

# Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

**Friday 10 February 2012**

**Volume 72, No WA1**



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

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Spratt, Jimmy (South Belfast)  
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Swann, Robin (North Antrim)  
Weir, Peter (North Down)  
Wells, Jim (South Down)  
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

# Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 10 February 2012

## Written Answers to Questions

### Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

#### **Public Realm Works at Ebrington Barracks, Derry**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress of the public realm works at Ebrington Barracks, Derry.

**(AQW 6206/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister):** The public realm works at Ebrington are substantially complete. A phased approach to the construction of the public realm has been taken.

Phase One was opened in June 2011 to coincide with the launch of the Peace Bridge that allowed access through the site via St Columbs Road/Browning Drive. Phase Two will provide public access from the Limavady Road via Cunningham Square leading to The Square at Ebrington Parade Ground which will be officially opened on 14 February 2012.

The final phase of work running from the Star Fort wall down to the Foyle River will be completed later in the year.

#### **Introduction of Social Tariffs**

**Mr Girvan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether a social tariff will be introduced as a priority within the Programme for Government.

**(AQW 6539/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The draft programme for Government includes proposals to develop a range of initiatives aimed at reducing fuel poverty. The Department for Social Development will lead on this specific area but this topic will also be an aspect of the task we set for the Advisory Group on Financial Hardship that we propose to establish in February 2012.

In addition, to alleviate the pressure of fuel poverty especially amongst the elderly, those in most need and others in need as a result of medical conditions, special payments will be paid from the Social Protection Fund. We hope that this will offer some short-term assistance to those most in need. We expect payments to issue by February 2012. We have prioritised payments to the most vulnerable to ensure an important contribution to addressing the need whilst recognising the pressures on public finances

Taken together these plans will contribute both practically in the short term and strategically in the medium term to address this key issue. The issue of fuel poverty remains a high priority for the Executive as a whole.

However, we recognise that strategic actions are required. We will be examining the issue of social tariffs along with a range of other proposals.

## Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12

**Mr Eastwood** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made with the key objective to establish linkages with other thematic strategies, such as competitiveness and climate change, as detailed in 'Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12'.

**(AQW 6781/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Barroso Taskforce Working Group includes in its membership the lead officials from each of the four working groups pursuing the themes outlined in "Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12". This establishes and reinforces links between the four thematic strategies.

In addition, the Social Cohesion thematic strategy includes the lead from the Competition and Employment thematic strategy to encourage linkages between them.

A dedicated officer has been appointed to specifically focus on each of the four themes and will move to Brussels mid February. These Desk Officers will be working closely to achieve their thematic aims and will collaborate to identify opportunities that will contribute across all of the themes.

## Children's Strategy

**Mr Lyttle** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the internal review of the structures supporting the Children's Strategy covered the role, purpose and functioning of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People, and if so, what were the conclusions of the review.

**(AQW 6989/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Our consideration of the structures supporting the Children's Strategy includes the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People. When this is complete, we will make proposals to the Executive.

## Northern Ireland Racial Equality Strategy 2005 – 2010

**Mr McDevitt** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the Northern Ireland Racial Equality Strategy 2005 – 2010 and the services provided for asylum seekers and refugees, (i) for their assessment of how joined-up the services are in practice; (ii) whether there are any areas in the implementation of the strategy which cause concern; (iii) what resources their Department has made available for this area of work, (iv) whether resources will be increased; and (v) what steps they are taking to ensure that asylum seekers and refugees are getting the services they need.

**(AQW 7027/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** As part of the development of a new Strategy to replace "A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010", a review of the existing mechanisms and structures was carried out to identify systemic and strategic strengths and weaknesses of the 2005-2010 Strategy.

This review, as well as the requirements identified by our Racial Equality Forum and Racial Equality Panel, will influence and inform delivery mechanisms, such as joined-up services, as well as the details and targets for the new Strategy.

These details and targets will impact on the resources available and we will ensure that proper governance mechanisms are put in place to achieve the successful delivery of the new Strategy.

Immigration, and consequently asylum and refugee issues, remains a reserved matter being administered by the UK Border Agency. However, we will continue to work with those authorities to ensure that immigration policy shows a regional flexibility that takes full account of the needs and concerns that we have.

We intend to continue our support for groups in the sector which have direct contact with asylum seekers and refugees.

## Trade Union Duties

**Mr McCallister** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in their Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.

**(AQW 7061/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:**

- (i) During 2000/2001, no staff carried out trade union duties during facility time.
- (ii) During 2005/2006, a total of five days (full time equivalent 0.02) of trade union duties were carried out for NIPSA during facility time; there were no duties carried out for any other trade union.
- (iii) During 2010/2011, a total of five days (full time equivalent 0.02) of trade union duties were carried out for NIPSA during facility time; there were no duties carried out for any other trade union.

## Construction Industry

**Ms Ritchie** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action they have taken to support and underpin the construction industry; and what progress they have made on the establishment of a taskforce for the construction industry.

**(AQW 7141/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We recognise the difficult situation facing the construction industry and have worked to ensure that steps are being taken to help the sector within the resources available to the administration.

Through the Investment Strategy 2011-2021 (ISNI), the Executive is providing a £5 billion stimulus to the construction industry and related sectors of the economy over the next four year period. Investment will be targeted at those public works that are more labour intensive, such as roads maintenance, refurbishment, upgrades and extensions, as research shows that these typically support significantly more jobs as similar value works that require the purchase of land and specialist materials.

The ISNI was published for public consultation on 17 November 2011, and we would encourage the construction industry to participate in this. To ensure that small and medium size enterprises are able to bid for public works, the ISNI website, [www.isni.gov.uk](http://www.isni.gov.uk) maintains a database of projects being delivered through the ISNI, which enables companies to identify opportunities to bid for contracts.

There are already close links with the construction industry through the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland. This is a strategically focused interface between representatives from the construction industry, the Central Procurement Directorate and Centres of Procurement Expertise.

The forum has taken forward a number of actions and initiatives to support and underpin the construction industry. These include agreement of proposals on the three strands of sustainability: economic; social; and environmental.

There are no plans to establish an alternative taskforce for the construction industry in addition to the current arrangements.

## Funding Allocated to Good Relations

**Mr Moutray** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the level of funding their Department has allocated to good relations which targeted, or involved, young people and youth workers in the Upper Bann area in each of the last three years (i) in total; and (ii) in each council area.

**(AQW 7166/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** OFMDFM does not directly fund youth work as this is the responsibility of other departments. We do, however, provide funding towards good relations and summer intervention work which either target or involve young people and youth workers. Both Craigavon

and Banbridge District Councils participate in our District Councils Good Relations Programme and they have provided the following funding for youth-focused work over the last three years:

	<b>11/12*</b>	<b>10/11</b>	<b>09/10</b>
Craigavon Borough Council	£3,000	£8,000	£4,000
Banbridge District Council	£9,100	£8,750	£9,400

\*The figure stated for each district council area in 2011/12 is the total amount of expenditure that is anticipated at 31 March 2012.

### **Public Bike Hire Scheme for Belfast**

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) whether the Public Bike Hire Scheme for Belfast continues to receive financial assistance from the Strategic Investment Board; and (ii) how much financial assistance it has allocated to the Scheme in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7271/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Public Bike Hire Scheme for Belfast does not continue to receive funding from the Strategic Investment Board (SIB). The project in which SIB was involved in association with Belfast City Council and the Department for Regional Development was completed in October 2011.

In the last three years the following amounts of funding were allocated by SIB to the project:-

	<b>£</b>	
2009/10	NIL	
2010/11	31,482 + VAT	£37,495
2011/12	4,370 + VAT	£5,243

### **Staff Appointed to Liaise with the European institutions in Brussels and/or Strasbourg**

**Mr Lunn** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the grades of staff appointed by their Department to liaise, in any capacity, with the European institutions in Brussels and/or Strasbourg.

**(AQW 7276/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** We are responsible for the Office of the NI Executive in Brussels (ONIEB) whose main purpose is to monitor relevant EU policy developments and to ensure that our interests are taken into account in the work of the EU Institutions. We employ 5 staff in ONIEB. The numbers and grades of staff are as follows:

- 1 Assistant Secretary
- 1 Principal (on loan from Department of Agriculture and Rural Development)
- 1 Deputy Principal
- 2 Administrative staff (locally recruited)

In addition, four 'Desk Officers' have recently been appointed to support the work of the Inter-Departmental Barroso Task Force. The posts will be located principally in Brussels in the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive. Those appointed will each be allocated to a specific policy area, namely, Innovation and Technology, Competitiveness and Employment, Climate and Energy and Social Cohesion.

The four officials are currently preparing to move to Brussels and are expected to take up their posts mid to end February 2012.



## Funding Allocated to Good Relations

**Mr Storey** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the level of funding their Department has allocated to good relations which targeted or involved young people and youth workers in the North Antrim area, in each of the last three years (i) in total; and (ii) in each council area. **(AQW 7321/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** OFMDFM does not directly fund youth work as this is the responsibility of other departments. We do, however, provide funding towards good relations and summer intervention work that targets or involves young people and youth workers. Ballymoney, Ballymena and Moyle District Councils participate in our District Councils Good Relations Programme.

It is anticipated that over the period 2009-12 expenditure by these district councils on good relations projects targeting or involving young people and youth workers will amount to a total of £109,691. The expenditure, broken down annually and by council area, is as follows:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12*
Ballymena	£16,861	£17,022	£16,163
Ballymoney	£11,150	£11,275	£11,100
Moyle	£11,500	£ 7,400	£ 7,220

\*The figure stated for each district council area in 2011/12 is the total amount of expenditure that is anticipated at 31 March 2012.

## Summer Intervention Work

**Mr Storey** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the level of funding their Department has allocated to summer intervention work, aimed at youth work, in the North Antrim area in each of the last three years (i) in total; and (ii) in each council area. **(AQW 7322/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** OFMDFM does not directly fund youth work as this is the responsibility of other departments. We do, however, provide funding towards good relations and summer intervention work that targets or involves young people and youth workers. Ballymoney, Ballymena and Moyle District Councils participate in our District Councils Good Relations Programme.

Funding in relation to Summer Intervention in these district council areas falls within the good relations expenditure totalling £109,691, tabulated below. It is not possible to further disaggregate these figures.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12*
Ballymena	£16,861	£17,022	£16,163
Ballymoney	£11,150	£11,275	£11,100
Moyle	£11,500	£ 7,400	£ 7,220

\*The figure stated for each district council area in 2011/12 is the total amount of expenditure that is anticipated at 31 March 2012.

## 10-year Strategy for Children and Young People

**Mr Eastwood** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 6367/11-15, why they have no plans to conduct the mid-term review of the 10-year Strategy for Children and Young People, when it states in their Department's Business Plan 2011/12 'By end June 2011 complete mid-term review of Strategy for Children and Young People'.

**(AQW 7512/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** As indicated in our response to the previous question, the Department has no plans to carry out a mid-term review of the 10 Year Strategy for Children and Young People. The commitment included in the Department's Business Plan refers to the work OFMDFM is currently undertaking to review progress against the indicators in the Strategy. This work will underpin the formulation of a new Action Plan designed to implement the Strategy over the period 2012-2016.

## EU Funding

**Mr A Maginness** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on progress in achieving the target of increasing the drawdown of European funding by 20 percent.

**(AQO 1215/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** In December 2010, we joined with President Barroso in a commitment to renew the Barroso Task Force. We have delivered on that commitment.

The Executive agreed its 2011-12 European priorities on 16 June, just five weeks into the term of our new administration; and since then all Executive departments have been working towards their implementation, including the 20% target.

Up to the end of December, departments had drawn down £3m of EU non-structural funds against this target and applications for a further £33m worth of funding have been submitted.

Departments have made significant progress in building capacity and increasing their engagement in EU policies, funding programmes and networks of value to Northern Ireland.

Of course, there will be further progress to report – we are not yet at the end of this financial year.

We are confident we have made a good start on meeting the Executive's four-year target and that the groundwork we have undertaken will deliver even greater success over the next three years.

## Centenaries

**Mr Lunn** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what discussions their Department has had with the British and Irish Governments regarding the decade of centenaries.

**(AQO 1218/11-15)**

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** This year marks the beginning of a decade of centenary anniversaries of seminal events and significant milestones in the shared history of the UK and Ireland. The 'decade of centenaries' will provide an opportunity for everyone to achieve a greater understanding of our shared past and how it shapes identities and relationships today.

It is important that these historic events are commemorated in a respectful manner and within the context of our efforts to build a peaceful, stable and shared future here.

In recognition of the international significance of the coming events and their potential economic and cultural benefits, we have raised the issue of commemorations with Executive colleagues as well as the UK and Irish governments.

The subject was discussed at our recent meeting with the Secretary of State, and Irish Tanaiste, where we agreed that our administrations would work closely throughout this period to develop and maintain consistent approaches for the mutual benefit of all our people.

We have also met with our Ministerial colleagues in the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, to take stock of progress to date and to ensure that our efforts at Executive level remain in close alignment.

## Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

### Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, given her Department's role as a competent authority, for her assessment of how the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy will contribute to the implementation of measures in the wider countryside, as required by the Birds Directive, particularly Article 4(4), and the Habitat Directive, Annex 1.

**(AQW 6849/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development):** As discussions on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are still at an early stage, it is not yet possible to fully assess how it will contribute to the implementation of measures in the wider countryside.

However, the European Commission proposals published on 12 October 2011 include an agri-environment programme as a compulsory measure of CAP. This may provide a mechanism for my Department to fund measures to protect and enhance Natura 2000 land, which is designated to help meet the aims of the Birds and Habitat Directives.

Further to this, and with regard to Article 4(4) of the Birds Directive, all farmers receiving EU funding through my Department must also observe the rules of Cross-Compliance, which aim to conserve natural habitats.

The Department of Environment (DOE) is the lead department in relation to the Birds and Habitats Directives. Under the Habitats Directive there is a requirement to have any plan or project assessed. Therefore, a proposed scheme resulting from CAP reform must be assessed to ensure compliance with the Habitats Directive. My Department will work closely with DOE as CAP reform progresses and on the design of specific agri-environment measures for the next Rural Development Programme.

### Top-Up Payment to Farmers

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she would support a top-up payment to farmers who farm in designated sites, to help compensate them for their extra work and management as a result of working in an environmentally sensitive manner.

**(AQW 6850/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department offers support to farmers who manage designated sites through the delivery of agri-environment schemes. Farmers participating in these schemes receive funding for managing the land in an environmentally sensitive manner. The prioritisation criteria for entry to the new Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS) gives priority to applicants who farm in designated sites such as Areas of Special Scientific Interest and Natura 2000 sites.

The Department of Environment has the remit for designating special areas of land for protection.

### Domestic Pets and Animals Being Killed by Hunting Dogs

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail, for each of the last three years, the number of reported cases of domestic pets and animals being killed by hunting dogs during fox and stag hunts; and the number of prosecutions which have resulted from these reports.

**(AQW 6966/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department does not maintain records of reported cases of domestic pets and animals being killed by hunting dogs during fox and stag hunts.

My Department's responsibilities towards animals in the wild are very limited and do not include any controls over the hunting or taking of wild animals and birds, or powers of entry for their protection.

My Department does keep information relating to the control of dogs which is legislated for by the Dogs Order 1983, as amended. Implementation of the Order is the responsibility of Councils here who provide the Department with information relating to its enforcement.

The Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011 amended the 1983 Order to make it an offence to keep a dog that attacks and injures a domestic pet.

As part of the implementation of the Act, my officials are currently working with Councils to review the information they provide to my Department, including figures relating to new offences that Councils will be required to collect after 2 April 2012 when the Act is fully commenced.

## **Potato Industry**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Department will introduce additional support measures for the potato industry.

**(AQW 6982/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department continues to provide a wide range of support measures for the potato sector. CAFRE provides technical and business competence and bench marking programmes. Through the Seed Potato Certification scheme my Department also provides assistance to the export trade through on farm inspection of seed and ware potatoes and the issue of phytosanitary certificates.

As part of the Rural Development Programme, the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme provides capital support to potato processors, including those producers engaged in processing activities, and this scheme has re-opened for applications on 30th January.

In Conjunction with the Countryside Agri-Rural Partnership my Department manages the Supply Chain Development Programme (SCDP). This programme supports farmers and growers working together with others to improve the rewards from their supply chain. Funded through the Rural Development Programme the SCDP provides the services and expertise of a professional business facilitator together with funding for training, business tools, professional advice or services and also study tours linked to the development of the groups' needs. This programme is open to groups including those involved in the potato sector, who wish to work together with other supply chains partners to explore how they could improve the supply chain for their products

I am fully aware of the current over supply position and the lack of market opportunity to take up surpluses, such as was the case in 2010 to Russia, and fully appreciates the difficulties and problems for local growers that this may be causing. In the current economic climate, DARD, along with other Government Departments continues to face significant financial constraints. In these circumstances I have no plans to bring forward additional support measures to the potato sector.

## **Feasibility Study on the Leitrim River**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made on the feasibility study on the Leitrim River.

**(AQW 7021/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Maghera, Co Down Feasibility Study is on course to be completed by the end of March 2012. Once the findings have been examined, my DARD Rivers Agency officials will make it publicly available on the departments website and will issue a copy to you.

## Lurgan Agricultural Show

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what level of funding her Department has provided to the Lurgan Agricultural Show in each of the last five years; and what plans she has to fund this year's 100th anniversary show.

**(AQW 7029/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2011 my Department provided £1,400 in funding for the Lurgan Agricultural Show.

This is broken down as follows -

2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
£225	£250	£300	£300	£325

Letters inviting the organisers of local agricultural shows to apply for funding are issued annually, with funding allocated when all applications have been received and assessed. I hope that in this, its centenary year, Lurgan Show will benefit as it has in previous years, from DARD support.

## Trade Union Duties

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in her Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.

**(AQW 7089/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** As part of the NICS Central Whitley arrangements, a small number of full-time equivalent staff are attached to NIPSA through the Seconded Officers Scheme. These individuals carry out trade union duties on behalf of NIPSA members in DARD.

The Department does not retain records for the 2000/01 financial year. In 2005/06 there were 4 DARD staff on full-time secondment to NIPSA and no full-time equivalent staff in its arm's length bodies. In 2010/11 there were 4 DARD staff on full-time secondment to NIPSA with a further 1 member of staff in its arm's length bodies on full-time secondment to NIPSA.

## Forestry Service

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for a breakdown of the annual operation costs associated with the (i) commercial undertakings; and (ii) leisure undertakings of the Forestry Service.

**(AQW 7097/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The annual cost of managing Forest Service plantations is £8.8 million, which provides for the sustainable management of our forests and woodlands to meet the needs for wood production and economic activity, public access and environmental protection while at the same time safeguarding the resource for future generations.

The annual costs of providing access for leisure undertakings, including commercial camping and caravanning activities is £1.7 million. Of the £1.7 million, the cost of commercial leisure undertakings is £0.4 million.

These costs are broken down in the attached table.

2010/11 Expenditure	Direct Spend £k	Salaries & Wages £k	GAE/ T&S £k	Capital £k	Total £k
Forest Management	2,358	5,388	517	551	8,814

2010/11 Expenditure	Direct Spend £k	Salaries & Wages £k	GAE/ T&S £k	Capital £k	Total £k
Leisure - Commercial	76	257	98	-	431
Leisure – Non-commercial	200	990	118	-	1,308

## Forestry Service

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the rationale for amalgamating the accounts of the commercial division and the leisure division of the Forestry Service. **(AQW 7098/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Forest Service is directed by the Department of Finance and Personnel to prepare its Resource Accounts in line with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRoM).

There is no requirement to provide a separate set of Resource Accounts for services for which we charge a fee, such as for leisure services. FRoM says that executive agencies should provide in their financial statements an analysis of the services for which a fee is charged, with a statement that the information is provided for fees and charges purposes.

In addition, as Forest Service charges fees for recreation services, Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) guidance applies, which says that a Memorandum Trading Account (MTA) must be maintained for those services. The MTA is prepared annually and is available on request.

## Forestry Service

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much, as a percentage of its annual budget, the Forestry Service has allocated specifically to tourism in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7099/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I am aware that Forest Service managed woodlands already deliver significant recreational and tourism benefits and that the potential exists for further development particularly through working with other recreation and tourism providers.

This is in line with my wish to see forests used more widely for safe, responsible enjoyment while also contributing to tourism growth. The forest recreation strategy acknowledges that we will have to work with partners to realise the full potential of forests to deliver against wider objectives such as health, tourism, education and sport and my officials are working with other government agencies, local authorities and other recreational providers to ensure that opportunities are realised.

To assess tourism potential, my officials in Forest Service are also involved in a joint initiative with NI Tourist Board, carrying out a study to analyse the opportunities for forests in relation to tourism development.

Camping and caravanning activity in forests falls within a definition of tourism as an activity which involves an overnight stay, and is treated for budgetary and accounting purposes as Commercial Recreation.

The budget for Commercial Recreation in 2009/10 was 3% of the total Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) expenditure budget, excluding income, non-cash items and capital expenditure. The equivalent figure for 2010/11 was 4% and for 2011/12 also 4%.

## Responsibility for Campsite Management and Administration

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she expects that the responsibility for campsite management and administration will remain centralised within her Department for the remainder of the current budgetary period.

**(AQW 7100/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My officials in Forest Service have been working in partnership with the Strategic Investment Board, to explore market opportunities for investment and service delivery across the forest estate, including the provision of caravan and camping. A Business Case for testing commercial opportunities in renewable energy and leisure, including caravan and camping, has been completed and is currently going through the approvals process.

At this stage it is not possible to say whether responsibility for campsite management and administration will be retained within the Forest Service for the remainder of the budgetary period.

## Chinese Lanterns

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) for her assessment of the damage caused to the agriculture sector as a result of Chinese lanterns; and (ii) how many animals have died, or been injured, due to the consumption of Chinese lanterns in each of the last ten years.

**(AQW 7159/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department has not received any reports of damage caused to the agriculture sector, or animals injured, as a result of the use of Chinese lanterns here.

In response to an Oral Assembly Question in November 2011, I stated that the farming community should be aware of the potential for Chinese lanterns to cause fire damage and injury to livestock and called on farmers to remain vigilant particularly at those times when such devices are commonly used, or during spells of dry weather.

## Capital Assets

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the capital assets that are to be disposed of in each of the next three years.

**(AQW 7190/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I can confirm that the Department is working closely with the Strategic Investment Board's (SIB) Asset Management Unit to develop a plan for capital asset disposals up to the end of 2015.

At this stage no firm commitments have been made to dispose of assets in the next three years.

## Exported Horses

**Mrs Overend** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) how many horses have been exported to (a) Great Britain; (b) the Republic of Ireland; and (c) the rest of the EU in each of the last three years; and (ii) whether there is any data recorded about the purpose of these exports, particularly in relation to the consumption of horse meat.

**(AQW 7194/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Department does not hold the information requested. The export of horses to Britain, the south and France is governed by the Tripartite Agreement. This agreement permits registered horses to move more freely between these Countries. Specifically, with the exception of horses for slaughter, these horses can move between these countries without the need for an Intra Trade Animal Health Certificate (ITAHC) or pre-notification of the move to the Department.

Exports of horses to other member States are required to be accompanied by an ITAHC and in these cases the exporter applies to the Department for this document. However details of exports accompanied by ITAHCs are not recorded locally but are held centrally on the EU TRACES database. Information on such exports can be obtained from that database however the information could not be provided within the timescale of this Assembly Question.

## Hunting with Dogs on Private, Third Party Land

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) what measures are in place to restrict hunting with dogs on private, third party land; and (ii) for her assessment of whether these measures offer adequate protection for landowners.

**(AQW 7200/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Hunting is not regarded as an agricultural activity, it is not exclusively carried out on agricultural land and the fox is not regarded as an agricultural animal. There is no legislation in place to regulate or ban hunting in the north of Ireland. As you know, a Private Member's Bill to ban hunting with dogs was considered by the Assembly in 2010 and it fell at Second Stage. I am not aware that the Executive has any plans to regulate or introduce a ban on hunting. Under the Dogs Order 1983, dogs are exempt from the control provisions on certain roads and on land while they are being used in a pack of hounds.

My Department has responsibility for the Welfare of Animals Act 2011, Section 53 of which specifically exempts from its provisions the coursing or hunting of any animal, other than a protected animal. This provision does not legitimise hunting or coursing, but excludes these activities from the offences of cruelty contained within the Act.

## EU Protected Geographical Indication

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what strategy her Department has in place to attain an EU Protected Geographical Indication for more local food products.

**(AQW 7202/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I am sure you will join me in congratulating the Potato Stakeholder Forum's recent successful application to register New Season Comber Potatoes under the EU Protected Food Names Scheme.

To build on this success, alongside the recent successful Lough Neagh Eels application, my officials continue to provide advice and guidance to a number of interested parties regarding the potential for registration of new products.

My officials hope to plan some Protected Food Name promotional activity at this year's Balmoral Show, which would be an ideal opportunity to showcase recent PGI successes and to promote the scheme generally.

I have seen at first hand the positive work carried out to deliver Lough Neagh Eels and New Season Comber Potatoes PGI's and I am hopeful that Armagh Bramley Apples will shortly be following suit.

My Department plans to contact local District Councils to encourage them to promote this scheme within their districts and we shall also be writing to local food producer groups again to bring the scheme to their attention and to encourage them to consider if it would be beneficial to them.

In the wider context, you may be aware that my Department is working with DETI/InvestNI to establish an industry-led Food Strategy Board. Its role will be to develop an agri- food strategy to plan the growth of the sector up to 2020. I am sure in this context, the importance of nurturing the availability and development of local quality produce will also be considered.

## Tree-Planting

**Mrs Dobson** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) what measures and financial assistance she has put in place to encourage tree-planting; (ii) how she intends to promote tree-planting through liaison with the Woodland Trust; and (iii) how her Department is participating in the Jubilee Woods Project, particularly through schools' programmes.

**(AQW 7214/11-15)**



**Mrs O'Neill:**

- i My Department provides support for tree planting through the Woodland Grant Scheme and the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme. The Woodland Grant Scheme provides support to plant new woodland at a rate of £2,400 per hectare for broadleaves and £1,600 per hectare for conifer. In addition, on agriculture land, the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme provides an annual payment for up to fifteen years to compensate for the loss of agriculture income. The payments for this scheme range from £60-£290 per hectare. Those people claiming Single Farm Payment (SFP) from 2008 can plant their land and continue to claim SFP, as well as their Woodland Grant Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme payments.
- ii. I have had meetings recently with the Woodland Trust and other stakeholders to discuss ways of increasing the rate of planting. I have also announced, in the Assembly, that my Department's Forest Service will review support arrangements for planting in the context of CAP Reform and the Commission's proposals in the Rural Development Regulation. A group will be set up to assist with this and will comprise of a variety of woodland stakeholders, including Woodland Trust.
- iii. Carrickfergus Borough Council, working with Woodland Trust, has successfully applied for funding under the Woodland Grant Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme to create a 25 hectare wood at Whitehead in Co Antrim.

**Hydraulic Fracturing**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she can offer an assurance that (i) permission for hydraulic fracturing on her Department's land will not be given; and (ii) her Department's land will not be sold to any company which has the intention of using the land for hydraulic fracturing.

**(AQW 7215/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Any request to carry out hydraulic fracturing on DARD land, or to purchase DARD land for that purpose, would be considered taking account of concerns about the process of hydraulic fracturing and its implications for DARD policies. No request for access to or the purchase of DARD land for the process of hydraulic fracturing has been received.

My Department has no role in regulating the process of gas exploration or extraction, other than as a statutory consultee. However, I have strong reservations about the process of hydraulic fracturing and its potential impact on the environment on the island of Ireland.

**Neglected or Cruelly Treated Animals**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what direct, or indirect, funding her Department provides for neglected or cruelly treated animals.

**(AQW 7251/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Animal welfare in the north of Ireland is regulated under the Welfare of Animals Act 1972 and the Welfare of Animals Act 2011, as currently commenced.

My Department is responsible for enforcement in relation to livestock on agricultural land and will continue to work to prevent cases of cruelty and neglect concerning farmed animals. That enforcement activity is funded from within DARD's budget. From 2 April 2012, my Department will have new powers to seize farmed animals which are suffering or are likely to suffer, if their circumstances do not change. Currently only the PSNI has powers of seizure in relation to animal welfare incidents.

In addition, from 2 April 2012, Councils here will have responsibility for enforcement in respect of non-farmed animals under the new Welfare of Animals Act 2011. My Department is providing annual funding to assist Councils implement their new role, starting with £404k funding this year to meet Councils' requirement in the preparation period. Next year, £780k funding is available, which increases by £20k for each of the remaining 2 years in this budget period.

## Feral Cats

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what control measures can be used to manage or curtail the number of feral cats in residential areas.

**(AQW 7284/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** My Department has no powers to manage or curtail the number of feral cats. My Department has responsibility for the Welfare of Animals Act 1972 and the Welfare of Animals Act 2011, as currently commenced. Under this legislation it is an offence to cause an animal, including feral cats, any unnecessary suffering.

I understand that some District Council Environmental Health Officers do occasionally receive reports of feral cats in residential areas. Councils have no statutory duty regarding the control of feral cats and I have been informed that such reports are generally referred to the Cats Protection League.

## Poultry Farmers

**Mr Buchanan** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what consideration her Department has given to compensating poultry farmers who have had to cease production, due to the high cost of compliance with the EU Directive on the Welfare of Laying Hens.

**(AQW 7287/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** I must stress that the EU Welfare of Laying Hens Directive was introduced to improve the welfare conditions for laying hens, as a result of concern over the use of battery cages. I am fully aware of the very significant cost of converting to new systems of egg production. I have no plans to compensate producers who have decided not to convert to new systems that meet the EU requirements; that would be unfair to all those producers who have invested heavily to make the necessary changes.

I very much appreciate the difficulties facing poultry producers generally at this time. I can assure you that my Department has looked widely at all the funding options available to support modernisation in the sector. As a result, funding was made available to poultry producers under the Farm Modernisation Programme (FMP) Tranche 2. The eligible items included plant, machinery and equipment and other items that could contribute to modernising production systems for poultry producers. The maximum rate of grant assistance under Tranche 2 was 40% up to a maximum payment of £4k per applicant. I am pleased that there were 60 successful applicants, who indicated that their main farming activity was 'Poultry', who were awarded £191k of financial support under Tranche 2 of the Farm Modernisation Programme.

My Department has also made funding in the region of £1 million available to the egg industry through the Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme and two local egg packers have benefited through this scheme.

## Single Farm Payments

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQO 784/11-15, whether her Department has researched the option of issuing Single Farm Payments prior to all the checks being completed; and whether this option will be implemented.

**(AQW 7292/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** There is no facility within current Commission Regulations for payments under the Single Farm Payment (SFP) Scheme to be made before all the relevant administrative checks, including on-the-spot inspections, have been carried out.

There are two scenarios in which SFP Payments may be made in two steps.

First, advance payments of 50% may be made between 16 October and 30 November of the scheme year concerned, with the balance paid on or after 1 December.

Second, an initial 'instalment' may be made at any time during the payment window (1 December to 30 June), with the balance following later within the same period.

In both cases all necessary controls (including all on-the-spot inspections) must be finalised before an advance or instalment can be made. This is so that payments can issue without the risk of making overpayments to the farmer. It is not within the scope of the EU Regulations to allow part payment of SFP where controls have not been completed or if any particular issue was holding up an application.

I am examining the scope for more timely payments in future, which depend on making substantial changes to our payment and inspection processes and systems.

### **Draft PPE 'Cessation of Interceptor Mixed Stock Fisheries on North Atlantic Salmon not Achieving their Conservation Limits'**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 6137/11-15, when she expects this report to be released to (i) the Assembly Library; (ii) MLAs; and (iii) the general public.

**(AQW 7296/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The primary purpose of Post Project Evaluations (PPE) is to examine the outcome of a project, programme or policy, and to ensure that the lessons learned are fed back into the decision-making process. PPEs are not, as a matter of routine, released to the Assembly Library, MLAs or the general public.

However, sponsor departments and the Loughs Agency are currently working on finalising the PPE, and it is anticipated that the PPE in question will be completed in the coming months. Once the report has been finalised the Loughs Agency, as authors of the report, will consider releasing the document upon request.

### **Annesley Arboretum, Buildings and Gardens in Castlewellan**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action will she take to restore the Annesley Arboretum, Buildings and Gardens in Castlewellan.

**(AQW 7411/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Since the Adjournment Debate in the Assembly on 17 January 2012, I have visited the Arboretum and Gardens at Castlewellan to see the situation for myself and to talk to potential partners who are interested in working with Forest Service to move the matter forward.

My officials in Forest Service are currently engaging with relevant stakeholders, funders and interested parties to scope a suitable restoration project and devise a long term plan to sustain the future of the Arboretum within the context of the Forest Park.

### **Horse and Greyhound Racing and Breeding**

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department has spent on (i) horse racing and breeding; and (ii) greyhound racing and breeding, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7434/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** Currently, the two racecourses in the north receive financial support through DARD's administration of the Horse Racing Fund (HRF). All persons who intend to apply for a bookmaker's licence or a bookmaking office licence are required to make an annual contribution to the HRF, as determined by DARD. The HRF provides financial assistance for prize money, security and technical services and some capital items.

Funding released to the two racecourses, in the north, in each of the last three calendar years was:

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Total	£512,328.26	£609,950.08	£644,861.71

My Department has had no role in respect of funding for horse breeding and therefore no monetary outlay. Greyhound racing and breeding does not come under the remit of DARD.

### **Council's Funded Projects**

**Mr McMullan** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much each Council within the North East Region Rural Development cluster has received in grant aid in each of the last four years; and to detail each Council's list of funded projects.

**(AQW 7470/11-15)**

**Mrs O'Neill:** The Axis 3 measures of the NI Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 is delivered on the ground by seven council clusters. The North East Region (NER) cluster is made up of Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Larne and Moyle Councils.

Under Axis 3 of the NI Rural Development Programme Councils are eligible to apply for funding under measures 3.3 tourism, 3.4 basic services, 3.5 village renewal and 3.6 heritage.

To date each council in the NER area has been awarded grant under Axis 3 as follows;

<b>Ballymena</b>	<b>Ballymoney</b>	<b>Coleraine</b>	<b>Larne</b>	<b>Moyle</b>
£54,612	£5,000	£42,517	£188,785	£597,434

The table below details projects for which funding has been awarded in each council area;

#### **BALLYMENA BOROUGH COUNCIL**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Measure</b>
Myths & Legends Podcasts	Measure 3.3: encouragement of tourist activities
Creating a Cleaner Greener Tourist Environment	Measure 3.3: encouragement of tourist activities
Glenravel Village Renewal Part 2	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development

#### **BALLYMONEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Measure</b>
Dalriada Drives Feasibility Study	Measure 3.3: encouragement of tourist activities

#### **COLERAINE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Measure</b>
Orientation & Interpretative Project, Castlerock	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development
Food Tourism Scoping	Measure 3.3: encouragement of tourist activities
Articlave Village Plan	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development
Macosquin Village Plan	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development

**LARNE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Measure</b>
Creating A Clean, Green, Smart Tourist Environment	Measure 3.3: encouragement of tourist activities
Medieval Churches Project	Measure 3.3: encouragement of tourist activities
Construction of a Covered BBQ and Event Area within Carnfunnock Country Park	Measure 3.3: encouragement of tourist activities
Heritage led 'treasure trail' through Glenarm Village	Measure 3.3: encouragement of tourist activities

**MOYLE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Measure</b>
GUNAGH PLAY AREA	Measure 3.4: basic services for the economy and rural population
Ballintoy Village Plan	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development
Cushendun Village Plan	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development
Mosside Village Plan	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development
Hamill Terrace, Bushmills	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development
Facilitation of Village Renewal and Development in the North east Rural Development Area	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development
MOYLE DISTRICT COUNCIL PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS	Measure 3.3: encouragement of tourist activities
Waterfoot Village Improvement Scheme	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development
Cushendall Village Improvement Scheme	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development
Village Renewal Facilitation/Animation in the NER Area	Measure 3.5: village renewal and development

**Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure****Sport Matters Capital Projects**

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the progress of delivering the Sport Matters' capital projects at (i) Moneyslane Football Club, Banbridge; (ii) Wallace High School, Lisburn; and (iii) Dromore First Presbyterian Church.

**(AQW 6949/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure):** My Department has been allocated £10.25m for the Sport Matters Community Capital Programme over the period 2011/15. Sport NI estimates that to fund all of the projects that met the quality threshold for the programme would require a total budget of £24.9m.

Bearing in mind the limited budget available for the programme, Sport NI had to prioritise projects. This was under the following categories:

- Projects significantly exceeding the pass mark scoring, demonstrating very significant facility need. These projects were therefore prioritised for funding against the available annual budget.

- Projects demonstrating significant facility need. Some of these projects may receive funding in the medium term if a large number of higher ranked projects drop out. They have therefore been placed on a call-off list.
- Projects demonstrating facility need. Sport NI is unlikely to secure funding for these projects in the foreseeable future. However, they have been held on a long-term term waiting list in the event that significant additional funding becomes available.

Moneyslane Football Club was assessed as demonstrating very significant facility need. Having met the relevant programme management requirements, the applicant was, on 22 September 2011, granted an award of £245,000 towards the construction of a sand carpeted grass pitch and a floodlit 3G pitch. The project is on schedule and is expected to be 80% completed by 31 March 2012 and fully completed within the first quarter of the new financial year.

The projects for Wallace High School and Dromore First Presbyterian Church were amongst those assessed by Sport NI as having demonstrated facility need and both have been placed on a long-term waiting list.

