Northern Ireland who have previously represented clients before the courts in Northern Ireland, with a view to determining whether or not they are prepared to take on Crown Court work.

A barrister wishing to practise here must apply to the General Council of the Bar of Northern Ireland, (the Bar Council), before being permitted to practise. An abridged, flexible procedure for barristers from outside Northern Ireland wishing to obtain a temporary practising certificate is available from the Bar Council. In the event that barristers from England do choose to take on work in Northern Ireland, it would be a matter for them to determine in what manner they would take instructions from solicitors.

Legal Aid Rates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to solicitors who have come off record and barristers who refuse to accept cases under the new Legal Aid rates, whether cases, which are currently halted because of the lack of legal representation for the defendant, could be dismissed due to unreasonable delay.

(AQW 654/11-15)

Mr Ford: Whether a case should be dismissed for any reason is a matter for the Judge in any individual case. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on this.

I am making every effort to ensure that defendants have access to legal representation, so that cases can proceed without delay. My officials have written to 664 barristers and all solicitors' firms in Northern Ireland, with a view to determining whether or not they are prepared to take on Crown Court work at the new rates agreed by the Assembly. A list of solicitors willing to take on Crown Court work has been compiled and sent to defendants whom it appears may be without legal representation.

Newry Crown Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) for his assessment of the proceedings which occurred at Newry Crown Court on 9 June 2011, when a defence team did not have sight of legal papers prior to entering a plea or fully consulting with their client; (ii) whether his Department, or any other agency, intends to investigate the issue; and (iii) whether he will make a statement in relation to this matter.

(AQW 755/11-15)

Mr Ford: It would not be appropriate for me to comment on ongoing court proceedings in an individual case. Proceedings before any court are a matter for the Judge in that court. The regulation of the legal profession is a matter for the Law Society in respect of solicitors and the Bar Council in respect of barristers. Both organisations have published complaints procedures, should any person wish to complain about the standard of the legal services they have received. I do not, therefore, plan to investigate further or make a statement on this issue.

Prison Service: External Advisers

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the external advisers who have been appointed to the Prison Service in the last 12 months, including what recruitment procedures were followed and the associated remuneration.

(AQW 796/11-15)

Mr Ford: As part of the Northern Ireland Prison Service's Strategic Efficiency & Effectiveness Programme the Prison Service has undertaken a number of short term external appointments.

Two former HMPS profilers developed a Target Operating Model required for an Exit Business Case at a cost of £20,000 plus travel and accommodation. Approval was sought and given as a Direct Award Contract, given the highly specific and limited expertise required.

The Department of Finance & Personnel's Business & Consultancy Service are currently undertaking two pieces of work.

Firstly, developmental work on the Role of the Prison Officer and that of a Prison Officer - Support Grade at a cost of £8,170. Secondly, an extensive review of the NIPS Estate Management function that will explore new and innovative solutions and analyse various operating models. The Review will provide a long-term strategic blueprint for NIPS at a cost of £45,530.

A review of the NIPS Dog Deployment Policy was carried out by two members of the HMPS National Dog and Technical Support Group. There was no charge for this work other than travel and accommodation costs.

Work undertaken using tender and framework procurement routes included two contracts for the development of Asbestos Registers at a cost of £5,700 and £8,600, a Legionella Audit for £5,200, Preparation of a Measured Term Contract Documentation and Tender evaluation for £18,000, preparation of Tender Contract Documentation for Monitoring and Targeting Energy Usage for £17,350, and a Condition Survey of Medium Pressure Hot Water for £ 5,570.

Death by Dangerous Driving

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Justice (i) what is the sentencing range for the offence of death by dangerous driving; and (ii) what aggravating and mitigating factors are taken into consideration when a sentence is passed for this offence.

(AQW 812/11-15)

Mr Ford: The maximum sentence permitted in law for the offence of causing death by dangerous driving is 14 years' imprisonment. The determination of the appropriate sentence in individual cases is of course a matter for the judiciary taking account of any aggravating or mitigating factors pertaining to that case. The judiciary are assisted in determining the appropriate sentence by guideline judgements from the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal. The relevant guideline judgments for this offence are R

–v- McCartney [2007] NICA 41 and Attorney General's Reference (Number 2 of 2008) (McGinn) [2008] NICA 40 which set out in some detail the sentencing range to be applied for this offence in relation to the varying degrees of culpability of the offender. They are available publicly on the website of the Judicial Studies Board (www.jsbni.com) under Sentencing Guidelines – Road Traffic Offences. These judgments also set out aggravating and mitigating factors which may be considered in determining an individual sentence within the relevant sentencing range.

Prison Service

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Justice what discussions he had with Prison Service personnel in relation to the creation of the posts of (i) Organisational Change Manager; (ii) HR and Organisational Development Directorate Project Manager; (iii) Finance and Corporate Services Directorate Project Manager; and (iv) Offender Policy and Regimes Directorate Project Manager.

(AQW 815/11-15)

Mr Ford: The interim report by the Prison Review team indicated that the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service “will need the support of a dedicated programme manager, with experience of change management in a large and service-providing organisation, supported by a dedicated team, which must include a strong and professional HR capability”.