### **Salmon Stocks**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given her Department's awareness and monitoring of the critical state of salmon stocks (i) what measures have been put in place to restrict the taking of salmon; (ii) what powers her Department has to enact restrictions on the taking of salmon for the 2012 season; and (iii) to outline the longer term action she will take and the associated timetable. **(AQW 6964/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:**

- (i) Measures in place for salmon caught by rod and line include compulsory catch and release from the opening day of the season until 31 May and a daily bag limit of 2 salmon from 1 June until the end of the season. There are also restrictions on the methods of fishing on particular waters. Commercial salmon fishermen are restricted by season and there is no fishing for salmon at weekends. There are also restrictions on the mesh size and construction of nets. Both commercial and recreational salmon fishermen must affix the appropriate carcass tags to any salmon they take and to be in possession of an untagged salmon carcass is an offence. These measures are defined in the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966, as amended, the Public Angling Estate Byelaws and the Fisheries (Tagging and Logbook) Byelaws (NI) 2001.
- (ii) I am currently considering powers under the Fisheries Act to introduce a range of salmon conservation measures in respect of commercial fishing and recreational angling.
- (iii) My Department will conduct a public consultation process on a range of options on the future of both commercial and recreational salmon fishing in the coming months. This will inform the development of salmon conservation policy and a robust legislative framework to protect and conserve wild Atlantic salmon in the DCAL jurisdiction. My Department is working towards having this legislation in place by the 2013 fishing season.

### **Illegal Nets**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 5140/11-15 and AQW 5920/11-15, whether the 25,831 yards of illegal nets that were seized by her Department were taken from the net owners premises or from Lough Neagh. **(AQW 7080/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The illegal nets referred to above were seized from Lough Neagh.

## Trade Union Duties

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in her Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.

**(AQW 7090/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** From the information held I can confirm the following:

DCAL		
Year	FTE	Union
2000/01	nil	-
2005/06	2	NIPSA
2010/11	2	NIPSA
ALBs		
2000/01	25	23 NIPSA, 2 not recorded
2005/06	30	26 NIPSA, 1 TGWU, 1 GMB, 2 not recorded
2010/11	35.26	31.10 NIPSA, 2GMB, 2 not recorded, 0.16 UNISON

Staff listed carry out a number of representative roles, for example branch committee members, health and safety roles, and union learning roles under general union facilities arrangements.

## Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding exists to assist local communities to celebrate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee; and what additional funding is being made available for this purpose.

**(AQW 7120/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** I am supportive of an inclusive approach to commemorations. I endorse the principles developed by the Community Relations Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund to remember the past in the context of an inclusive and accepting society.

My officials explored the potential of the Community Festival Fund being used by local councils to support community-led commemorative activities. Some councils were supportive while others expressed concern this would impact on their ability to assist the diverse range of community events already supported by the Fund. Therefore individual councils can decide whether to support commemorative activity but they should engage with the Community Relations Council and Heritage Lottery Fund to ensure an inclusive approach.

There is no additional funding available for this event.

## Fish Species in Lough Neagh

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what is the current estimated stock of (i) coarse; and (ii) game fish species in Lough Neagh.

**(AQW 7129/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:**

- (i) There is currently no data on populations of pollan, roach, rudd, bream, rudd/roach/bream hybrids, pike, perch, tench, stone loach, gudgeon, minnow and stickleback which make up coarse fish present in Lough Neagh.
- (ii) Records conclude that salmon populations in the Rivers Maine and Blackwater, which both flow into Lough Neagh, are failing to consistently achieve conservation limits and are outside safe biological limits.

The status of the population of migratory trout in Lough Neagh is unknown at present but research is currently being undertaken and a report is due towards the end of this year.

**Londonderry as the 2013 UK City of Culture**

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the work carried out by her Department on the promotion of Londonderry as the 2013 UK City of Culture.

**(AQW 7130/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** I have been vocal in my support for City of Culture. I believe it has the potential to deliver significant benefits in relation to community development, education, social inclusion, health and well-being as well as opportunities to boost tourism and the local economy.

My officials continue to work closely with the Culture Company and City of Culture partners in Derry to help ensure that 2013 is a successful year and brings lasting benefits. Business cases are in development to underpin financial support and my officials are in regular contact with partners in Derry to provide support and advice.

**Cost of Each Quango**

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the cost of each quango operating under the remit of her Department for each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7131/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** In the past three years there have been 12 Executive Non Departmental Public Bodies in total operating under the remit of the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure. Details of funding provided to them in the last three full financial years is contained in the table below.

Name of body	Notes	Funding provided		
		2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
		£000	£000	£000
Libraries Northern Ireland		37,958	34,285	34,706
National Museums Northern Ireland		24,499	17,462	21,492
Sports Council for Northern Ireland		25,400	25,377	24,184
Arts Council of Northern Ireland		27,178	27,481	16,334
Armagh Observatory and Planetarium		2,055	1,530	1,503
Northern Ireland Screen Commission Ltd		1,368	1,450	1,479
Northern Ireland Museums Council Ltd		324	349	309
2013 WPGF Company Ltd	1	nil	nil	nil
North South Language Body		6,516	6,466	6,514
Waterways Ireland		4,537	5,394	7,323



Name of body	Notes	Funding provided		
		2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
		£000	£000	£000
Northern Ireland Events Company Ltd (NIEC)	2	10	73	118
Fisheries Conservancy Board	3	Nil	Nil	739

**Notes**

- 1 2013 WPF Company was incorporated in 2010/11 but did not receive funding from the Department until the current year (2011/12).
- 2 NIEC no longer trades but receives financial support to ensure its orderly winding up.
- 3 Fisheries Conservancy Board (FCB) was subsumed into the Department on 1 June 2009.

**Armagh County Museum**

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much revenue was raised by the Armagh County Museum in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7132/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** National Museums NI has provided the following information, showing the revenue raised by Armagh County Museum in each of the last three years;

Year	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09
Gross Revenue*	£2789	£3841	£3755

\* Gross revenue includes shop receipts, donations and sponsorship.

**Bag and Drift Net Operations off the County Antrim Coast**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 6521/11-15, what communications, through British Government Departments, her Department has had with the EU Commission, over the last five years, in relation to the bag and drift net operations off the Co. Antrim coast.

**(AQW 7198/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** DCAL officials have been part of the team supporting the delegation from Britain attending North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) annual meetings.

As part of the team, DCAL officials have had discussions and prepared pre-briefs with EC Officials on the North of Ireland's commercial salmon fisheries.

The NI Fisheries Management Focus Area Report was prepared and compiled by DCAL officials and submitted to the EC Head of Delegation to NASCO in 2008.

DCAL officials also provided responses to queries from the EC through DEFRA on European Habitats Directive compliance in 2011 and 2012.

**Bag Nets Operated off the County Antrim Coast**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 6518/11-15, in relation to fish being 'landed' and the tagging obligations, whether this is referring to being landed on shore, as opposed to being landed in a boat, and if so, whether there is a lacuna in the law if the fish are taken ashore in another jurisdiction.

**(AQW 7199/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Fish caught by net holders licensed under the 1966 Fisheries Act must comply with the legislation specified for each type of net as outlined in AQW 6518/11-15 regardless of where the fish are landed.

### **Conservation Limits for all Fish Species**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what progress has been made in establishing conservation limits for all fish species which are routinely the subject of commercial fishing, by net or line, in Lough Neagh and its feeder rivers.

**(AQW 7220/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The methodology used to establish Conservation Limit's and monitor stock status relative to that target for migratory salmonids, and escapement targets for eels, where both have temporary residence in Lough Neagh is not directly applicable to other fish species that are commercially fished in Lough Neagh.

Conservation Limits have been established for the River Main and Blackwater salmon populations. Work to define a Conservation Limit for salmon escapement to Lough Neagh from the Lower River Bann is under development.

Robust estimates of what represents 40% of pristine eel escapement have been developed as required by the EC eel regulation.

### **Re-Imaging Communities Programme**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the success of the Re-imaging Communities programme to date.

**(AQW 7227/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** An independent evaluation of the Re-Imaging Communities programme was completed in June 2009 and the findings indicate that the programme has been a success. The report can be found on the Arts Council's website. It concluded that the programme has been a considerable success not only in relation to its own aims and objectives, but also in relation to the wider context of inter-group relations across the north of Ireland. In addition the report highlights significant benefits to communities including increased community cohesion through strengthening relationships, the development of links between communities and Councils, and an increased willingness for individuals and communities to dissociate from division and hostility. A total of £3.3million has been invested in 155 projects.

All the evidence collected in the evaluation suggests that there remains a considerable market for such activities. The programme has a proven track record of dealing sensitivities around murals and I believe it has been very successful in building positive relations.

### **Salmon and Grilse**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of salmon and grilse, passing upstream through each fish counter, in each river, for each year since the counters were installed; and to detail the periods of time when the counter was not operating, or for which there was doubt as to the accuracy of the count.

**(AQW 7260/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Adult Salmon returns are recorded on index catchments of the DCAL Salmon Management Strategy. The index catchments represent rivers typical of geographical regions of the North of Ireland.

**TABLE BELOW INDICATES NUMBERS OF SALMON MOVING UPSTREAM IN INDEX CATCHMENTS  
2002 - 2010.**

	<b>Glendun</b>	<b>Main</b>	<b>Blackwater</b>	<b>Shimna</b>
2002	85	211	431	
2003	68	205	310	
2004	103	239	399	
2005	65	198	199	
2006	75	179	273	
2007	95	479	n/a	
2008	127	548	n/a	
2009	41	333	n/a	
2010	84	296	n/a	96

Note 1: The count from the River Main is a partial count, the River Blackwater counter has been inoperable 2007 - 2010, and the Shimna River counter is a partial count as the counter was only commissioned in 2010 and required operational validation.

Note 2: 2011 data is not yet fully analysed and compiled.

### **Salmon and Grilse**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an estimate of the percentage of salmon and grilse, passing upstream which pass through each fish counter, in each river, for each year since the counters were installed; and to outline the means by which each estimate is determined.

**(AQW 7262/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** DCAL cannot differentiate between 2 sea winter fish (2SW) and 1 sea winter fish (1SW) passing upstream through the fish counters located on DCAL Salmon Management Strategy index catchments. DCAL use resistivity counters and are unable to apportion 2SW and 1SW component of each adult returning stock due to the technical limitations of this methodology. The DCAL salmon research station on the River Bush traps, visually inspects, and removes scale samples from a representative selection for subsequent age determination of upstream migrating salmonid adults and consequently can record the 2SW/1SW components of each annual salmon run (see table below).

Smolts returning as adults to the River Bush as % grilse

<b>Smolt Release Year</b>	<b>% Grilse</b>
1989	86.7
1990	87.0
1991	84.4
1992	93.4
1993	88.4
1994	92.2
1995	87.2
1996	85.0
1997	95.3

<b>Smolt Release Year</b>	<b>% Grilse</b>
1998	90.4
1999	90.7
2000	96.9
2001	95.2
2002	96.2
2003	92.4
2004	91.3
2005	87.3
2006	94.1
2007	90.1
2008	82.5

Note that 2009 onwards data is not included as 2 SW stock component not yet fully analysed and compiled.

### **Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how she is using EU policies, networks and programmes to achieve the key objective to stimulate growth of the creative industries by nurturing creative talent and creative enterprises and encouraging innovative cross-sectoral collaborations, as detailed in 'Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12'.

**(AQW 7263/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** The prioritisation of the creative industries within the 'Winning in Europe' document highlights recognition by government of the sector's contribution to rebuilding and rebalancing the economy.

An EU Engagement initiative has been established within my Department to support Officials and sponsored Arms-length Bodies in exploring EU funding, policy and networking opportunities for the North's culture, arts and leisure base. This initiative builds on my Department's active participation in the cross-departmental Barroso Taskforce Working Group and the Executive's commitment to enhancing its engagement with the EU Commission.

The Creative Industries Innovation fund over 2011-15 will also prioritise support to businesses engaging in export-focused growth and innovative cross-sectoral collaborations. This will stimulate commercial opportunities across the EU and further afield.

### **Counting Salmon Redds**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of man days spent counting salmon redds in each river system (i) in each of the last twenty years; and (ii) in the Autumn and Winter of 2011/2012 to date.

**(AQW 7265/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Neither the Department nor the Fisheries Conservancy Board, which carried out the function prior to 1 June 2009, recorded the number of man hours spent counting salmon redds in any year.

## Illegal or Unlicensed Nets

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an estimate of the percentage of salmon smolts which have returned from each year's cohort, to each river, as adult fish, for each of the last twenty years.

**(AQW 7266/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Monitoring of annual salmon smolt migrations from freshwater to the marine environment is carried out by DCAL on the River Bush only. The resulting return of adult grilse after one year at sea and of salmon after two years at sea is recorded over the subsequent two years. See below returns from 1989 - 2008.

Smolt Release Year	Total Adult Fish % Return
1989	10.8
1990	13.6
1991	14.2
1992	30.4
1993	17.1
1994	9.6
1995	19.5
1996	14.3
1997	15.2
1998	5.4
1999	8.1
2000	4.9
2001	5.7
2002	6.1
2003	4.6
2004	5.0
2005	4.8
2006	13.8
2007	8.3
2008	4.0

NB: 2009 onward data is not included as 2 Sea Winter stock component has not yet been fully compiled.

## Mountain Biking

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) to outline her Department's policy on mountain biking; (ii) for an estimate of number of people currently participating in the sport; (iii) to detail the number of mountain bike trails available; (iv) for her assessment of mountain biking as a growth sport; and (v) for an estimate of the revenue generated by the sport.

**(AQW 7383/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Cycling Ulster is the governing body of cycling sport, including mountain biking, and is responsible for all aspects of cycling including policy, participation, facilities, growth and revenue

generation. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) policy on sport, which incorporates all recognised sporting activities, including cycling and mountain biking, is outlined in its 10-year strategy for sport, Sport Matters. Through Sport Matters, DCAL is seeking to improve participation, performance and places for sport as a whole in the north of Ireland in order to realise the strategy's 10 year vision of '... a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport ...'

As part of the implementation of Sport Matters, DCAL regularly gathers information on overall participation rates in sport, facility provision, growth and revenue generation. The latest DCAL published participation figures indicate that approximately 9% of the population participated in some form of cycling, including mountain biking, at least once in the last 12 months. Figures previously published by the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN) indicate that the number of participants in mountain biking grew from 1,000 in 1995 to 15,000 in 2008. SportNI advises that there are 6 officially recognised mountain biking trails in the north and that the sport currently is growing chiefly amongst children under 14 years and adult males. The Department holds no information on revenue generated by mountain biking. However, Sport Matters estimates that sport overall contributes c.£450 million per annum to the local economy and, of this, activity/sports tourism contributes c.£30 million.

## GAA

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what progress has been made in dissuading the GAA from naming stadia and trophies in honour of dead terrorists.

**(AQW 7386/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Responsibility for the naming of GAA grounds and trophies is not a matter for me but wholly a matter for the governing body of Gaelic games. I am not aware of any GAA ground or trophy in the north of Ireland that has been named in honour of any deceased person whom all sections of the community recognise as having been a terrorist.

## GAA Clubs

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what financial support has been given to GAA clubs whose grounds are named in honour of dead terrorists, in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 7387/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** I am not aware of any GAA club in the north of Ireland whose ground is named in honour of any deceased person whom all sections of the community recognise as having been a terrorist. Sport NI has, however, provided a total of £14,200,577 to GAA clubs across the north in the last five financial years up to 31 March 2011. A breakdown of this figure, and the names of the GAA clubs that have received funding, is provided below.

### TABLE BELOW

Organization Name	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Grand Total
Aghadrumsee St Macartan's GFC				£205,704		£205,704
Aghaloo O'Neills GFC				£251,319		£251,319
All Saints GAC			£248,195			£248,195
An Maigh Tir Na nOg GAC				£97,329		£97,329
An Ríocht GAC				£233,340		£233,340
Ardoyne Kickhams GAC				£7,420		£7,420
Armagh Harps GFC				£7,620	£21,123	£28,743

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Ballerin GAC			£225,000			£225,000
Ballygalget GAC				£6,600	£29,970	£36,570
Ballymacnab GFC				£8,995		£8,995
Belleeks GFC				£241,688		£241,688
Beragh Red Knights GAC				£3,697		£3,697
Brookeborough Heber McMahon GAC			£68,987			£68,987
Carrickcruppen GAC				£68,958		£68,958
Clann Eireann GFC & Youth Club				£5,010		£5,010
Clann na nGael Aughnabrack				£235,000		£235,000
Clonduff GAC				£245,000		£245,000
Crossmaglen Rangers GFC					£29,925	£29,925
Derrygonnelly Harps GFC			£142,302			£142,302
Derrylin O'Connells GAA			£137,604			£137,604
Derrynoose GAC				£1,699		£1,699
Dromara GAC			£245,000			£245,000
Dromore St Dympna GFC				£232,310		£232,310
Drumgath GAC				£245,000		£245,000
Drumragh Sarsfields GAC			£798,000	£6,996		£804,996
Dungannon Thomas Clarke GFC				£226,675	£47,111	£273,786
Dunloy GAC				£144,700		£144,700
Eglish St Patricks GAC				£245,000		£245,000
Enniskillen Gaels GAA	£407,572				£28,624	£436,196
Fintona Pearses GAC				£245,000		£245,000
Galbally Pearses GFC			£200,565			£200,565
Glen Rovers GAC			£188,793			£188,793
Glenn GAC				£4,700		£4,700
John Mitchel's GAC				£612,826		£612,826
John Mitchel's Glenullin GAC				£9,272		£9,272

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Keady Michael Dwyers GFC				£245,000		£245,000
Kevin Lynch Hurling Club				£245,000		£245,000
Kickhams Creggan GAC		£240,000		£7,822		£247,822
Kilcoo GAC				£245,000		£245,000
Kildress Wolfe Tones GAC		£245,000				£245,000
Kilrea Pearses GAC				£3,500		£3,500
Knocks Grattans Hurling Club			£10,000			£10,000
Lagmore Gaels					£8,774	£8,774
Lisnaskea Emmetts GAC		£220,000				£220,000
Loughgiel Shamrocks GAC				£2,468	£61,114	£63,582
Madden Raparees GFC				£1,299		£1,299
Maghery Sean MacDermotts GAC				£10,000	£30,000	£40,000
Na Magha Hurling and Camogie Club		£286,342				£286,342
O'Brien's GAC		£245,000				£245,000
O'Donovan Rossa GAC (Magherafelt)			£225,000			£225,000
Ogra Colmcille GFC					£27,011	£27,011
Owen Roe GAC, Coleraine			£245,000	£4,900		£249,900
Patrick Sarsfield GAC				£9,491		£9,491
Pearse Óg GFC			£245,000			£245,000
Pearses Gaelic Football & Camogie Club			£170,000			£170,000
Russell Gaelic Union					£59,436	£59,436
Saval GAC				£5,799		£5,799
Sean Dolans GAC				£10,000		£10,000
Sean O'Learys GAC (Newbridge)					£30,000	£30,000
Shane O'Neill's GAC				£4,900		£4,900



<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Slaughtneil Robert Emmets GAC			£119,140			£119,140
St Agnes GAC					£14,612	£14,612
St Brigids GAC (Belfast)				£7,650		£7,650
St Canice's GFC			£245,000			£245,000
St Colmcille's GAC (Armagh)			£210,000	£1,218		£211,218
St Colm's GAC		£100,000		£8,808		£108,808
St Comgall's GAC				£225,000		£225,000
St Enda's (Omagh)					£31,316	£31,316
St Enda's GAC				£245,000		£245,000
St Eugenues GAC (Castleberg)				£221,285		£221,285
St Eugene's GFC				£2,500		£2,500
St Galls GAC				£4,434		£4,434
St John's GAC (Belfast)					£56,998	£56,998
St Joseph's GAC (Craigbane)				£245,000		£245,000
St Malachy's GAC (Castledawson)			£225,000			£225,000
St Malachy's GAC (Castlewellan)				£245,000		£245,000
St Malachy's Hurling Club					£30,000	£30,000
St Martins GAC				£245,000		£245,000
St Mary's GAC (Ahoghill)			£225,000		£20,000	£245,000
St Mary's GAC (Faughenvale)		£235,000		£2,000		£237,000
St Mary's GAC (Slaughtmanus)			£210,000			£210,000
St Molaise GAC (Irvinestown)					£28,515	£28,515
St Treas GFC (Ballymaguigan)				£9,000		£9,000
Stewartstown Harps GAC				£245,000		£245,000
Tattyreagh St Patrick's GAC				£9,600		£9,600
Tempo Maguire's GAC			£245,000			£245,000
Tír na nÓg GAC			£245,000			£245,000
Tullysaran O'Connells GAC				£249,500		£249,500

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Watty Graham's GFC				£8,016		£8,016
Wolfe Tone GAC (Derrymacash)				£245,000		£245,000
Wolfe Tones GAC (Bellaghy)			£180,000	£7,500		£187,500
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£407,572</b>	<b>£1,571,342</b>	<b>£5,053,586</b>	<b>£6,613,548</b>	<b>£554,529</b>	<b>£14,200,577</b>

## **GAA Events**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what financial support has been given to GAA events organised in connection with trophies named in honour of dead terrorists, in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 7388/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** My Department has provided no financial support for any GAA events in the last five years. From 1 April 2010 responsibility for events transferred from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

I am not aware of any GAA events in the north of Ireland organised in connection with trophies named in honour of any deceased person whom all sections of the community recognise as having been a terrorist.

## **GAA**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she is seeking to discourage the GAA from naming their grounds and trophies in honour of dead terrorists; and how such efforts are deployed.

**(AQW 7389/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Responsibility for the naming of GAA grounds and trophies is not a matter for me but wholly a matter for the governing body of Gaelic games. I am not aware of any GAA ground or trophy in the north of Ireland that has been named in honour of any deceased person whom all sections of the community recognise as having been a terrorist.

## **Horse and Greyhound Racing and Breeding**

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much her Department has spent on (i) horse racing and breeding; and (ii) greyhound racing and breeding, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7432/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** Sport NI is responsible for the distribution of funding for sport in the north of Ireland. Sport NI has provided no funding to horse racing or breeding in the last three years. Greyhound racing is not recognised as a sporting activity and it has therefore received no funding from Sport NI in the last three years.

## **Human Resources Staff**

**Dr McDonnell** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many staff are employed in her Department's Human Resources section.

**(AQW 7759/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** There are 6.22 full time equivalent staff employed in my Department's Human Resources section.

## Irish Amateur Boxing Association's Strategic Plan in Ulster

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether the Ulster Provincial Boxing Council (UPBC) and SportNI, in developing their four year plan to identify how UPBC proposes to implement the Irish Amateur Boxing Association's Strategic Plan in Ulster for the period 2011-16, will include an initiative to ensure that boxing is open and inclusive for all people who wish to take part. **(AQW 7782/11-15)**

**Ms Ní Chuilín:** I am already aware that one of the key objectives of the Strategic Implementation Plan 2012-2016, developed by the Ulster Provincial Boxing Council (UPBC) and Sport NI, is to ensure that anyone who wishes to participate in the sport of boxing at participative and competitive levels has the opportunity to do so. To assist the UPBC in the implementation of its plan, Sport NI is currently developing a business case for the sport going forward. I have already written to Sport NI to stress the importance of ensuring that this process is based on inclusion and provides opportunities for the development of boxing clubs from all sections of the community that are affiliated to the governing body.

## Department of Education

### Redundancy Packages

**Mrs McKeivitt** asked the Minister of Education when teachers will be informed of the redundancy packages that will be available in 2012/2013. **(AQW 6377/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):** Employing Authorities wrote to controlled and maintained schools on 30/31 January 2012 advising of the compensation terms available to teachers made redundant at 31 August 2012. The Department wrote in similar terms to voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools on 2 February 2012.

### Recommendations of the Viability Audits

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Education how he plans to implement the recommendations of the viability audits, particularly in relation to the development and implementation of the area based planning process. **(AQW 6554/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** My Department has received the first viability audit reports from the Boards on Monday 16 January 2012. The Boards have also sent each school a copy of the information specifically relating to that school. My officials have made an initial assessment of the reports and are engaging with the Boards to obtain further information. Boards have been asked to resubmit the viability audits by 6 February and to submit proposals to address the position by the 15 February. When the information is complete the five reports will be published by the Boards as soon as practicable.

The purpose of the viability audits, as set out in the Terms of Reference, was:-

- i to identify and make proposals to address immediate concerns around unviable schools to protect the education of pupils; and
- ii. to support the development of detailed area profiles to inform the wider strategic area planning process.

Work on both of issues will be supported by the information contained in the final reports. In terms of area planning, the viability audit data will be combined with a wide range of other educational, demographic and economic data to provide detailed area profiles which will provide the information base for the area planning process.

## Education Research Forum

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education (i) for an update on the work of the Education Research Forum; (ii) how many times it has met; and (iii) to detail the associated costs to date.

**(AQW 6606/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** (i) The Education Research Forum was established in 2008, comprising representatives from each of the Higher Education Institutions here and both the Department of Education (DE) and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL). Its role has been to exchange research information, knowledge and skills on current and emerging issues in relation to education with a view to enhancing evidence-based policy and practice. I am conscious that the forum has not met for some time and I have asked my officials to review its role in the context of our programme of education reform.

- (ii) The Education Research Forum has held 5 formal meetings as well as various sub-group meetings.
- (iii) The direct costs to the Department of Education were in relation to a Symposium event in April 2009 held at Stranmillis College. Room hire and hospitality for the event amounted to £292.78.

## Recent Fund for Redundancies

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Education whether his Department plans to work with teachers and the Education and Library Boards to ensure that schools can avail of the recent fund for redundancies in the most flexible and efficient way.

**(AQW 6908/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** I have made funding available to allow schools and employing authorities to manage teacher redundancies at August 2012. The funding I have made available will allow employers to offer enhanced compensation of up to 90 weeks' salary, depending on age and length of service. This will help encourage volunteers to transfer into redundant posts, keeping compulsory redundancies to a minimum. Many of those volunteering will be older teachers, at the top of their pay bands. Not only will this lead to an immediate drop in the wage bill, but it will protect the jobs of younger teachers.

I am optimistic that, through collaborative working between my Department, the Employing Authorities and the teacher unions, redundancies in 2012 can be managed as far as possible on a voluntary basis.

## Loreto Grammar School, Omagh

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education, in light of the appeal by his Department in relation to Loreto Grammar School, Omagh, to detail the implications for capital works.

**(AQW 6920/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Department, in conjunction with its legal advisors, is currently considering the detail of the judgement specific to the Loreto Grammar project and will re-engage with the school in due course to deal with the findings.

No part of the judgement impacts on capital projects which are currently under construction. The Department's legal advice is that the ruling applies to all projects previously announced but which have not yet commenced. The Minister has stated that future capital projects coming forward will be looked at in the context of Area Planning and no project will be considered in isolation.

## Court of Appeal's Judgement on Loreto Grammar School, Omagh

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking in relation to the Court of Appeal's judgement on Loreto Grammar School, Omagh.

**(AQW 6922/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Department, in conjunction with its legal advisors, is currently considering the detail of the judgement specific to the Loreto Grammar project and will re-engage with the school in due course to deal with the findings.

No part of the judgement impacts on capital projects which are currently under construction. The Department's legal advice is that the ruling applies to all projects previously announced but which have not yet commenced. The Minister has stated that future capital projects coming forward will be looked at in the context of Area Planning and no project will be considered in isolation.

### **Dunmurry High School Pupils**

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister of Education what measures his Department has taken to ensure that all pupils currently attending Dunmurry High School will obtain a place at another school before it closes in June 2012.

**(AQW 6971/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** All proposals for school closures are governed by the statutory Development Proposal process. Following publication there is a statutory two month consultation period during which anyone may make their views known to the Department. I then make a decision to approve or reject the proposal taking account of all pertinent information and comments received. Always included in this is an assessment of the availability of alternative places for pupils whose school may close. It is the statutory responsibility of the Education & Library Boards to ensure adequate provision in their areas.

In the case of Dunmurry High School, a proposal for closure was published by the South Eastern Education & Library Board on 13 December 2011. The consultation period ends on 13 February 2012. I can make no further comment at present on Dunmurry High School as I can consider the proposal only after the consultation has closed and the required information has been collated.

### **Trade Union Duties**

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in his Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.

**(AQW 7016/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** DE STAFF

For each of the years 2000/01, 2005/06 and 2010/11, 6 full time equivalent staff (accredited NIPSA representatives) may from time to time have availed of facilities time as set out in the NICS facilities agreement to undertake trade union duties.

In addition, for the 3 years in question the following full time equivalent staff members were employed full-time on NIPSA trade union duties:

<b>2000/01</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
1	1.5	1.5

### **ALB STAFF**

#### **2000/01**

	<b>NIPSA</b>
ALBs	8-10*

\*Excludes ELBs - there were no secondee arrangements prior to August 2005

#### **2005/06**

	<b>NIPSA</b>	<b>T&amp;G</b>	<b>GMB</b>	<b>UNISON</b>
ALBs	16	2	3	3.5

**2010/11**

	<b>NIPSA</b>	<b>T&amp;G</b>	<b>GMB</b>	<b>UNISON</b>
ALBs	15	2	3	3.5

**First Preference Applications for Primary Schools in Lagan Valley**

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of first preference applications for each Primary School in Lagan Valley area for the 2011/12 academic year. [R]

**(AQW 7034/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** According to the South-Eastern and Southern Education and Library Boards, the number of first preference applications to each primary school in the Lagan Valley area for the 2011/12 academic year is set out in the table below:-

Largymore Primary School	17
Brownlee Primary School	21
Dunmurry Primary School	23
Lisburn Central Primary School	32
Seymour Hill Primary School	30
Tonagh Primary School	22
Carr Primary School	9
Anahilt Primary School	10
Dromara Primary School	30
Harmony Hill Primary School	94
Knockmore Primary School	8
Moira Primary School	53
Old Warren Primary School	13
Killowen Primary School	58
Ballinderry Primary School	37
Pond Park Primary School	98
Maghaberry Primary School	35
Ballymacash Primary School	53
Riverdale Primary School	35
Meadow Bridge Primary School	45
Downshire Primary School, Hillsborough	91
St Joseph's Primary School	57
St Aloysius Primary School	52
St Colman's Primary School	53
Fort Hill Integrated Primary School	40
Oakwood Integrated Primary School	32

Rowandale Integrated Primary School	29
Dromore Central Primary School	93
Fair Hill Primary School	39
St Michael's Primary School (Finnis)	12
St Colman's Primary School	11

### Applications for Pre-School Places

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of first preference applications for each pre-school provider in the Lagan Valley area for the 2011/12 academic year.[R]

**(AQW 7035/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** According to the South-Eastern and Southern Education and Library Boards, the number of first preference applications to each pre-school provider in the Lagan Valley area for the 2011/12 academic year is set out in the table below:-

Grove Community Playgroup	8
Sunshine Community Playgroup	19
Anahilt Pre-School Playgroup	16
Legacurry Playgroup	21
Rainbow Corner Playgroup	23
Seymour Hill Pre-School Playgroup	24
Busy Bees Playgroup	37
Rhyme Times Playgroups	9
Dromara Playgroup	51
Brownlee Playgroup (by Little Rays)	17
Little Oaks Pre-School	29
Oakwood Integrated Children's Centre	44
Poppins Day Nursery	9
Jolly Rodgers Day Nursery	4
Rainbow Playgroup	14
Jolly Jester's Day Nursery	14
The Old Station Playgroup	21
Barbour Nursery School	74
Pond Park Nursery School	123
Holy Trinity Nursery School	66
Dromore Nursery School	86
Dunmurry Primary School Nursery Unit	25
Lisburn Central Primary School Nursery Unit	28

Harmony Hill Primary School Nursery Unit	65
Moira Primary School Nursery Unit	66
Old Warren Primary School Nursery Unit	33
Killowen Primary School Nursery Unit	59
Ballinderry Primary School Nursery Unit	37
Maghaberry Primary School Nursery Unit	55
Ballymacash Primary School Nursery Unit	60
Downshire Primary School, Hillsborough Nursery Unit	82
St Aloysius Primary School Nursery Unit	40
Fort Hill Integrated Primary School Nursery Unit	43
Fair Hill Primary School Nursery Unit	31

### Viability Audit of Primary and Post-Primary Schools

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Education to detail the next steps in taking forward the viability audit of primary and post-primary schools, including the consultation process for developing Area Plans for the South Eastern Education and Library Board area.

**(AQW 7036/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** My Department received the first viability audit reports from the Boards on Monday 16 January 2012. The Boards have also sent each school a copy of the information specifically relating to that school. My officials have made an initial assessment of the reports and are engaging with the Boards to obtain further information. Boards have been asked to resubmit the viability audits by 6 February and to submit proposals to address the position by the 15 February.

When the information is complete the five reports will be published by the Boards as soon as practicable.

The Terms of Reference for the Area Planning process were issued on 15 December 2011. Public consultation in each Board area, including the South Eastern Education & Library Board area, will take place following the Department's consideration of the initial draft area plans to ensure compliance with the Departmental policy framework. Full detail of the consultation process will be made available at that time. The Department will consider and, if satisfied, approve the area plans after the consultation has been completed and the responses considered.

### Former Maghera High School Site

**Mrs Overend** asked the Minister of Education (i) for an update on the use of the former Maghera High School site; (ii) whether he is aware of the damage done to the building since its closure; and (iii) to detail (a) the valuation of the site when the school closed; (b) the most recent valuation; and (c) the estimated cost of repairing any damage to the building.

**(AQW 7154/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** There have been two expressions of interest in using the former Maghera High School site for other educational purposes. I understand that there has been at least one other expression of interest in the site. However, until the options for other educational use are fully explored, the site will not be placed on the open market.

At the time of closure, the site was valued at £1million. It was subsequently revalued in June 2011 with the valuation remaining the same at £1million.



I am aware that some damage has been done to the school and the North Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the cost of repairing this has been just over £3,000.

## **C2K Contract**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Education to detail the price a school pays for (i) the lowest priced laptop; (ii) the highest priced laptop; and (iii) an interactive whiteboard, under the current C2K contract. **(AQW 7160/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** C2k has a range of prices for hardware, which is part of its managed service for schools.

- (i) and (ii) Under the current C2K framework, post – primary and special schools have two options and will pay either £849 or £1089 for a laptop. Primary schools have one option and will pay £787.

Whilst we understand that schools make direct comparisons between the C2k and internet/shop prices, it must be borne in mind that the C2k prices are higher because they cover more than just the laptop. C2k prices include support functions, such as helpdesk provision of all locally hosted software, licensing, encryption, (where appropriate), virus protection, maintenance and extended 'new for old' warranty.

Improved value for money was a key focus of assessing tenders for the new C2k service. The cost of the proposed new service demonstrated a 23% saving. The new contract will ensure the prices of items are more competitive, as the prices will be annually benchmarked against prices offered by other suppliers. Where appropriate, prices will be reduced to match the comparison price.

- (iii) Interactive whiteboards are not part of C2K services. Schools purchase these via the Education and Library Board Inter-Board framework, negotiated by the SELB on behalf of the five boards - a new framework will be in place from 1 April 2012. Present prices allow choices of makes and specifications and range from £1700 to £2700. The prices cover a survey of the school room, provision of advice (type of whiteboard), fitting, training and extended warranty. The only additional cost is the electrical connection, provided by a qualified electrical contractor.

## **Dromintee Primary School, Newry**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for Dromintee Primary School, Newry.

**(AQW 7161/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuisioige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;
- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;

- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

### **New Build for Scoil Na Fuiseoige, Belfast**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for Scoil Na Fuiseoige, Belfast.

**(AQW 7162/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuiseoige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;
- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;
- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

### **St Columba's Primary School, Draperstown**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for St Columba's Primary School, Draperstown.

**(AQW 7163/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuiseoige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;
- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;

- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;
- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

### **St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Forkhill**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Forkhill.

**(AQW 7164/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuisioige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;
- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;
- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

### **St Colman's Primary School, Lisburn**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for St Colman's Primary School, Lisburn.

**(AQW 7165/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuisioige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;

- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;
- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

### **Capital Projects for Schools in the Holywood Area**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the capital projects for schools in the Holywood area.

**(AQW 7171/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** You will be aware that I have commissioned the 5 Education & Library Boards working in conjunction with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools to undertake a strategic planning process based on each Board area to shape the future pattern of education delivery.

In any area, potential projects, such as that for the Holywood multi-schools project, will be critically assessed as part of the area planning process to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed. Future capital investment will be targeted at supporting area plans emerging from this process. No school building project will be looked at in isolation but will be considered in the context of the wider area.

You will appreciate that until this work is completed it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the position of any potential project or how any available funding might be allocated.

### **Applications for Pre-School Places**

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of applications received for a pre-school place in the 2012/13 academic year at (a) Dundela Infants School, Belfast; (b) Loughview Integrated Nursery, Belfast; (c) St Colmcille's Pre-School, Belfast; (d) Ravenscroft Nursery, Belfast; (e) Orangefield Nursery, Belfast; (f) Sandbrook Nursery, Belfast; (g) Little Ducks Playroom, Belfast; (h) Dundonald Nursery, Dundonald; (i) McArthur Nursery, Belfast; (j) Knocknagoney Nursery, Belfast (k) Glendhu Nursery, Belfast; (l) Avoniel Nursery, Belfast; (m) Greenwood Nursery, Belfast; (n) St Matthews Nursery, Belfast; (o) Braniel Nursery, Belfast; (p) Brooklands Nursery, Dundonald; (q) Castlereagh Nursery, Belfast; (r) Belmont Pre-School, Belfast; (s) Kings Road Nursery, Belfast; and (t) Ballybeen Women's Centre Pre-School, Dundonald.

**(AQW 7203/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The admissions process for places in pre-school education in the 2012/13 academic year is currently ongoing. The Belfast and South-Eastern Education and Library Boards, who administer the admissions process for the areas in which the named providers are located, have advised me that they will not be in a position to provide the information requested until after the process is completed on 1 June 2012, when final placement letters issue to parents. I will be pleased to provide the information to you after that date if that would be helpful.

## **St Joseph's Primary School in Madden, Co. Armagh**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for St Joseph's Primary School in Madden, Co. Armagh.

**(AQW 7232/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuisioige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;
- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;
- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

## **Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit.

**(AQW 7233/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuisioige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;
- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;

- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

### **St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle.

**(AQW 7234/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuisioige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;
- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;
- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

### **Taughmonagh Primary School, Belfast**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for Taughmonagh Primary School, Belfast.

**(AQW 7235/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuisioige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;
- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;

- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;
- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

### **Bangor Grammar School**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for Bangor Grammar School. **(AQW 7236/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Updates for the new builds at the above schools are detailed as follows:

- 1 Dromintee Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 2 Scoil Na Fuisseoige Primary School commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete July 2012;
- 3 St Columba's Primary School commenced construction work in August 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 4 St Oliver Plunkett Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete March 2012;
- 5 St Colman's Primary School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 6 St Joseph's Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete January 2012;
- 7 Magherafelt Primary School and Nursery Unit commenced construction work in May 2011 and is due to complete August 2012;
- 8 St Mary's Primary School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete October 2012;
- 9 Taughmonagh Primary School commenced construction work in January 2011 and is due to complete May 2012;
10. A new build for Bangor Grammar School commenced construction work in February 2011 and is due to complete February 2013.

### **Average Computer to Pupil Ratio**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Education to detail the average computer to pupil ratio in (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary schools. **(AQW 7239/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** C2k has advised that based on the PCs and laptops provided by C2k the average computer to pupil ratio in Primary Schools is 1:6. For Post-Primary Schools the ratio is 1:5.

Schools enhance their hardware provision by making direct purchases via the C2k's managed service school catalogue and when such purchases are taken into account the ratio for Primary schools is 1:5 and for Post-Primary Schools it is 1:3.

The ratio in Special Schools is 1:2.

Schools can also purchase items not in the C2k catalogue and when they do so the above ratios are improved. The Department does not hold information on such purchases.

### **Bullying on Buses**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Education how many complaints (i) schools; and (ii) Education and Library Boards have received in relation to bullying on buses in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 7246/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Department does not collect this information from schools. The Education and Library Boards may be in receipt of complaints about bullying on buses; however recording systems are not sufficiently detailed to produce accurate statistics.

The Department recently published research into the "Nature and Extent of Pupil Bullying in Schools in the North of Ireland" (2011) in which 4.2% of Year 6 pupils and 5.9% of Year 9 pupils surveyed reported that they had been bullied on the school bus.

Pupil behaviour is a matter for schools which are required, by law, to have measures in place to promote good pupil behaviour as part of their discipline policy. When developing a policy, a school community must decide on its position in respect of pupil behaviour off site and out of school hours, including while travelling to and from school.

The Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) focused on the theme of travelling to and from school free from bullying during Anti-Bullying Week 2009. At that time young people produced a 'Top Tips' leaflet, which is available at [http://www.niabf.org.uk/cms/images/stories/top\\_five\\_tips.pdf](http://www.niabf.org.uk/cms/images/stories/top_five_tips.pdf), on keeping safe from bullying when travelling to and from school.

The Education and Library Boards also have policies and practices to help address the issue of bullying on school buses. For example, the North Eastern Education and Library Board is a member of a 'Safe Travel Group' which is made up of local Principals, the PSNI and Translink and sponsored by the Community Safety Partnership. The group has developed and implemented an action plan, held awareness raising events and meets regularly to consider local and timely issues. As suggested through that group, the NEELB take action when they are made aware of bullying on their buses or at stations. The perpetrators will receive an initial warning letter, which if ineffective will be followed by a meeting with the Board, the parents and the school. This may result in the suspension or withdrawal of the pupil's bus pass.

### **Cost of Call-Out for C2K Services**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Education what is the average cost to a school of a call-out for C2K services.

**(AQW 7248/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** C2k has advised that there is no cost to a school for its managed services on-site support.

### **C2K Services**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Education how much schools have spent on C2K services in each of the last two years.

**(AQW 7249/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** There is no cost to schools for the C2k managed ICT service which provides networked computers, administration and management systems for school staff, a managed learning environment called Learning NI and full service support via the C2k helpdesk.

Schools can enhance their ICT provision by purchasing additional equipment from C2k's managed service school catalogue which includes full support services for any purchases made or they may purchase via shops or the internet. The latter would of course not include the support services included with purchases made through the C2k catalogue.



C2k has advised that schools have spent the following in relation to school catalogue purchases in the last two years:

2010/11	2011/12 (up to 31/01/12)
£3,549,605	£1,921,313

We do not have information on expenditure on ICT provision purchased directly by schools from a non C2k source.

### **School Dedicated to Teaching Ulster-Scots Language and Culture**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the feasibility of a school dedicated to teaching Ulster-Scots language and culture.

**(AQW 7256/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Management of education provision in the schools' estate is, in the first instance, the responsibility of the relevant School Managing Authority.

Any significant change, such as opening a school dedicated to teaching Ulster-Scots language and culture, requires the publication of a statutory Development Proposal. As part of this statutory process I assess the feasibility of a Development Proposal and make my decision taking account of all issues pertinent to that case. As no such proposal has been published, I cannot provide an assessment.

### **Proposals for School Mergers**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Education to detail the proposals for school mergers on which a decision will be made in 2012.

**(AQW 7275/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Management of education provision in the schools estate is in the first instance the responsibility of the relevant School Managing Authority. Any significant change, such as an amalgamation, would require the publication of a statutory development proposal to support that intent.

My Department is currently considering a two proposals for the amalgamation of four schools to form two new schools with effect from 31 August 2012, these schools are:-

- St Aidan's Christian Brothers and St Bernadette's Primary Schools, Belfast.
- Edmund Rice and Star of the Sea Girls' Primary Schools, Belfast.

In addition, I approved proposals in 2011 for the amalgamation of four schools to form two new schools with effect from 31 August 2012, these schools are:-

- St Mary's Boys' and St Mary's Girls' Primary Schools in Strabane
- Elmbrook and Erne Special Schools in Enniskillen

### **Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender Students**

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Education what statistical data has been collected from schools in relation to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender students in accordance with Section 75 obligations as set out in his Department's Equality Schemes, in the past ten years.

**(AQW 7281/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Department does not routinely collect information from schools in relation to lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender students and is not required to do so. The main data collection exercise, the school census, gathers information held by schools which is not self-reported by pupils and, therefore, would not be an appropriate vehicle through which to collect information on sexual orientation.

The Department is obliged to have regard to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations across all of the section 75 groups and takes that responsibility very seriously. It therefore makes extensive use of data that is collected as part of external research, including information on sexual orientation, to inform its policies and programmes.

### **Strathearn Grammar School, Belfast**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the new build for Strathearn Grammar School, Belfast.

**(AQW 7314/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** (i) Strathearn Grammar School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete September 2014.

(ii) The acquisition of the former Beechmount Leisure Centre site was completed in January 2011. The construction element of the major capital project for Coláiste Feirste is one of a number of potential projects which will be assessed as part of the Area Planning process to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed. Until this work is completed and outcomes determined, there is nothing further I can provide in terms of an update on specific projects.

### **Coláiste Feirste, Belfast**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the site acquisition and new build for Coláiste Feirste, Belfast

**(AQW 7315/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** (i) Strathearn Grammar School commenced construction work in March 2011 and is due to complete September 2014.

(ii) The acquisition of the former Beechmount Leisure Centre site was completed in January 2011. The construction element of the major capital project for Coláiste Feirste is one of a number of potential projects which will be assessed as part of the Area Planning process to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed. Until this work is completed and outcomes determined, there is nothing further I can provide in terms of an update on specific projects.

### **Awareness Sessions on the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number and location of the awareness sessions on the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity policy held with schools and youth organisations since 2011.

**(AQW 7342/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Awareness Sessions on the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity policy were held as follows:

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Education Sector</b>
BELB	4 October 2011	Ulidia Resource Centre	Post-Primary & Youth
	11 October 2011	Ulidia Resource Centre	Post-Primary & Youth
	13 October 2011	Ulidia Resource Centre	Post-Primary & Youth
	18 October 2011	Ulidia Resource Centre	Primary
	20 October 2011	Ulidia Resource Centre	Primary
	26 October 2011	Ulidia Resource Centre	Primary
	24 January 2012	Ulidia Resource Centre	Primary
	26 January 2012	Ulidia Resource Centre	Nursery
	9 February 2012	Ulidia Resource Centre	Post-Primary
NEELB	16 March 2011	Antrim Board Centre	All Schools
	21 March 2011	Antrim Board Centre	All Schools
	25 March 2011	Antrim Board Centre	All Schools
	11 November 2011	Antrim Board Centre	CASS Officers
	5 December 2011	Antrim Board Centre	Successful Applicants for CRED Enhancement Scheme
SEELB	3 October 2011	Ardnabannon OEC	Youth
	15 October 2011	Ardnabannon OEC	Youth
	26 & 27 October 2011	SEELB HQ	Primary
	3 November 2011	SEELB HQ	Post-Primary
SELB	11 February 2011	Armagh City Hotel	Youth
	28 & 29 March 2011	Manor House, Killadeas	Youth
	20 & 21 October 2011	Belfast	Youth
	16 November 2011	Newry Teachers' Centre	Primary
	23 November 2011	Clounagh Centre, Portadown	Primary
	29 November 2011	Dungannon Teachers' Centre	Primary
	5 December 2011	Bann House, Portadown	Youth
	11 January 2012	Clounagh Centre, Portadown	Post-Primary
	19 January 2012	Bann House, Portadown	Youth
	1 February 2012	Amma Centre, Armagh	Primary & Post-Primary

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Education Sector</b>
WELB	20 January 2011	Station Centre, Omagh	Youth
	28 January 2011	North-West Teachers Centre	Schools
	11 February 2011	Technology Education Centre	Schools
	7 October 2011	North-West Youth Office	Youth
	21 October 2011	Omagh Youth Centre	Youth
	21 November 2011	North-West Teachers Centre	Schools
	21 November 2011	North-West Youth Office	Youth
	5 December 2011	Technology Education Centre	Schools
INTER-BOARD	24 March 2011	Antrim Board Centre	All school sectors
YCNl	13 September 2011	Greater Belfast area	Youth
	17 January 2012	Greater Belfast area	Youth

### **Youth and Schools Interboard Panel**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Education to list the groups represented on the joint Youth and Schools Interboard Panel.

**(AQW 7344/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The joint Youth and Schools CRED Interboard Panel comprises representatives from each of the five Education and Library Boards from both schools and youth sections. Representatives from the Department of Education and the Education and Training Inspectorate attend as observers.

### **Senior Education Officers Group**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Education who is represented on the Senior Education Officers Group to which the Interboard Panel reports.

**(AQW 7347/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Senior Education Officers Group comprises of Senior Education Officers from each of the five Education and Library Boards and includes the Director of the Regional Training Unit.

### **Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Enhancement Scheme**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Education to list the groups which have received funding from the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Enhancement Scheme.

**(AQW 7349/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Groups which have received funding through the ELB led Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Enhancement Scheme are as follows:

BELB (Schools)	Arellian Nursery School	New Lodge Nursery School
	Ashfield Boys' High School	Our Lady's Nursery School
	Belfast Boys' Model School	Ravenscroft Nursery School
	Belfast Hospital School	Shaftesbury Nursery School
	Belfast Model School for Girls'	St Dominic's High School
	Naiscoil/Bunscoil Phobal Feirste	St Gemma's High School
	Cathedral Nursery School	St Louise's College
	Cliftonville Integrated PS	St Malachy's College
	Corpus Christi College	St Patrick's College
	Hazelwood Integrated College	St Peter's Nursery School
	Knockbreda High School* (SEELB)	St Therese of Lisieux PS
	Ligoniel PS	St Vincent de Paul PS
	Little Flower Girls' School	Tudor Lodge Nursery School
	Loughshore Educational Resource Centre	
BELB (Youth)	Ardoyne Youth Centre	Newlodge Youth Centre
	Blackie River Community Group	North Belfast Area Project/ Shankill Area Project
	East Belfast Area Youth Project	Nubia Youth Club
	Glen Parent	Roden Street Youth Service
	Glór na Mona	South Belfast Area Project
	Indian Community Centre Youth Club	St Michael's Youth Group
	Lorag Youth Group	West Belfast Area Project
	Newhill Youth Club	

NEELB (Schools)	Ballyhackett Primary School	Parkhall Integrated College
	Broughshane Primary School	Rasharkin Primary School
	Damhead Primary School	Seaview Primary School
	Drumard Primary School	St Brigid's PS, Mayogall
	Duneane Primary School	St Ciaran's Primary School
	Glenann Primary School	St Colmcille's Primary School
	Knockahollet Primary School	St Columba's PS, Kilrea
	Knocknagin Primary School	St John Bosco
	Millburn Primary School	St John's PS, Coleraine
	Mount St Michael Primary School	St Patrick's & St Brigid's
	Oakfield Primary School	Whiteabbey Primary School
NEELB (Youth)	Cheers Youth Forum	Newtownabbey/Carrickfergus/ Larne Capacity Building Programme
	Coleraine Diversity Competent Leadership Programme	OCNI Introduction to CR Course
	Dunclug Youth Forum	Windy Hall/Knocklyn/ Stranocum Project
	Moyle Outreach/Detached Project (Armoy)	
SEELB (Schools)	Ballinderry Primary School	Lagan College
	Ballykeigle Primary School	Lisnagarvey High School
	Ballymacrickett Primary School	McKinney Primary School
	Ballymacward Primary School	Moira Primary School
	Ballyvester Primary School	Our Lady & St Patrick's College
	Brownlee Primary School	Rowandale Int Primary School
	Cumran Primary School	Sacred Heart Primary School
	Downpatrick Primary School	St Anne's Primary School
	Dunmurry Primary School	St Colman's Primary School
	Glencraig Int Primary School	St Joseph's Primary School
	Greyabbey Primary School	St Macartan's Primary School
	Grosvenor Grammar School	St Mary's High School
	Killyleagh Primary School	St Mary's Primary School
	Kircubbin Int Primary School	St Patrick's Academy
Knockbreda High School	St Patrick's Primary School	

SEELB (Youth)	Ballymagee Youth Centre	Lisburn Rural Project
	Colin Youth Development	North Down Division
	Cregagh Youth Centre	NRG Kircubbin Community Centre
	East Down Rural Project	Old Warren Youth Initiative
	EDRP Ards Peninsula	St Comgall's Youth Club
	Lisburn BME Project	
SELB (Schools)	Aughnacloy Primary School	Pheonix Int Primary School
	Ballyoran Primary School	Presentation Primary School
	Ballytrea Primary School	Rathfriland High School
	Banbridge High School	Sperrin Int College
	Birches Primary School	Sperrinview School
	Bocombra Primary School	St Anthony's PS, Craigavon
	Ceara School	St Brigid's PS, Drumilly
	Cookstown High School	St Louis' Grammar School
	Cookstown Primary School	St Mary's PS, Aughnacloy
	Derryhale Primary School	St Mary's PS, Cabragh
	Fivemiletown Primary School	St Mary's PS, Fivemiletown
	Hart Memorial Primary School	St Mary's PS, Lisbuoy
	Holy Trinity College, Cookstown	St Mary's PS, Maghery
	Holy Trinity PS, Cookstown	St Mary's PS, Stewartstown
	Kilkeel High School	St Oliver Plunkett's Primary School
	Lisanally School	St Patrick's College, Banbridge
	Milltown Primary School	St Patrick's PS, Newry
	Moyallon Primary School	The Armstrong Primary School
	Newbridge Int College	Windsor Hill Primary School
	Newmills Primary School	

SELB (Youth)	Armagh Young Women's/ Traveller Group	Seagoe Youth Group
	Banbridge Youth Group	SELB Inclusion Group (across SELB)
	Brownlow Youth Resource Centre	SELB Inclusion Unit Group, Cookstown
	Kildress Youth Group	SELB Inclusion Unit Group, Dungannon
	Legahory Young Girls' Muslim Group	Taghnevan Youth Group
	Oasis LGBT Group	Tandragee Youth Group
WELB (Schools)	Barrack Street Boys' Primary School	Lisneal College, Derry
	Belmont Special School	Portora Royal Grammar School
	Bready Jubilee Primary School	St Cecilia's College
	Culmore Primary School	St Joseph's Boys' School, Derry
	Cumber Claudy Primary School	St Mary's PS, Altinure
	Foylview Special School	St Michael's College
	Gortin Primary School	St Patrick's PS, Gortin
	Greenhaw Primary School	
WELB (Youth)	Bovalley Community Youth Group	Limavady NRA
	Caw Youth Club	Lincoln Court
	Cedar Foundation	Lincoln Youth Club
	Derry Travellers	Omagh Boys & Girls Club
	Destined	Pennyburn Youth Club
	Down Syndrome	Pilots Row Youth Club
	Drummond Centre	Pilots Row Youth Club
	Enagh Youth Forum	Reach Across
	Foyle Down Syndrome	Rosemount Youth Club
	Glebe Outreach	Sion Mills Youth Club
	Hospital Road Youth Club	Strabane Youth Council
	Irish Street Y&CA	

\* This school is partnered with St Gemma's High School and they receive CRED funding from BELB



## Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy Enhancement Scheme

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Education to detail the budget for the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Policy Enhancement Scheme in each of the next three years.

**(AQW 7350/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** As you will be aware, the education budget faces significant challenges over the period to 2014-15. I am currently reviewing my budget allocations for the next three years and until this exercise is complete I am unable to confirm any future budget allocations for the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Enhancement Scheme.

## School Visits

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of school visits he has made since coming into office, broken down by constituency.

**(AQW 7365/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** I have visited 42 schools since coming into office.

Belfast North	3
Belfast South	5
Belfast West	2
East Derry	2
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	2
Foyle	6
Lagan Valley	3
Mid Ulster	1
Newry and Armagh	2
North Antrim	3
South Down	1
Upper Bann	10
West Tyrone	2

## Viability Audit Policy

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education what weight will be given to each of the three criteria set out in the Viability Audit Policy when considering the future of a school.

**(AQW 7390/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** As previously stated in response to AQW 6549/11-15, the six criteria outlined in the Sustainable Schools Policy and their associated quantitative and qualitative indicators provide a framework for assessing the range of factors which may affect a school's sustainability. Sustainable Schools is the basis of my Department's policy for the planning of educational provision on an area basis.

Last September the Education and Library Boards, working with CCMS and the other sectors, were asked to conduct a viability audit of all schools in their areas. Its purpose was to identify schools facing significant viability challenges in any or all of the three indicators set out in the terms of reference (delivering quality education, sustainable enrolment trends and financial stability), to identify the root cause(s) of their problems and present proposals to address them. The data gathered for the audit will

feed into the Area Planning process. Weightings will not be applied to the viability audit's criteria – the intention is to look at each school in the round.

It is, in the first instance, the responsibility of the managing authorities to determine proposals for schools, including those experiencing stress. The Sustainable Schools Policy states that the local circumstances of each individual school will need to be considered in determining what action should be taken, and that, as a result, each case should continue to be assessed individually. When I make decisions on development proposals for a significant change to a school, including closure, I will continue to do so, on a case by case basis, taking into account all pertinent information. The over-riding consideration is the quality of education that a school provides for its pupils.

### **Best Foot Forward for Schools Initiative**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education how the Best Foot Forward for Schools initiative is being made available to schools.

**(AQW 7391/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Best Foot Forward resource was developed by Travelwise NI, a Department for Regional Development (DRD) initiative, to encourage the use of sustainable transport options.

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) worked with DRD to update this resource which is available to all schools via the NI Curriculum website, [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk). This website provides advice, guidance and resources to assist teachers in their delivery of the curriculum.

The resource is also available for download from C2k's Learning NI library, available to teachers. Further work is being progressed by C2k and DRD to make it available via Learning NI in a course format. This is expected to be available shortly.

### **Department Spend on Taxis**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education how much his Department spent on taxis in the last financial year.

**(AQW 7397/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Department of Education spent £996 on taxis in the last financial year ended 31 March 2011.

### **Youth Workers from St Agnes and St Michael's Youth Clubs, West Belfast**

**Ms S Ramsey** asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 6726/11-15, whether youth workers from St Agnes and St Michael's Youth Clubs, West Belfast, have been redeployed.

**(AQW 7429/11-15)**

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

The BELB has advised that one full-time youth worker from each club has been redeployed on a temporary basis. The youth worker from St Agnes' Youth Club has been on temporary secondment since November 2009 and the youth worker in St Michael's Youth Club moved on a temporary basis from December 2011. To ensure the two clubs continue to operate effectively, the BELB has allocated additional part-time hours to both centres for youth support worker-in-charge posts.

### **Strategy for Helping Children who are Blind with Reading Skills**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Education to outline his Department's strategy for helping children who are blind with reading skills.

**(AQW 7448/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** My Department has a range of policies in place to enable every child to learn to read. These include the school improvement strategy, the literacy and numeracy strategy and the revised curriculum and its assessment arrangements.

I recognise that pupils who are blind or have a visual impairment need additional support with their reading. That is why my Department is continuing to support the Royal National Institute of Blind People's (RNIB) Vision Strategy.

In support of the Vision Strategy, my Department is providing funding for the Regional Vision Resource Base (RVRB) at the Fortwilliam Centre, Belfast, which I was delighted to open back in June 2011.

I was pleased to note that the Education and Training Inspectorate's "Report of an Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with a Visual Impairment in Mainstream Schools in Northern Ireland", published on 2 February 2012, found provision for visual impairment in mainstream schools to be very good. The report also found that the ELBs provided a very good standard of VI support.

## **Boards of Governors**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Education (i) what training is available for Boards of Governors; and (ii) what evaluation process exists to ensure that Boards of Governors are carrying out their duties to the highest standard.

**(AQW 7472/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:**

- (i) It is extremely important that school governors, who play an important role in our education service in an entirely voluntary capacity, are supported, including through effective training. The education and library boards are responsible for providing the training and support that Boards of Governors need in order to fulfil effectively their statutory responsibilities. The ELBs have advised that all new governors are offered a place on an induction programme and that existing governors are offered an annual governor training programme, both of which cover a variety of essential topics.

The Department of Education also provides opportunities for governors to hear directly about its strategic priorities and has recently completed a series of ten information seminars for school governors.

Additionally, governors have access to an on-line information guide on the DE website entitled 'Every School a Good School – the Governors' Role' which sets out their roles and responsibilities.

- (ii) The Education & Training Inspectorate looks at the effectiveness of a Board of Governors as part of the school inspection process. I have asked for the school inspection procedures to be reviewed and strengthened so that governors can have feedback on how they are doing and good practice can be identified and shared and that work is now in hand.

## **Advisory Group on Shared Education**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Education to detail the terms of reference for the Advisory Group on Shared Education and when these will be published.

**(AQW 7491/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** I will publish the terms of reference for the Ministerial Advisory Group by

1st April 2012.

## Area-Based Planning

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 6649/11-15, to outline the criteria used to determine the development of constituent local plans.

**(AQW 7499/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** Given the wide scope and complexity of the task and the geographical spread within some Boards, it is likely that Board level plans will be developed by combining lower level local plans.

It will be a matter for the Education & Library Boards, working with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectoral bodies, to determine the most appropriate means of arriving at area plans, in compliance with the Terms of Reference issued on 15 December 2011.

## Area-Based Plans Submitted by the Education and Library Boards

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Education to detail the criteria to be used to determine the outcome of area-based plans submitted by the Education and Library Boards.

**(AQW 7500/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The Terms of Reference issued to the Boards on 15 December 2011 require the area plans to be submitted by them to reflect Departmental policies and priorities, and deliver a specified list of objectives.

They are available in full at:

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/area-planning-terms-of-reference.htm>

In considering the plans, my Department will assess the extent to which these requirements have been met.

## Staff Financial Package

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of staff within his Department who have taken any form of a financial package and are now re-employed by his Department.

**(AQW 7559/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** No staff who took any form of financial package are now re-employed by the Department of Education.

## Teacher-Pupil Ratio

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Education what was the average teacher-pupil ratio at (i) primary schools; and (ii) post-primary schools in each of the last two years.

**(AQW 7578/11-15)**

**Mr O'Dowd:** The information is contained in the table below and is routinely published on the DE website.

### PUPIL: TEACHER RATIOS IN NI BY SCHOOL TYPE: 2009/10 - 2010/11

School Type	2009/10	2010/11
Primary <sup>1</sup>	20.4	20.2
Post-primary	14.6	14.7

**Source:** Teachers Payroll and Pensions System and Annual School Census

1 Includes pupils and teachers in nursery classes.

## Department for Employment and Learning

### Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative 'Youth on the Move'

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what progress has been made on the key objective to align with the Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative 'Youth on the Move', as detailed in 'Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12'.

**(AQW 6859/11-15)**

**Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning):** My Department is active in promoting the European Union's flagship educational exchange programme Erasmus and other EU policies within the higher education sector. It has membership of several national advisory boards and strategic working groups whose main functions are to provide strategic oversight for the UK Higher Education International and Europe Unit, and to provide expert input on UK/European Higher Education activities.

The aims of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NIESF) Programme 2007-2013, which is administered by my Department, contribute to "Youth on the Move's" objective of promoting more and equal opportunities for young people in education and in the labour market. Priority 1 of the NIESF Programme 2007-2013 provides opportunities for 16-19 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEETS). The programme is on track to achieve the target of assisting 4,500 of these young people. The Objectives of Priority 2 of the ESF programme are also in line with the objectives of "Youth on the Move" as its purpose is to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce (including the younger workforce) by increasing the number of workers qualified to levels 2 and 3 and reducing the number of workers without essential (basic) skills.

The Department will continue to work to identify and use opportunities to maintain and enhance links with the policies and programmes contained within "Youth on the Move".

### Facilities at Stranmillis University College, Belfast

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why he did not bid for additional capital funding, during the last monitoring round, in order to improve the facilities at Stranmillis University College, Belfast.

**(AQW 6894/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Stranmillis University College has been allocated £1.635m of capital funding for the current spending review period. It has indicated how this will be spent and has prepared economic appraisals to cover the draw down of funds in the current year. Funds secured under the last monitoring round were required to be expended by 31 March 2012. There was not sufficient time available for the College to identify new capital proposals, prepare economic appraisals, obtain approval of these, procure the capital works and to execute the works before that date.

### Proposed Merger of Queen's University and Stranmillis University College

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 6504/11-15, whether representatives of Queen's University, Belfast or Stranmillis University College, Belfast have met with representatives of Methodist College, Belfast to discuss any aspect of the proposed merger of Queen's and Stranmillis.

**(AQW 6896/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Queen's University Belfast and Stranmillis University College have both advised me that no representatives of their respective institutions have met with representatives of Methodist College Belfast to discuss any aspect of the proposed merger of Queen's and Stranmillis.

## Public Consultation on the Proposed Merger of Stranmillis University College, Belfast and Queen's University, Belfast

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, given that 40 of the 55 responses to the public consultation on the proposed merger of Stranmillis University College, Belfast and Queen's University, Belfast were opposed to the merger, for his assessment of the claim that the merger has 'overwhelming' support.

**(AQW 6897/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Of the 55 responses received, 13 were from corporate entities and 42 were from individuals. The majority of the individual responses were negative. The majority of the corporate responses were supportive. As with any consultation, responses are not necessarily scientifically representative and they also reflect views at a particular snapshot in time when the consultation is conducted. On balance, the responses which were against the merger came primarily from individuals and limited corporate representation whilst the supportive responses came from a much wider range of individuals and corporate entities.

Furthermore, I have had many meetings with a wide range of stakeholders with varying opinions which have informed the conclusions that I have made.

### Meeting with the Staff of Stranmillis University College, Belfast

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he intends to update the Assembly on the outcome of his meeting with the staff of Stranmillis University College, Belfast on 19 January 2012.

**(AQW 6899/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** I made a statement to the Assembly on 28 November 2011 setting out the work that I have asked the Department to undertake to inform the way forward on teacher education. I am not intending to make any further policy statement on this issue until the study has been concluded.

### Students: Non-UK Nationals

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of non-UK nationals, and their proportion of the student population, studying at (i) Queen's University, Belfast; (ii) the University of Ulster; and (iii) the Regional Colleges, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 6939/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The information on total enrolments, total non-UK national enrolments and their proportion of the student population for each of the last three years, for which data are available at (i) Queen's University Belfast; and (ii) the University of Ulster are detailed overleaf.

#### (I) QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Total student enrolments	22,810	22,705	24,195
Total Non-UK national student enrolments	2,175	2,140	2,510
Percentage of Non-UK national student enrolments	9.5%	9.4%	10.4%

**Source:** Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

**(II) THE UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER**

	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Total student enrolments	23,160	26,030	25,520
Total Non-UK national student enrolments	2,995	3,605	4,010
Percentage of Non-UK national student enrolments	12.9%	13.8%	15.7%

**Source:** Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes: Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

**(III) REGIONAL COLLEGES**

The table below details enrolments of non-UK nationals, studying Professional and Technical Courses at the Northern Ireland Further Education Colleges for the last 3 years for which full-year data are available.

**NON UK NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL ENROLMENTS IN NI FE COLLEGES (2008/09-2010/11)**

	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>
Total enrolments	142,486	163,350	155,425
Total Non-UK national enrolments	4,579	5,711	4,874
Percentage of Non-UK national enrolments	3.2%	3.5%	3.1%

**Source:** Further Education Statistical Record Vocational and Apprenticeship Courses in the Agricultural Industry

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much funding has been allocated in the 2011/12 financial year for (i) vocational; and (ii) apprenticeship courses in the agricultural industry.

**(AQW 6941/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The primary responsibility for education and training for the agricultural industry rests with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The six Further Education (FE) colleges are funded through the recurrent block grant for the provision of further education up to and including level 3, essential skills and higher education provision delivered in FE colleges. This funding is allocated annually among colleges on the basis of an agreed, planned volume of provision to be delivered during the next academic year. The total planned delivery is agreed in line with the curriculum policy and Departmental priorities, categorised into broad areas of the curriculum, such as level, priority skills areas, vocational and externally regulated provision. Funding is not allocated to specific courses, qualifications or industry sectors. The Department sets the strategic direction for the Further Education sector in Northern Ireland and each college is responsible for its own curriculum offer.

Funding is allocated on an academic year basis and in 2011/12 the six colleges have a target to deliver provision to the value of £147.7 million in further education, essential skills, and higher education vocational provision. It is not possible to quantify or estimate how much of the total funding will relate to provision in the agricultural industry.

Similarly it is not possible to break down spend on apprenticeships at industry level. ApprenticeshipsNI is a demand led provision and the uptake of places is determined by employers in Northern Ireland. My Department funds the training element of the full framework apprenticeship in the occupational areas required by employers in Northern Ireland. The closing position for financial year 2011/12 has yet to be determined. ApprenticeshipsNI expenditure for the 2010/11 financial year was £25,043,650, 40% of which is funded from the European Social Fund.

## University Drop-out Rates

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how the drop-out rates at (i) Queen's University, Belfast; and (ii) the University of Ulster compared to other UK universities' rates in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 6942/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Data on drop out rates for Higher Education Institutions are only available for undergraduate entrants who fail to return to Higher Education in the following academic year. In terms of reporting information on drop out rates in Higher Education, the Department concentrates on full-time first degree entrants.

The drop-out rates in Queen's University and the University of Ulster compared with the UK average for each of the last 3 available years for which data are available are detailed below:

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Queen's University Belfast	6.3%	7.1%	7.7%
University of Ulster	12.4%	13.2%	10.0%
Total UK average	9.0%	8.6%	7.9%

**Source:** Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

### Notes:

- 1 Data on drop out rates for Higher Education Institutions are obtained from the Higher Education Statistics Agency's Performance Indicators data.
- 2 The latest available data are for 2008/09 entrants failing to continue in Higher Education in 2009/10.
- 3 The data measures those full-time first degree entrants who fail to continue in Higher Education in a particular academic year after entry in the previous academic year.

## University Drop-out Rates

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the drop-out rate at (i) Queen's University, Belfast; (ii) the University of Ulster in each of the last three available years, broken down by school; and what these figures represent as a percentage of the number of students in each school.

**(AQW 6943/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The Department does not hold information on drop-out rates by school and therefore subject area is used as a proxy.

Data on drop out rates for Higher Education Institutions are only available for undergraduate entrants who fail to return to Higher Education in the following academic year. In terms of reporting information on drop out rates in Higher Education, the Department concentrates on full-time first degree entrants.

The drop-out rates in Queen's University and the University of Ulster, broken down by subject area, in each of the last three available years are detailed in the table below:

Subject Area	The Queen's University of Belfast			University of Ulster		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Medicine & dentistry	0.0%	1.1%	2.4%	...	...	...
Subjects allied to medicine	3.6%	6.5%	5.8%	9.1%	8.9%	10.2%
Biological sciences	9.8%	8.6%	9.2%	8.7%	11.1%	10.1%



Subject Area	The Queen's University of Belfast			University of Ulster		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Agriculture & related subjects	1.5%	9.4%	2.7%	3.1%	15.8%	3.6%
Physical sciences	8.6%	9.6%	8.9%	12.4%	7.4%	6.6%
Mathematical sciences	7.8%	11.6%	15.0%	...	...	...
Computer science	13.6%	11.3%	13.5%	16.5%	18.1%	10.9%
Engineering & technology	11.6%	10.7%	13.1%	21.7%	26.9%	17.4%
Architecture, building & planning	7.8%	4.7%	8.3%	14.2%	10.4%	10.9%
Social studies	5.9%	8.9%	6.3%	11.1%	11.9%	9.2%
Law	5.1%	2.5%	3.7%	11.4%	8.2%	10.3%
Business & administrative studies	2.9%	3.1%	6.0%	11.0%	13.3%	8.4%
Mass communications and documentation	13.0%	17.1%	13.9%	9.7%	14.1%	8.4%
Languages	6.1%	6.0%	7.9%	10.2%	17.4%	12.9%
Historical and philosophical studies	8.7%	6.5%	7.3%	13.8%	18.3%	10.5%
Creative arts & design	4.3%	11.6%	14.3%	16.2%	13.1%	8.8%
Education	...	...	...	10.7%	17.4%	12.5%
Total	6.3%	7.1%	7.7%	12.4%	13.2%	10.0%

**Source:** Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

**Notes:**

- 1 Data on drop out rates for Higher Education Institutions are obtained from the Higher Education Statistics Agency's Performance Indicators data.
- 2 The latest available data are for 2008/09 entrants failing to continue in Higher Education in 2009/10.
- 3 The data measures those full-time first degree entrants who fail to continue in Higher Education in a particular academic year after entry in the previous academic year.
- 4 Percentages calculated on small populations are suppressed and represented as '...' in the above table.

### **Fees Generated by Universities and Colleges through the Enrolment of Non-UK Nationals and Non-EU Nationals**

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the amount of fees generated by universities and colleges through the enrolment of (i) non-UK nationals; and (ii) non-EU nationals in each of the last three years; and what percentage of the total amount of fees generated these figures represent.

**(AQW 6945/11-15)**

**Dr Farry: Universities**

The tables below show the amount of fees generated by universities through the enrolment of:

- (i) non-UK nationals in each of the last three years; and
- (ii) non-EU nationals in each of the last three years.

Also:

- (iii) the percentage of the total amount of fees generated that the non-UK income figures represent; and
- (iv) the percentage of the total amount of fees generated that the non-EU income figures represent.

**TABLE ONE: QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST (QUB)**

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
(i) Total Fees generated from non-UK nationals by QUB (£m)	£9.67m	£10.65m	£11.72m
(ii) Total Fees generated from non-EU nationals by QUB (£m)	£7.49m	£8.30m	£9.04m
(iii) Estimated non-UK income as % of overall total	20.9%	20.6%	21.2%
(iv) Estimated non-EU income as % of overall total	16.2%	16.0%	16.2%

- 1 (i) and (iii) above refer to EU nationals from outside the UK.
- 2 (ii) and (iv) above refer to nationals from outside the EU.
- 3 For the purposes of financial reporting, only non-EU fee income is accounted for separately by Queen's University Belfast. Currently, Home/EU income is not accounted for separately, between UK and non-UK students. In the absence of available income figures for this category, Queen's University Belfast (QUB) has made an apportionment, based on student numbers.

**TABLE TWO: UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER (UU)**

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
(i) Total Fees generated from non-UK nationals by UU (£m)	£2.95m	£2.80m	£3.06m
(ii) Total Fees generated from non-EU nationals by UU (£m)	£3.49m	£3.11m	£3.24m
(iii) Estimated non-UK income as % of overall total	6.6%	5.5%	5.9%
(iv) Estimated non-EU income as % of overall total	7.8%	6.2%	6.3%

- 1 (i) and (iii) above refer to EU nationals from outside the UK.
- 2 (ii) and (iv) above refer to nationals from outside the EU.