I have had regular meetings with the Director General regarding the Prison Review Team’s interim report and he has kept me informed of the process being followed to recruit the Change Management Team.

Department for Regional Development

A6 Dualling Scheme and Dungiven By-Pass

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the timescale for the completion of the (i) A6 dualling scheme; and (ii) Dungiven By-Pass.

(AQW 294/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): My Department’s Roads Service expects to publish an Environmental Statement, draft Direction Order and draft Vesting Order later this year for the 30 kilometre dual carriageway from Londonderry to Dungiven, including a dual carriageway bypass of Dungiven. Publication of these Orders will invite formal comment and objection and this will most likely lead to a public inquiry in Spring 2012, to examine the case for and against the scheme.

Given the reduction of two fifths in the Executive’s overall capital funding, the funds currently allocated to my Department in the 2011-2015 budget would not allow construction of the Londonderry to Dungiven dual carriageway or Dungiven Bypass to commence before 2014-2015, at the earliest.

Traffic-Calming Scheme on the Glen Road, Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail why a public consultation was not carried out prior to the installation of a traffic-calming scheme on the Glen Road, Derry.

(AQW 295/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department’s Roads Service has advised that the installation of traffic islands on the Glen Road was as a follow-up to an earlier resurfacing scheme and a formal public consultation was not required.

I understand that officials from Roads Service met with the Member and the residents of the area during the construction of the islands, and a number of changes were effected to accommodate their concerns.

University of Ulsters' Magee College: Residents' Parking Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking in relation to a residents' parking scheme in the vicinity of the University of Ulsters' Magee College.

(AQW 296/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a working group, set up last year to consider options for dealing with parking in the vicinity of the Magee Campus in Londonderry, is expected to report its findings by the end of summer 2011. It is anticipated that a Residents' Parking Scheme will be included as an option for some residents in the area. However, the progression of any Residents' Parking Scheme will be dependent upon those areas identified meeting the necessary criteria and achieving the required level of support from residents.

Sydenham By-Pass Carriageway

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed upgrade of the Sydenham By-Pass carriageway network.

(AQW 310/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is continuing to develop proposals for the A2 Sydenham Bypass Improvement Scheme. The proposed scheme will widen a 2.5km length between Bridge End and Knocknagoney from dual 2-lane carriageway to a dual 3-lane carriageway.

The scheme is being developed through a three stage assessment process:

- Stage 1 – focused on identifying the environmental, engineering, economic and traffic advantages and disadvantages, as well as the constraints associated with broadly defined improvement strategies. This concluded in the selection of the Proposed Corridor in May 2008;
- Stage 2 – is a detailed assessment of the range of options within the Proposed Corridor. This concluded in the selection of the Preferred Option in February 2010; and
- Stage 3 – involves detailed assessment of the Preferred Option, on which work is currently progressing. This will result in the publication of the Statutory Orders, which include the draft Direction Orders, Environmental Statement and Vesting Orders. Following this, there will then be a formal consultation period for comment and depending on the response a Public Inquiry may be held. The publication of the draft orders is envisaged in 2012.

It is not envisaged that the scheme will proceed to procurement during the current 2011-2015 budget period.

Proposed Roundabouts Adjacent to Craigtantlet Crossroads in Holywood

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how much funding has been allocated for two proposed roundabouts adjacent to Craigtantlet Crossroads in Holywood; and (ii) the timescale for the work to commence on the scheme.

(AQW 311/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a proposed scheme to upgrade two junctions in the vicinity of Craigtantlet Crossroads will cost in the region of £2.1 million. It is anticipated that a planning application and environmental statement for this major improvement scheme will be submitted in autumn of this year.

The timescale for construction of this scheme will be dependent on the outcomes of the various statutory processes, land acquisition and the availability of the necessary finance.

While a firm commitment on funding for this project cannot be given until the various statutory processes have been successfully completed, the scheme remains a high priority for Roads Service.

Staff Sick Leave

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps his Department is taking to reduce the number of staff taking two or more periods of sick leave in a year.

(AQW 335/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The latest statistics published by NISRA for the 2009/10 financial year showed that my Department had the lowest level of absence in the non-industrial grades in the NI Civil Service at 6.7 average working days lost per full-time member of staff. My Department will continue to focus on managing sick absence effectively and, in so doing, will robustly apply the terms set out in the Northern Ireland Civil Service Inefficiency Sickness Absence policy. This policy includes Review Points, ie points at which a sickness absence record must be reviewed. The NI Civil Service Review Points are 4 occasions or 10 working days in a rolling 12-month period.

When a member of staff reaches the Review Point, inefficiency action, including Written Warnings and ultimately dismissal, may be initiated.

Blue Badges

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of people who were refused a Blue Badge renewal in the last 12 months, and of these, how many had their Blue Badge renewed after reassessment.

(AQW 357/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would advise the Member that records maintained by my Department's Roads Service do not differentiate between details of renewal and first-time appeals against the refusal of a Blue Badge and I am therefore unable to provide the information requested.

However, I can advise that in the 2010/11 financial year, a total of 971 Blue Badge applications were refused, of which 366 were appealed and in 299 cases, the appeal was successful. For most of the successful appeals, medical evidence was provided which had not been included with the original application.

Ballykelly By-Pass

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development if will assess the level of daily vehicle usage of the A2 dual carriageway between Maydown and Londonderry Airport to ascertain the need for the Ballykelly By-Pass.

(AQW 359/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service regularly monitors traffic flows across the road network and will continue to do so. No traffic flow surveys have been carried out along the new A2 Maydown to City of Derry Airport dual carriageway scheme since its completion in February 2011, however, surveys are currently being planned. It is unlikely that the traffic flows at this location will influence the need for the A2 Ballykelly Bypass.

The preferred route for the Ballykelly Bypass was announced in March 2010, at which time a Cost Benefit Analysis, which is a measure of the scheme's economic viability, confirmed that it would deliver a positive economic return.

Traffic flows used for the A2 Ballykelly Bypass preferred route assessment were ascertained by undertaking surveys in November 2008. The results of which were:

- 13,845 vehicles to the west of the village; and
- 14,792 vehicles to the east of the village.

A26 Between Ballymena and Glarryford and Glarryford and the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the difference in the levels of daily vehicle usage of the A26 between (i) Ballymena and Glarryford; and (ii) Glarryford and the Causeway Hospital, Coleraine.

(AQW 360/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the latest validated information for the A26 Frosses Road is contained in the Roads Service Report 'Traffic and Travel Information 2009' which incorporates the Annual Traffic Census and Vehicle Kilometres of Travel statistics.

There are four automated traffic counting sites along the stretch of the A26 between Ballymena and the Causeway Hospital. The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flow for each site is calculated from the information collected and the tables below detail the 2009 validated information for the four sites, together with information currently being processed for inclusion in the forthcoming 2010 Report:

Between Ballymena and Glarryford		
Location	Year	Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
North of M2 Ballymena Bypass at Teeshan (site 113)	2009	21,720
	2010	20,280

Between Glarryford and Causeway Hospital, Coleraine		
Location	Year	Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)
South-East of Ballymoney at Glenlough (site 317)	2009	15,050
	2010	14,610
Ballymoney By-pass East of Ballybogey Road (site 316)	2009	17,150
	2010	15,560
Coleraine to Ballymoney at Windyhall (site 310)	2009	15,940
	2010	16,130

The traffic volume varies along the A26 Frosses Road with reductions in flows as traffic leave the route for destinations, such as Ballycastle via the A44 Drone's Road, Cloughmills and Dunloy. The AADT volume is in excess of 20,000 vehicles per day immediately north of Ballymena, reducing to between 14,500 and 15,500 vehicles per day in the vicinity of Ballymoney, before increasing to over 16,000 vehicles per day near Coleraine. In comparison with 2009, the 2010 AADT volume has reduced at the Ballymena and Ballymoney sites and increased at the site closer to Coleraine. However, I should advise that the 2010 information have yet to be verified.

A6 from Castledawson to Derry

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration he has given to the decoupling of the by-pass planned for Dungiven as part of the proposed upgrade to the A6 from Castledawson to Derry.

(AQW 361/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service expects to publish an Environmental Statement, draft Direction Order and draft Vesting Order later this year for the 30 kilometre dual carriageway from

Londonderry to Dungiven, including a dual carriageway bypass of Dungiven. Publication of these Orders will invite formal comment and objection, and this will most likely lead to a public inquiry in Spring 2012 to examine the case for and against the scheme.

Given the reduction of two-fifths in the Executive's overall capital funding, the funds currently allocated to my Department in the 2011-2015 budget would not allow construction of the Londonderry to Dungiven dual carriageway, or Dungiven Bypass to commence before 2014-2015, at the earliest.

Park and Ride Schemes

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) to list the Park and Ride schemes which are currently in operation; (ii) to detail how much each scheme cost to (a) set up; and (b) run on an annual basis; and (iii) to detail the amount of revenue raised to date by each scheme.

(AQW 367/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In addition to a wide range of Park and Share schemes, there are 44 Park and Ride schemes in Northern Ireland operated by Translink or my Department's Roads Service. Details of those schemes and the requested information, where available, are set out in the table below. It is not possible, however, to provide the information requested in relation to all sites.

With regard to set up costs, a number of the schemes set out in the table have been in operation for some considerable time and it is no longer possible to separately identify the initial construction costs.

While the operation of sites will incur costs, the majority of Park and Ride sites are operated as complementary infrastructure to bus and rail operations and any annual maintenance costs would be subsumed within general maintenance costs. Separate running costs for these sites could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Most Park and Ride sites are not revenue raising and do not levy parking charges. Rather, they aim to facilitate access to public transport by car users with customers paying for the relevant bus or rail service that they require. Details of the small number of revenue raising sites in which my Department's Roads Service is currently involved are set out separately in the further table below. The table provides details of all Roads Service revenue raised and annual direct running costs associated with the car park costs.