**TABLE THREE: STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
(i) Total Fees generated from non-UK nationals by Stranmillis (£m)	£0.01m	£0.02m	£0.03m

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
(ii) Total Fees generated from non-EU nationals by Stranmillis (£m)	£0.01m	£0.01m	£0.01m
(iii) Estimated non-UK income as % of overall total	0.28%	0.60%	0.94%
(iv) Estimated non-EU income as % of overall total	0.24%	0.36%	0.32%

- 1 (i) and (iii) above refer to EU nationals from outside the UK.
- 2 (ii) and (iv) above refer to nationals from outside the EU.

**TABLE FOUR: ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
(i) Total Fees generated from non-UK nationals by St. Mary's (£m)	£0.08m	£0.1m	£0.1m
(ii) Total Fees generated from non-EU nationals by St. Mary's (£m)	£0.00m	£0.00m	£0.00m
(iii) Estimated non-UK income as % of overall total	3.50%	4.61%	4.16%
(iv) Estimated non-EU income as % of overall total	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

- 1 (i) and (iii) above refer to EU nationals from outside the UK.
- 2 (ii) and (iv) above refer to nationals from outside the EU.

#### Further Educations Colleges

The tables below show the amount of fees generated by the six Further Education Colleges through the enrolment of:

- (i) non-UK nationals in each of the last three years; and
- (ii) non-EU nationals in each of the last three years.

Also:

- (iii) the percentage of the total amount of fees generated that the non-UK income figures represent; and
- (iv) the percentage of the total amount of fees generated that the non-EU income figures represent.

**TABLE FIVE: FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES**

	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
(i) Total fees from non-UK nationals (£m)	£1.98m	£1.38m	£0.66m
(ii) Total fees from non-EU nationals (£m)	£0.14m	£0.19m	£0.48m
(iii) Non-UK fee income as % of total fee income	11.3%	7.1%	3.6%
(iv) Non-EU fee income as % of total fee income	0.8%	1.0%	2.6%

- 1 (i) and (iii) above refer to EU nationals from outside the UK.
- 2 (ii) and (iv) above refer to nationals from outside the EU.
- 3 For the purposes of financial reporting, only non EU fee income is accounted for separately by the further education colleges. Non-UK students have been identified by nationality and the related fees are disclosed within the table above.

### **Court Order Preventing a Student from Possessing a Mobile Phone**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) whether Belfast Metropolitan College or North West Regional College were aware that one of their students had a court order preventing him from possessing a mobile phone and that he had breached this order in the past; (ii) whether these institutions were aware that he had recently received a suspended sentence for a breach of this order; (iii) how students in these situations are monitored by a college; (iv) what support is being given to the students affected by the breaches of this order (v) whether there is an onus on the colleges to maintain the confidentiality of the student who is subject to the order; and (vi) if so, how this impacts on the protection and duty of care that a college has to its other students.

**(AQW 7000/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** I would refer you to the individual colleges for the specific aspects of the cases in relation to the individual in question.

All six Further Education (FE) colleges have robust safeguarding procedures in place, developed in conjunction with a number of external agencies, including the PSNI and Social Services.

Upon enrolment at an FE college, a student is asked to declare any criminal convictions. Where a student makes such a declaration, the college will initiate its safeguarding procedures, to ensure that the student will not pose a risk to other students. These arrangements include a thorough risk assessment, conducted by the college, which will evaluate the level of adjustments needed, or whether it is appropriate for the student to enrol at the college.

Where a student discloses information of this nature, the college will only make it available to staff or students where it is deemed necessary, informed by a risk assessment carried out as part of its safeguarding procedures.

### **Catholic Certificate of Education**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much has been spent on students from Stranmillis University College, Belfast achieving the Catholic Certificate of Education in each of the last thirteen years.

**(AQW 7001/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** This is information which my Department does not hold and I requested Stranmillis University College to provide it. The College provided information for the last six academic years in the table below which represents the reimbursement made in each year to students.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
£	7,010	6,125	6,527	1,804	5,400	2,956

### **University of Ulster**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many (i) courses; and (ii) student places were transferred from the University of Ulster Coleraine campus to other sites in each of the last three years; and how many (a) courses; and (b) student places were transferred from other University of Ulster sites to the Coleraine campus over the same period.

**(AQW 7072/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The University of Ulster has advised that no courses or student places have been transferred either to or from the Coleraine campus in the last three years.

### Unemployment in the Craigavon Area

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to tackle unemployment in the Craigavon area during this Assembly term.

**(AQW 7077/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** My Department will tackle unemployment in the Craigavon area by providing a comprehensive range of services and programmes to help people find and sustain employment. Specific plans include the support of the Employment Service frontline to engage clients in work-focused activity, helping them to overcome barriers to employment. In addition, we will ensure that clients have access to more intensive support such as Steps to Work, our main adult return to work programme. This is complemented by our active engagement with employers in the area to help source placement and job opportunities. Between April 2011 and November 2011 1718 unemployed people in the Craigavon area have been helped into work and this work will continue.

### Trade Union Duties

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in his Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.

**(AQW 7092/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** The detail on the number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time for each of the years requested, is set out in the table below:

Year	2000/01	2005/06	2010/11
Number of FTE staff*	0.14	0.31	0.29

\* Information on FTE staff is not available from the Construction Industry Training Board.

All facilities time has been granted to trade union representatives of the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)

### Anti-Social Behaviour in the Holylands Area of Belfast

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the progress of the schemes aimed at combating anti-social behaviour in the Holylands area of Belfast, and in other areas with a large student population.

**(AQW 7104/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** Belfast City Council's Holylands Inter-Agency Group's Implementation Plan outlines a number of short, medium and long term measures to try to address the ongoing problems in the area.

Although the Plan is specific to the wider Holylands area, many of the measures outlined are applicable across Northern Ireland.

The Plan covers the following six key themes, Alcohol, Policing, Student accommodation, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Local Neighbourhood, Student behaviour, Holylands management and Environmental.

Other medium and long-term measures are currently being progressed by the different departments and Agencies on the Holylands Inter-Agency Group. Some of these involve the introduction of legislation to tackle specific issues. These include The Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Act. (One of the key elements of this legislation is its capacity to empower the police to close nuisance premises).

Also, Fixed Penalty Notice powers under the Justice Act (NI) 2011 for minor offences such as drunk in a public place, disorderly behaviour and breach of the peace will be commenced in April 2012.

In addition Department of Justice officials are finalising the development of a Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland.

The Department for Social Development is currently carrying out a review of the definition and regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). It has been engaging with key stakeholders, including DEL, to ensure all relevant matters are included. It then intends to produce proposals for change for public consultation by 31 March 2012.

Both Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster continue to develop clear and consistent guidance for students regarding their rights and responsibilities as students, required standards of behaviour; issues regarding living off campus and consequences faced if things go wrong. These are reviewed at least annually and good practice is shared where appropriate.

Other measures include the introduction of CCTV, Community Safety Wardens, increased police presence, the enforcement of alcohol bye-laws and the deployment of Student Liaison Officers in the Holylands area.

In addition, Belfast City Council commissioned a Strategic Study to examine the key issues in the wider area and to try to identify a long term solution. A series of workshops involving key stakeholders has just been completed to finalise the recommendations of this Study. When the study report is finalised my Department, in conjunction with the Belfast City Council, intends to hold an event to disseminate the findings of the report.

The Implementation Plan is currently being reviewed and I will forward a copy to you when finalised.

### **St Mary's University College, Belfast**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 6828/11-15, given his Department's role as the main funder of St Mary's University College, for his assessment of the benefits of his Department engaging with the Equality Commission on this issue.

**(AQW 7689/11-15)**

**Dr Farry:** I acknowledge that my Department is the main funder of St. Mary's University College. However, under current legislation my Department has no remit in this area and, I repeat, it is a matter for the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland.

## **Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment**

### **Electricity Interconnection**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) whether her Department, or the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation, has undertaken cost-benefit modelling of the benefits of having (a) a latest generation, high efficiency flexible gas fired power station constructed, instead of the Electricity Supply Board providing electricity through the North/South interconnector; and (b) greater electricity interconnection with the British mainland and access to its cheaper electricity; and (ii) for her assessment of whether either of these options could potentially offer greater benefits to consumers than the proposed North/South interconnector.

**(AQW 6900/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment):** Investing in new power stations is a commercial decision that depends on a company's ability to trade competitively. It must be able to move its power through a reliable electricity grid with adequate interconnection capacity with Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

The planned North South Interconnector will provide the capacity needed to promote investment and competition, while restoring the Moyle interconnector to Scotland and introduction of the interconnector between the Irish Republic and Wales will improve electricity flows into and out of the market to the benefit of consumers.

### **Proposed North/South Interconnector**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she will ensure that consumers have the relevant information on alternatives before any final decision is reached on the proposed North/South interconnector, such as a new power station and greater interconnection with Great Britain.

**(AQW 6901/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Approval of investment by NIE in North South interconnection as part of the programme to upgrade the Northern Ireland grid system is the responsibility of the Utility Regulator, in keeping with its statutory and energy policy objectives. Economic regulation aims to achieve a balance between the viability of the required project for the company and its shareholders and ensuring value for money for consumers.

The Regulator when approving investment to upgrade the grid has and will consult interested parties.

### **Proposed North/South Interconnector**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the dominance of Republic of Ireland state owned energy businesses in the Northern Ireland market; and the impact that a second North/South interconnector will have on competition in the energy market.

**(AQW 6902/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Single Electricity Market uses market mitigation measures to monitor and address the effect of market dominance by any commercial operator. The SEM Committee recently published a draft decision paper on an external assessment of market power and liquidity in the SEM. This found that these measures are effective in ensuring competitive bids by generators trading in the market.

The extra capacity of a second North South interconnector will facilitate increased competition from the most efficient plants in the market.

### **Switching Electricity Suppliers**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the maximum number of consumers that are able to change electricity supplier on an annual basis.

**(AQW 6954/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The current electricity customer switching system can facilitate up to 120,000 switches within a 12 month period. An unconstrained switching system is expected to go live in May 2012.

### **Switching Electricity Suppliers**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what targets are in place with regard to the number of consumers switching electricity suppliers.

**(AQW 6957/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** I have not set targets relating to the number of consumers switching electricity supplier.

My Department and the Utility Regulator continue to work to create competitive energy market conditions that offer consumers a choice of electricity supplier. In addition, work is underway to improve the information available to consumers so that they can make informed decisions in relation to their electricity supplier and to enhance the current electricity switching arrangements to ensure that customers can switch supplier within three weeks of request, in line with EU and domestic legislation. Ultimately the choice to switch energy provider is at the discretion of the consumer.

## Switching Electricity Suppliers

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps her Department (i) has taken; and (ii) plans to take to encourage and support consumers in changing electricity suppliers.  
**(AQW 6960/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My officials continue to engage with the Utility Regulator and energy companies to encourage new entrants into the Northern Ireland electricity supply market, and to ensure there are no barriers to customer switching.

The EU Third Package of energy legislation contains obligations to enhance consumer information and protection, and to ensure energy companies facilitate switching within three weeks of request. My Department has made legislation requiring the Utility Regulator to implement this obligation via licence conditions. The Utility Regulator, in consultation with the industry, is developing the necessary conditions to give effect to these and other Directive requirements.

## Northern Ireland Electricity Companies

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she expects that Northern Ireland electricity companies will follow the lead of companies on the mainland in reducing consumer prices in response to falling fuel costs.  
**(AQW 7004/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** I understand that the Utility Regulator monitors wholesale and retail energy prices on an ongoing basis and is keeping the matter under review. If wholesale energy costs continue to fall, this will be reflected in the electricity bills of Northern Ireland consumers in due course.

## Proposed North/South Interconnector

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, if the new north/south interconnector proceeds, (i) whether it will be put out to tender so that an organisation other than the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) could build and operate it in competition with the existing interconnector, or whether it is assumed that ESB will build and operate it; (ii) if so, whether it will be built as a merchant plant operating in the market at its own risk, or on the basis of a guaranteed regulated income; and (iii) for her assessment of these options for the benefit of consumers in Northern Ireland.  
**(AQW 7008/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Utility Regulator has yet to make a decision on the method of procurement to be used under European procurement law. The interconnector would be regulated as part of the Northern Ireland transmission system and operated by SONI, the transmission system operator for Northern Ireland.

The Utility Regulator has a duty to ensure that its decisions ensure value for money and protect customers.

## Opportunities for Individuals to Generate Energy

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the companies which currently offer opportunities for individuals to generate energy via (i) wind turbines; (ii) solar panels; (iii) air source heat pumps; and (iv) ground source heat pumps.  
**(AQW 7030/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** DETI does not hold details of companies that offer opportunities for individuals to generate energy. However any individual installing microgeneration onshore wind turbines or solar photovoltaic (up to 50kW installed capacity) must use the services of a Microgeneration Certification Scheme approved equipment installer in order to become accredited under the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation.

Domestic renewable heat technologies, including air source and ground source heat pumps, will also be required to be certified under MCS and installed by MCS accredited installers in order to receive support under the proposed Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive.



The Microgeneration Certification Scheme website ([www.microgenerationcertification.org](http://www.microgenerationcertification.org)) details registered installers for these technologies, as well as others, for Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

### **Grants for Individuals to Generate Energy**

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the financial incentives or grants that are available for individuals to generate energy via (i) wind turbines; (ii) solar panels; (iii) air source heat pumps; and (iv) ground source heat pumps.

**(AQW 7031/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Wind turbines and solar photovoltaic panels are incentivised by the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation which provides a revenue stream for the renewable electricity generated in the form of Renewables Obligation Certificates. There are no grants available for the generation of renewable electricity.

DETI recently consulted on proposals to provide financial support for a range of renewable heat installations, including solar thermal panels, air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps. It is proposed that these technologies should be supported under a future Renewable Heat Incentive scheme for Northern Ireland and through grant payments for domestic customers known as Renewable Heat Premium Payments. The proposed level of support for these technologies can be found in the consultation paper on the DETI website. The Department is currently carrying out further analysis on the proposed scheme in advance of finalising levels of support. An announcement will be made in due course.

### **Introduction of Social Tariffs**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 3412/11-15, to outline her Department's intentions to introduce a social tariff; and whether she will bring forward a paper on this issue to the Executive.

**(AQW 7038/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** I am already on record as stating that I have no plans to introduce a social tariff at this time and as such will not be bringing forward any paper on the issue to the Executive.

### **Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 6012/11-15, when the further energy efficiency measure will be in place; and to outline the benefits of this measure to non-vulnerable households.

**(AQW 7054/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Department can give no commitments as to timescale or form of a measure which remains policy under development and which will require the approval of the Executive, full consultation and subsequent legislation.

### **Economic Activity in Derry**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 5185/11-15, what initiatives and projects she has introduced in the last three years to increase economic activity in Derry.

**(AQW 7055/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Over the last three years, my Department in conjunction with Invest NI has issued circa 500 offers of assistance to companies within the Londonderry City Council area, generating over £100 million of investment and promoting almost 900 new jobs. During this time some 474 new business starts were also created in the area and Invest NI has hosted some 30 visits to the Londonderry City Council area by potential inward investors.

Invest NI's North West Regional Office was actively involved in the Sector Working Groups which have been set up to develop the Regeneration Plan ("One Plan") for the City. The plan was launched in 2011

after a two year engagement process. Invest NI also continues to work closely with Londonderry City Council and other stakeholders to maximise opportunities for economic growth. This currently includes two significant economic development projects, one tailored to exploit and maximise the opportunities that the UK City of Culture status offers for local businesses, and the second targeted at Growing the Digital Economy. Both are considered catalyst actions if Londonderry is to gain the economic benefits targeted in the "One Plan".

The Londonderry Stakeholder Forum was set up by Invest NI in October 2010 as a means of ensuring closer working relationships between the key stakeholders in economic development in the City. Comprising representatives from amongst others, Council, Chamber, Ilex, DSD, DEL and the University, the forum meets regularly to discuss current activities and ideas for increasing economic activity, aligned to the regeneration plan, and local economic development in general. At present the forum is working on a sales proposition for the city as well as scoping projects targeted at enhancing the social economy.

Of course, the last three years has seen our local business base subjected to the full impact of the economic downturn and, in an attempt to alleviate this, we have been taking various proactive steps to support our local business base.

As a direct response to the downturn, I launched "The Jobs Fund" in April 2011 with a ring-fenced £19m budget to support business owners to create new, sustainable jobs that will tackle our current levels of unemployment. To date, the uptake in Londonderry has been most encouraging with nine projects approved and a further two in negotiation. Collectively these projects will create 143 new jobs with 63 already created. This includes recently announced job creation projects for One Stop Data (24 jobs), Axa Insurance (13 jobs) and Fresh Food Kitchens (5 jobs).

The Jobs Fund, through its Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) Business Start grant, has also issued offers of support to 95 individuals to start new businesses in Londonderry. While many of these businesses are still at a very early stage, this support has already led directly to the creation of 37 new jobs. In addition, a further 18 new, young entrepreneurs aged 16-24 have been offered support through the NEET Business Start Grant (aimed at young people Not in Employment, Education or Training). The Jobs Fund has also supported three social enterprises in Londonderry which will create a further nine new jobs.

As you can see from the above, my Department and Invest NI is continuing to seek to maximise economic development opportunities in both Londonderry and the North West region as a whole and you can be assured that we will continue to help companies in the city cope with the effects of the downturn and build for the future opportunities that City of Culture status will provide.

### **Energy Efficiency Directive**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration his Department has given to developing further policy on energy efficient measures to comply with the potential targets under the proposed new Energy Efficiency Directive.

**(AQW 7067/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department is working closely with the Department of Social Development, which has statutory responsibility for domestic energy efficiency, and with other Northern Ireland departments, to develop further policy measures to comply with potential targets under the proposed new Energy Efficiency Directive.

### **Regulation of the Home Heating Oil Industry**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with her Executive colleagues regarding regulation of the home heating oil industry; and whether she has any plans to regulate this industry.

**(AQW 7071/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** I have no plans to extend the powers of the independent regulator.

The Office of Fair Trading report published on 18 October 2011, on the competitiveness of the UK energy market for customers not connected to the gas grid, did not see any justification for price regulation in Great Britain or Northern Ireland on competition grounds. It reported that retail and wholesale heating oil prices in recent years had been lower in Northern Ireland than other parts of the UK.

### InvestNI Land Bank in the Upper Bann Constituency

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the current status of the InvestNI Land Bank in the Upper Bann constituency, including any reserves, the number of sites and their value.

**(AQW 7079/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Invest NI's land is held in support of economic development projects brought forward by qualifying businesses with an approved business case and immediate property need.

Within the Upper Bann Constituency the agency holds 332 acres in 6 locations across Lurgan, Portadown, Craigavon and Banbridge. Whilst a significant proportion of this has been developed and is occupied by businesses there remain circa 176 acres available. At 31st March 2011 this land was valued, by DFP Land & Property Services, at approximately £11.3 million.

Invest NI employs a long term strategy in respect of its land holding and does not hold land in reserve.

The table attached at Annex A provides information in respect of Invest NI's land holding, the amount of available land and its valuation broken down at each location.

#### ANNEX A

Location	Town	Land Holding (Acres)*	Land Availability (Acres)	Valuation (£) as at 31 March 2011**
Mandeville	Craigavon	99.00	95.18	4,600,000
Charlestown Road	Portadown	60.16	22.30	2,845,000
Halfpenny Valley	Lurgan	60.37	44.70	2,312,500
Craigavon Food Park	Portadown	43.36	13.00	1,490,000
Silverwood	Lurgan	44.12	0.50	65,000
Scarva Road	Banbridge	25.13	0	N/A
<b>Total</b>		<b>332.14</b>	<b>175.68</b>	<b>£11,312,500</b>

\* Figures are correct as at 31st December 2011

\*\* An asset valuation exercise on all Invest NI property is undertaken by DFP Land and Property Services (LPS) on an annual basis. Indicative per acre valuations are also undertaken by LPS which reflect the restrictive covenants contained within the 999 year lease offered by Invest NI.

### Trade Union Duties

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in her Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.

**(AQW 7091/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:**

- (i) & (ii) No records of facility time usage are held in the Department or its arm's-length bodies for 2000/01 or 2005/06.
- (iii) During 2010/11 our records indicate that a total of 6 days\* of facility time (full-time equivalent of 0.02) were spent on trade union duties on behalf of NIPSA.

\* facility time occurrences of less than half a day are normally not recorded.

**Unspent Funds by InvestNI**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with the Minister of the Environment regarding the planning issues that contributed to the return of over £21 million in unspent funds by InvestNI.

**(AQW 7095/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** There were no planning issues which contributed to the return of funds by Invest NI.

**Entrepreneurship Programmes by InvestNI**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given the ongoing expenditure on the advertising of entrepreneurship programmes by InvestNI, which organisation is currently entitled to, and in a position to deliver these programmes during the period January to March 2012.

**(AQW 7096/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Invest NI is not currently advertising a business start programme. Invest NI's Go For It advertising campaign is a generic message to encourage individuals to consider self employment and entrepreneurship. Due to the current legal action by Enterprise Northern Ireland, Invest NI is prevented from delivering a business start programme. Other organisations wishing to deliver such programmes should consider whether they need to take legal advice in relation to this.

**Legislative Proposals**

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

**(AQW 7101/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** I have submitted my proposals for primary legislation to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

**Legislation to Provide for an Oil Industry Regulator**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline her plans to introduce legislation to provide for an oil industry regulator.

**(AQW 7109/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Member is referred to the answer provided in AQW No. 3734/11-15.

**Foreign Representation by InvestNI**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 6313/11-15, what is the cost of the current level of foreign representation by InvestNI; and what performance metrics and timescales have been put in place to determine the success of this representation.

**(AQW 7116/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The current level of export-focused foreign representation by Invest NI costs £1,074,200 per annum.

Programme for Government 2011-15 has tasked Invest NI with increasing the value of manufacturing exports by 15%.

### **Independent Review of Economic Policy**

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the finding in the Independent Review of Economic Policy, that only 82 percent of promoted jobs are actually created, is still regarded as an accurate benchmark; and, if not, what is the reliable percentage.

**(AQW 7121/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The 82% finding in the Independent Review of Economic Policy was the result of a one-off exercise using point-in-time data, which was considered reliable at that time. Unfortunately, system constraints mean that the provision of precise point-in-time job creation data to answer Assembly Questions is only possible following an extensive exercise which would involve disproportionate cost. In addition, by its nature 'point in time' job creation information is complex and open to misinterpretation without an in-depth understanding of the job creation profile of the individual projects that have been supported during the time period in question.

Importantly not all grant offered by Invest NI is paid out to assisted businesses. Each project that is offered assistance by Invest NI is intensively monitored to ensure financial assistance is only paid out to companies based on actual jobs created within the control period specified in the Letter of Offer. In addition, if the original number of jobs promised by a project fail to be completely implemented, then Invest NI is free to consider its options with regards to seeking clawback of any assistance paid.

The important constraint to be borne in mind when analyzing job creation is the job creation profile of any given project, i.e. any supported project will have a lead time between the assistance being granted, to the project's full implementation and all jobs being created. For example, a project which is offered assistance in 2011 to create 300 jobs may not actually have created all of these jobs for up to five years depending on the company's implementation plan. This is further complicated by the fact that at present, Invest NI has some 1,500 employment related live Letters of Offer in process, each of which has its own implementation plan, job creation profile, delivery date and control period. This underlines the complexity of providing accurate and specific figures on actual jobs created at any given period in time.

However, Invest NI has recently conducted a similar exercise to that undertaken for IREP for the NI Audit Office, the results of which will be published in their forthcoming review. Invest NI is also developing systems in order to make such information more readily available in future, but even when these systems are put in place, difficulties will remain with interpreting such data, given the intricacies and complexities discussed above.

### **Areas Licensed for Gas Exploration in Co. Fermanagh**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether any of the areas licensed for gas exploration in Co. Fermanagh have been identified as having a high level of radon gas.

**(AQW 7157/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** A map of estimated in-house radon levels in Co Fermanagh may be seen on page 15 of the radon report published on the DoE website:

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/pollution-home/radiation/radon.htm>

Across the southeastern half of the area licensed for gas exploration less than 1% of homes are estimated to be above the Radon Action Level.

Higher levels are predicted in that part of the licence area northwest of a line between Enniskillen and Belcoo. Recent analysis by British Geological Survey indicates that in approximately 10% of this part of the licence area between 10 and 30% of homes may have radon levels exceeding the Action Level. These higher radon levels are associated with underlying limestone.

The target of shale-gas exploration is the Bundoran shale. Across almost all the area where this formation comes to the ground surface, to the west, southwest and southeast of Enniskillen, less than one percent of homes are expected to have radon levels exceeding the Action Level. An airborne geophysical survey flown over all Northern Ireland in 2005/6 did not indicate abnormal levels of radioactivity arising from the Bundoran shale.

The potential for radon occurring in domestic gas supplies sourced from shale is not thought to be significantly more than in domestic gas sourced from conventional reservoirs. The Health Protection Agency estimates that natural gas used for cooking contributes only about 0.2% of the average indoor radon level; see [http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb\\_C/1194947373777](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947373777) .

### **Areas Licensed for Gas Exploration in Co. Fermanagh**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the (i) size; and (ii) percentage of the area which is licensed for gas exploration in Co. Fermanagh which is also designated as an Area of Special Scientific Interest.

**(AQW 7158/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:**

- (i) The area designated as Areas of Special Scientific Interest which lies within the petroleum licence in Co. Fermanagh is 74.1 square kilometres.
- (ii) This represents 9.9% of the area licensed for petroleum exploration in Co. Fermanagh.

### **Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how she is using EU policies, networks and programmes to achieve the key objective to establish a smart specialisation platform, as detailed in 'Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12'.

**(AQW 7184/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The European Commission is encouraging Member States and regions to develop Smart Specialisation Strategies in order to meet the "Europe 2020" objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Smart Specialisation Strategies are designed to help regions identify and concentrate resources on key priority areas; increase cooperation at a local, national, EU and international level; and ensure more effective use of European funding.

The draft economic strategy and the MATRIX Panel reports have already identified our capabilities and opportunities for growth in key market areas and therefore provide a strong foundation for developing a Smart Specialisation Strategy. At a European level we are co-operating with the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), (a network of more than 90 EU regions) to facilitate the development of a smart specialisation strategy for Northern Ireland.

As part of that process we hosted with ERRIN and the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive a workshop on Smart Specialisation in Brussels at which 130 delegates from across Europe attended.

My Department has also recently appointed a smart specialisation co-ordinator to co-ordinate and develop Northern Ireland's smart specialisation strategy.

### **Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how she is using EU policies, networks and programmes to achieve the key objective to improve the business environment, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, to promote enterprise, as detailed in 'Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12'.

**(AQW 7185/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department contributes to the delivery of three of the four Thematic Priorities identified in “Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12”. Specific EU related activities undertaken over the period, aimed at supporting SMEs, include:

- Encouraging smaller companies to engage more fully with the 7th Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities. This has involved supporting the sector to prepare applications and find partners. By 31 October 2011, Northern Ireland based SMEs had secured €3.3m from this source.
- Engaging directly with EU counterparts through membership of networks such as the “European Regions Research and Innovation Network” (ERRIN) which facilitates knowledge exchange, joint action and project partnerships between its members with the aim of strengthening their research and innovation capacities.
- Participating in and hosting EU workshops to exchange best practice and identify learning/funding opportunities for Northern Ireland in areas such as Smart Specialisation and Horizon 2020.
- Imminent appointment of additional staff resource based in Brussels, to engage directly with the EU institutions on this agenda and identify new funding opportunities for NI.

DETI continues to manage drawdown of the €306 million European Regional Development funds available to NI through the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme, 2007-2013. NI SMEs have been assisted through a range of initiatives funded from this source including New Grant for R&D, proof of concept activity, business advice services and product and process development schemes.

### **Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how she is using EU policies, networks and programmes to achieve the key objective to facilitate access to European funding, including structural funds, rural development funds and research and development framework programmes, to support innovation, as detailed in ‘Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12’.  
**(AQW 7186/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department contributes to the delivery of three of the four Thematic Priorities identified in “Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12”. Specific activities undertaken over the period, aimed at supporting innovation, include:

- Encouraging companies and research bodies to engage more fully with the 7th Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities. This has involved supporting the SME sector, Universities and other research bodies to prepare applications and find partners. In the period 31 October 2010 to 31 October 2011, Northern Ireland based researchers (in private companies, academia and other) secured €11.54m from this source.
- Engaging directly with EU counterparts through membership of networks such as the “European Regions Research and Innovation Network” (ERRIN) which facilitates knowledge exchange, joint action and project partnerships between its members with the aim of strengthening their research and innovation capacities.
- Participating in and hosting EU workshops to exchange best practice and identify learning/funding opportunities for Northern Ireland in areas such as Smart Specialisation and Horizon 2020.
- Imminent appointment of additional staff resource based in Brussels, to engage directly with the EU institutions on this agenda and identify new funding opportunities for NI.

DETI continues to manage drawdown of the €306 million European Regional Development funds available to NI through the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme, 2007-2013. €160m of this is specifically earmarked for R&D and innovation support activities such as New Grant for R&D, R&D Centres of Excellence and Innovation Advisers. My officials are also involved in early discussions with DFP on the Commission’s proposals for the 2014-2020 Structural Funds period and support for innovation remains a key focus within these.

## Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what progress has been made on the key objective to encourage greater participation in the Framework Programme, as detailed in 'Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12'.

**(AQW 7187/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) is the EU's main instrument for funding research in Europe. The programme runs from 2007 to 2013 and has a budget of €50 billion. Up to 31 October 2011 €36.5million has been drawn down by Northern Ireland organisations. The target is to draw down €50 million by 2013.

DETI through Invest NI and Intertrade Ireland, promotes the funding opportunities afforded by the EU Framework Programme. These are promoted through conferences, tailored workshops with UK National Contact Points, dissemination of work programmes through the Enterprise Europe Network and general advice to researchers. Financial support is also available to help researchers develop FP7 proposals. Invest NI also provides a Brussels-based service to facilitate closer engagement with the European Commission Officials.

Work is also ongoing to improve the support mechanisms available to organisations who wish to engage in the Framework Programme. As part of this, Invest NI have recently launched a pilot FP7 Mentoring programme to provide support to academic researchers to develop FP7 applications.

## Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what progress has been made on the key objective to encourage universities, the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, the public and private health and life sciences sectors to increase the number of applications to the Framework Programme, as detailed in 'Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12'.

**(AQW 7188/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) is the EU's main instrument for funding research in Europe. The programme runs from 2007 to 2013 and has a budget of €50 billion. Up to 31 October 2011 €36.5million has been drawn down by Northern Ireland organisations. The target is to draw down €50 million by 2013.

DETI through Invest NI and Intertrade Ireland, promotes the funding opportunities afforded by the EU Framework Programme through a variety of ways. These include conferences, tailored workshops with UK National Contact Points, dissemination of work programmes through the Enterprise Europe Network and general advice with researchers. Financial support is also available to help all researchers develop FP7 proposals. Invest NI also provides a Brussels-based service to facilitate closer engagement with the European Commission Officials.

To encourage University engagement on Framework, Invest NI have recently launched a pilot FP7 Mentoring programme to provide support to academic researchers to develop FP7 applications.

The Department has been working with other departments, including DARD to develop measures to specifically support increased AFBI engagement on the Framework Programme.

Similarly in relation to the life and health sciences sector, Invest NI plan to invest £5M over a 5 year period into the Connected Health Innovation Centre at Jordanstown. As part of this the centre will seek research funding from European and International funding bodies.

## Petroleum Licences for Hydraulic Fracturing

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why the granting of petroleum licences for hydraulic fracturing operations was not subject to a strategic environmental assessment,



when the identification of marine renewable generation zones has been subject to the strategic environmental assessment process.

**(AQW 7217/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 sets out the requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessments to be carried out on plans or programmes within Northern Ireland of which the first formal preparatory act is on or after 21st July 2004, or where the first formal preparatory act is before 21st July 2004 but it has not been adopted or submitted to the legislative procedure for adoption before 22nd July 2006.

Petroleum licensing onshore Northern Ireland is a plan or programme for energy which was adopted before 21st July 2004 and, therefore, does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment to be undertaken on it.

The Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan 2009- 2020 is a plan or programme for energy of which the first formal preparatory act was on or after 21st July 2004 and, therefore, was subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

### **Signature Project Formula for Supporting Tourism Initiatives**

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans there are to review the Signature Project formula for supporting tourism initiatives; and what consideration she has given to adding Lough Neagh to the Signature Projects.

**(AQW 7221/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Strategic Framework for Action 2004-2008 identified five Signature Projects as the key drivers for tourism within Northern Ireland.

The DETI draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 has identified nine key tourism destinations. One of these destinations is Lough Neagh.

My department and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board continue to engage in consultations with key stakeholders including local authorities and the Lough Neagh Partnership with a view to further developing the area as a tourism destination.

### **Development of Geothermal Energy**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what work has been carried out on the development of geothermal energy in (i) Ballymena; (ii) Ballymoney; and (iii) Ballycastle.

**(AQW 7229/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** As per my response to AQWs 5716/11-15 and 5717/11/15, my Department is committed to development of a range of renewable energy technologies in order to support ambitious targets of 40% renewable electricity and 10% renewable heat by 2020. In addition, I am aware of the potential geothermal energy could play in the future energy mix.

Deep geothermal energy is eligible for incentives in the form of Renewable Obligation Certificates for renewable electricity generation. My Department is also assessing how renewable heat from deep geothermal resource could be incentivised.

In order to assess the potential for geothermal energy in Northern Ireland, the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) co-ordinated a research programme from 2008-2011, supported by the Innovation Fund, into the geological characterisation of potential deep geothermal energy targets in the Lough Neagh and Larne sedimentary basins, and the Mourne Mountains granites. The data acquired provides new insight into the deep geothermal aquifer potential of the northeast of Northern Ireland, including the areas near Ballymena, Ballymoney and Ballycastle.

Further to this, GSNI will continue to interpret this data as part of its work programme and as a partner in the €850,000 IRETherm research project into the deep geothermal resource potential of the island of Ireland. This project, funded by Science Foundation Ireland and led by the Dublin Institute of

Advanced Studies, runs from 2011-2015 and includes the development of 'state of the art' modelling techniques with which to interpret the new Northern Ireland datasets and to further assess the potential of selected resource areas such as the Rathlin (Ballymoney and Ballycastle) and the Lough Neagh (Antrim and Ballymena) sedimentary basins.

In addition, my Department worked with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) in GB during the roll-out of funding for towns and communities wishing to avail of capital support through the Low Carbon Communities Challenge (LCCC). In February 2010, as a result of DETI's work, two Northern Ireland applicants were successful in gaining funding of up to £500,000 for renewable energy projects, one of which was Ballymena Borough Council. The Ballymena proposal was a two phase project, with the first phase being a biomass district heating scheme, it was proposed that a geothermal scheme would be developed as part of phase 2. Unfortunately, the funding secured for this scheme by Ballymena Council was returned to DECC unspent.

Finally, since 2009 funding has been available from DECC, specifically for deep geothermal installations, under the UK wide Deep Geothermal Challenge Fund. My Department is not aware of any Northern Ireland applicants to this scheme.

## Credit Unions

**Mr Hilditch** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why under the Financial Services Authority's proposed regulations, Credit Unions will not be able to invest for more than twelve months after 2013.

**(AQW 7280/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Investment safety and liquidity are the primary concerns underpinning the Financial Services Authority's (FSA) proposed twelve-month limit on the investment period for Credit Unions from 1 April 2013.

Following the joint HM Treasury and FSA consultation exercise, I wrote to the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (FST) setting out a number of concerns with the proposals within the document; one of these related to the twelve month limit on investment periods for those credit unions which will transfer as 'version 1' on 31 March 2012 and which will comprise the majority of transferees. The letter was also copied to the Chief Executive of the Financial Service Authority for his observations. As a result of my intervention, FSA announced a policy change in respect of several issues, including the one year transitional easement for investment limits following the transfer date of 31 March 2012.

However, I am aware, from representations by trade bodies as well as correspondence received from individual credit unions, that there is considerable disappointment that the policy easement remains as an interim, transitional measure. In view of this, I have again written to the FST and the FSA, outlining the detrimental effect of this policy on credit unions here and requested that the issue be looked at again.

## Telecommunication Operators

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the operational competency of the telecommunication operators in Northern Ireland, in comparison with their counterparts in the rest of the United Kingdom.

**(AQW 7282/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** My Department has no information and no remit to make an assessment of this nature. The UK telecommunications market is privatised and regulated independently of Government and on a national basis by OFCOM. Part of the OFCOM remit is to ensure that regulation delivers a competitive and efficient telecommunications marketplace.

Where my Department has contracts with telecommunications operators, performance measures have been put in place as part of the governance arrangements.

## Telecommunication Services

**Mr Swann** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she is aware of telecommunication services, or additional support mechanisms or services, that are available to users in other parts of the United Kingdom but are not available to Northern Ireland users.

**(AQW 7283/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** In Northern Ireland telecommunications services are delivered using a range of platforms including fibre, radio and mobile. The market has evolved through a combination of funding provided by Government to stimulate competition and emergence of new services and investments by network operators.

My Department takes note of the investments made by other nations and regions of the UK but I have no detailed information on the range of services such investments support and these will often be specific to the needs of such areas. As the UK telecommunications market is privatised, it is also largely a matter of choice for network operators as to where they make investments and the range of services they offer.

In some respects, other regions of the UK are currently making investments in order to catch up with the services that have been made available in Northern Ireland through DETI's strategic initiatives, particularly with regard to fibred broadband services.

## Tamboran Resources

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) for an update on the progress of the work programme of Tamboran Resources; and (ii) whether the Health and Safety Executive has received any notification of its intention to move to the next stage of operations.