TABLE 1: NON-REVENUE RAISING PARK AND RIDE SITES

Site Name	Set-Up Costs	Annual Running Costs
Altnagelvin / Drumahoe	£250,000	£3,200
Antrim	Nil	n/a*
Ballee, Ballymena	£85,000	Nil
Ballgawley Rbt.	£77,000	Nil
Ballycastle	n/a	n/a
Ballyclare Bus Station	n/a	n/a
Ballymena	n/a	n/a
Ballymoney	n/a	n/a
Bangor	n/a	n/a
Black's Road	£344,000	£31,000
Cairnshill	£1,610,000	£13,000
Carnalea	n/a	n/a

Site Name	Set-Up Costs	Annual Running Costs
Carrickfergus	£612,581	n/a
Castledawson Rbt	n/a	Nil
Castlerock	n/a	n/a
Central Station	n/a	n/a
Coleraine	n/a	n/a
Craigadick	n/a	Nil
Dungannon	£137,854	n/a
Dunsilly	£285,000	Nil
Eastside, Belfast	£80,000	Details set out in Table 2
The Elk, Castledawson	n/a	Nil
Finaghy	£91,165	n/a
Greenisland	£325,100	n/a
Helen's Bay	n/a	n/a
Hollywood	n/a	n/a
Larne	n/a	n/a
Larne Station	n/a	n/a
Lisburn	n/a	n/a
Londonderry	n/a	n/a
Lough Road, Lurgan	n/a	n/a
Lurgan	£214,982	n/a
Maguiresbridge	n/a	n/a
Moira	£127,153	n/a
Mossley West	£17,153	n/a
Newry Station	£2,269,000	n/a
Northside, Belfast	n/a	Details set out in Table 2
Portadown	n/a	n/a
Ravenscroft Avenue	£25,000	n/a
Sprucefield	£329,000	£38,500
Strabane	n/a	n/a
TemplepatrickVillage	£73,000	Nil
Toome Bypass	£50,000	Nil
Whiteabbey	£526,034	n/a
Whitehead	£121,294	n/a
York Street	n/a	Details set out in Table 2

Site Name	Set-Up Costs	Annual Running Costs
Yorkgate	n/a	n/a

*na: Not Available

TABLE 2: REVENUE RAISING PARK AND RIDE SITES

Financial Year (ending 31 March)	DRD Roads Service Car Park	Revenue £	Direct Costs £
2010-11	EastsidePark& Ride, Belfast	76,827	£78,530
	NorthsidePark& Ride, Belfast	127,955	£125,026
	York Street 2, Park & Ride, Belfast	20,615	£32,141
2009-10	EastsidePark& Ride, Belfast	84,470	£88,862
	NorthsidePark& Ride, Belfast	148,662	£141,816
	York Street 2, Park & Ride, Belfast	42,605	£32,656
2008-09	EastsidePark& Ride, Belfast	83,895	£75,763
	NorthsidePark& Ride, Belfast	157,746	£132,288
	York Street 2, Park & Ride, Belfast	76,377	£29,253
2007-08	EastsidePark& Ride, Belfast	86,485	£61,433
	NorthsidePark& Ride, Belfast	161,572	£116,390
	York Street 2, Park & Ride, Belfast	73,034	£19,172
2006-07	EastsidePark& Ride, Belfast	71,014	£91,374
	NorthsidePark& Ride, Belfast	146,677	£168,485
	York Street 2, Park & Ride, Belfast	51,447	£37,082

Residents Only Parking Schemes in South Belfast

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Regional Development how he intends to progress earlier plans for Residents Only Parking Schemes in South Belfast.

(AQW 368/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that following representations received concerning the cost of residents' parking permits in areas that were not wholly or partially within a Neighbourhood Renewal Area, as defined by the Department for Social Development, its officials are currently finalising a review of the economic appraisal.

When this review is completed and the existing proposed cost is either confirmed or a revised cost established, officials will re-engage with local community representatives.

With regard to other areas where there will be no charge for permits, officials are awaiting contact from local representatives.

Further progress of these schemes will depend on the availability of the necessary resources required to both develop and implement such schemes.

Waste Water Pumping Stations in Enniskillen

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the work that is planned to tackle the recurring odour problem at waste water pumping stations in Enniskillen, which is affecting the residents of the Danny's Mill Road area.

(AQW 373/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that odour control equipment has been installed at the wastewater pumping station in Enniskillen, which should contribute to a reduction in the level of odours in the Danny's Mill Road area. The equipment became operational on 6 May 2011 and NIW will monitor its performance and make any adjustments necessary to ensure it remains effective.

On-Street Car Parking Charges

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development when he will make an announcement on whether he intends to proceed with on-street car parking charges.

(AQW 388/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In response to the potential impact on retail trade, I have initiated a review of the policy of introducing new on-street parking charges in towns throughout Northern Ireland.

I intend to announce my decision in due course.

NI Water

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development how many NI Water customers were recently overcharged, broken down by (i) constituency; and (ii) council area.

(AQW 389/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 83/11 dated 31 May 2011.

Departmental Documentation

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he intends to continue providing all departmental documentation in Irish.

(AQW 408/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: No. I understand it has not been the practice of the Department to provide all departmental documents in Irish. I have made some changes to departmental writing paper and advertisements. I have also asked officials to review the Codes of Courtesy for Irish and Ulster Scots, to ensure that my Department meets its obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the most cost effective way.

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on external consultants in each financial year since May 2007.

(AQW 431/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's expenditure on external consultants in each financial year since April 2007 is set out in the table below:

Financial Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Expenditure £	1,839,078	781,444	543,000	401,377*

* The expenditure quoted for the 2010-11 financial year is a provisional outturn figure.

Street Lighting

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to use energy saving light bulbs for street lighting.

(AQW 533/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it seeks to use the most suitable street lighting equipment for energy efficiency and performance. Conventional energy saving light bulbs, such as compact fluorescents, are generally not the most energy efficient choice for street lighting.

Other energy efficient lamps, such as Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs), are likely to become viable for street lighting in the near future. Roads Service has already trialled a number of LED lanterns, and plans further installations to assess their efficiency and performance, with a view to more widespread use in future.

SmartPasses

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will make representations to his counterpart in the Republic of Ireland on SmartPasses, and other concessionary schemes, which are accepted on Bus Éireann services but are being rejected when passengers use the EX33 (Goldline 274 equivalent) service, which is a commercial service run under the auspices of Bus Éireann.

(AQW 544/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland residents who are holders of a Senior SmartPass (for those over the age of 65), a Registered Blind SmartPass or a War Disablement SmartPass are entitled to free travel on cross-border bus and rail services, part funded by the Irish Department of Social Protection. This concession is available only on those services participating in the Irish Free Travel Scheme.

Although there are currently eight participating daily return services on the Londonderry to Dublin/Dublin Airport route on which holders of these Northern Ireland SmartPasses can enjoy free travel, the X33 express bus service which operates two additional daily return services, at premium fares, does not have participation in the Irish Free Travel Scheme. The Bus Éireann timetable sets out that free travel is not available on X33 services.

My officials have brought the Member's concerns to the attention of the Department of Social Protection.

Antrim to Crumlin Railway Line

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he intends to review the upgrading of the Antrim to Crumlin railway line.

(AQW 568/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have no plans to review the current status of the railway line between Antrim and Knockmore junction. Translink continues to maintain the line to the standard necessary to allow it to be used for diversionary services. Any work that might be carried out to bring back regular services to this line is considered to be beyond the period of the current budget settlement.

Door-to-Door Transport Service

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development how many people used the Door-to-Door transport service in each of the last five years.

(AQW 675/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The information is not available in the format requested. Door-to-Door service providers record the number of passenger trips undertaken but not the number of people who use the service.

The number of passenger trips in each of the last five years is as follow:-

2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
2,261	43,588	75,291	91,486	94,103

It should be noted that contracted Door-to-Door services in Belfast and Londonderry only commenced in April 2008.

New Local Urban Transport Service

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development what contractual safeguards are in place for the new local urban transport service for people with disabilities to ensure that the level of service provided during off-peak periods is based on the needs of users and not on cost.

(AQW 676/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The recent invitation to tender documents for the Door-to-Door service provision asked bidders to submit proposals for a “core hours” Door-to-Door service between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday. Additionally bidders were asked to provide costs for service delivery in the “non-core hours” of 7:30am to 9:00am and 5:00pm to 11:30pm Monday to Friday and between 7:30am and 11:30 pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

The intention of the new tender specification is to protect service delivery during the busy core hours when the majority of trips are provided. It also allows for services in “non-core hours”. The number of trips will be determine by both the needs of the users and the budget available which remains at broadly the same level as last year.

Unadopted Roads in Private Housing Estates

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the impact of the economic downturn on developers, what action he intends to take to ensure that unadopted roads in private housing estates are completed to an acceptable standard and that footpaths and street lighting are provided.

(AQW 771/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Prior to starting building works on any development where the layout of roads and footways has been determined under the Private Streets (Northern Ireland) Order 1980, a developer is required to enter into an agreement with my Department’s Roads Service to provide the roads, footpaths and street lighting to the Department’s standards, as prescribed in The Private Streets (Construction) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994.

This agreement is secured by a bond that allows Roads Service to complete the road works should the developer default.

Department for Social Development

External Consultants

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department has spent on external consultants in each financial year since May 2007.

(AQW 432/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The information on external consultancy spend within the Department for Social Development (including the Social Security Agency and Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division) for each financial year from 2007/08 to 2010/11 is set out in the table provided.

	*2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	**2010/11
DSD	£739,447	£2,411,170	£1,399,999	£1,209,731

* Information provided is inclusive for the full financial year

** Please note that these figures are provisional subject to the completion and audit of end year accounts.

Social Security Benefits

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to list the Social Security Benefits which (a) can be automatically transferred to Northern Ireland; and (b) are closed down and have to be reapplied for when a resident from another part of the UK moves to Northern Ireland; (ii) the reasons for the different approach to the respective benefits; and (iii) for an estimate of additional costs associated with reprocessing applications.

(AQW 440/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Memorandum of Reciprocal Arrangements between Great Britain and Northern Ireland relating to social security enables claims for certain benefits to link without the need for a fresh claim when a person moves between the two jurisdictions. The Arrangements cover contributory and non-contributory benefits but exclude income-related benefits. Negotiations are ongoing with the Department for Work and Pensions on a possible amendment to the Memorandum to include Employment and Support Allowance which has both a contributory and an income-related component.