**(AQW 7359/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:**

- (i) Tamboran Resources Pty Ltd. is progressing in accordance with the work programme included in petroleum licence PL2/10, available for download at [www.detini.gov.uk/deti-energy-index/minerals-and-petroleum/petroleum\\_licensing\\_2.htm](http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-energy-index/minerals-and-petroleum/petroleum_licensing_2.htm). The company issued a press release on 1st February 2012 announcing the completion of the initial analysis of the feasibility of shale gas exploration in Northern Ireland. Further information about the work programme for Years 1 – 3 of petroleum licence PL2/10 is given in the answer to AQW7343/11-15.
- (ii) The Health and Safety Executive has not received any notification of the company's intention to move to the next stage of operations.

## Home Heating Oil Customers

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in light of the assertion by the Office of Fair Trading that it is "an anomaly of the Northern Ireland market that the most common household heating fuel, heating oil, is unregulated", whether her Department intends to explore a form of regulation that would benefit home heating oil customers.

**(AQW 7439/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** As stated in my earlier response to the Member in AQW 5639/11-15, I have no plans to extend the powers of the independent regulator to cover the NI home heating oil sector.

I would also draw his attention to the remainder of paragraph 4.142 in the Office of Fair Trading report from which he quotes, as I believe this provides the full context for the comment. It reads: "We also recognise that regulation allows for other interventions, not just price control. For example initiatives to address fuel poverty or raise standards of conduct with respect to doorstep sales can be implemented by way of licence conditions. However, [all] these issues do not of themselves amount to a case for sector-specific regulation. Consumer law offers significant protection from unfair trading – we discuss this in the next section."

The OFT study did not find evidence of either market power or coordination problems, with a choice of supplier generally available to consumers, low barriers to market entry, and no apparent evidence of collusion. They believe that regulation would not reduce retail prices.

### **Economy: Welfare Reform**

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact of Welfare Reform on the economy.

**(AQO 1231/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** Clearly a sustainable welfare system is important to the stability of the UK economy. Nationally, and locally, it is also important that the reforms incentivise individuals to join the active labour market by ensuring that work pays. At the same time it is important that we retain vital support mechanisms to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

There are understandable concerns about any reforms to welfare – but if we want people to be productive, and part of, rather than outside of the labour market, then we should also be concerned about tackling the barriers to work by helping people to move into work.

An Executive Sub-Committee, chaired by the Minister for Social Development has been established to support the Executive in understanding the implications, across the departments, of Welfare Reform and to assist with developing a response to mitigate any negative impact and achieve the long term benefits for the people of Northern Ireland.

### **Tourism Strategy**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment when she will publish the Tourism Strategy.

**(AQO 1232/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 is a key priority for DETI. It is at an advanced stage and is currently being revised in light of the downturn in global tourism over the last few years and to align it with the Economic Strategy. The ambitious high level goals for increasing visitor numbers and tourism revenue over the next decade remain unchanged. The Strategy aims to double the current contribution tourism makes to the Northern Ireland Economy to £1 billion and to increase visitor numbers from 3.2million to 4.5million by 2020. I aim to seek Executive approval for the Tourism Strategy in line with the timeframe for approval of the Economic Strategy and Programme for Government.

### **Northern Ireland Tourist Board: Financially Assisted Projects**

**Mr Humphrey** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the benefits of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board 'Financially Assisted Projects' to tourism and the wider economy.

**(AQO 1233/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** NITB directly funded 99 capital projects across Northern Ireland providing £60 million in financial assistance which levered an additional £90 million over the last three years. This huge investment provided confidence to the private sector and resulted in a total investment of over £300 million in tourism projects.

The visitor economy directly supports 5.6% of Northern Ireland's total workforce or 1 in 18 jobs and sustains 40,000 jobs. These people are employed in every constituency and at every skill level.

Investment in the infrastructure is the first step in building a long term sustainable tourism sector in Northern Ireland. To realise this investment the NI2012 Programme of events leading into UK City of Culture 2013 is planned to showcase and change global perceptions of Northern Ireland as a place not only to visit but to live, work, study and invest.

## Renewable Energy: Training and Qualifications

**Ms Ruane** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions her Department has had with the Department for Employment and Learning, to ensure that proper training and qualifications are available for people interested in working in the renewable energy sector.

**(AQO 1234/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** I chair the Sustainable Energy Inter-Departmental Working Group on which DEL is represented and the skills requirements of the renewable energy sector have been regularly discussed.

Invest NI works closely with DEL and was represented as a steering group member in a recently completed DEL study on skills in the renewable energy sector. The report which was launched in September 2011 has resulted in four of NI's Further Education colleges developing training solutions for the renewables sector.

As a result of this and other awareness raising activities there is ongoing communication between DEL and Invest NI on the skills required in the renewable energy sector and these discussions will continue as the sector's requirements evolve.

## Construction

**Mr Girvan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she has taken to address the impact of the economic downturn on the construction industry.

**(AQO 1235/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** The Economic Strategy recognises the importance of taking action to rebuild the local labour market in the aftermath of the recession and identifies a number of actions which will support the construction industry, particularly through the delivery of a number of key infrastructure projects.

Invest NI's primary focus for the sector is on assisting businesses that are targeting external markets. A key focus has been on major construction events or projects where there is still significant spend anticipated.

I recently visited Moore Concrete in Ballymena where I saw firsthand how a focus on innovation and export can help companies in the construction sector survive the downturn. In the last three years, Moore Concrete has benefited from a number of Invest Northern Ireland programmes which have helped it develop new products, improve operational efficiency, increase skills levels and target new markets. As a result, the company has strengthened its position in both local and export markets and is continuing to expand its product portfolio and target potential new customers.

On 17 January I had a very positive engagement with the all party working group on construction which focussed on how the construction industry can help deliver the Executive's objectives set out in the PfG and Economic Strategy.

The industry has identified 16 PfG commitments that they can assist the Executive in delivering and I will continue to work with my colleagues on the Executive Sub-committee on the Economy to ensure we collectively support the sector through the delivery of the PfG and Economic Strategy.

## Mobile Phone Coverage: West Tyrone

**Mr McElduff** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact that Ofcom's proposals on the 4G spectrum auction will have on mobile phone coverage in West Tyrone, if they are adopted.

**(AQO 1237/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** These proposals are currently the subject of a second OFCOM consultation exercise which closes on 22 March 2012. The consultation documentation extends to 700 pages. Coverage proposals are linked to the Mobile Infrastructure Project by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has set aside £150million to address mobile not-spots issues. My Department continues its engagement with

Broadband Delivery UK and OFCOM to raise issues and to understand the coverage implications for Northern Ireland. We will also respond to the OFCOM consultation in due course and I would encourage all those with an interest in this matter to make their own representations to OFCOM.

### **Ulster Bank: Job Losses**

**Mr Ó hÓisín** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has had any discussions with the Ulster Bank about the impending job losses in the company.

**(AQO 1238/11-15)**

**Mrs Foster:** A stable and competitive banking sector that meets the needs of businesses and individuals is vital for economic recovery in Northern Ireland. While I have no statutory control of the banking sector, we have met with the main banks in Northern Ireland, most recently in December 2011, to emphasise the importance of supporting business development and growth. I also spoke with a representative of the Ulster Bank on the evening the redundancy announcement was made.

In addition to the discussion with the Ulster Bank I am also intending to meet with a representative of the Irish Bank Officials' Association (IBOA) the Finance Union.

Both the Finance Minister and I will continue to liaise with the UK and Irish governments and the local banking sector where appropriate to ensure that any impact on Northern Ireland's banks is minimised, and that we continue to have a competitive banking sector.

## Department of the Environment

### **Local Council Staff: Redundancy or Retirement Packages**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of the Environment how many local council staff who have taken (i) redundancy packages; or (ii) retirement packages have been re-employed by a public body in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 5798/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment):**

- (i) One local council member of staff who had taken a redundancy package has been re-employed by the same council in the last three financial years.
- (ii) Three council staff who had taken retirement packages has been re-employed by their original council employer council in the last three financial years.

Please note that these figures refer to staff being re-employed by the same council as it is not possible to verify whether they have been re-employed by other public bodies.

### **Council Owned Commercial Leisure Facilities**

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the name of any council owned commercial leisure facility which has (i) operated at a loss; and the level of loss; and (ii) made a profit; and the level of profit, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 6073/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The name of each council run leisure facility and the level of profit and loss in the last three financial years are provided in the table below. The figures preceded by a minus sign are losses, while the others are profits.

Councils do not necessarily operate their leisure facilities on a commercial basis. Article 10 of the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, requires that each district council "... shall secure the provision for its area of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities..."

In practice, councils interpret the legislation to mean that they must operate the facilities to deliver affordable services which will maximise participation regardless of the public's socio-economic classification. Effectively, the consequence is that the facilities run almost exclusively at a loss.

The figures for Magherafelt District Council's Greenvale Leisure Centre are not provided at this point as their publication could be prejudicial to ongoing commercial negotiations in relation to the operation of the Centre. The figure will be supplied as soon as those restrictions are no longer relevant.

<b>Council Leisure Facility</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Antrim</b>				
Antrim Forum Leisure Centre	-1,688,591	-2,646,670	-1,706,560	-6,041,821
Allen Park Golf Centre	-323,410	-428,443	-276,372	-1,028,225
<b>Ards</b>				
Ards Leisure Centre	-1,014,979	-989,295	-1,046,474	-3,050,748
Comber Leisure Centre	-408,304	-377,523	-402,991	-1,188,818
Portaferry Sports Centre	-102,878	-111,337	-115,280	-329,495
Ballygowan Leisure Facility	-1,046	-921	-671	-2,638
Parkway, Comber	-2,953	-13,137	-5,762	-21,852
Dairy Hall, Newtownards	-2,370	5,792	3,435	6,857
Londonderry Park, Newtownards	-45,868	-44,148	-46,749	-136,765
Crommelin Park, Donaghadee	-627	-1,442	-5,676	-7,745
The Commons, Donaghadee	-24,722	-17,959	-23,006	-65,687
Northfield, Donaghadee	-56	-4,805	-4,103	-8,964
Newtownards Road, Donaghadee	-124	-249	0	-373
Abbey Road, Millisle	-2,297	-878	-1,892	-5,067
Ballywalter Leisure Facility	569	391	51	1,011
Ballyhalbert Leisure Facility	-1,200	-362	-426	-1,988
Harbour Road, Portavogie	-327	-1,019	-3,796	-5,142
Cloughey	-2,453	-1,018	-7,832	-11,303
Anne St, Portaferry	573	-283	-465	-175
Church Grove, Kircubbin	-2,933	-7,829	-3,008	-13,770
Islandview Rd, Greyabbey	-2,938	-1,029	26	-3,941
Castle Park, Portaferry	134	-1,158	-427	-1,451
Cloughey Rd, Portaferry	-1,839	-617	-1,369	-3,825
Cottown	11	0	-149	-138
West Winds, Newtownards	-2,316	-13,326	-4,856	-20,498
Cloughey Bowling Pavilion	-50,931	-54,842	-45,995	-151,768

<b>Council Leisure Facility</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
Moss Rd, Ballygowan	647	-723	1,263	1,187
Castle Place, Carrowdore	-3,142	-4,233	-4,212	-11,587
Glastry	1,545	1,442	-323	2,664
<b>Armagh</b>				
Orchard Leisure Centre	-891,113	-1,228,746	-1,665,258	-3,785,117
Tandragee Recreation Centre	-222,764	-236,918	-258,331	-718,013
Ardmore	-181,230	-79,082	-92,065	-352,377
Cathedral Road	-55,217	-40,003	-73,045	-168,265
Keady	-184,002	-216,590	-257,054	-657,646
Richhill	-137,555	-90,490	-210,888	-438,933
<b>Ballymena</b>				
Sentry Hill Sports Hall	-22,256	-35,531	-19,713	-77,500
Seven Towers Leisure Complex	-913,700	-1,218,825	-981,171	-3,113,696
Simpson & Wakehurst Playing Fields	-68,310	-83,962	-109,253	-261,525
Waveney Playing Fields	-16,083	-20,591	-19,062	-55,736
Smithfield Playing Fields	-23,816	-24,643	-26,686	-75,145
Showgrounds Complex	-472,473	-583,427	-470,014	-1,525,914
Ahoghill Playing Fields	-18,028	-18,853	-22,673	-59,554
Tober Pk/Cullybackey Playing Fields	-12,477	-13,240	-16,584	-42,301
Broughshane Playing Fields	-27,806	-26,946	-31,576	-86,328
Portglenone Playing Fields	-13,897	-14,831	-9,553	-38,281
Carnhill Play Area	-6,253	-1,840	-5,135	-13,228
Kells Playing Field	-9,552	-19,748	-20,463	-49,763
Ballee Playing Fields	-23,960	-24,487	-41,030	-89,477
Dunfane Playing Fields	-15,675	-41,000	-23,936	-80,611
Cargan Playing Fields	-445	-845	-1,517	-2,807
Ballykeel Playing Fields	-11,470	-17,882	-16,613	-45,965
Clough Playing Fields	-12,869	-8,827	-7,224	-28,920
Gracehill/Galgorm Playing Fields	-12,061	-17,092	-18,365	-47,518
Multi Use Games Area	-6,305	-30,244	-7,580	-44,129
Miscellaneous Play Areas	-160,524	-193,266	-209,378	-563,168



<b>Council Leisure Facility</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
George V Park	-12,337	-19,743	-15,841	-47,921
Sentry Hill Park	-9,079	-11,691	-11,094	-31,864
People's Park	-254,981	-211,482	-217,246	-683,709
Moat Park	-6,126	-1,368	-6,273	-13,767
ECOS Grounds	-31,528	-14,963	-8,725	-55,216
Ballymena North	-12,728	-9,447	-27,037	-49,212
<b>Ballymoney</b>				
Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre	-657,842	-711,678	-765,820	-2,135,340
Riada Stadium	-53,332	-76,428	-78,482	-208,242
Megaw Playing Fields	-20,734	-24,087	-17,795	-62,616
Rasharkin Playing Fields	-18,131	-10,850	-9,008	-37,989
Balnamore Playing Fields	-17,022	-17,828	-19,390	-54,240
Dunloy Playing Fields	-21,896	-16,329	-15,358	-53,583
Dervock Playing Fields	-26,125	-27,593	-25,052	-78,770
Dunaghy Playing Fields	-16,360	-16,473	-17,166	-49,999
Drumaheglis Marina & Caravan Pk	-16,775	-22,304	-19,976	-59,055
<b>Banbridge</b>				
Banbridge Leisure Facility	-1,244,388	-715,777	-1,095,068	-3,055,233
Dromore Leisure Facility	-136,927	-152,089	-142,907	-431,923
Rathfriland Leisure Facility	-103,917	-90,066	-84,509	-278,492
<b>Belfast</b>				
Andersonstown Leisure Centre	-783,739	-912,752	-901,626	-2,598,117
Avoniel Leisure Centre	-992,691	-993,739	-1,021,236	-3,007,666
Shankill Leisure Centre	-997,422	-1,058,985	-1,106,150	-3,162,557
Ballysillan Leisure Centre	-866,856	-864,044	-902,975	-2,633,875
Grove Leisure Centre	-163,012	-32,244	-8,721	-203,977
Olympia Leisure Centre	-809,288	-828,338	-841,937	-2,479,563
Whiterock Leisure Centre	-827,215	-931,556	-970,417	-2,729,188
Falls Swimming Centre	-855,002	-941,542	-908,070	-2,704,614
Loughside RC	-126,967	-127,862	-153,917	-408,746
O Zone Tennis Courts Complex	-403,639	-356,474	-397,857	-1,157,970
Templemore Swim Centre	-164,864	-148,437	-175,892	-489,193

<b>Council Leisure Facility</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
Grove Wellbeing Centre	-1,050,543	-972,927	-1,041,588	-3,065,058
<b>Carrickfergus</b>				
Carrickfergus Leisure Centre	-1,662,161	-1,291,067	-1,444,465	-4,397,693
Carrickfergus Marina	-213,145	-293,873	-316,624	-823,642
Bentra Golf Course	-110,905	-141,773	-108,893	-361,571
Woodburn Playing Fields	-21,182	-6,555	-13,185	-40,922
Beltoy Playing Fields	-20,724	-20,189	-22,840	-63,753
Whitehead Recreation Centre	-16,397	-28,779	-29,568	-74,744
Greenisland Recreation Centre	-25,510	-30,325	1,369	-54,466
Barnfield Artificial Pitch	16,375	22,791	17,193	56,359
<b>Castlereagh</b>				
Dundonald International Ice Bowl	-209,353	-157,284	-318,377	-685,014
Belvoir Centre	-128,716	-146,216	-135,271	-410,203
Robinson Centre	-538,562	-482,012	-386,700	-1,407,274
Lough Moss Centre	-268,419	-296,288	-305,369	-870,076
Castlereagh Golf Club	-524,279	-411,943	-385,531	-1,321,753
<b>Coleraine</b>				
Coleraine Leisure Centre	-742,756	-654,013	-647,913	-2,044,682
Jim Watt Sports Hall, Garvagh	0	0	-38,589	-38,589
Kilrea Sports Complex	-110,509	-114,547	-119,039	-344,095
Anderson Park, Coleraine	-11,142	-11,838	-10,802	-33,782
Rugby Ave Playing Fields, Coleraine	-62,991	-52,998	-47,741	-163,730
Portrush Recreation Grounds	-50,870	-27,868	-38,714	-117,452
Castlerock Recreation Grounds	-28,259	-42,088	-60,334	-130,681
The Warren, Portstewart	-44,535	-47,603	-44,502	-136,640
Brook Street Bowling, Coleraine	-18,645	-16,175	-20,463	-55,283
Watersports Centre, Portrush	-13,444	-13,694	-15,394	-42,532
Ballyreagh Golf Course	10,682	36,038	31,668	78,388
<b>Cookstown</b>				
Cookstown Leisure Centre	-1,568,006	-1,429,930	-1,467,344	-4,465,280

<b>Council Leisure Facility</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Craigavon</b>				
Waves Leisure Complex	-521,603	-481,627	-509,114	-1,512,344
Cascades Leisure Complex	-753,824	-669,865	-693,010	-2,116,699
Craigavon Leisure Centre	-682,909	-672,018	-648,263	-2,003,190
Craigavon Golf & Ski Centre	-293,488	-177,088	-192,440	-663,016
Watersports Centre	-139,234	-210,426	-181,601	-531,261
Kinnego Marina	-199,392	-188,033	-151,910	-539,335
<b>Derry</b>				
Brandywell Stadium	-271,567	-326,636	-319,940	-918,143
Creggan Synthetic Pitch	-113,754	-115,982	-135,555	-365,291
Templemore Sports Complex	-997,050	-1,180,265	-1,374,995	-3,552,310
Brooke Park Leisure Centre	-276,113	-243,518	-252,234	-771,865
Derry City Baths	-381,878	-361,111	-358,896	-1,101,885
Brandywell Sports Centre	-46,295	-54,372	-70,268	-170,935
Brooke Park Bowling Green	-9,066	-5,462	-11,426	-25,954
Creggan Sports Hall	-12,439	-16,117	545	-28,011
Lisnagelvin Leisure Centre	-574,757	-562,127	-651,764	-1,788,648
St Columbs Park Leisure Centre	-146,995	-107,757	-144,199	-398,951
Prehen Boathouse	-16,065	-23,704	-25,094	-64,863
Lisngelvin Bowling Green	-22,937	-36,590	-26,403	-85,930
St Columb's Pk Synthetic Pitch	1,716	-16,939	-7,294	-22,517
<b>Down</b>				
Down Leisure Centre	-969,074	-814,671	-962,044	-2,745,789
Newcastle Leisure Centre	-571,286	-527,467	-592,705	-1,691,458
Ballynahinch Leisure Centre	-302,938	-233,358	-294,585	-830,881
Tropicana	-61,786	-75,780	-78,058	-215,624
Newcastle Pool	-85,096	-98,170	-96,726	-279,992
Drumaness Hall	-138,013	-104,665	-109,647	-352,325
Killyleagh Community Centre	-472,904	-194,345	-206,552	-873,801
Killough Rd CC DSO	-101,668	-59,239	-63,255	-224,162
Ballymote	0	0	-217,205	-217,205
Castlewellan DSO Leisure	-89,156	-44,938	-58,773	-192,867

<b>Council Leisure Facility</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Dungannon &amp; S Tyrone</b>				
Dungannon Leisure Centre	-1,159,591	-1,316,192	-1,364,408	-3,840,191
Dungannon Outdoor Leisure facilities incl Pitches, Bowling Green & Tennis Courts	-224,761	-187,054	-212,993	-624,808
<b>Fermanagh</b>				
Lakeland Forum	-859,146	-916,590	-870,732	-2,646,468
Castle Park Centre	-267,976	-240,255	-275,665	-783,896
Bawnacre	-303,317	-301,686	-330,975	-935,978
Fermanagh Outdoor facilities	-99,642	-51,905	-80,583	-232,130
Fermanagh Bowling Green	-7,424	-9,188	-13,799	-30,411
<b>Larne</b>				
Larne Leisure Centre	-981,504	-920,751	-1,057,963	-2,960,218
Sandy Bay Playing Fields	-91,921	-80,681	-65,852	-238,454
Antiville Playing Fields	-193,349	-55,287	-45,936	-294,572
Millbrook Football	-3,012	-2,808	-2,824	-8,644
Craigyhill MUGA	-2,459	893	635	-931
Carnlough MUGA	7,266	7,376	2,123	16,765
Glenarm Playing Fields	-5,066	-1,614	-1,500	-8,180
Astro Synthetic Pitch	0	0	-11,449	-11,449
<b>Limavady</b>				
Roe Valley Leisure Centre	-861,268	-862,342	-914,198	-2,637,808
Dungiven Pavilion	-95,068	-81,639	-102,188	-278,895
Lisburn				
Leisure Plex	-1,543,230	-1,614,709	-1,608,202	-4,766,141
Brook Activity Centre	-295,356	-278,185	-285,172	-858,713
Glenmore Activity Centre	-213,627	-239,975	-248,587	-702,189
Grove Activity Centre	-230,909	-239,847	-245,278	-716,034
Kilmakee Activity Centre	-253,907	-268,748	-280,751	-803,406
<b>Magherafelt</b>				
Greenvale Leisure Centre	*	*	*	*
Maghera Leisure Centre	-367,635	-264,770	-347,084	-979,489
Meadowbank Sports Arena	-154,218	-132,066	-135,802	-422,086
Tobermore Golf Driving Range	-6,231	-7,143	-28,263	-41,637

<b>Council Leisure Facility</b>	<b>2008/2009</b>	<b>2009/2010</b>	<b>2010/2011</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Moyle</b>				
PULSE	0	-13,282	-12,648	-25,930
<b>Newry &amp; Mourne</b>				
Kilkeel Leisure Centre	-655,378	-575,166	-782,848	-2,013,392
Newry Swimming Pool	-668,657	-544,005	-684,813	-1,897,475
Newry Sports Centre	-537,252	-452,852	-643,561	-1,633,665
<b>North Down</b>				
Bangor Castle Leisure Centre	-589,900	-549,195	-635,667	-1,774,762
Queen's Leisure Centre, Holywood	-315,738	-221,215	-294,168	-831,121
Bangor Sportsplex	-129,601	-128,607	-156,795	-415,003
Kingsland	-6,957	-7,372	-10,691	-25,020
Sea Park	-46,328	-49,694	-32,596	-128,618
Ward Park	-80,778	-62,801	-66,281	-209,860
Various facilities	-115,830	-72,060	-121,557	-309,447
<b>Omagh</b>				
Omagh Leisure Centre	-1,445,633	-1,267,636	-1,170,123	-3,883,392
<b>Strabane</b>				
Riversdale Leisure Centre	-742,360	-802,875	-889,472	-2,434,707
Derg Valley Leisure Centre	-198,102	-203,745	-198,613	-600,460
Melvin Sports Hall	-140,245	-176,816	-203,462	-520,523

## Formal Financial Reserves

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the amount each council has in its formal financial reserves.

**(AQW 6777/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Under Section 55 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 all income of a council is held in the District Fund and all expenditure falling to be discharged by the council shall be discharged out of that fund. A table is attached detailing both District Fund balance and Cash based reserves as of 31 March 2010. These figures were published in the Report by the Chief Local Government Auditor in December 2011.

It is impracticable for Councils to determine how much of their current District Fund will be used for possible future civil emergencies.

### COUNCIL FINANCIAL RESERVES 31 MARCH 2010

<b>Council</b>	<b>District Fund Balance</b>	<b>Cash Based Reserves</b>
Antrim	2,222,203	300,000
Ards	1,882,058	1,300,000

<b>Council</b>	<b>District Fund Balance</b>	<b>Cash Based Reserves</b>
Armagh	2,538,768	100,000
Ballymena	1,614,845	2,300,000
Ballymoney	353,300	1,600,000
Banbridge	2,172,649	400,000
Belfast	4,602,602	9,200,000
Carrickfergus	931,256	300,000
Castlereagh	1,351,192	1,300,000
Coleraine	1,043,857	1,000,000
Cookstown	2,368,613	800,000
Craigavon	2,485,895	1,000,000
Derry	2,276,270	24,000,000
Down	2,165,311	4,900,000
Dungannon	2,168,182	4,000,000
Fermanagh	1,450,291	1,600,000
Larne	1,345,964	0
Limavady	558,418	3,100,000
Lisburn	4,120,136	2,200,000
Magherafelt	613,677	3,800,000
Moyle	1,432,482	0
Newry & Mourne	1,982,965	600,000
Newtownabbey	4,342,822	0
North Down	2,065,284	4,100,000
Omagh	1,200,089	400,000
Strabane	1,432,442	1,400,000

### **River Pollution in the North Down Area**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment how many incidents of river pollution in the North Down area have been reported in each of the last two years.

**(AQW 6906/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** In each of the last two years, the number of pollution incidents reported to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in the North Down area, as defined by the North Down Parliamentary boundary, are in the table 1 below.

The environmental impacts of water pollution incidents are classified by their 'Severity' i.e. High, Medium or Low Severity. The definition of each severity class is detailed in Appendix A.

In the period January 2010 to December 2011, NIEA received 114 reports of water pollution. Upon investigation, 73 of these were confirmed as having had an environmental impact on a waterway.

**TABLE 1**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No of Water Pollution Reports Received</b>	<b>No of Reports Where an Environmental Impact was confirmed</b>	<b>High Severity Incidents</b>	<b>Medium Severity Incidents</b>	<b>Low Severity Incidents</b>
2010	59	38	0	4	34
2011	55	35	1	10	24

NIEA's enforcement policy, as it relates to water pollution incidents, is that for all High and Medium Severity water pollution incidents, where the polluter can be identified, the Agency will normally pursue appropriate enforcement action against that polluter.

Enforcement action may include one or more of the following:-

- Prosecution;
- Issuing of a Legally Binding Notice;
- Issuing of a Warning Letter and/or, for agricultural incidents, 'Breaching' under Cross Compliance (where the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development may initiate a deduction from a farmer's Single Farm Payment).

For the most significant water pollution incidents, having the greatest environmental impact, the enforcement action will generally be the initiation of prosecution proceedings through the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). Enforcement action is not normally taken for Low Severity Incidents.

Formal enforcement action was considered, in line with the Agency's enforcement policy, for the 15 water pollution incidents that were of High or Medium Severity. A prosecution file is currently being prepared for submission to the PPS in relation to the High Severity Incident.

In relation to the 14 Medium Severity incidents, the following action was taken:-

- 6 Warning Letters were issued;
- 1 further Warning Letter was issued after PPS withdrew the case in the Magistrates Court;
- 2 incidents resulted in 'Breaching' under Cross Compliance (where the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development may initiate a deduction from a farmer's Single Farm Payment);
- 1 incident investigation remains on-going;
- No polluter was identified in relation to 3 incidents; and
- Enforcement action was precluded in respect of 1 incident as Article 7B of the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 applied.

The statutory defences in the amended Water Order under Article 7B relate to water pollution situations where the 'sewage undertaker' was either not bound to receive a discharge into its sewer or works or was bound to receive it subject to conditions which were not observed i.e. Northern Ireland Water (NIW) was confirmed as the source of the pollution but the incident was not due to the act or default of NIW.

### **Village Urban Renewal Area in South Belfast**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required prior to the demolition of the remaining housing in the redevelopment zone of the Village Urban Renewal Area in South Belfast, and if so, why.

**(AQW 6969/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Demolition/site clearance of areas of 0.5 hectares and above may be deemed to be urban development projects for the purposes of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

The relevant legislation in Northern Ireland is 'The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 1999' and urban development projects are listed at Schedule 2 Category 10. For Schedule 2 projects submission of an Environmental Statement is not mandatory but the planning authority must make a determination if one is required. The requirement to make a determination does not raise a presumption that a statement will be required.

It is also the intention to phase the remainder of the redevelopment of the Village area and in many cases the actual site area of the phase will be under 0.5 hectares so will fall outside the scope of the EIA Regulations. In practice the need for an EIA is unlikely to arise for a redevelopment of this nature.

### Gorse Fires

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail any prosecutions which have been brought against people who have started gorse fires.

**(AQW 6970/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Department has brought no prosecutions against people who have started gorse fires. However, an Interdepartmental Group on Wildfires that I established will present its report shortly and this will include recommendations for future action to address this problem. I am deeply disappointed that no prosecutions have arisen given that the evidence is that the fires were deliberate. I believe it is important to identify these persons responsible, the reasons why the fires occurred and what it may say about these involved.

### Complaints to the Planning Service

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many anonymous complaints have been made to the Planning Service in relation to breaches of planning permission in each of the last five years; (ii) how many complaints have been (a) substantiated; and (b) malicious; and (iii) what measures are in place to protect individuals from unfounded or malicious complaints.

**(AQW 6972/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Breaches of planning control associated with the failure to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted are recorded on the Department's IT data base with a Breach Type of Breach of Condition.

The number of anonymous complaints made in relation to breaches of planning permission and the number of anonymous complaints closed with a reason of 'No Breach' in each of the last 3 business years to date are set out in the table below.

<b>Details associated with Breach of Condition Complaints (Cases)</b>			
	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12 (to 31 Dec 2011)</b>
No. of Complaints received (case equivalent)	881(816)	650 (580)	457 (302)
No of Anonymous Complaints received (case equivalent)	149 (143)	106 (105)	48 (46)
Anonymous Complaints Closures as of 25 January 2012 (case equivalent)	123 (119)	79 (78)	15 (14)
No of Anonymous complaints closed with a reason of 'No Breach' as of 25 January 2012 (case equivalent)	45 (45)	28 (28)	9 (9)



These figures have been extracted from a live dataset which is continuously updated and validated. They should therefore be regarded as indicative only at this point in time and should not be compared with any previous figures published by Planning.

All alleged breaches of planning control will be investigated. However, where a complainant fails to provide an adequate level of detail in relation to an alleged breach this may result in the Department being unable to fully investigate or proceed with enforcement action due to insufficient evidence. Furthermore, after investigation, where there is no breach of planning control identified, the case will be closed and no further action taken by the Department.

### **Road Safety Education Officers**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of road safety education officers currently employed; (ii) the cost of their salaries, travel and other expenses; and (iii) the evaluation process used to assess the benefits of these posts.

**(AQW 6985/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** There are 13 road safety education officers currently employed within the Department. The budgeted salary costs of for 2011-12 are in the region of £341k.

The most up to date information in respect of expenses, for April 2011 to end December 2011, show that £16,341 has been claimed for travel, £1,642 for daily subsistence and £416 for subscriptions to professional bodies, giving a total of £18,399.

The Road Safety Education Officer Service (RSEO) was independently reviewed in 2011 by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Business Consultancy Service (BCS) with expert technical advice and guidance on road safety issues provided by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), an internationally recognised centre of excellence providing world-class research, consultancy, testing and certification for all aspects of transport.

The conclusions of the BCS report were that the need for the work of the RSEOS is as great now as ever as to how the DOE helps protect road users young and old and remains a high profile and an emotive issue. In addition, the challenging targets set in the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020 cannot be achieved without effective road safety education.

The report, which was circulated to members of the Environment Committee, contains recommendations for improving, not only on the Road Safety Education Officer Service, but on the service provided to schools and the wider general public.

### **Reported Cases of River Pollution**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of reported cases of river pollution in each of the last three years; and (ii) the number of successful prosecutions taken against polluters.

**(AQW 6986/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:**

(i) The number of reported cases of river pollution in each of the last three years

The following table provides a breakdown of the number of water pollution reports received and the number where pollution was confirmed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in each of the past 3 years.

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF REPORTED AND CONFIRMED WATER POLLUTION INCIDENTS IN EACH OF THE PAST 3 YEARS**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of water pollution reports received by NIEA</b>	<b>Number of reports where actual pollution was confirmed upon investigation</b>
2009	2152	1248
2010	2080	1237
2011	2111	1299

The number of incidents where water pollution was confirmed by NIEA upon investigation is markedly lower than (slightly over half) the total number of incident reports. The reasons for this include the public mistaking non-pollution phenomena for pollution and minor, short-lived incidents having dispersed when NIEA staff attend the site.

(ii) The number of successful prosecutions taken against polluters

The following table provides a breakdown of the number of successful convictions for water pollution offences heard in court in each of the past 3 years.

**TABLE 2: NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL COURT CONVICTIONS FOR WATER POLLUTION OFFENCES IN EACH OF THE LAST 3 YEARS**

<b>Year in which the case was heard</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Number of court convictions	39	46	60

It should be noted that while the great majority of the convictions listed above resulted in the court imposing a fine, the term conviction includes fines, conditional discharges and absolute discharges.

In a small proportion of cases where NIEA forwards a file to the Public Prosecution Service recommending prosecution, PPS decides for legal or other reasons not to proceed with a prosecution. There are also a proportion of cases where a prosecution reaches court but the court dismisses the case (i.e. there is no conviction). Cases such as these, where NIEA initiated a prosecution but no conviction resulted in court, are not listed in the table above.

## **Anti-Social Behaviour**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to give more powers to councils to tackle anti-social behaviour.

**(AQW 6991/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which comes into operation on 1 April 2012, contains a range of measures to help district councils to deal more effectively with anti-social behaviour. From that date councils will have improved powers to tackle littering, fly-posting and graffiti, abandoned vehicles, abandoned shopping trolleys, nuisance parking, dog-fouling, control of dogs, problem alleyways and a range of nuisance issues including noise nuisance.

## **Recycling of Food Waste**

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to encourage greater recycling of food waste.

**(AQW 7028/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Department's Rethink Waste Programme has a series of measures to promote and support waste prevention and recycling including capital and revenue funds, a communications action

plan and funding of a Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) delivery programme. These measures include the recycling of food waste.

Brown bins are currently supplied to householders by a total of 22 Councils for the collection of organic waste. Of these Councils, 18 also permit the inclusion of food waste in the brown bin. In addition, 4 councils within the arc21 group supply 23 litre food caddies in lieu of a brown bin for food waste.

Under the Department's Rethink Waste (Capital) Fund Grant scheme, in 2010/11 five Councils - Ballymena, Dungannon & South Tyrone, Omagh, Armagh and Newry & Mourne were awarded grants to extend their brown bin service to include food waste. In addition, grants for the purchase of kitchen caddies for food waste were also awarded to Craigavon, Dungannon and Lisburn Councils.

Home composting complements the 'brown bin service' provided by councils as it provides the means for householders to compost their garden and food waste. In 2010/11 eight Councils – Armagh, Coleraine, Derry, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Moyle, Omagh and Strabane were awarded a Rethink Waste (Capital) Fund grant by the Department to fund the purchase of home composters.

To encourage behaviour change, the Department's Rethink Waste Communications Action Plan promotes food waste reduction, reuse and, where waste is unavoidable, recycling. Fully funded Love Food Hate Waste and composting demonstration packages to raise awareness amongst the public have been offered by the Department to every council in Northern Ireland.

The Department also funds WRAP to provide technical advisory support to Councils to improve the quality and efficiency of collection and recycling services offered to households and businesses, food waste is a key focus for this support.

A further intervention in these times of economic need was money to the Council for the homeless to run a "Fareshare" scheme distributing 72,000 meals in the last 11 months in the greater Belfast area through 41 charities with food from various growers, suppliers and retailers, foods which otherwise may go to waste. I intend to increase funding for this type of intervention.

## **Hydraulic Fracturing**

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment whether there are any measures in place to deal with the disposal of the waste water that would be generated from the process of hydraulic fracturing; and whether the cost of disposing of the waste water would be borne by his Department or councils.

**(AQW 7123/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The disposal of waste water from the hydraulic fracturing process is the responsibility of the operator of the process.

It is the responsibility of Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) to safeguard the quality of the environment as a whole through effective regulation of activities that have the potential to impact on the environment.

NIEA, as a consultee to DOE Planning, will assess any proposals to dispose of waste water submitted as part of a planning application or any other fracking process and ensure that the proposed operator applies for the required environmental permissions, where required.

Any waste water disposal costs resulting from a hydraulic fracturing operation would be the responsibility of the company carrying out the operation.

## **Reform of the Planning System**

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has any proposals for the reform of the planning system; and the timescale for the completion of any reform.

**(AQW 7125/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I believe that NI needs generally a new phase of reform across a range of policy areas. Despite delay and doubt across a vast range of areas, NI has done reform well and to the benefit of great numbers. I bring the same perspective to planning.

I am working on a number of fronts to reform and remodel the planning system so that it supports the future economic and social development needs of all users in Northern Ireland and pay due regard to the wonder of our built and natural heritage and environment

The reforms to the planning system contained within the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 will result in a modernised system transferring to councils with quicker local development plans, faster decisions on planning applications, faster and fairer appeals and tougher and simpler enforcement.