- (i) The benefits covered by the Arrangements are Incapacity Benefit, contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Bereavement Payment, Widowed Parent's Allowance, Bereavement Allowance, Widow's Pension, Widowed Mother's Allowance, Maternity Allowance, contributory and non-contributory State Pensions, Industrial Injuries Benefits, Child's Special Allowance (for existing beneficiaries), Severe Disablement Allowance (for existing beneficiaries) and the age addition payable as an increase to the State Pension for people over the age of 80.
- (ib) Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit, State Pension Credit and certain statutory payments such as Statutory Sick Pay are not covered.
- (ii) As income-related benefits are not covered by the Memorandum, a new claim is necessary. Income-related benefits are based on a person's income and needs, and any move between Great Britain and Northern Ireland would of necessity involve a change of circumstances which would need to be reassessed.
- (iii) The Social Security Agency does not routinely record cases of applications for Social Security benefits where residents move from another part of the United Kingdom to Northern Ireland. Therefore the Social Security Agency is unable to provide information on any additional costs associated with reprocessing applications in this type of case.

Pension Credit

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people do not claim the Pension Credit to which they are entitled.

(AQW 449/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not held by my Department as there is no available data source that can be used to accurately estimate how many people do not claim Pension Credit. Benefit uptake is one of the Social Security Agency's key priorities. Since 2005 around 90,000 invitations have been issued to older people offering a benefit assessment through the Advice Sector and 250,000 mail shots have been sent out to raise awareness of State Pension Credit. This work is complimented by participation in local promotional events and general assistance with information and advice through the Social Security Agency network of offices. By June 2011 these exercises had generated an additional £26m of annual benefit and arrears to people over 60. The number of recipients receiving State Pension Credit at May 2011 is 97,101.

MLAs Surgeries in Community Houses

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether there are any restrictions on MLAs holding surgeries in community houses owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

(AQW 478/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive's policy requires that any dwellings let to community groups on a community basis, should not be used in such a manner that may erroneously suggest or give the impression that the Housing Executive endorses or wishes to promote the political views or stance of any political party. The Housing Executive seeks to maintain absolute impartiality in relation to such matters. Schedule 8 of the Housing Executive's standard Community Lease therefore provides that these dwellings are not to be used "at any time for the sale or supply or consumption of intoxicating liquor or for political purposes."

The Housing Executive considers that any use of a dwelling let on this basis for the purpose of an MLA holding a surgery would constitute a breach of this provision and would therefore contravene the terms of the Lease under which the dwelling is held.

Window Replacement Schemes

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the window replacement schemes planned for the (a) Newtownards; and (b) Downpatrick District Office areas in this financial year; (ii) the number of homes involved in each scheme; and (iii) the cost of each scheme.

(AQW 484/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that it has the following schemes programmed for both its Newtownards and Downpatrick District Office areas this financial year that may involve window replacement:-

Newtownards	316 dwellings	Glen Estate, Newtownards & Laburnum/Lower Crescent, Comber
Downpatrick	369 dwellings	Annsborough, Ardglass, Ballynahinch, Crossgar, Dundrum, Killyleagh & Newcastle

However, a survey of the dwellings has yet to be conducted and windows will only be replaced if the frames are in poor condition and warrant replacement. The cost for each scheme will not be known until the surveys are completed. It should be noted that the schemes will only proceed as funding becomes available.

Window Replacement Schemes

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the window replacement schemes planned for the Foyle constituency.

(AQW 485/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A window replacement scheme is programmed for the Creggan Estate for December 2011 for 70 dwellings at an estimated cost of £210,000. The properties involved are in Beechwood Crescent, Dunaff Gardens, Central Drive, Dawros Gardens, Demesne Gardens and Dunree Gardens. A second scheme for Creggan for 117 dwellings is also being considered, subject to additional funding becoming available during the year. The properties involved will be located in Westway, Inniscarn Crescent, Bligh's Lane, Bligh's Gardens, Crawford Court and Fountain Street.

Solid Fuel Fires

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive will carry out a review of its policy which does not allow tenants to have solid fuel fires.

(AQW 494/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive is currently conducting a review of its heating policy which is expected to be completed in the Autumn. The issue of solid fuel fires will be addressed within this review.

Housing Executive Weekly Rental Rate

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the average Housing Executive weekly rental rate since April 2011 for (i) a one bed flat or apartment; (ii) a two bed flat or house; (iii) a three bed house; and (iv) a four bed house.

(AQW 496/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that it operates a point based rent system and within house types there may be significant variables that impact on rent charges. The average Housing Executive weekly rents (exclusive of rates charges) applicable from 4 April 2011 are as follows:-

House Type	Weekly Rental Rate
1 Bedroom flat	Between £34.19 - £38.85
2 Bedroom flat	Between £35.74 - £40.40
2 Bedroom house	Between £48.17 - £54.39
3 Bedroom house	Between £54.39 - £60.61
4 Bedroom house	Between £55.94 - £65.16

Public Sector Social Housing Properties

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many public sector social housing properties were built in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 498/11-15)

Mr McCausland: During the course of the 2010-11 financial year a total of 2,418 units (165 schemes) of social housing were started. This included properties purchased "off the shelf" as well as traditional new build schemes.

A total of 1,409 properties were completed during the same period.

Housing Executive Staff

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number; and (ii) the percentage of full-time staff recruited to the Housing Executive in 2010, broken down by the recruits' community background.

(AQW 499/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below sets out details of the numbers and percentages of full-time staff appointed to the Housing Executive in 2010 by community background.

	Number	Percentage
Protestant	44	50.6
Roman Catholic	39	44.8
Not Known	4	4.6

Minimum Price for Alcohol

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Social Development what assessment he has made of the impact that the introduction of a minimum price for alcohol would have on (i) under-age drinking; and (ii) binge drinking.

(AQW 520/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A substantial knowledge base already exists on the possible relationship between pricing controls and reductions in consumption and alcohol-related harm. In particular research undertaken by Sheffield University concluded that the greatest health benefit impact would be among hazardous and harmful drinkers. A copy of this report is available in the Assembly library. DSD and DHSSPS officials are continuing to develop an evidence base to allow Ministers to develop policies to tackle underage drinking and binge drinking.

Disability Living Allowance Appeals

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many people have won Disability Living Allowance appeals in each of the last three years, broken down by council area; and (ii) what the total figure represents as a percentage of the total number of appeals.

(AQW 521/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Appeals Service arranges Disability Living Allowance appeals to be heard in Tribunal Centres throughout Northern Ireland. Statistical data can be broken down on the basis of each Tribunal Centre but not by council area. The table below outlines the total number of Disability Living Allowance appeals allowed at hearing in each of the last three years, broken down by Tribunal Centre.

DLA Appeals Allowed At Hearing (1st April 2008 to 31st March 2011)				
	Year			
Tribunal Centre	08'09	09'10	10'11	Total
Armagh	48	34	45	127
Ballymena	79	69	87	235
Ballymoney	23	25	17	65
Banbridge	38	23	22	83
Belfast	579	592	547	1718
Coleraine	87	81	75	243
Cookstown	50	39	44	133
Craigavon	108	99	92	299
Downpatrick	65	47	49	161
Dungannon	69	71	60	200
Enniskillen	59	52	70	181
Limavady	66	52	45	163
Londonderry	289	292	188	769
Magherafelt	55	41	52	148
Newry	101	86	85	272
Newtownards	102	127	99	328

DLA Appeals Allowed At Hearing (1st April 2008 to 31st March 2011)				
	Year			
Tribunal Centre	08'09	09'10	10'11	Total
Omagh	62	52	35	149
Strabane	62	54	39	155
Total number of allowed DLA appeals	1942	1836	1651	5429

The total number of Tribunal determinations for Disability Living Allowance appeals, both allowed and disallowed, for the same 3-year period was 15,507. As can be seen from the table, the total number of these appeals allowed at hearing was 5,429, which equates to 35% of all Disability Living Allowance appeal determinations.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in the (i) Larne; and (ii) Carrickfergus area have been refused Disability Living Allowance in the last twelve months.

(AQW 529/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not available. The data for Disability Living Allowance refusals/disallowances is held on the Department for Work and Pensions IT System and is only available on a Northern Ireland wide basis (11,945 in the last twelve months). The data cannot be broken down by Local Council area as the Department for Work and Pensions IT System is not configured to capture refusals/disallowances in the same manner as it does for those in receipt of the benefit.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, broken down by council area.

(AQW 553/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is set out in the table below. The figures show the number of claims where Disability Living Allowance was in payment at the date of extract. The date of extract was 14th May 2011.

Disability Living Allowance recipients by Council Area

Council Area	May 2011	Council Area	May 2011
Antrim	4,560	Dungannon	6,069
Ards	6,585	Fermanagh	5,293
Armagh	5,664	Larne	2,605
Ballymena	4,476	Limavady	3,355
Ballymoney	2,724	Lisburn	10,762
Banbridge	4,481	Magherafelt	3,723
Belfast	37,081	Moyle	1,524
Carrickfergus	3,339	Newry & Mourne	10,712
Castlereagh	5,396	Newtownabbey	7,333

Council Area	May 2011	Council Area	May 2011
Coleraine	4,302	North Down	5,250
Cookstown	4,273	Omagh	6,971
Craigavon	9,986	Strabane	5,765
Londonderry	14,245	Unallocated	1,712
Down	7,186	Total	185,372

*In producing this analysis, individual records were attributed to a local government district on the basis of their postcode. Not all records can be correctly allocated using this method, and some cannot be allocated at all.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance in each of the last three years, broken down by council area.

(AQW 554/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is set out in the table below. The figures show the number of claims where Disability Living Allowance was in payment at the dates of extract. The dates of extract are 16 May 2009, 15 May 2010 and 14 May 2011.