In advance of the transfer of powers to councils I am bringing forward a Bill that will accelerate the implementation of a number of those reforms, to be administered by the Department. These will include the development of a Statement of Community Involvement setting out opportunities for interested parties to become involved in development management and other planning control issues, enhanced community involvement through a requirement that developers engage in pre-application community involvement in advance of submitting an application for major developments. Higher penalties for a number of offences are also included.

I intend to introduce the Bill in this Assembly session and to have the reform in place sooner rather than later.

I am also bringing forward a number of administrative reforms which will speed up the processing of applications (including major applications) such as an extension to the streamlined planning application scheme with local councils, measures to ensure quicker responses from consultees and on a voluntary basis pre-application community consultation on key developments.

In addition, the Department is undertaking a revision of planning policy which will result in more strategic, simpler and shorter policy and a new complaints procedure has been introduced designed to make the process of complaining easier and more user-friendly for members of the public. I have a series of interventions involving representatives of the renewable industry (including anaerobic digestion) to identify how the planning service can be improved; there is an operational review of PPS21; a group looking at planning, business and the economy and across planning. I am starting to identify where in the immediate and short term, planning can be made more fit for purpose, responsive and fulfil economic and environmental imperatives.

## Planning Applications

**Mr Lunn** asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the average time taken by the Planning Service to process planning applications which involve the creation of jobs.  
**(AQW 7127/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The average processing times for the 2010/11 business year are contained within the Development Management Statistics Northern Ireland 2010/11

Annual Statistical Bulletin (April 2010 to March 2011) which is publically available on the Department's website.

The majority of applications involving job creation would fall within the major category of development. The PSA target for processing major applications is to process 60% of major applications to decision or withdrawal in 23 weeks. In the year 210/2011, the time taken to process 60% of major applications was 25 weeks.

There are a number of reasons for this fall in performance including the redeployment of staff/resources as the reduction in fee income; the short term issues relating to the roll out of the Planning Portal; the priority reassessment of 2,500 deferred PPS21 applications; plus, the implementation of the agreed Action Plan to reduce the backlog of applications in the system over 12 months, all of which have missed the PSA target. The Department is committed to reducing the backlog.

In order to improve performance, the Department has been initiating a number of short term reform measures to improve performance and speed in decision-making to stimulate and support economic recovery in the Region. This includes measures such as

- the implementation and extension of the Streamlined Council Consultation Scheme.
- Publication of guidance for prioritising planning applications stating clearly the types of applications that should be considered for prioritising.
- Publication of guidance on consistency in decision making with particular emphasis on economic consideration to ensure a consistent approach to the consideration of the economic merits of planning applications by the Department so that local communities are treated equally and not disadvantaged.
- the Development Management Good Practice Guide particularly in relation to the active case management of Article 31 applications have been reinforced.
- encouraging applicants to engage with it in pre-application discussions (PADs) on the more significant development proposals. Through this process, it encourages the submission of high quality applications which will maximise the prospects of getting through the statutory process expeditiously.

Since becoming Minister, I have commenced a radical reform of planning. For example, general review of PPS21; new planning leadership team; development of a new HR strategy; dedicated groups of officials and external people interrogating how to streamline more, actively manage renewable applications etc. In this way, I aim to build a planning service even more fit for purpose that will provide decisions on planning applications in a timely manner.

## River Pollution

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment how many people have been prosecuted for river pollution in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7254/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The following table provides a breakdown of the number of prosecutions for water pollution offences concluded in court in each of the past 3 years.

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS FOR WATER POLLUTION OFFENCES CONCLUDED IN COURT IN EACH OF THE LAST 3 YEARS**

Year in which the prosecution was concluded in court	2009	2010	2011
Number of prosecutions	41	46	60

It should be noted that while the great majority of the prosecutions listed above resulted in the court convicting the polluter and imposing a fine, the figures include a small number of other court outcomes and sentences: including dismissal, conditional discharges and binding over orders.

## George Best Belfast City Airport

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the proposed extension of the runway at George Best Belfast City Airport.

**(AQW 7258/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** In March 2011 my Department requested that the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) make the necessary arrangements for a public inquiry into the proposed runway extension. In May 2011 the PAC suspended all preparations for the inquiry because GBBCA declared their intention to submit further environmental information to support the proposals. The public inquiry cannot proceed until all the necessary information has been submitted, circulated to relevant consultees for comment and advertised in the local press.

GBBCA have stated that they will not submit further environmental information until the process to modify the existing Planning Agreement between the Department and the airport has concluded. This appears to suggest that the application to extend the runway will not be before the PAC, until the issue of an airport noise contour has been concluded at the request of the airport. There is and there will not be any impediment by me, my Department or DOE Planning to the PAC process, if the airport management wish to advance the work.

The process to modify the Planning Agreement will include a public consultation on proposals for a noise management system, to be brought forward by the airport, and a Public Examination to independently consider all of the issues. After I have considered the independent report and recommendations of the Examination, I will decide the outcome and its examination in the planning agreement. It is hoped that the airport will submit their proposals in the near future which should allow the examination to be concluded by summer 2012. The process I have established will enable the appropriate involvement of interested parties.

### **Council Chief Executives**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to make council Chief Executives more accountable to his Department.

**(AQW 7316/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Council Chief Executives are paid employees of a district council and are accountable to the elected members. It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to implement the policies of the district council.

The Department of the Environment is responsible for the development of policy and legislation relating to the finance and audit framework of local government. Council members and officers must operate within the legal framework, as provided by the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 and the Local Government (NI) Order 2005. The existing financial framework is further developed in the Local Government Finance (NI) Act 2011 which will be fully implemented from 1 April 2012.

I have to be mindful of my legal competence in relation to the actions of Councils. However, I will ensure that the proper authority of central Government is exercised going forward, particular in relation to RPA.

### **Belfast Area Metropolitan Plan**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Belfast Area Metropolitan Plan.  
**(AQW 7318/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I would refer Mr Easton to an answer that he received on 2 December 2011 regarding BMAP (AQW 3928/11-15).

As regards recent progress, I can confirm that my Department received further reports from the Planning Appeals Commission on Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus proposals on 31 January 2012, and that all the PAC Reports on BMAP have now been delivered.

The PAC recommendations are currently being considered and the Plan is being prepared for adoption. At present it is anticipated that BMAP will be published in the early part of 2013.

I appreciate the frustration around BMAP. Consequently, I am assessing, if at all, what I can may do to release parts of BMAP in advance of full adoption.

### **Single Use Carrier Bags**

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister of the Environment to provide an estimate of the revenue that will be generated in the first year of the single use carrier bag levy.

**(AQW 7335/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I recognise that carrier bags present a significant environmental problem. Resolution of this problem is the key driver behind my proposal to introduce a carrier bag levy from April 2013.

Evidence from other countries demonstrates that a bag levy is a simple and effective means to reduce substantially the negative environmental impact of carrier bag consumption. A 10p levy on single use carrier bags and lower cost reusable carrier bags can therefore bring about significant environmental improvement.

In the first year I propose to discount the charge to 5p and limit the levy to single use carrier bags. This will provide consumers with time to adapt their shopping habits to the new levy.

The amount of revenue that will ultimately be raised will be dependent on consumer behaviour. In the event that the local experience is similar to that of other jurisdictions that have introduced bag charges, the single use carrier bag levy is anticipated to generate around £1.5m in net revenue in the first year.

### **Single Use Carrier Bags**

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister of the Environment to provide an estimate of the annual cost of the administration and collection unit that will process the single use carrier bag levy.

**(AQW 7336/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** My officials have assessed a range of potential options for the administration of the Carrier Bag Levy, including the associated costs of each option, and have identified an in-house solution as the preferred solution.

I intend to introduce levy administration arrangements that provide an appropriate level of governance and accountability, which ensure that the administrative burden on retailers is minimised and which represents the best value for money.

As such, I can advise that in 2012/2013 including administration team start up, staff and IT system development and delivery costs it is anticipated that the Total Year 1 costs will be £500k. It is envisaged that administration costs for subsequent years will be £600k until 2016 when a formal review of the administration team and structures has been scheduled.

I and the Minister of Finance and Personnel made the argument – on a number of occasions – to Treasury that HMRC should collect the levy. This argument did not prevail. I rejected the proposal to contract out collection as neither right nor cost effective. DOE have developed an in-house system, demonstrating that Government has the capacity and imagination to rely on itself to do its business, not routinely rely on external suppliers.

### **Single Use Carrier Bags**

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister of the Environment how the administration and collection unit, established to process the single use carrier bag levy, will determine how many carrier bags that shops are using.

**(AQW 7338/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** My intention is to deliver simple and cost effective carrier bag levy administration arrangements which ensure minimum bureaucracy and cost to both business and the Department.

In the run up to go live in April 2013 the levy administration team will facilitate registration for those liable for the levy. Through a DOE developed IT system and utilising the NICS NI Direct portal, a secure channel will be provided to register and to submit subsequent bag usage returns and payments.

On a quarterly basis, the majority of businesses liable for the levy will submit on line returns on bag usage accompanied by the relevant payment to the Department. A small number of identified larger bag users will submit returns on a monthly basis. Bag consumption and compliance with the levy legislation across all businesses will be monitored by Customer Relations Officers deployed as part of the levy administration team.

## Single Use Carrier Bags

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department intends to develop an information campaign on the introduction of the single use carrier bag levy; and to detail the estimated cost of the campaign.

**(AQW 7339/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Department will use the existing 'Rethink Waste' multi media campaign to promote valuable information about the carrier bag levy to consumers and to businesses across Northern Ireland. This campaign activity is planned to take place from December 2012 to April 2013, at an estimated maximum cost of £15,000. Consumers and businesses will be provided with all the information they will need in a very timely manner.

The Department will also use its own Communications Team to help promote the message and to avoid the additional costs of outside providers. This is a further example of Government relying on its own capacity and resources to promote positive public policy rather than relying on external consultants.

## Areas of Special Scientific Interest

**Mr Wells** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 6099/11-15, to detail the extent of the damage to the Area of Special Scientific Interest; and why a Restoration Order was not imposed.

**(AQW 7352/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Moneystaghan Bog Area of Special Scientific Interest was declared mainly for the presence of intact deep peat deposits and the diversity of the associated vegetation. Damage was caused through the extraction of peat and the resultant slumping, drying and oxidation of the adjacent intact raised bog. The area affected was approximately 256m<sup>2</sup> out of a total site area of 83,710m<sup>2</sup> resulting in damage to 0.31% of intact lowland raised bog feature. A case was brought before the courts, where an absolute discharge was imposed on two offences with an order for court costs of £125,

The Department did not request a Restoration Order in this case as it was considered that restoration to the former condition was not feasible. Officials have advised that the boundary of the bog will stabilise naturally over time through a slumping process. As a matter of policy NIEA would seek such an Order where appropriate.

## Single Use Carrier Bags

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how much revenue he expects the single use carrier bag levy to generate, given that the original proposal for a fifteen pence charge per bag has been reduced to five pence; and (ii) which of his Department's programmes will have their funding reduced as result of this change.

**(AQW 7363/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I recognise that carrier bags present a significant environmental problem. Resolution of this problem is the key driver behind my proposal to introduce a carrier bag levy from April 2013.

Evidence from other countries demonstrates that a bag levy is a simple and effective means to reduce substantially the negative environmental impact of carrier bag consumption. A 10p levy on single use carrier bags and lower cost reusable carrier bags can therefore bring about significant environmental improvement.

In the first year I propose to discount the charge to 5p and limit the levy to single use carrier bags. This will provide consumers with time to adapt their shopping habits to the new levy.

The amount of revenue that will ultimately be raised will be dependent on consumer behaviour. In the event that the local experience is similar to that of other jurisdictions that have introduced bag charges, the single use carrier bag levy is anticipated to generate around £1.5m in net revenue in the first year.



This figure is anticipated to increase to around £4m in 2014/15 when the levy will increase to 10p and extend to low cost reusable carrier bags.

The original proposal for a 15p levy was included in a Private Member's Bill. However, my officials have estimated that a 10p levy should be sufficient to deliver the target net revenue and maximise the overall benefit to the community. It is my intention that the levy will be reviewed in late 2015 or early 2016. If deemed beneficial, the amount of the levy can be changed following this review.

My Department will seek additional funding from DFP to cover any revenue shortfall. I will also assess baseline levels in the Department, further reduce relevant internal costs, etc. I will work to ensure that a situation does not develop that a levy to protect the environment ends up with reductions in monies to protect the environment.

## Review of PPS 21

**Mr W Clarke** asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the review of PPS 21, including when it will be completed.

**(AQW 7412/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Work on the review of the operation of PPS21 is close to conclusion. I am currently finalising the review report and will announce the outcome of the review in the near future.

## Single Use Carrier Bags

**Mr S Anderson** asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department intends to monitor retailers' compliance with the single use carrier bag levy.

**(AQW 7600/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Prior to the April 2013 go live of the carrier bag levy, retailers identified as being liable will be asked to register with the Department. The levy administration team will facilitate and oversee registration. Through a DOE developed IT system using the NICS NI Direct portal, a secure channel will be provided to register and to submit subsequent bag usage returns and payments.

The majority of retailers will be required to submit quarterly on-line returns outlining bag usage accompanied by the relevant payment to the Department. A small number of identified retailers who use large numbers of bags will submit returns on a monthly basis. Bag consumption and compliance with the levy legislation across all businesses will be monitored and enforced by Customer Relations Officers deployed as part of the Department's levy administration team.

Carrier bag levy regulations, currently being drafted and which will be subject to public consultation, will allow for sanctions to be imposed on retailers for non compliance with the legislation requirements.

## Local Government Reform: SOLACE

**Mr Gardiner** asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the savings potential, in relation to the reform of Local Government, created by the proposals put forward by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives in August 2011.

**(AQO 1242/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The proposals put forward by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives relate to the ICE (Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency) programme and form a report for the sector to examine the potential for efficiencies across the 26 councils, on a voluntary basis. Therefore, it is not a business case relative to local government reform, based on an 11 council model.

However, the ICE programme has put forward a number of specific efficiencies covering Customer-Facing Services, Information and Communication Technologies, Human Resources, Payroll and Procurement for detailed analysis. The report anticipates that the implementation of this programme will achieve savings in the range of £257 million to £570 million, over 25-years. These figures are to

be treated as indicative, but the sector is confident that the savings will be at the higher end of these projections.

However, whilst the potential for savings is significant, it is my intention, in liaison with the sector, to align the ICE programme with the reform agenda.

### **Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-12**

**Mr McGimpsey** asked the Minister of the Environment how he is engaging with European networks to deliver the opportunities detailed within Winning in Europe: European Priorities 2011-2012.

**(AQO 1247/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Under the auspices of the Barroso Taskforce four thematic groups were established. The Department of the Environment leads on the Climate Change and Energy thematic group. The focus of the work of the group at this stage is on further developing the necessary networks to help engage with the European institutions. At the same time work is ongoing to scope out the key EU funding programmes, both current and future, with which to best target a programme of climate change and energy project bids. To increase our involvement in Europe five officials from my Department will shortly be taking up secondments across the European Commission. One of these officials will be a full time policy officer dedicated to the work of the Climate & Energy thematic Group.

The Barroso work is in addition to work undertaken across the Department to secure funding from other relevant EU environmental programmes. It is my belief that across government there has been insufficient work in taking forward EU funding opportunities. I will travel to Brussels in March where I will raise issues of funding and environmental protection – the first DOE Minister to put our case personally in Brussels since the restoration of devolution.

### **Road Safety: Omeath Road, Newry**

**Mr Murphy** asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Regional Development about improving road safety on the Omeath Road in Newry, particularly in relation to the canal.

**(AQO 1248/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I appreciate the concern around safety at the Newry Canal.

While I understand that the recent tragic fatal collision on the Omeath Road remains under investigation, I shall write to the Minister for Regional Development on the concerns that have been raised about safety on that road and I will include the Omeath Road for discussion at my next meeting with the Minister.

Officials from the Department of the Environment and the Department for Regional Development liaise closely to consider how best to achieve the objectives and targets in the Road Safety Strategy. I can assure you that such engagement will continue between road safety partners, stakeholders and counterparts, North and South, to improve safety for all road users.

The concerns about infrastructure and engineering issues on specific roads are, in the first instance, an operational matter for the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service, but I will work with DRD to identify how best to respond to the risk.

### **Ravenhill Rugby Ground**

**Mr A Maskey** asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions his Department has had with Roads Service or the Department for Regional Development before granting planning approval for increased capacity stands at Ravenhill Rugby ground.

**(AQO 1245/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Roads Service was one of a number of bodies formally consulted by the Department during the processing of this application. The consultation entailed ongoing and regular engagement

between planning and Roads Service officials regarding the traffic, access and parking aspects of the application. This engagement extended to a meeting with the applicant in February 2011, following which further traffic information was submitted to the Department.

Following consideration of this further information, Roads Service commented they had no objection to the application subject to the imposition of planning conditions. These conditions which related to parking, circulation and access arrangements at the site were attached to the Notice of Opinion issued by the Department.

## **Waste Management Contracts**

**Mr Brady** asked the Minister of the Environment for his Department's assessment of the suitability of awarding 25-year contracts for waste management.

**(AQO 1246/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** I have carefully considered this issue since I became Minister. The advice provided suggests that the growth in waste volumes means that, mindful of the positive direction of travel on recycling, the waste procurement strategy is required. I wish to stress that the procurement group have to pass affordability and deliverability requirements, in respect of which critical work is ongoing. The Department has therefore concluded, on the basis of detailed analysis, that substantial new waste infrastructure is required to comply with the 2020 legislative target for landfill diversion. The size, complexity and capital cost of the required facilities entail a level of investment not generally available in the public sector. In common with local authorities elsewhere in Britain and in Europe as a whole, and on the basis of business cases which demonstrated that it represented the most viable approach, local government in Northern Ireland has opted for the public private partnership approach. Under this approach, the private sector provides the necessary investment to cover the capital costs of the facility and recoups its costs through a gate fee payable by the contracting authority over an extended period.

## **Planning: Zero-carbon Homes**

**Ms J McCann** asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications for zero-carbon homes have been approved to date.

**(AQO 1249/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The zero carbon tests can only be applied once a building is complete.

Due to the way information is recorded on the Planning Portal there is no mechanism to identify a planning application where the development is intended to qualify for rate relief once completed. I have asked officials to see if this system can be upgraded.

A manual search of all planning application files may identify proposals for potential zero carbon homes. This is not only disproportionate in terms of time and cost but would result in un-validated statistics being released.

The Department operates a Streamlined Council Consultation Scheme which has resulted in approximately 50% of all planning applications being progressed through this very successful scheme. Currently approvals issue on average within 52 working days. The types of applications assessed under this scheme include proposals for up to five dwellings; this would include zero carbon dwellings.

## **National Parks**

**Mr McNarry** asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department is engaging with the farming community in advance of the introduction of any enabling legislation in relation to the establishment of National Parks.

**(AQO 1250/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** The Department has an ongoing dialogue with a range of stakeholders, including farming representatives, about the issues surrounding national parks. Most recently, I met the President of the Ulster Farmers' Union on 30 January. I recognise the particular interest that the farming community

and other rural dwellers have in this issue, and I will be meeting representatives from other, similar organisations in the coming weeks. I believe firmly in National Parks Legislation – I hope my Executive Colleagues will concur. This is an important potential opportunity for a number of areas, for better management of the environment and economic growth.

## **Taxis**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of the Environment what additional costs taxi operators are likely to face as a result of the Taxi Fare and Taximeters Regulations to be made under the Taxis Act (NI) 2008. **(AQO 1251/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** As members will be aware I am currently consulting on proposals to introduce new taxi fare and taximeter regulations and this consultation closes 17 February 2012. The proposed regulations will set a maximum taxi fare for all taxis and will make it an offence to overcharge customers. These proposals aim to ensure that taxi drivers can earn a reasonable wage while providing the general public with the assurance that they are being charged a reasonable fare regardless of which part of Northern Ireland they live.

I will consider all responses to the consultation before reaching a decision, including any potential costs.

## **Environmental Impact Assessments**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of the Environment if his Department plans to amend the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations to preclude the provider of additional environmental information, submitted to a public inquiry, from having to comply with the statutory advertisement and consultation procedure.

**(AQO 1252/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** There is no current statutory requirement for the provider of additional environmental information, submitted to a public inquiry, to advertise and consult on such information. The Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations currently require the Department to undertake these functions.

The existing procedure has led to delays in the public inquiry process therefore, I intend to bring forward new legislative proposals to ensure that any additional environmental information submitted for the purposes of a public inquiry will instead be made available for public inspection at a specified location by the Planning Appeals Commission and on the Commission's website. It will be up to the Planning Appeals Commission to inform the relevant parties and seek an adjournment if necessary to ensure full consideration of this information.

I believe these proposals remove any uncertainty from the existing process and enable smoother and quicker timetabling of events surrounding a public inquiry within the hands of the PAC who are best placed to deal with this.

## **Built Heritage: Tourism and Economic Development**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the contribution that built heritage assets can make to tourism and to economic development.

**(AQO 1254/11-15)**

**Mr Attwood:** Built Heritage plays a fundamentally important role in tourism and economic development and there is much unrealised potential for its increased role in future. These assets are important to the whole of society, particularly in the context of our tourism economy and overseas earnings in particular – that is 'new' money coming into the NI economy. They are unique, authentic irreplaceable elements of the past that help make Northern Ireland a better place to work, live and invest in. They contribute enormously to the character of our cities, villages and countryside. Many of these are destinations for tourists already, but others have yet to realise their full heritage and economic potential.

At the present time work is underway to find out just how important the built heritage is for the economy. We know already that for example, every £1 of Listed Building Grant Aid paid out by the Department, in total, at least £7.65 of investment is levered in to the construction sector: this is particularly important at the present time. Works to historic properties have also acted as a catalyst for regeneration, as demonstrated by the investment made in the built heritage of Derry~Londonderry, now the focal point for the 2013 UK City of Culture.

My officials are currently working towards the augmentation of work already done in connection with the NITB key signature projects. Officials are also planning and implementing heritage-related projects at many sites across Northern Ireland, such as at Dunluce Castle, County Antrim; Navan Fort, in County Armagh; Tullaghoge Fort, in County Tyrone; the wealth of Christian Heritage sites, particularly those in County Down linked to St Patrick, and; at Plantation-related sites throughout the North. All of these will continue my Department's work, and my own commitment, to help realise the heritage, tourism and economic value of these historic properties.

Pat Ramsey MLA has previously asked me about the promotion of built heritage assets in support of tourism and, in particular, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) key signature projects. I refer you to the answer that I gave to him on that matter, because it is relevant again in this instance (reference AQO 9, for answer on 7 November 2011).

## Department of Finance and Personnel

### Surplus Posts in the Civil Service

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) location; and (ii) number of surplus posts in the Civil Service at (a) Administrative Assistant; (b) Administrative Officer; (c) Executive Officer II; (d) Executive Officer I; and (e) Staff Officer; and (f) Deputy Principal grades, broken down by Department.

**(AQW 6296/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel):** The location and number of surplus posts in the Civil Service at (a) Administrative Assistant (AA); (b) Administrative Officer (AO); (c) Executive Officer II (EOII); (d) Executive Officer I (EOI); (e) Staff Officer (SO); and (f) Deputy Principal (DP) grades, broken down by Department are set out in the table overleaf.

**AQW 6296/11 - LOCATION & NUMBER (FTE)\* OF SURPLUS POSTS IN THE NICS AT AO, E02, E01, SO & DP AS AT 16/1/12**

	AA	Location	AO	Location	E011	Location	E01	Location	SO	Location	DP	Location
DARD												
DCAL				Belfast	2	Belfast						
DE												
DEL	1	Belfast		Belfast	2	Belfast						
DETI												
DFP			1	Belfast					2	Belfast	1	Belfast
DHSSPS												
DOE				Belfast	1	Belfast						
DOJ												
DRD												
DSD	2	1 Belfast	1	Belfast			1	Belfast	1	Belfast		Belfast
		1 Ballymena										
OFMDFM												
PPS												
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>1</b>	

\* FTE – Full-time Equivalent

## Civil Service Staff

**Mr P Maskey** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 6597/08, to detail the (i) actual; and (ii) percentage composition of Civil Service non-industrial and industrial staff, by grade, within each Department/agency, in each year from January 2009 to January 2012, broken down by (a) gender; (b) community background (including non-determined); (c) ethnic background; and (d) people with a disability.

**(AQW 6409/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Northern Ireland Civil Service personnel database is sourced from HRConnect and a number of Department of Justice databases, a process which requires considerable collation and validation, consequently data for 1st Jan 2012 is not available at this time. Information for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 has been placed in the Library

To prevent disclosure of personal information and ensure confidentiality my Department has adopted a publication threshold of 10 for Community Background, Disability and Ethnicity data. Given the relatively small numbers involved for Disability and Ethnicity a two way classification by Grade Level and by Department when coupled with this thresholding, would have highly limited utility as nearly all cells would be suppressed. As a consequence Disability data is presented separately by Grade Level and by Department while Ethnicity is presented at the overall NICS level.

## Civil Service

**Mr P Maskey** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 5047/08, to detail the (i) actual; and (ii) percentage composition profile of the Civil Service's broad occupational groupings, in each year from January 2009 to January 2012, broken down by (a) gender; (b) community background (including non-determined); (c) people with a disability; and (d) ethnic minority.

**(AQW 6410/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Northern Ireland Civil Service personnel database is sourced from HRConnect and a number of Department of Justice databases, a process which requires considerable collation and validation, consequently data for 1st Jan 2012 is not available at this time.

Information for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 is set out in the attached tables overleaf. In order to ensure confidentiality it has been necessary to suppress some numbers where the value is less than 10.

**TABLE 1 COMPOSITIONAL PROFILE OF NICS BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP AT 1 JAN 2011**

Occupational Group	Total Staff		Gender				Community Background					
	No	Col %	Female		Male		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined	
			No	Row %	No	Row %	No	Row %	No	Row %	No	Row %
General Service	19,241	69.5	12,038	62.6	7,203	37.4	9,185	47.7	9,749	50.7	307	1.6
Secretarial	412	1.5	412	100.0	0	0.0	245	59.5	#		*	
Scientific	539	1.9	246	45.6	293	54.4	307	57.0	192	35.6	40	7.4
Technology	1,704	6.2	308	18.1	1,396	81.9	911	53.5	749	44.0	44	2.6
Legal	347	1.3	222	64.0	125	36.0	138	39.8	190	54.8	19	5.5
Computing	634	2.3	156	24.6	478	75.4	318	50.2	300	47.3	16	2.5
Specialisms	3,393	12.2	1,010	29.8	2,383	70.2	1,838	54.2	1,350	39.8	205	6.0
Centralised Services	266	1.0	76	28.6	190	71.4	183	68.8	#		*	
Industrial and No Group	1,165	4.2	60	5.2	1,105	94.8	613	52.6	499	42.8	53	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,701</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,528</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>13,173</b>	<b>47.6</b>	<b>13,738</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>13,270</b>	<b>47.9</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>2.5</b>



Occupational Group	Total Staff		Declared Disability		Ethnic Minority	
	No	Col %	No	Row %	No	Row %
General Service	19,241	69.5	1184	6.2	28	0.2
Secretarial	412	1.5	20	4.9	0	0.0
Scientific	539	1.9	19	3.5	*	
Technology	1,704	6.2	59	3.5	*	
Legal	347	1.3	*		*	
Computing	634	2.3	31	4.9	*	
Specialisms	3,393	12.2	122	3.6	*	
Centralised Services	266	1.0	*		0	0.0
Industrial and No Group	1,165	4.2	35	3.0	*	
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,701</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,488</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0.2</b>

**Notes:**

Data sourced from HRConnect & Additional DOJ databases

Staff numbers are provided on a headcount basis

Includes all NICS Permanent staff with the exception of uniformed Prison service staff

Staff without a disability declaration have been placed in the 'No Declared Disability' category

Excludes staff who have not declared their ethnicity

\* For confidentiality reasons the number of cases is too small to publish (i.e. below the publication threshold of 10 employed by NISRA for Community Background, Disability and Ethnicity data)

# Number has been suppressed to avoid disclosing another number that is too small to publish.

TABLE 2 COMPOSITIONAL PROFILE OF NICS BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP AT 1 JAN 2010

Occupational Group	Total Staff		Gender						Community Background					
	No	Col %	Female		Male		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined			
			No	Row %	No	Row %	No	Row %	No	Row %	No	Row %		
General Service	18,627	68.0	11,528	61.9	7,099	38.1	8,773	47.1	9,559	51.3	295	1.6		
Secretarial	460	1.7	459	99.8	1	0.2	268	58.3	#	*				
Scientific	553	2.0	250	45.2	303	54.8	310	56.1	198	35.8	45	8.1		
Technology	1,715	6.3	304	17.7	1,411	82.3	931	54.3	740	43.1	44	2.6		
Legal	316	1.2	200	63.3	116	36.7	124	39.2	180	57.0	12	3.8		
Computing	645	2.4	161	25.0	484	75.0	322	49.9	305	47.3	18	2.8		
Specialisms	3,042	11.1	770	25.3	2,272	74.7	1,674	55.0	1,225	40.3	143	4.7		
Centralised Services	278	1.0	69	24.8	209	75.2	184	66.2	#	*				
Industrial and No Group	1,763	6.4	451	25.6	1,312	74.4	1,013	57.5	657	37.3	93	5.3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,399</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,192</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>13,207</b>	<b>48.2</b>	<b>13,599</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>13,139</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>2.4</b>		

Occupational Group	Total Staff		Declared Disability		Ethnic Minority	
	No	Col %	No	Row %	No	Row %
General Service	18,627	68.0	1110	6.0	29	0.2
Secretarial	460	1.7	23	5.0	0	0.0
Scientific	553	2.0	20	3.6	*	
Technology	1,715	6.3	54	3.1	*	
Legal	316	1.2	*		*	
Computing	645	2.4	31	4.8	*	
Specialisms	3,042	11.1	114	3.7	*	
Centralised Services	278	1.0	#		0	0.0
Industrial and No Group	1,763	6.4	67	3.8	*	
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,399</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0.2</b>

**Notes:**

Data sourced from HRConnect & Additional DOJ databases

Staff numbers are provided on a headcount basis

Includes all NICS Permanent staff with the exception of uniformed Prison service staff

Staff without a disability declaration have been placed in the 'No Declared Disability' category

Excludes staff who have not declared their ethnicity

\* For confidentiality reasons the number of cases is too small to publish (i.e. below the publication threshold of 10 employed by NISRA for Community Background, Disability and Ethnicity data)

# Number has been suppressed to avoid disclosing another number that is too small to publish.

TABLE 3 COMPOSITIONAL PROFILE OF NICS BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP AT 1 JAN 2009

Occupational Group	Total Staff		Gender				Community Background					
	No	Col %	Female		Male		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined	
			No	Row %	No	Row %	No	Row %	No	Row %	No	Row %
General Service	19,150	70.0	11,931	62.3	7,219	37.7	9,153	47.8	9,685	50.6	312	1.6
Secretarial	500	1.8	497	99.4	3	0.6	288	57.6	#		*	
Scientific	506	1.9	222	43.9	284	56.1	285	56.3	180	35.6	41	8.1
Technology	1,729	6.3	299	17.3	1,430	82.7	951	55.0	732	42.3	46	2.7
Legal	324	1.2	206	63.6	118	36.4	129	39.8	184	56.8	11	3.4
Computing	649	2.4	158	24.3	491	75.7	331	51.0	305	47.0	13	2.0
Specialisms	2,969	10.9	739	24.9	2,230	75.1	1,656	55.8	1,175	39.6	138	4.6
Centralised Services	365	1.3	97	26.6	268	73.4	231	63.3	#		#	
Industrial and No Group	1,157	4.2	48	4.1	1,109	95.9	627	54.2	478	41.3	52	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,349</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>14,197</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>13,152</b>	<b>48.1</b>	<b>13,651</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>13,068</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>2.3</b>

Occupational Group	Total Staff		Declared Disability		Ethnic Minority	
	No	Col %	No	Row %	No	Row %
General Service	19,150	70.0	1094	5.7	24	0.1
Typing	500	1.8	25	5.0	0	0.0
Scientific	506	1.9	20	4.0	*	
Technology	1,729	6.3	53	3.1	*	
Legal	324	1.2	10	3.1	*	
Computing	649	2.4	30	4.6	*	
Specialisms	2,969	10.9	115	3.9	*	
Centralised Services	365	1.3	26	7.1	0	0.0
Industrial and No Group	1,157	4.2	40	3.5	*	
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,349</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,413</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>0.2</b>

**Notes:**

Data sourced from HRConnect & Additional DOJ databases

Staff numbers are provided on a headcount basis

Includes all NICS Permanent staff with the exception of uniformed Prison service staff

Staff without a disability declaration have been placed in the 'No Declared Disability' category

Excludes staff who have not declared their ethnicity

\* For confidentiality reasons the number of cases is too small to publish (i.e. below the publication threshold of 10 employed by NISRA for Community Background, Disability and Ethnicity data)

# Number has been suppressed to avoid disclosing another number that is too small to publish.

**Departmental Demographics**

**Mr P Maskey** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 5048/08, to detail the (i) actual; and (ii) percentage composition profile of each Department/agency in each year from January 2009 to January 2012, broken down by gender and cross-referenced against community background (including non-determined).

**(AQW 6411/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Northern Ireland Civil Service personnel database is sourced from HRConnect and a number of Department of Justice databases, a process which requires considerable collation and validation, consequently data for 1st Jan 2012 is not available at this time.

Information for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 is set out in the attached tables overleaf. In order to ensure confidentiality it has been necessary to suppress some numbers where the value is less than 10.