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE RECIPIENTS BY COUNCIL AREA IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS

CouncilArea	2009	2010	2011	CouncilArea	2009	2010	2011
Antrim	4,340	4,482	4,560	Dungannon	5,844	6,011	6,069
Ards	6,193	6,414	6,585	Fermanagh	5,277	5,215	5,293
Armagh	5,438	5,567	5,664	Larne	2,447	2,548	2,605
Ballymena	4,212	4,359	4,476	Limavady	3,171	3,281	3,355
Ballymoney	2,622	2,718	2,724	Lisburn	10,301	10,694	10,762
Banbridge	4,225	4,426	4,481	Magherafelt	3,481	3,667	3,723
Belfast	35,860	36,839	37,081	Moyle	1,441	1,483	1,524
Carrickfergus	3,260	3,340	3,339	Newry& Mourne	10,363	10,584	10,712
Castlereagh	5,247	5,287	5,396	Newtownabbey	6,897	7,164	7,333
Coleraine	4,080	4,223	4,302	North Down	5,020	5,178	5,250
Cookstown	4,100	4,219	4,273	Omagh	6,647	6,860	6,971
Craigavon	9,692	9,955	9,986	Strabane	5,675	5,747	5,765
Londonderry	13,933	14,213	14,245	Unallocated	946	1,372	1,712
Down	6,847	7,064	7,186	Total	177,559	182,910	185,372

*In producing this analysis, individual records were attributed to a local government district on the basis of their postcode. Not all records can be correctly allocated using this method, and some cannot be allocated at all.

Housing Waiting List

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development whether a person on a Northern Ireland housing waiting list can be transferred to a housing waiting list in England; and if so, what mechanisms exist to facilitate this process.

(AQW 596/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that applicants who wish to move outside Northern Ireland must apply directly to join the waiting list of local authorities and housing associations in the area(s) in which they would like to live. The Housing Executive facilitates such applicants by providing information on other local authorities and housing associations.

Houses on the Former St Patrick's Barracks Site, Ballymena

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development when the houses on the former St Patrick's Barracks site, Ballymena will be allocated.

(AQW 598/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I understand that ownership of the homes on this site at St.Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena have now transferred from Defence Estates to OFMdfM.

I am keen to see them brought back into use as soon as practicably possible and I have asked my officials to discuss with OFMdfM to see how this can be delivered. However the homes themselves require significant refurbishment and the Housing Association appointed to oversee their improvement advise me it could take up to 5 months to complete the work once on-site. This will obviously delay any allocation of the homes in question however I will be happy to update the member once these homes are ready for allocation.

Ballymena Master Plan

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the implementation of the Ballymena Master Plan.

(AQW 599/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Forty six actions were identified in the Ballymena Town Centre Masterplan, which was published in April 2009. A number of these actions have been completed, including a study of the town's retail capacity, a transport assessment which examines the measures required to address problems in the town and a separate Masterplanning process for the development of the St Patricks Barracks site, which is now owned by OFMdfM.

Several other actions, including a new public realm programme for the town centre and development of a site at Bridge Street are being taken forward by the Department in partnership with Ballymena Borough Council and Ballymena Town Centre Development Ltd, a public-private partnership that involves traders in the town and key public sector agencies.

Maintenance Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to list all the maintenance schemes planned for the Donaghadee area in the next financial year.

(AQW 603/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the following maintenance schemes are planned for this financial year and the next financial year, subject to funding being available:-

2011/12

Kitchen replacements for 27 properties in Victoria at an approximate cost of £135,000

24 fire-doors to flats in Barnagh Grove. The cost of this type of work is currently being negotiated with the Egan contractor.

2012/13

Kitchen replacements for 76 properties in Barnagh Grove and Park and ElmfieldPark at an approximate cost of £380,000.

Pensioners' Bungalows in Bloomfield Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what plans he has for the future of the pensioners' bungalows in Bloomfield Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 664/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I was pleased to accept the member's invitation on my recent visit to Bangor to see for myself the problems with these bungalows. I was also pleased to meet with representatives of the Bloomfield Community Association to hear first hand the problems the residents face, particularly in terms of keeping these bungalows warm during the winter months.

I have asked my officials to work alongside the Housing Executive in preparing an economic appraisal that can consider each of the options available for these particular homes. I expect that work to be completed by October and have assured the residents I will share the results of this with them at that time.

Heating Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what new heating schemes are planned for the North Down area in the next financial year.

(AQW 665/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Memberis referring to the current financial year. The following Housing Executive heating schemes are planned for the North Down area during the current financial year. These schemes are subject to the availability of funding. There is no programme as yet for 2012/13.

2011/12	Number of Dwellings	Estimated Cost
Crawfordsburn/Groomsport	80	£462k
Hollywood	101	£515k

Housing Repairs

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how much money the Housing Executive has allocated for housing repairs in the North Down area in the next financial year.

(AQW 667/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I assume the Memberis referring to the current financial year. The Housing Executive has advised that its proposed expenditure in the current financial year for Planned Maintenance is £1.772 million and for Response Maintenance is £1.775 million, making a total of £3.547 million.

Social Housing New Builds

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development to outline his Department's plans for social housing new builds in (i) Magherafelt town; (ii) Magherafelt district; and (iii) Cookstown district.

(AQW 746/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am still considering the Social Housing Development Programme and will advise the member of the proposals for Magherafelt and Cookstown within the coming weeks.

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