**TABLE 1 COMPOSITIONAL PROFILE OF NICS BY DEPARTMENT, WITH GENDER CROSS-REFERENCED BY COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AT 1 JAN 2011**

Dept	Total staff		Females						Males					
			Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined	
			No	Col %	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Males	No	Row % Males
DARD	3,075	11.1%	596	49.2%	574	47.4%	42	3.5%	943	50.6%	854	45.8%	66	3.5%
DCAL	296	1.1%	63	47.4%	#	#	*		83	50.9%	70	42.9%	10	6.1%
DE	635	2.3%	261	64.8%	#	#	#		131	56.5%	#		*	
DETI	630	2.3%	212	62.7%	#	#	*		180	61.6%	#		*	
DFFP	3,610	13.0%	918	52.4%	804	45.9%	30	1.7%	1,031	55.5%	788	42.4%	39	2.1%
DEL	2,143	7.7%	574	39.6%	853	58.9%	21	1.5%	298	42.9%	385	55.4%	12	1.7%
DHSSPS	769	2.8%	237	59.1%	#	#	#		213	57.9%	#		*	
DOE	2,799	10.1%	652	47.7%	679	49.7%	36	2.6%	753	52.6%	623	43.5%	56	3.9%
DRD	2,493	9.0%	262	42.6%	#	#	*		1,033	55.0%	#		#	
CMED	1,490	5.4%	#		433	54.1%	*		318	46.2%	361	52.4%	10	1.5%
DSD (Core)	801	2.9%	#		244	54.7%	*		#		195	54.9%	*	
SSA	5,486	19.8%	1,428	41.7%	1,958	57.2%	39	1.1%	819	39.7%	1,216	59.0%	26	1.3%
OFMDFM	393	1.4%	134	60.6%	#	#	*		95	55.2%	#		*	
DOJ	2,516	9.1%	982	61.0%	550	34.2%	77	4.8%	559	61.6%	277	30.5%	71	7.8%
PPS	565	2.0%	#		186	52.1%	*		#		111	53.4%	*	
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,701</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,041</b>	<b>48.5%</b>	<b>7,183</b>	<b>49.4%</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>6,697</b>	<b>50.8%</b>	<b>6,087</b>	<b>46.2%</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>3.0%</b>

**Notes:**

Data sourced from HRConnect & Additional DOJ databases

Staff numbers are provided on a headcount basis

Includes all NICS Permanent staff with the exception of uniformed Prison service staff

\* For confidentiality reasons the number of cases is too small to publish (i.e. below the publication threshold of 10 employed by NISRA for Community Background data)

# Number has been suppressed to avoid disclosing another number that is too small to publish.

**TABLE 2 COMPOSITIONAL PROFILE OF NICS BY DEPARTMENT, WITH GENDER CROSS-REFERENCED BY COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AT 1 JAN 2010**

Dept	Total staff		Females						Males					
	No	Col %	Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined	
			No	Row % Females	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Males	No	Row % Males	No	Row % Males
DARD	3,098	11.3%	596	48.9%	582	47.7%	42	3.4%	957	51.0%	851	45.3%	70	3.7%
DCAL	307	1.1%	67	47.2%	#	#	*	51.5%	85	51.5%	#	#	#	#
DE	662	2.4%	268	64.9%	133	32.2%	12	2.9%	143	57.4%	96	38.6%	10	4.0%
DETI	652	2.4%	209	60.6%	#	#	*	59.9%	184	59.9%	#	#	#	#
DFP	3,559	13.0%	893	53.1%	759	45.1%	31	1.8%	1,053	56.1%	783	41.7%	40	2.1%
DEL	2,024	7.4%	560	40.8%	791	57.6%	23	1.7%	275	42.3%	363	55.8%	12	1.8%
DHSSPS	852	3.1%	259	59.3%	166	38.0%	12	2.7%	236	56.9%	169	40.7%	10	2.4%
DOE	2,983	10.9%	700	47.6%	733	49.8%	38	2.6%	795	52.6%	659	43.6%	58	3.8%
DRD	2,601	9.5%	278	43.7%	#	#	*	55.3%	1,086	55.3%	#	#	#	#
CMED	1,602	5.8%	383	44.2%	472	54.4%	12	1.4%	350	47.6%	373	50.7%	12	1.6%
DSD (Core)	728	2.7%	#	#	222	56.2%	*	57.4%	#	#	191	57.4%	#	#
SSA	5,767	21.0%	1,515	41.9%	2,061	57.0%	42	1.2%	859	40.0%	1,263	58.8%	27	1.3%

Dept	Females						Males							
	Total staff		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined	
	No	Col %	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Males	No	Row % Males	No	Row % Males
OFMDFM	421	1.5%	146	60.6%	#	#	*	95	52.8%	#	#	*		
NIO	2,086	7.6%	798	60.2%	471	35.5%	56	4.2%	472	62.0%	254	33.4%	35	4.6%
Other	57	0.2%	17	68.0%	*	*	0	0.0%	18	56.3%	#	#	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,399</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,859</b>	<b>48.3%</b>	<b>7,036</b>	<b>49.6%</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>6,740</b>	<b>51.0%</b>	<b>6,103</b>	<b>46.2%</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>2.8%</b>

**Notes:**

Data sourced from HRConnect & Additional DOJ databases

Staff numbers are provided on a headcount basis

Includes all NICS Permanent staff with the exception of uniformed Prison service staff

\* For confidentiality reasons the number of cases is too small to publish (i.e. below the publication threshold of 10 employed by NISRA for Community Background data)

# Number has been suppressed to avoid disclosing another number that is too small to publish.

**TABLE 3 COMPOSITIONAL PROFILE OF NICS BY DEPARTMENT, WITH GENDER CROSS-REFERENCED BY COMMUNITY BACKGROUND AT 1 JAN 2009**

Dept	Females						Males							
	Total staff		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined	
	No	Col %	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Males	No	Row % Males	No	Row % Males
DARD	3,158	11.5%	611	48.9%	593	47.5%	45	3.6%	977	51.2%	857	44.9%	75	3.9%
DCAL	282	1.0%	71	50.7%	#	#	*		78	54.9%	#	#	*	
DE	685	2.5%	275	65.3%	#	#	#		147	55.7%	#	#	*	
DETI	691	2.5%	223	60.6%	#	#	*		186	57.6%	#	#	#	



Dept	Total staff		Females						Males					
			Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined		Protestant		Catholic		Not Determined	
			No	Col %	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Females	No	Row % Males	No	Row % Males	No	Row % Males
DFFP	3,599	13.2%	906	53.4%	754	44.5%	36	2.1%	1,077	56.6%	784	41.2%	42	2.2%
DEL	1,931	7.1%	#	#	757	57.3%	#	#	#	#	349	57.1%	*	#
DHSSPS	883	3.2%	262	57.5%	184	40.4%	10	2.2%	239	56.0%	175	41.0%	13	3.0%
DOE	2,986	10.9%	719	48.4%	730	49.1%	38	2.6%	789	52.6%	655	43.7%	55	3.7%
DRD	2,642	9.7%	295	44.0%	#	#	*	#	1,114	56.5%	#	#	#	#
CMED	1,721	6.3%	#	#	506	54.6%	#	#	#	#	412	51.9%	*	#
DSD (Core)	732	2.7%	#	#	221	55.9%	*	#	#	#	190	56.4%	#	#
SSA	5,531	20.2%	1,458	41.4%	2,019	57.3%	46	1.3%	787	39.2%	1,190	59.3%	31	1.5%
OFMDFM	410	1.5%	145	62.0%	#	#	*	#	99	56.3%	#	#	*	#
NIO	1,940	7.1%	767	62.1%	442	35.8%	26	2.1%	440	62.4%	239	33.9%	26	3.7%
Other	158	0.6%	56	73.7%	#	#	*	#	47	57.3%	#	#	*	#
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,349</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,909</b>	<b>48.7%</b>	<b>7,018</b>	<b>49.4%</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>6,742</b>	<b>51.3%</b>	<b>6,050</b>	<b>46.0%</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>2.7%</b>

**Notes:**

Data sourced from HRConnect & Additional DOJ databases

Staff numbers are provided on a headcount basis

Includes all NICS Permanent staff with the exception of uniformed Prison service staff

\* For confidentiality reasons the number of cases is too small to publish (i.e. below the publication threshold of 10 employed by NISRA for Community Background data)

# Number has been suppressed to avoid disclosing another number that is too small to publish.

## Pay Pressure Due to Settlement of High Court Case

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the 'pay pressure due to settlement of High Court case' referred to in Tables D and E which accompanied his statement to the Assembly on 17 January 2012 on the January Monitoring Round.

**(AQW 6700/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The issue relates to a breach of contract case taken against the NIO and the Department of Finance and Personnel by 53 lawyers employed by the Northern Ireland Civil Service. In December 2011, the parties agreed to settle. The terms of the settlement remain to be finalised. The Public Prosecution Service has bid for resources to enable it to meet any liabilities arising from the settlement.

## Small Business Rate Relief Scheme

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the uptake of the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme in the (i) Ballymoney; (ii) Ballymena; and (iii) Moyle council areas.

**(AQW 6995/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The number of properties benefitting from the current Small Business Rate Relief Scheme in the Ballymoney, Ballymena and Moyle Council areas are 431, 911 and 424 respectively as at 22nd January 2012.

## Sports and Recreation Rate Relief Scheme

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the football clubs which currently benefit from Sports and Recreation Rate Relief.

**(AQW 7024/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Association football clubs are not identified separately in the valuation list from all other clubs that currently receive Sport and Recreation Relief. Extracting the details solely for football clubs from the list of all organisations that benefit from the Relief, is based on occupier name information only. Based on this, the football clubs currently benefitting from the Relief are shown in the table attached.

Some football clubs may also have associated social clubs occupying separate premises which also enjoy Sport and Recreation Relief in respect of other (non-football) recreational activities. These properties are not included in the list below.

Name of Club	Address
Annagh United FC	151 Tandragee Road, Annagh, Portadown, Armagh, BT62 3BP
Ardmore Cricket & Football Club	62B Ardmore Road, Ballyshasky, Londonderry, BT47 3QZ
Ardstraw Football Club	Unit D, 1 Douglas Road, crosbalinree, Newtown Stewart, BT78 4ne
Armagh City Football Club	Unit A, HOLM PARK, 41 Ballynahonemore Road, Ballynahone More, Armagh, BT60 1JD
Armoy United Football Club	28A DRONES ROAD, MOYAVER UPPER, ARMOY, BALLYMONEY, BT53 8XJ
Ballyclare Comrades Social Club	25The Square, Ballyclare, BT39 9BB
Ballymoney United Football Club	Showgrounds , 4A North Road, Town Parks, Ballymoney BT53 6BW

<b>Name of Club</b>	<b>Address</b>
Ballynahinch United FC	8 DOWNPATRICK ROAD, BALLYLONE BIG, BALLYNAHINCH BT24 8SH
Banbridge Town FC	2 LAWS LANE, BANBRIDGE, BT32 4BQ
Barn United Football Club	4 TAYLORS AVENUE, NORTH EAST DIVISION, CARRICKFERGUS, , BT38 7HF
Carrickfergus Rangers Football Club	2 Taylors Avenue, North East Division, Carrickfergus BT38 7HF
Chimney Corner FC	51 CASTLE ROAD, KILBEGS, ANTRIM BT41 4NA
Crumlin United Football Club	26 Mill Road, Ballytromery, Crumlin, BT29 4XL
Coagh United FC	11 BALLINDERRY BRIDGE ROAD, COAGH, BT80 0BF
Desertmartin Football Club	34 Dromore Road, Dromore, Desertmartin, Magherafelt BT45 5JZ
Dollingstown FC	PLANTER'S PARK, 80 DROMORE ROAD, DONAGHCLONEY BT66 7NF
Drumaness Soccer Club	156A Drumaness Road, Cumber, Drumaness, BT24 8RL
H.& W.Welders Football Club	370 HOLYWOOD ROAD, BELFAST, BT4 1SL
Islandmagee Fc	68 MIDDLE ROAD, ISLANDMAGEE, BALLYSTRUDDER, LARNE BT40 3SX
Iveagh United Fc	1 THORNHILL ROAD, DUNMURRY, BELFAST BT17 9EJ
Killen Rangers Football Club	Unit D 1, Main Street, Killen, Castlederg, BT81 7SE
Knockbreda FC	31 Upper Braniel Road, Braniel, Belfast, BT5 7TX
Larne Football Club	7A Inver Road, Larne BT40 3BW
Limavady United Football Club	15 RATHMORE ROAD, LIMAVADY, BT49 0DF
Lurgan Celtic Football Club	84A NORTH STREET, LURGAN, CRAIGAVON, BT67 9AJ
Mountjoy United Football Club	1 LISNAGIRR ROAD, OMAGH, BT78 5NT
North Fermanagh Cricket & Association Football Club.	39 CREVENISH ROAD, ROSSCOLBAN, KESH, CO FERMANAGH, BT93 1RF
Northwest Football Association	WILTON PARK, 41B LIMAVADY ROAD, LONDONDERRY, BT47 6LP
Park Football Club	101 ALTINURE ROAD, ALTINURE UPPER, CLAUDY, LONDONDERRY, BT47 4DE
Penarol FC	120 RAILWAY STREET, BALLYMENA BT42 2AF
Portstewart FC	Seahaven, 32 St Johns Close, Portstewart, BT55 7HJ
Seagoe FC	8A TARSAN LANE, PORTADOWN BT63 5RT

<b>Name of Club</b>	<b>Address</b>
Tobermore Football Club	16 MAGHERA ROAD, TOBERMORE, MAGHERAFELT, BT45 5QB
Trustees of Abbey Villa Football Club	91 Abbey Road, Ballymacruise, Millisle, BT22 2DG
Trustees of Ards Rangers FC	DROME PARK, 53 PORTAFERRY ROAD, NEWTOWNARDS, BT23 8SG
Trustees of Ballinamallard United	70 Enniskillen Road, Ferney, Drummurry, Ballinamallard, BT94 2EG
Trustees of Bangor Amateur Football Club	102 CLANDEBOYE ROAD, BANGOR, BT20 3JU
Trustees of Crewe United Football Club	95 Lisburn Road, Ballypitmave, Crumlin, BT29 4NY
Trustees of Downshire Football Club	30 OLD COACH ROAD, , HILLSBOROUGH, BT26 6PB
Trustees of Dunmurry Football Club	23 Ashley Park, Dunmurry, Belfast, Antrim, BT17 9EH
Trustees of Fivemiletown United Football Club	39 COONEEN ROAD, FIVEMILETOWN, BT75 ONF
Trustees of Killyleagh Youth Football Club	40 COMBER ROAD, CORPORATION, DOWNPATRICK, BT30 9QZ
Trustees of Lisbellaw United FC.	30 DRUMEER ROAD, DRUMAD, LISBELLAW, CO FERMANAGH, BT94 5DG
Trustees of Loughgall F.C.	LAKEVIEW PARK, 37 BALLYGASEY ROAD, BALLYGASSEY, LOUGHGALL, ARMAGH, BT61 8HY
Trustees of Moyola Park FC	Mill Meadow, 25 Bridge Street, Castledawson, BT45 8EB
Trustees of Oxford United Football Club	57 Silverwood Road, Knockramer, Lurgan, Craigavon BT66 6LE
Warrenpoint Town Football Club	65B Upper Dromore Road, Dromore, Warrenpoint, Newry BT34 3PN
Wellington Recreation Football Club	1Willowbank Road, Millbrook , Larne, BT40 2SF

### **Unoccupied Properties**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 3380/11-15, to detail the amount of cash receipts from unoccupied properties since 31 October 2011.

**(AQW 7047/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** From 1st November 2011 to 29th January 2012 a total of £2.659M has been receipted in respect of domestic properties that are currently unoccupied in Northern Ireland.

### **Government Contracts**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what measures are in place to encourage small and medium-sized businesses to tender for government contracts.

**(AQW 7155/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Small and medium sized businesses are the backbone of the Northern Ireland economy and I am delighted that SMEs have been successful in winning many of our public sector contracts. For example, between May 2008 and November 2010 73% of contracts awarded by CPD and the Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs) went to SMEs.

Public procurement opportunities are open to all and the Procurement Board, which I chair, has a key objective in its Strategic Plan to target the use of public procurement to support economic growth. The Board has also endorsed a number of initiatives, specifically targeted at encouraging SMEs to tender for public sector business. These include -

- the development of a simplified procurement process for low value contracts;
- guidance aimed at SMEs to help demystify the public sector procurement process;
- guidance for public sector buyers to help remove barriers to small businesses tendering for contracts;
- the implementation of eSourcing NI, a single electronic portal advertising all government tendering opportunities over £30k; and
- “Meet the buyer” events which explain the tendering procedures and engage with the supply base in a real and meaningful way. CPD alone supported 53 “Meet the Buyer” events around the province between March 2008 and September 2011 attended by approximately 2,600 suppliers.

### **Number of Immigrant Workers**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the current number of immigrant workers.

**(AQW 7172/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The closest approximation to the information requested comes from the July - September 2011 Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS estimated<sup>1</sup> that there were some 71,000 people aged 16 and over in employment in Northern Ireland who were born outside the UK. [An estimated 55,000 of these were born outside both the UK and the Republic of Ireland.]

1 Since the LFS is a sample survey, these estimates are subject to sampling variation.

### **Courier Service and Dispatch of Documents within the Civil Service**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what changes have been made in the last 12 months, or are intended to be made, to the courier service and the dispatch of documents within the Civil Service.

**(AQW 7191/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** There have been no changes made in the last 12 months to the NICS internal courier service or to the way in which documents are dispatched. The service will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure it remains efficient and meets NICS requirements.

### **Formal Grievance Procedure in the Civil Service**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what remedies are available through the formal grievance procedure in the Civil Service.

**(AQW 7192/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The NICS grievance procedures state that a grievance is any complaint, concern, or problem which a staff member has in relation to an employment-related matter. Due to this broad definition there is no set list of remedies that a Department can implement or suggest to resolve a complaint. However if an employee's grievance is upheld, the Department will take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that the individual's complaint is satisfactorily dealt with.

## International Labour Organisation

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) International Labour Organisation; and (ii) claimant count unemployment statistics for each year since 2006, broken down by gender; and the number of these people who were under the age of 26.

**(AQW 7240/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Claimant Count data, detailing unemployment statistics, can be found in the tables attached. Please note, that the LFS measure of unemployment is consistent with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) measure.

### LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

#### UNEMPLOYMENT BY GENDER (16+).

Period <sup>1</sup>	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2006	25,000	5.8	13,000	3.7	39,000	4.8
2007	20,000	4.6	13,000	3.6	34,000	4.1
2008	24,000	5.3	8,000	2.3	32,000	4.0
2009	38,000	8.5	16,000	4.5	54,000	6.7
2010	42,000	9.3	16,000	4.4	59,000	7.1
Jul-Sept 2011	41,000	8.9	22,000	5.5	63,000	7.3

1 Annual data are derived from an annual LFS dataset; Jul –Sept 2011 data are from the quarterly LFS series.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT FOR THOSE AGED UNDER 26.

Period <sup>1</sup>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Jul-Sept 2011
Number <sup>2</sup>	16,000	15,000	16,000	24,000	25,000	28,000

1 Annual data are derived from an annual LFS dataset; Jul –Sept 2011 data are from the quarterly LFS series.

2 Sample size too small to provide reliable estimates for male and female totals.

#### Claimant Count

The table below provides the annual average for the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits with the percentage of population aged 16 to 64:

Year	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2006	20,940	3.8	7,010	1.2	27,950	2.5
2007	18,382	3.3	6,023	1.1	24,405	2.1
2008	21,597	3.8	6,258	1.1	27,855	2.4
2009	38,465	6.7	10,646	1.8	49,111	4.3
2010	42,976	7.5	13,838	2.4	56,813	4.9

Year	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
2011	43,115	7.5	16,795	2.9	59,910	5.2

**Notes:** Data are not seasonally adjusted

Claimant Count information is only available for 16-64 population.

The table below provides annual average for the number of people aged under 26 who are claiming unemployment related benefits in Northern Ireland:

Year	Male	Female	Total
2006	6,950	3,020	9,970
2007	6,105	2,530	8,635
2008	7,780	2,745	10,520
2009	13,960	4,405	18,365
2010	14,925	5,125	20,045
2011	14,835	5,670	20,505

**Notes:** Youth Claimant count refers to those aged under 26, and does not include clerical claimant that make up less than one per cent of total.

Data rounded to 5 and are not seasonally adjusted.

## Vacant Properties

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many vacant properties, whose ownership has yet to be identified, there are in each council area.

**(AQW 7257/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The latest figures available, as at 29th January 2012, indicate that the total number of vacant properties whose ownership is not identified within Northern Ireland is 19,895. The table below provides a breakdown of the total by District Council.

### NUMBER OF VACANT PROPERTIES, WHOSE OWNERSHIP IS NOT IDENTIFIED, AS AT 29TH JANUARY 2012

District Council Area	Total
Antrim	321
Ards	789
Armagh	740
Ballymena	470
Ballymoney	259
Banbridge	565
Belfast	4,521
Carrickfergus	299

<b>District Council Area</b>	<b>Total</b>
Castlereagh	315
Coleraine	713
Cookstown	459
Craigavon	837
Derry	768
Down	708
Dungannon and South Tyrone	825
Fermanagh	1,644
Larne	281
Limavady	308
Lisburn	771
Magherafelt	419
Moyle	187
Newry and Mourne	1,186
Newtownabbey	524
North Down	482
Omagh	1,073
Strabane	430
District Council Area not known	1
<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>	<b>19,895</b>

## **Rates Amendment Bill**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many business might benefit from the passage of the Rates Amendment Bill.

**(AQW 7333/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Assembly has approved legislation that will raise most of the £6m a year required to fund the extension of the small business rate relief scheme. This will enable a further 8,300 business ratepayers to benefit from the expanded scheme over the next three years.

20% relief will be provided on properties with a net annual value of £5,001 –£10,000. The amount of relief under the main scheme will be broadly doubled, increasing the number receiving help by around 50%. The average award will be in the region of £740 per year.

It should be noted that to preserve the scheme's automatic nature it will apply to all non domestic ratepayers with small premises at or below a £10,000 net annual value but exclude businesses with more than three premises. Some types of property are excluded as well, such as car parks, advertising hoardings and telecommunications masts. You may be interested to know that around two thirds of rateable properties have an NAV of £10,000 or less.

The other measures contained in the Bill that will benefit businesses include providing a 50% rebate on occupation of long term empty retail premises and allowing 50% empty property relief to continue where a show window display is used for non-commercial purposes in empty retail premises. At



this stage while it is difficult to estimate the number of businesses that may avail of each of these measures I would put it in the hundreds rather than thousands.

### **Special European Union Programmes Body**

**Mr Craig** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the measures his Department is taking to ensure that the Special EU Programmes Body maximises its possible spend.

**(AQO 1266/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** DFP officials are liaising closely with SEUPB to ensure that the PEACE III and INTERREG IVA Programmes spend their budgets in full and achieve their respective EU spending targets. If Programmes fail to meet these spending targets, the EU deducts the shortfall from the relevant Programme budget. My officials are working with SEUPB to make sure that this does not happen. Our aim is that all targets will be achieved and no funds deducted.

No measures are in place for PEACE as SEUPB report that it is spending well. However, SEUPB have advised that there is a significant risk that INTERREG will miss its targets in 2013 and 2014 and that as much as £35 million might be deducted. SEUPB say that this is the likely outcome if INTERREG does not increase the pace at which its funds are allocated and then spent. There is about £78 million in the INTERREG budget left to allocate to projects. SEUPB's current plan is to have it all allocated before the end of the year. (It has to be allocated by then if the projects are to have a realistic chance of spending before the Programme closes in December 2015). Allocating £78 million to suitable projects before the end of the year is a challenging objective. My officials are meeting regularly with SEUPB and are closely monitoring progress.

### **Special European Union Programmes Body**

**Mr Murphy** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what measures are in place to ensure that PEACE and INTERREG funds are fully spent by the Special EU Programmes Body in the current programmes.

**(AQO 1258/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** SEUPB have reported no spending difficulties with the PEACE III Programme. Therefore, there are no special measures in place to ensure that PEACE III will spend its budget and achieve its EU spending targets. With regard to the INTERREG IVA Programme, SEUPB have advised that it will fail to meet its EU spending targets in 2013 or 2014, or in both those years if the current pace of commitment and spend continues. When a Programme fails to meet its EU spending targets, the EU deducts the shortfall from the Programme budget. SEUPB have advised that as much as £35 million might be at risk but the Body is actively taking steps to manage this risk and ensure that no money is lost.

The INTERREG Programme has around £78 million still to allocate to projects. SEUPB plans to allocate this £78 million to projects by December this year. This should allow the projects in question ample time in which to spend and thereby help achieve EU targets. If all goes to SEUPB's plan, the Programme will achieve its EU spending targets and no money will be deducted from its budget. My officials will closely monitor SEUPB's actual performance via regular progress meetings.

### **Departmental Budgets**

**Mr B McCrea** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether Departments are now permitted to switch resources from their programme funding into administration without the approval of his Department or the Executive.

**(AQO 1262/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Over the last Budget period (2008-2011) the Executive operated an administration cost control regime to ensure that there was an incentive on departments to eliminate needless bureaucracy and waste. This approach was successful in bearing down on administration costs,

however it became clear to me from discussions with Ministerial colleagues that costs of operating this regime had reached a point where they would outweigh the benefits anticipated from its continuation.

The Executive agreed in Budget 2011-15 that the administrative control regime should be suspended providing departmental Ministers with the flexibility to manage the resources at their disposal.

Departments however do continue to report administration costs to DFP and this is reported to the Assembly at each Monitoring round. Encouragingly the 2011-12 January Monitoring round showed a decrease of 3.8% in total departmental administration costs from the Budget 2011-15 opening position.

## **Public Sector Pensions**

**Mr Dunne** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on public sector pension negotiations.

**(AQO 1263/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Public service pension negotiations have been conducted at central government level with trades unions.

Public service pension policy is a transferred matter but it has been a matter of practice for many decades that the pension arrangements for public service workers in Northern Ireland have been virtually identical to the equivalent arrangements in Great Britain.

With regard specifically to Increased Member Contributions the Northern Ireland Executive agreed on 22 September 2011 to:

- I. commit to the principle of delivering the targeted level of savings to the cost of public sector pension schemes in Northern Ireland, subject to the details of how those savings will be delivered being worked through over time;
- II. adopt this approach consistently for each of the different public sector pension schemes; and
- III. authorise engagement with the unions to discuss a graduated approach which protects lower paid public sector workers.

Ministers who have responsibility for the various Northern Ireland public sector pension schemes will take this forward. My Department is progressing the consultation processes in respect of the civil service pension scheme.

The agreement of the Northern Ireland Executive is required to implement the proposals for long term reform to public service schemes, including the move to career average schemes and pension age linked to State Pension Age. I will bring this matter to the Executive for consideration.

## **Rates: Empty Shops**

**Mr Irwin** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the fifty percent rates relief on empty shops includes premises located in out of town shopping developments.

**(AQO 1264/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The proposal for a 50% rates concession for the occupation of long term empty shops applies throughout Northern Ireland and is not confined to town centres.

To do so would create significant difficulties defining what is in town, edge of town and out of town and the current town planning categories are not current or accurate enough to use for the purposes of local taxation. I will not have my Department hauled through the courts at public expense for creating a targeted incentive scheme that has imperfections. This is a one year scheme and therefore I want to keep it as straightforward as possible to administer.

As it happens most long term empty shops are in town anyway so this is where the scheme is expected to have most impact.

## Welfare Reform Bill

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what implications the Welfare Reform Bill will have for his Department.

**(AQO 1265/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Welfare Reform Bill has major implications for Northern Ireland. In relation to my Department, the abolition of Housing Benefit next year and in particular the rates element of Housing Benefit, is of most concern, as it will not be covered by the new Universal Credit system.

If the current proposals are passed by the Coalition Government this will require the Executive to consider an alternative way of providing support. The demand led AME funding from the Government for the current scheme will be converted to a fixed DEL allocation but with a 10% cut.

I am currently working with Ministerial colleagues on the Executive Sub Group on Welfare Reform to examine this important issue.

## Economy

**Mr Molloy** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of when the economy is likely to recover.

**(AQO 1267/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** Current global economic conditions are extremely challenging. While some sectors of our local economy are continuing to perform relatively well it is clear that the recovery for others will take longer.

For the UK as a whole the Office for Budget Responsibility has recently (29 November 2011) revised its growth forecasts downwards. There are no official regional forecasts for Northern Ireland but if the pace of the UK's recovery overall is slower than previously hoped then this will have implications for the pace of growth in all regions including Northern Ireland.

## Procurement

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps are being taken to improve procurement policy.

**(AQO 1268/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** The Procurement Board is responsible for the development of public procurement policy and for monitoring its implementation within Northern Ireland public bodies.

Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) is responsible for the formulation and review of policy in consultation with major stakeholders in the Centres of Procurement Expertise for endorsement by the Procurement Board and, as appropriate, by the Executive.

Within this structure there is a programme of work which has been developed following engagement with stakeholders including contractor/supplier representatives. The current focus is on simplified processes for low value procurements.

Since June 2010 the Procurement Board has approved five new guidance notes on topics such as selection, evaluation and contract management and updated a further five. In addition there are currently a number of others in production or under review which I expect to be published within the next few months.

## Fiscal Powers

**Mr P Maskey** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has had discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer regarding the transfer of fiscal powers to the Assembly.

**(AQO 1269/11-15)**

**Mr Wilson:** I have had ongoing discussions with the Government on the transfer of certain fiscal powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly over the last eighteen months.

The Chancellor has already agreed that Air Passenger Duty on direct long haul flights will be devolved and officials are urgently working through the implementation issues associated with this.

I, alongside Executive colleagues, am currently working with the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the Ministerial Working Group on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland economy where the key consideration is the possible devolution of Corporation Tax powers. This work has also included correspondence and discussions with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor. This Ministerial Working Group is also considering what other steps can be taken to support our wider economic rebalancing objectives and we have raised a number of non corporation tax options with the Treasury, in particular, investment allowances, R&D tax credits and national insurance holidays.

And outside this rebalancing work, I have also raised concerns with the Chancellor in relation to the suspension of the Aggregate Levy Credit Scheme and the Carbon Price Floor. While we are not calling for devolution in these instances, I have called on the Government to take action in both regards to mitigate the impact of these taxes on Northern Ireland and work is ongoing on these important issues also.

## Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

### Fire and Rescue Service Recruitment Drive

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people initially failed an aspect of the aptitude test as part of the recruitment process in the 2011 Fire and Rescue Service recruitment drive, but successfully passed the test following an appeal.

**(AQW 6875/11-15)**

**Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** I understand that, of the 373 candidates who failed the practical aptitude test, 37 candidates were successful after re-testing.

### Lifetime Ban on Gay and Bisexual Men Donating Blood

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the agencies and organisations he has had meetings with in relation to the lifetime ban on gay and bisexual men donating blood; (ii) when he plans to make a decision on lifting the lifetime ban, following the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs, for a one-year deferral period; and (iii) the countries in Great Britain from which Northern Ireland has received blood in (a) November 2011, (b) December 2011 and (c) January 2012.

**(AQW 6961/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:**

- (i) In relation to blood donations by men who have had sex with men I have had meetings with the Office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO), and the Rainbow Project.
- (ii) I will make a decision on this matter when I have considered all the relevant evidence and legal advice.
- (iii) Regarding blood received from other GB countries, the table below sets out the position at 25 January 2012.

Month	Country	Detail
November 2011	England (NHSBT)	4 units of phenotyped red cells imported for a patient with complex antibodies requiring urgent surgery.
December 2011	Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS)	50 units of group O neg red cells imported due to low stocks of O neg pre-Christmas.
January 2012*	Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS)	50 units of group O neg red cells imported due to low stocks post-Christmas

\* as of 25 January 2012

### Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Hospital, Derry

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the construction of the Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin Hospital, Derry.

**(AQW 6998/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** There are two stages to the project – the enabling works and the main project, each having a design and construction phase.

Design work associated with the enabling works is progressing well with the tendering process for the construction work due to be completed over the next couple of months. Construction of the enabling works is expected to commence in April 2012 and be completed in August 2013. In parallel with this, the process of appointing the design team for the main works is underway. Construction of the main works is planned to commence in late 2013 with the facility due to open in mid 2016.

### Suicides and Attempted Suicides

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of suicides in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area in each of the last three years; and (ii) what measures he will take to reduce the number of suicides and attempted suicides across Northern Ireland.

**(AQW 7115/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:**

- i) I have detailed below the number of deaths registered due to “suicide and self-inflicted injury”, or “undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposely inflicted” in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust area for each year between 2008 and 2010.

Registration Period	2008	2009	2010
Number of Suicide Deaths	69	47	51

- ii) The “Protect Life” strategy is currently being refreshed in light of findings from a review of international evidence and best practice. The “refreshed” strategy will be published in early 2012. Action will focus on: continued provision of the Lifeline services; training on suicide prevention; public awareness raising on the issue; continued support for community-led suicide prevention initiatives; local research into the causes of suicide; further development of community emergency response plans; projects and programmes to access vulnerable young men; and enhanced mental health crisis intervention services.

In addition, an independent evaluation of Protect Life is now underway, the outcome of which will inform future suicide and self-harm prevention policy in Northern Ireland.

## **PIP Breast Implants**

**Mr McCarthy** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of concerns about faulty PIP breast implants, what consideration his Department has given to testicular cancer patients who opted to have a prosthetic testicle fitted.

**(AQW 7128/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Information provided by the HSC indicates that PIP testicular implants have not been used in the Health Service

## **PIP Prosthetic Testicles**

**Mr McCarthy** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether PIP prosthetic testicles have ever been used by the Health Service; and what assurances he can give that men who have received them via the Health Service will have them removed and replaced free of charge.

**(AQW 7133/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Information provided by the HSC indicates that PIP testicular implants have not been used in the Health Service.

## **Fuel Allowance Initiative**

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the First Minister and deputy First Minister's announcement on the 8 December 2012, of a special payment of £100 through the Fuel Allowance Initiative for people receiving cancer treatment, to outline (i) when the payments will begin; and (ii) how potential recipients will be identified.

**(AQW 7142/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** It is intended that payments will be issued to patients, who wish to receive payment, in February 2012.

Eligible patients will be identified by their General Practitioners (GPs) who have been requested by the Health and Social Care Board to examine their Practice Cancer Registers to identify those patients who would be eligible for the fuel allowance payment. GPs have been asked to write to each eligible patient identified seeking their consent for their personal information to be used by the Business Services Organisation, to enable a payment to be made to them if they so desire. All eligible patients should have received a letter from their GP by 30 January

## **Financial Assistance for Students Undertaking Medical or Dental Graduate Entry Courses**

**Mr McElduff** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what financial assistance is available for students undertaking medical or dental graduate entry courses.

**(AQW 7208/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** My Department normally provides a non repayable grant for tuition fee costs and a means tested bursary for Year 5 Medical and Dental students undertaking a primary degree. Students already holding a degree are not eligible for this support. However, graduates can apply to their local Education & Library Board for a maintenance loan and supplementary allowances where applicable.

## **Oasis Healthcare in the Carrickfergus Area**

**Mr Beggs** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of Health Service patients registered with Oasis Healthcare in the Carrickfergus area; and (ii) how many have people are currently on the waiting list due to over-subscription. [R]

**(AQW 7213/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:**

- (i) The number of Health Service patients registered at the De Courcey Oasis Dental Practice in Carrickfergus as at January 2012 was 3,024. This information was obtained from the Family Practitioner Services, Information and Registration Unit of the HSC Business Services Organisation.
- (ii) The information requested is not available.

**Business Services Transformation Programme**

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the areas selected from the Business Services Transformation Programme proposals to become new centres of excellence were identified.

**(AQW 7226/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Sections 2 and 3 of the consultation document explain how the proposed shared service locations were identified.

Especially relevant from section 2 is the principle that there should be a “distribution of employment opportunities across Northern Ireland to minimise adverse economic impact”. Subject to that consideration, and to the availability of suitable premises, section 3 explains how the proposed centres of expertise have been selected. The approach taken comprises both analysis of the proximity of current staff to each of the proposed shared service accommodations, and the cost of making the accommodation ready for shared services occupation. In other words, the preferred option for the centres of expertise is one which emphasises fairness, business continuity and value for money.

**Pseudomonas Guidelines**

**Mr Lyttle** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the pseudomonas guidelines published on the Chief Medical Officer’s website in 2010 have been implemented.

**(AQW 7267/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** I have commissioned an independent review of the circumstances contributing to the occurrences of pseudomonas infection within neonatal units across Northern Ireland, which led to the tragic death of a baby in Altnagelvin Area Hospital and the tragic deaths of three babies in the Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit.

The Review will examine the actions and responses of the DHSSPS, the HSC Board, the Public Health Agency and the HSC Trusts to relevant circulars and advice issued in respect of water sources and potential infection risk to patients, issued on and since 15 September 2010. In doing so the Review will seek to determine the extent to which this advice has been implemented.

I have asked the Review team to present an interim report to me by the end of March 2012 and to present their final report within eight weeks of the interim report. I will present the findings of the Review to the Assembly at the earliest opportunity.

**Pseudomonas Bacteriain in Water Tanks**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the water tanks that service the Royal Jubilee Maternity Unit, Belfast and the Altnagelvin Area Hospital, Londonderry have been tested for the pseudomonas bacteria; and if so, what were the findings.

**(AQW 7270/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has confirmed that the water tanks supplying the Royal Jubilee Maternity Unit have been tested for pseudomonas and results have returned satisfactory. The Western Health and Social Care Trust has also confirmed that the water tanks serving the neonatal unit at Altnagelvin Hospital have been tested for Pseudomonas and are awaiting the results of the tests.

## Shared Services Proposals

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the Shared Services proposals, for an estimate of the number of jobs that are currently based in Belfast that might be relocated.

**(AQW 7341/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Based on the proposals which are out for public consultation, the estimated number of jobs currently based in Belfast that might be relocated is a maximum of 144, with a possible lower number between 62 and 72. The number of actual staff affected cannot as yet be estimated. That will become known only in light of their wishes for redeployment within their existing organisations, retraining etc.

## Implementation of the Bamford Review

**Mr W Clarke** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) for an update on the implementation of the Bamford Review; and (ii) for his assessment of how the review will affect the South Down constituency.

**(AQW 7410/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The cross-Departmental Bamford Action Plan 2009-2011, published in October 2009, has been the vehicle for taking forward implementation of the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability. This Action Plan has now come to an end. An evaluation of the 2009-2011 Plan is being finalised and I hope to publish this evaluation shortly. The evaluation indicates that, overall, 80% of actions committed to were achieved.

Work is also progressing on the development of the Bamford Action Plan 2012-2015 which I plan to issue for public consultation later in the year.

The Action Plan will again follow a regional approach to the delivery of the Bamford Vision, and will seek to ensure that services are provided to the same standard across Northern Ireland and are, as far as possible, delivered in the community rather than in hospitals.

## Prison Service: New Pharmacy Model

**Mr B McCrea** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether the new pharmacy model has been implemented by the Prison Service; and (ii) how many pharmacists will be employed under this model.

**(AQW 7416/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is responsible for the delivery of healthcare services in prisons.

- (i) The new dispensing contract between the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and Lloyds Pharmacy has been in place since 1st May 2011.
- (ii) The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust currently employs 1 full time Senior Prisons Pharmacist who is responsible for leading and developing pharmaceutical services within prisons and for monitoring the performance of the dispensing contract.

The NI Prison Service currently employs 1 full time pharmacy liaison officer and 8 healthcare assistants who are responsible for the day to day delivery of medicines management within the prisons.

Lloyds Pharmacy are responsible for employing sufficient staff to cover the needs of the dispensing contract. They currently employ 1 full time and 1 part time pharmacist, 2 full time pharmacy technicians and 2 delivery drivers.



## Waiting Time for Reversal Colorectal Surgery

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average waiting time for reversal colorectal surgery in each Health and Social Care Trust area in (i) 2009; and (ii) 2011.

**(AQW 7433/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** My Department collects waiting times for inpatient admission on the basis of the number of patients waiting and the length of time they have been waiting at a point in time.

Presented in the table below are the average waiting times for reversal colorectal surgery at each Health and Social Care Trust at 30th September 2009 and at 30th September 2011 (the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available).

HSC Trust	Waiting time position at 30th September 2009		Waiting time position at 30th September 2011	
	Total number waiting	Average waiting time	Total number waiting	Average waiting time
Belfast	2	9 weeks	3	21 weeks
Northern	1	5 weeks	5	34 weeks
South Eastern	2	6 weeks	3	19 weeks
Southern	1	8 weeks	5	10 weeks
Western	2	15 weeks	4	37 weeks
Northern Ireland	8	9 weeks	20	25 weeks

**Source:** DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset

The tables also show the numbers of patients waiting at each date at each HSC Trust. This illustrates that, at particular points in time, the waiting list is made up of very small numbers of patients, and there is the potential that this may skew the average.

## Mobile Phone Applications

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) any mobile phone applications that have been designed by his Department, and its arm's length bodies, for use by members of the public; and (ii) any that are currently being developed.

**(AQW 7458/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Neither my Department nor any of its ALBs has designed any mobile phone applications for use by members of the public, and no such applications are currently being designed or developed.

## Booking Line at Altnagelvin Area Hospital

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many staff are employed to operate the booking line at Altnagelvin Area Hospital; and whether there has been a change in the number of staff or hours of employment in the last 12 months.

**(AQW 7465/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Number of staff employed to operate the booking line at Altnagelvin Area Hospital

Date	Headcount	WTE
February 2011	15	14.91
February 2012	16	15.91

**Source:** Western Health and Social Care Trust

**Notes:**

- 1 WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
- 2 Western HSC Trust reported that they are doing a higher number of additional sessions this year which was generating a higher volume of calls.

### Alternative Therapies Scheme

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 4315/11-15, whether the complementary and alternative therapies provided in the Complementary and Alternative Medicines pilot scheme demonstrated value for money, compared to conventional treatment for musculoskeletal and mental health problems.

**(AQW 7481/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** I understand the Complementary and Alternate Medicines (CAM) Pilot Project funded by the Department in 2007/2008 aimed to treat patients with acute or chronic conditions who were referred by their GP. While the evaluation of the pilot demonstrated positive support from patient recipients it was not designed to investigate the effectiveness of CAM therapies, either individually, or in comparison to one another, or in comparison to conventional treatment, or over time. It was not a clinical trial or a research study.

In the light of the constrained budgetary environment faced by my Department I need to focus my resources on sustaining existing frontline health and social care services. As a result it is not possible to allocate any funding for CAM services during the current spending period.

### Child Dental Health

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that Northern Ireland is one of the worst performing regions in Europe for child dental health, whether he can offer an assurance that every child will have access to comprehensive and timely Health Service dental services by the end of the Programme for Government period.

**(AQW 7525/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Access to health service dentistry is very good across the Province. There are now more dentists in Northern Ireland than ever before and Northern Ireland currently enjoys its highest ever rate for children registered with dental practitioners.

The General Dental Services budget is expected to be under significant pressures in the next few years. My Department and the Health and Social Care Board have developed several savings proposals to help address the pressures whilst maintaining a core of services under the health service to protect and maintain the oral health of the population here. These are currently the subject of consultation with the British Dental Association (BDA).

My Department also continues to work with the Health and Social Care Board and the BDA to put in place new dental contracts which should provide a sustainable service to patients; a predictable remuneration package for the dental profession; and a more controlled method of managing the General Dental Services budget.

### Waiting Time for an Appointment with an Ophthalmologist

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what was the average waiting time for an appointment with an ophthalmologist in each Health and Social Care Trust area, in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 7529/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** From the quarter ending June 2008 there were substantial changes in how data on waiting times for a first outpatient appointment were collected, with aggregate weekly time bands replacing a

series of three monthly time bands. Therefore, to allow comparison, information is provided for the last four years.

While it is not possible to calculate an average waiting time from data collected in aggregate time bands, it is possible to calculate the median time band, a similar statistical measure.

The median waiting times for a first outpatient appointment with a consultant in the Ophthalmology specialty in each HSC Trust at 30th September 2011, the most recent quarter for which official statistics are available and the comparable position in the previous three years, are shown in the table below.

**MEDIAN WAITING TIME, IN AGGREGATE WEEKLY TIME BANDS<sup>1</sup>, FOR A FIRST OUTPATIENT APPOINTMENT IN THE OPHTHALMOLOGY SPECIALTY**

HSC Trust	Waiting Time Position @			
	30th Sep 2008	30th Sep 2009	30th Sep 2010	30th Sep 2011
Belfast	0-6 weeks	0-6 weeks	6-9 weeks	6-9 weeks
Northern <sup>2</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
South Eastern	0-6 weeks	0-6 weeks	9-13 weeks	6-9 weeks
Southern	0-6 weeks	0-6 weeks	9-13 weeks	13-21 weeks
Western	0-6 weeks	0-6 weeks	9-13 weeks	13-21 weeks

**Source:** Departmental Return CH3

<sup>1</sup>0-6 weeks: Waiting no longer than 6 weeks

6-9 weeks: Greater than 6 weeks but waiting no longer than 9 weeks

9-13 weeks: Greater than 9 weeks but waiting no longer than 13 weeks

13-21 weeks: Greater than 13 weeks but waiting no longer than 21 weeks

<sup>2</sup>The Northern HSC Trust does not provide outpatient services in the Ophthalmology specialty.

**Tristel Product**

**Mr T Clarke** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 6801/11-15, to detail (i) the health and safety concerns of staff in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area; (ii) how many complaints have been received about Tristel; and (iii) the problems with this product that have been identified.

**(AQW 7590/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:**

- (i) A number of staff raised concerns regarding health problems as a result of exposure to this bleach-based product. These are summarised below:
- Skin problems manifesting with red skin which has a scalded appearance most often over forearms and face;
  - Eye irritation;
  - Irritation of nasal linings with lesions;
  - Chest tightness and worsening of existing asthma and in one case new asthma presenting.

Despite changes to usage protocols and training, further problems continued.

- (ii) The total number of staff complaining of problems was 101. These staff were reported to occupational health who collated information and eventually advised against the continued use

of Tristel fusion. While the majority of complaints were of a less serious nature, a number of staff and in particular those with respiratory symptoms were a cause for concern. In order to establish the specific pattern of the health issues, a case-note audit of all reported adverse reactions was undertaken. This was shared with the employment medical adviser at the Health and Safety Executive.

- (iii) In addition to the issues outlined at (i), there were a number of specific direct hazards normally caused by practice issues and storage problems, for example, burst sachets spraying into eyes, product left on surfaces and a build up of fumes when the product is made up in confined spaces.

### **Business Services Transformation Programme Consultation Document**

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the incorrect contact email address printed on the Business Services Transformation Programme consultation document, what action his Department is taking to rectify this error.

**(AQW 7596/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** There was no 'incorrect' email address printed in the Business Services Transformation Programme (BSTP) consultation document. There have been two different addresses in use, each of which will correctly channel the public's responses to the BSTP Project Team.

I understand that, quite separately, on Friday 27th January the HSC's ICT infrastructure suffered intermittent outage. That fault, since rectified, may have resulted in some emailed responses being bounced back to the senders. I regret any inconvenience caused by that occurrence, but comments will now get through. The public consultation does not end until Wednesday 29 February.

### **Cyberknife Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy**

**Mr Lyttle** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients have been refused a referral for cyberknife stereotactic body radiotherapy in the last year.

**(AQW 7629/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Information on the number of patients who have been refused a referral for CyberKnife stereotactic body radiotherapy is not collected centrally. Identification of the number of such patients can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

However, I have been advised by the Health and Social Care Board that during the calendar year 2011, they received requests from consultants within the HSC in Northern Ireland for funding approval to send a total of 53 patients to a specialist provider of stereotactic radiotherapy in another part of the United Kingdom. Of these, one request related specifically to the CyberKnife method of stereotactic radiotherapy.

All 53 patients were transferred for treatment, but in the case of the request relating specifically to the CyberKnife method, the HSCB requires additional information for what would now be a retrospective funding. There were no instances where a referral was not approved.

### **Cyberknife Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy**

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients have been referred to another part of the UK for cyberknife stereotactic body radiotherapy in the last year.

**(AQW 7632/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** I have been advised by the Health and Social Care Board that during the calendar year 2011, they received requests from consultants within the HSC in Northern Ireland for funding approval to send a total of 53 patients to a specialist provider of stereotactic radiotherapy in another part of the United Kingdom. Of these, one request related specifically to the CyberKnife method of stereotactic radiotherapy.

All 53 patients were transferred for treatment, but in the case of the request relating specifically to the CyberKnife method, the HSCB requires additional information for what would now be a retrospective funding. There were no instances where a referral was not approved.

### **Cyberknife Stereotactic Body Radiotherapy**

**Mr McCarthy** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what discussions he has had with the UK Health Secretary in relation to patients from Northern Ireland being referred to hospitals in Great Britain for cyberknife stereotactic body radiotherapy; and (ii) what criteria is used to determine any such referral.

**(AQW 7666/11-15)**

#### **Mr Poots:**

- (i) I have not had any discussions with the UK Health Secretary in relation to patients from Northern Ireland being referred to hospitals in Great Britain for cyberknife stereotactic body radiotherapy. Stereotactic radiotherapy is not currently commissioned in Northern Ireland. Referrals for such treatment would therefore be considered under the process the HSC Board uses for the approval of Individual Funding Requests (IFRs) or Extra Contractual Referrals to providers outside Northern Ireland.
- (ii) The criteria used to determine a referral are as follows:
- The patient's clinical condition requires specialised care that could only be sustained for a large catchment population and cannot be provided for a small geographic area such as Northern Ireland.
  - The patient's clinician wishes to seek a second opinion from a provider outside Northern Ireland because of complexities of the patient's condition or circumstances.
  - The treatment is available locally but the patient has some exceptional reason which renders their case different from the vast majority of other patients with the same condition and which therefore justifies a referral for care or treatment outside Northern Ireland.

### **New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Strategy (Phase 2)**

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of whether the commitments to the on-going outcomes in the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Strategy (Phase 2) will be realised within the current funding allocation.

**(AQW 7678/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** Alcohol and drug misuse have been significant public health and social issues over the last number of years, and continue to be a key priority for my Department.

On the 26th January 2012, I launched the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2 (NSD), which is a cross-sectoral strategy to reduce the harm related to alcohol and drug misuse. This Department allocates approximately £8 million to its implementation each year, and additional funding is provided through the mental health budget for the provision of treatment and support services. The NSD seeks to direct action across five pillars: prevention and early intervention; harm reduction; treatment and support; criminal justice; and monitoring, evaluation and research.

I want to ensure that the strategy is implemented as fully and effectively as possible, and I believe that this can be delivered within the current funding allocation. However, if issues arise (such as new emerging drugs of concern) it may be necessary to revisit the funding allocation and/or the Public Health Agency may need to prioritise the delivery of certain outcomes in line with the priorities within the NSD Phase 2.

It should be noted that DHSSPS cannot effectively address this issue in isolation. The NSD Phase 2 commits other Government Departments and other sectors to recognise this issue and to allocate time, effort and resources towards our efforts to tackle it.

## Recommendations of the Bamford Review

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department has taken to implement the recommendations of the Bamford Review.

**(AQW 7680/11-15)**

**Mr Poots:** The cross-Departmental Bamford Action Plan 2009-2011, published in October 2009, has been the vehicle for taking forward implementation of the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability. This Action Plan has now come to an end. An evaluation of the 2009-2011 Plan is being finalised and I hope to publish this evaluation shortly. The evaluation indicates that, overall, 80% of actions committed to were achieved.

Work is also progressing on the development of the Bamford Action Plan 2012-2015 which I plan to issue for public consultation later in the year.

## Department of Justice

### Strip-Searching in Prisons

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice whether it is legislation that dictates the necessity for strip-searching in prisons; and whether strip-searches are employed in other UK prisons as well as Roe House, HMP Maghaberry.

**(AQW 6898/11-15)**

**Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice ):** The Prison Act Northern Ireland (1953) is the legislative authority for the making of Prison Rules. The Prison and Young Offenders Centres Rules

(Northern Ireland) 1995 set out the powers in relation to searching, including full body searching, which is employed in all three establishments in Northern Ireland and all other UK prisons.

### Illegal Knives Confiscated by the PSNI

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister of Justice (i) how many illegal knives were confiscated by the PSNI in each of the last three years; (ii) to detail the number of convictions for (a) being armed with an offensive weapon with intent to commit an offence; (b) possessing an article with a blade or a point in a public place; and (c) possessing an article with a blade or a point on school premises, in each of the last three years; and (iii) whether he has any plans to legislate further on knife crime or the sale of knives.

**(AQW 6977/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:**

- I. Two knife amnesties were held during May/June and November/December 2006 resulting in approximately 1500 potentially lethal weapons being disposed of.
- II. The table below gives the number of convictions for knife offences for the calendar years 2006 – 2008.

#### NUMBER OF CONVICTIONS FOR CERTAIN KNIFE AND OFFENSIVE WEAPON OFFENCES: 2006-2008

Offence	2006	2007	2008
Armed with offensive weapon with intent to commit offence	3	8	8
Possessing article with blade or point in public place	24	45	54
Possessing article with blade or point on school premises	3	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>62</b>

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included. Data for 2006 should not be directly compared with data from 2007 to 2008 as the data sets are sourced from different systems.

III. The Justice Act 2011 finalised a new knife crime sentencing package which increased the penalties available for a range of offences around possession of knives and other offensive weapons. This followed an increase in 2007 in the age at which knives can be purchased from 16 to 18 years of age. Maximum penalties, including the illegal sale of knives, have now been standardised to include up to 12 months' imprisonment where the case has been heard in a magistrates' court and four years' in the Crown Court.

As the Assembly has legislated within the last year, I have no plans at this stage for further legislation, but I continue to monitor the levels of knife crime in Northern Ireland and to keep legislative and amnesty options under review.

### Prison Arts Foundation

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how much his Department has contributed to the Prison Arts Foundation in each of the last five years; and which other organisations or agencies fund this facility.

**(AQW 6978/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Table A below sets out the amounts paid by my Department to the Prison Arts Foundation in each of the last five years.

**TABLE A**

Financial Year	Cost to PBNI	Cost to NIPS	Cost to YJA	Total
2007/08		£217,035	£9,513	£226,548
2008/09	£10,000	£321,250		£331,250
2009/10	£10,000	£311,503		£321,503
2010/11	£10,000	£304,793		£314,793
2011/12 (to date)	£8,000	£156,179		£164,179

PAF deliver a number of services, ranging from arts and creative writing to teaching of essential skills, providing a link between vocational training and education to engage those with current or past custodial sentences in the rehabilitative process.

The Prison Arts Foundation also receives funding from the Arts Council NI and from other organisations on an ad-hoc basis for a number of agreed programmes and projects of work.

### Sexual Offences Prevention Order

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, given that Stuart Townsend breached his Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) on several occasions whilst he was a student at Belfast Metropolitan College and again at his home, an offence for which he had received a suspended sentence, and then breached the Order again whilst a student at the North West Regional College, to detail the monitoring to which he was subject under his SOPO; and for his assessment of the effectiveness of SOPOs.

**(AQW 6999/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** I cannot give details on any individual case.

A sexual offences prevention order (SOPO) is ordered by the court when it appears necessary for the purpose of protecting the public from serious sexual harm. Breach of the order is a criminal offence with a maximum sentence of five years. I am satisfied that the SOPO provisions play an important part

in the management of risk jointly undertaken by the agencies under the public protection arrangements (PPANI). I am also satisfied that the police diligently enforce the orders.

A SOPO can only contain prohibitions on the offender's behaviour. I have recently consulted on changes to the law to allow for other positive conditions to be included. Legislative proposals have been drafted and will be presented to the Assembly in due course.

### **Security Clearance to Work on PSNI and Ministry of Defence Sites**

**Mr Eastwood** asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the process by which contractors apply for security clearance to carry out work on PSNI and Ministry of Defence sites; (ii) the expected timescales for clearance to be approved; and (iii) any potential issues which may hold up an application.

**(AQW 7056/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** As Justice Minister I have no role either in policy or practice in relation to security clearance processes for the PSNI or the Ministry of Defence. PSNI security vetting is an operational matter for the Chief Constable and as I am committed to respecting his operational independence it would be inappropriate for me to comment. You may therefore wish to direct your query to his office. In relation to the Ministry of Defence vetting processes, as this relates to a non-devolved function for which I have no remit, I am also unable to comment.

### **Rehabilitation Courses**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6267/11-15, whether a refusal to co-operate with rehabilitation courses, whilst serving a custodial sentence, is taken into consideration when a prisoner is being released back into the community and appropriate monitoring is being put in place, particularly in relation to sex offenders.

**(AQW 7059/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Justice system has a wide range of interventions and rehabilitation courses available to prisoners.

If a prisoner with a Determinate Custodial Sentence refuses to undertake a course or other intervention stipulated by the sentencing court or recommended by the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) and/or the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) following assessment while in custody, this non co-operation may result in additional conditions being placed on that prisoner's licence (if a period on licence forms part of the sentence). These additional conditions may require the prisoner to undertake and complete courses or other interventions during the period of time they spend on licence in the community.

If a prisoner with an Indeterminate or an Extended Custodial Sentence refuses to co-operate with courses and interventions stipulated by the sentencing court or recommended by NIPS and/or PBNI following assessment while in custody, the Parole Commissioners for Northern Ireland (PCNI) may decide that such an individual may have to complete these courses and interventions prior to consideration of release. However, such decisions are matters entirely for the PCNI.

Prisoners given sentences absent of a requirement to spend a period of time in the community on licence will be released from prison at their custody expiry date regardless of whether they have completed any recommended interventions and/or rehabilitation courses.

### **Investigation into the Prisoner Assessment Unit's Failings**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6107/11-15, (i) on what date was the Prisoner Assessment Unit investigation concluded; (ii) whether the investigation report has been compiled; and (iii) if the report will be published.

**(AQW 7062/11-15)**



**Mr Ford:** The Investigation into the Prisoner Assessment Unit (PAU) was completed on 15 July 2011 and the investigation report has been compiled. As stated in my answer to AQW 6107/11-15 no date has yet been fixed for the publication of the report.

## **Barry Johnston**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW6188/11-15, and in particular to the remark that ‘the offender chose to reoffend’, for his assessment of appropriate, robust and stringent monitoring by various agencies allowing action to be taken to prevent reoffending, rather than an Order in itself preventing reoffending.

**(AQW 7063/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Once an offender has finished his sentence, including any period of supervision which formed part of the sentence or of licence conditions imposed on release from custody, the agencies no longer have any further custodial or supervisory powers. In the case of a sex offender subject to the statutory notification provisions, the police will enforce those provisions and have certain powers of entry and search in order to do so.

A Sexual Offences Prevention Order is made by the court when it appears necessary for the purpose of protecting the public from serious sexual harm. It places prohibitions on the offender’s behaviour and provides the basis for legal action by the police to enforce the order.

The multi agency PPANI arrangements allow for cooperation by a number of agencies on risk assessment and management within the bounds of what is legally possible under the available statutory provisions.

## **Mileage Claims from Lawyers**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6318/11-15 and AQW 6260/11-15, given the three-year total of £9.02 million paid from legal aid for lawyers’ travel costs, and the acceptance that some court users will have to travel greater distances, for his assessment of the proposal to close some courthouses which may lead to increased mileage claims from lawyers that will have to be paid out of legal aid.

**(AQW 7070/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** On balance, the Department does not anticipate any significant additional costs to legal aid due to increased mileage claims.

When conducting criminal business in the Magistrates’ Courts, solicitors are only entitled to claim mileage allowance for travel to courthouses other than their local courthouse. Therefore, if any courthouse is required to close, the next nearest courthouse will become the local courthouse for payment purposes, and no additional mileage allowance will be payable.

The situation for barristers conducting criminal business in the Magistrates’ Courts is different in that barristers are only paid travel costs if they travel more than 20 miles outside Belfast. With regard to the consequences of the proposed closures, Newtownards and Bangor are within the 20 mile limit from Belfast and therefore barristers are not entitled to travel costs to these venues. Antrim is considerably closer to Belfast than Magherafelt while Londonderry and Ballymena are only ten miles and eight miles further away from Belfast than Limavady and Larne respectively. Additionally, the use of barristers in cases in the Magistrates’ Courts is not normally authorised for payment out of the legal aid fund.

For civil business, solicitors are entitled to travel costs to any courthouse (barristers are still entitled to travel payments for travel outside the 20 mile limit from Belfast), and therefore it is accepted that there may be some additional cost in this regard. However, most of the business conducted in the courthouses identified as potentially for closure is Magistrates’ Courts criminal business.

## Anti-Social Behaviour

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Justice what schemes or initiatives his Department is planning to introduce to combat anti-social behaviour in areas of Belfast with a large student population, such as the Holylands.

**(AQW 7105/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The new Community Safety Strategy 'Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities' will set the strategic direction over the next five years for reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime in Northern Ireland.

You will be aware from the recent Assembly debate on anti-social behaviour that in Northern Ireland we have adopted a multi-agency partnership approach to tackling anti-social behaviour such as that experienced in Belfast. This approach recognises the fact that anti-social behaviour can encompass a wide range of behaviour such as excessive noise, littering and rowdy behaviour.

This multi-agency approach is reflected in the membership of the Belfast City Council's Holyland Interagency Group which includes representatives from Government Departments, including my own, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, universities and colleges. This inter-agency group has developed an implementation plan which consists of strategic and operational actions under the themes of alcohol, policing, student accommodation and physical infrastructure, student behaviour and management and monitoring to address concerns of residents.

Initiatives taken forward by my Department in conjunction with the Holyland Interagency Group include CCTV, community safety wardens and Get Home Safe.

Finally, new powers which my Department made provision for in the Justice Act 2011, for Fixed Penalty Notices, will come into force in April. These notices will give police additional powers to deal with a range of incidents including indecent behaviour, being drunk in a public place and disorderly behaviour in a public place.

## Attempt by a Prisoner in Maghaberry Prison to Escape from Custody

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6103/11-15, (i) for what the prisoner was sentenced; (ii) how long is his sentence; and (iii) whether he has previously attempted to escape or has assaulted staff.

**(AQW 7179/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:**

- (i) The prisoner was sentenced to life imprisonment for murder.
- (ii) The tariff for this offence has been set at 30 years.
- (iii) He has never previously attempted to escape and has no record of having assaulted any member of staff.

## Taking Part in an Un-Notified Public Procession

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to the 17 people who appeared at Armagh Magistrates Court and were charged with taking part in an un-notified public procession, to detail (i) how many (a) have been granted Legal Aid; (b) solicitor firms are on record; and (c) counsel have been instructed; (ii) the total cost of the cases to date; and (iii) the estimated final cost of the cases.

**(AQW 7181/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Of the 17 defendants who appeared at Armagh Magistrates' Court, eight were granted a criminal legal aid certificate and a total of five firms of solicitors were engaged to represent those legally aided defendants at the Magistrates' Court.

The legal aid certificates issued do not authorise the use of counsel.

To date, claims have been received and paid in respect of advice given under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act to ten of the defendants. A total of seven firms of solicitors were engaged to give PACE advice. The total fees paid to date amount to £1,136.65, including VAT.

The case is still ongoing therefore no claims for payment in respect of the proceedings at the Magistrates' Court have been received. The cases have been listed as a contest. It is anticipated the fees when paid will be approximately £3,200.00 including VAT.

### Back-log in the Forensics Science Unit

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice (i) for an update on the back-log in the Forensics Science Unit; (ii) whether the back-log is contributing to the delays in the justice system which were criticised in the latest Criminal Justice Inspectorate Report; and (iii) what action he intends to take in relation to this matter.

**(AQW 7183/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** One of my priorities is to deliver a fairer, faster justice system and I am committed to speeding up justice. Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) produce approximately 9000 reports per annum. Currently, 167 reports are outstanding, of which four are required by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) to progress prosecutions. FSNI is working closely with the PPS to minimise this number of outstanding reports.

### Trade Union Duties

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in his Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.

**(AQW 7205/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** As the Department of Justice was created in April 2010 figures can only be provided for the 2010/11 period. The table below provides a breakdown of full-time equivalent staff within the Department of Justice and its arm's length bodies who carried out trade union duties, broken down by trade union, where figures are available.

NI Public Service Alliance (NIPSA)	National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO)	Prison Officers Association (POA)
4.08	0.73	3

### PSNI Civilian Staff Back Pay Entitlement

**Mr McClarty** asked the Minister of Justice to provide details of the ongoing dispute over PSNI civilian staff back pay entitlement, including when back payments are likely to be made.

**(AQW 7211/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Advice from the Department of Finance and Personnel is that the settlement reached between DFP and NIPSA in respect of equal pay did not extend to police staff. Pay and grading delegation was granted to the Northern Ireland Office (including police support staff) in 1996, therefore no liability exists in respect of equal pay when comparing PSNI support staff and civil servants. No payments can be made without the demonstration of liability.

A number of cases for breach of contract have been lodged in the County Court by members of police staff.

## Barry Johnston

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6188/11-15, why the various agencies did not consider that there was adequate evidence to suggest a need to disclose the identity of a convicted sex offender in order to protect the public, particularly given that he had failed to co-operate with any rehabilitation courses that he was offered whilst in custody.

**(AQW 7237/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The question of whether or not to disclose information about an offender is a standing part of the risk management process. Disclosure is unlawful unless there is evidence to suggest it is necessary in order to protect the public. In this case the agencies did not have evidence which would have necessitated a decision to disclose information.

## Robert Black

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6506/11-15, whether Robert Black will serve only half of his 25 years sentence under the 50 percent remission policy.

**(AQW 7238/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Robert Black received a life sentence under the provisions of the Life Sentences (Northern Ireland) Order 2001, not a determinate sentence. His tariff of 25 years does not attract remission.

## Attempt by a Prisoner in Maghaberry Prison to Escape from Custody

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 6103/11-15, how many staff escorted the prisoner in question; and how many were (i) male; and (ii) female.

**(AQW 7288/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** A total of three staff escorted the prisoner in question of whom two were male and one female.

## Criminal Justice Inspection Report 'Avoidable Delay: A Progress Report'

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the Criminal Justice Inspection report 'Avoidable Delay: A Progress Report' which criticised delays in court cases, whether he will abolish Preliminary Enquiries at Magistrates Courts, in cases which are automatically indictable, and have them proceed to Crown Court after the initial first stage appearance.

**(AQW 7298/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** On 19 January, I launched a public consultation on proposals to reform the committal process as part of a series of measures to reduce the burden on victims and to speed up the justice system. As part of this consultation I have asked for views on more fundamental reform of the committal stage, including the possibility of direct transfer of cases to the Crown Court. Should consultation responses indicate support for removing the need to hold Preliminary Enquiries in indictable cases, I would clearly be required to consider this in my response.

This is an important piece of work and I would encourage everyone to give us their views. The consultation process will run until 27 April 2012 and the consultation paper is available from the Department of Justice website: <http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/public-consultations/current-consultations/consultation-on-reform-of-committal-proceedings.htm>.

## Bench Warrants

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice how many Bench Warrants, including European Arrest Warrants, which were issued by Northern Ireland courts, are currently outstanding; and how many of these were issued (i) between one and five years ago; (ii) between five and ten years ago; (iii) between ten and fifteen years ago; (iv) between fifteen and twenty years ago; and (v) more than twenty years ago.

**(AQW 7300/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The table below sets out the number of warrants<sup>1</sup> outstanding for the stated periods.

<b>Warrant Age</b>	<b>Number Outstanding</b>
Less than 1 year	808
1 to 5 years	1,810
5 to 10 years	1,700
10 to 15 years	818
15 to 20 years	139
Over 20 years	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,338</b>

1 Includes outstanding Arrest Warrants (Magistrates' Court and Youth Court), Bench Warrants (Crown Court) and European Arrest Warrants as of 25 January 2012.

## **Human Trafficking**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Justice to outline the research his Department has carried out into (i) the numbers of people affected by human trafficking; (ii) the identifiable hot-spots for human trafficking; and (iii) the gateways into the country used by the traffickers.

**(AQW 7324/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Department of Justice publishes the Organised Crime Task Force Annual Report and Threat Assessment ([www.octf.gov.uk](http://www.octf.gov.uk)) which gives figures on the number of victims of human trafficking who have been recovered, an overview of the threat at the current time and examples of recent operational activity by law enforcement agencies. The broader issues raised in the Question are considered by the Organised Crime Task Force Immigration and Human Trafficking sub-group which examines periodic reports by the Higher Police Analyst for the Police Service on a variety of issues about this crime type, including those highlighted.

## **People Involved in Prostitution**

**Mr D McIlveen** asked the Minister of Justice what research his Department has carried out into the number of people involved in prostitution; and to detail the number of people involved, broken down by (i) constituency; and (ii) city.

**(AQW 7325/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** In January 2011, the Department published a research paper investigating the issues for women in Northern Ireland involved in prostitution and exploring best practice elsewhere. While the research paper focused on women involved in prostitution, it recognised that men can also become involved in prostitution.

The paper noted that prostitution was occurring in towns throughout Northern Ireland and that there were approximately 40-100 women involved in prostitution at any one time. Given the covert nature of prostitution, the paper was not able to establish the precise numbers of those involved in prostitution in Northern Ireland or to break these down to cover each constituency or city.

In October 2011 the Department held a conference to build on the findings of the research paper, attended by 45 delegates from a range of relevant organisations across Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, England and Scotland. The conference covered four themes:

- Preventing people from entering prostitution;
- Tackling demand for those involved in prostitution;

- Helping those involved in prostitution who want to exit to do so and supporting those who do not wish to exit; and
- Eliminating trafficking for sexual exploitation.

The Department has since hosted meetings with the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust on this topic and is now developing a programme of action, building on the findings of the research paper and the outcome of the conference.

The Department is also working with the PSNI and the Belfast Trust to carry out research into men who use prostitutes.

### **Prison Service: Private Investigators**

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Justice whether the Prison Service has ever used private investigators to investigate any of its employees.

**(AQW 7354/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** Yes, the Northern Ireland Prison Service has used private investigators to investigate employees.

### **Irish Language**

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister of Justice what action he has taken, or plans to take, to facilitate the use and promotion of the Irish language within his Department.

**(AQW 7372/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** My Department has adopted the Code of Courtesy for the use of Irish in official business. This Code complies with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (The Charter). The Code of Courtesy is designed to assist staff in fulfilling the Department's obligations under the Charter.

### **Public Prosecution Service Summonses**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the delay in processing cases caused by the delivery of Public Prosecution Service summonses by post, given that they then require an acknowledgement to be submitted to the relevant court; and whether this process could be expedited by sending the summonses by recorded delivery.

**(AQW 7375/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The recent deterioration in the performance of summons cases is a cause for concern. My officials are working with the independent Public Prosecution Service, which is responsible for the summons process, and with others across the justice system to examine the reasons for this and to consider ways in which performance could be improved. As part of this work, we will consider whether the use of recorded mail as evidence of service could improve the effectiveness of postal summonses.

### **Cost of Legal Cases Involving Car Insurance**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Justice how the cost of legal cases involving car insurance claims compares to the cost of such cases in England and Wales.

**(AQW 7418/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The majority of personal injury cases arising from road traffic accidents are dealt with in the County Court in Northern Ireland. Costs payable to solicitors and barristers for proceedings issued in the County Court are on a fixed scale prescribed in the County Court Rules. The Rules are made by the County Court Rules Committee and allowed by me. These scales have not increased since 2007.

I understand the scales are currently under consideration by the Rules Committee. I will wish to ensure that any adjustment to the scales prescribed represent fair, reasonable and proportionate remuneration.

In the High Court costs which are not agreed by the parties or between a solicitor and client are assessed by the Taxing Master who decides what constitutes fair and reasonable remuneration for the work conducted.

There are significant differences between how road traffic claims (like other civil matters) are handled in Northern Ireland compared to England and Wales, therefore a direct comparison of legal costs is not straightforward. The Civil Procedure Rules, which govern the procedure for civil courts in England and Wales, provide for the operation of scale costs in limited circumstances. Fast track trial costs are designed only to facilitate the trial of straightforward cases. Fixed costs apply to road traffic accident, personal injury and vehicle damage only claims which settle prior to proceedings being issued but which do not exceed £10,000 in damages. As noted above, scale costs in the County Court apply to all types of cases and prescribe the costs to be paid irrespective of when the case is disposed.

In England and Wales, it would appear that the majority of legal costs in civil cases are based on an hourly rate with a success fee added. Lord Justice Jackson in his report "Review of Civil Litigation Costs" recognised the advantages to the fixing of costs as it gives all parties certainty as to the costs they may recover or incur.

### **Legal Costs Associated with Car Insurance Cases**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister of Justice what steps are being taken to reduce the legal costs associated with car insurance cases.

**(AQW 7420/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The County Court deals with the majority of personal injury cases in Northern Ireland. I have already indicated my intention to increase the jurisdiction of the County Court from £15,000 to £30,000. This will enable more lower value claims to be processed through this efficient and accessible court tier.

Costs payable to solicitors and barristers for proceedings in the County Court are prescribed in the County Court Rules. The Rules are made by the County Court Rules Committee and allowed by me. These scales have not increased since 2007. I understand the scales are currently under consideration by the Rules Committee following a public consultation exercise. Any adjustment to scale costs must be allowed by my Department and I will wish to ensure that the amounts prescribed represent fair, reasonable and proportionate remuneration.

In the High Court costs which are not agreed by the parties or between a solicitor and client are assessed by the Taxing Master who decides what constitutes fair and reasonable remuneration for the work conducted.

The Access to Justice Report made a number of recommendations regarding the civil justice system, including personal injury litigation. The consultation on the Report has now closed and my officials are considering carefully the responses.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders**

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders applied for by (i) the PSNI; (ii) local Councils; and (iii) the Housing Executive in the South Belfast constituency, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7423/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Anti-Social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 provides for the making of an anti-social behaviour order against a person by a magistrates' court on application by a relevant authority, or by the court before which a person is convicted of a criminal offence.

The relevant authorities have advised that, in the South Belfast constituency, the PSNI applied for one ASBO in each of 2009 and 2011: both were issued.

The Anti-social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 stipulates that an order shall have effect for a period of not less than two years.

Based on information supplied by the relevant authorities for the period 2005- 2010, the average length of time for a full anti-social behaviour order in Northern Ireland is 2 years 2 months, with the vast majority having the minimum 2 year duration.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders**

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister of Justice how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders were issued in the South Belfast constituency, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7424/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Anti-Social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 provides for the making of an anti-social behaviour order against a person by a magistrates' court on application by a relevant authority, or by the court before which a person is convicted of a criminal offence.

The relevant authorities have advised that, in the South Belfast constituency, the PSNI applied for one ASBO in each of 2009 and 2011: both were issued.

The Anti-social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 stipulates that an order shall have effect for a period of not less than two years.

Based on information supplied by the relevant authorities for the period 2005- 2010, the average length of time for a full anti-social behaviour order in Northern Ireland is 2 years 2 months, with the vast majority having the minimum 2 year duration.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders**

**Mr Spratt** asked the Minister of Justice to detail the average length of time for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order to be issued.

**(AQW 7425/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** The Anti-Social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 provides for the making of an anti-social behaviour order against a person by a magistrates' court on application by a relevant authority, or by the court before which a person is convicted of a criminal offence.

The relevant authorities have advised that, in the South Belfast constituency, the PSNI applied for one ASBO in each of 2009 and 2011: both were issued.

The Anti-social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 stipulates that an order shall have effect for a period of not less than two years.

Based on information supplied by the relevant authorities for the period 2005- 2010, the average length of time for a full anti-social behaviour order in Northern Ireland is 2 years 2 months, with the vast majority having the minimum 2 year duration.

### **Legal Aid for the 17 Defendants in the 'UVF Supergrass' Trial**

**Mr Givan** asked the Minister of Justice (i) how much has been spent to date on legal aid for the 17 defendants in the 'UVF Supergrass' trial to date; and for an estimate of the final legal aid costs; and (ii) how much has been spent to date in legal costs by the Public Prosecution Service in this case, and for an estimate of the final legal costs.

**(AQW 7436/11-15)**

**Mr Ford:** To date, a total of £157,037.01 (including VAT of £23,704.61 and disbursements of £111.63) has been paid in respect of the legal representation of the defendants in the Magistrates' Court. It is estimated that a further potential £3,500.00 including VAT may yet be claimed and paid for this part of the proceedings.



The total Crown Court fees paid to date is £10,305.60 (including VAT of £1,717.60) in respect of Counsel and interim fees to one firm of solicitors totalling £64,441.54 (including VAT of £9,000.00 and disbursements of £10,441.54).

This case has not yet concluded in the Crown Court and the claims have not yet been submitted. As the case was certified as a Very High Cost Case, the final fees will be assessed by the Taxing Master and therefore it is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the final legal aid bill.

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) is an independent organisation and any questions regarding its legal costs should be directed to the PPS.

## Bench Warrants

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 3013/11-15, to detail the five longest outstanding bench warrants, including the period of time each warrant is outstanding and the nature of the offences.

### (AQW 7467/11-15)

**Mr Ford:** The table below details the five longest outstanding warrants which are Arrest Warrants issued by a Magistrates' Court:

Court Division	Date Warrant Issued	Offence
Armagh & South Down	29/09/1981	Burglary (2 charges)
Armagh & South Down	23/10/1981	No Insurance
Armagh & South Down	06/04/1982	Obtaining Property by Deception (2 charges)
Armagh & South Down	14/05/1985	Theft
Londonderry	08/05/1986	Theft

## Department for Regional Development

### Proposed Capital Spend Projects

**Mr Dickson** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail his Department's proposed capital spend projects, for each of the next three financial years, including the projected timescales and the costs for each project.

### (AQW 6868/11-15)

**Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development):** AQW 6869/11-15 provides details of my Department's total capital budget for 2011-15.

My Department has several hundred projects in progress or under development during each of the next 3 years. The following table lists those projects which have a projected cost greater than £5m, providing details of the budgeted spend across the next 3 years, (2012-15) and the estimated completion date.

The table also includes details of capital programmes within which a number of smaller projects are being taken forward.

	2012-13 £m	2013-14 £m	2014-15 £m	Total Project Cost £m	Estimated Completion Date
<b>Roads (including EU Structural Funds)</b>					
A5 Western Transport Corridor *	143.0	285.0	210.0	650 - 850	2016
A8 Belfast to Larne*	46.0	51.0	12.0	110 - 120	2016
Other Strategic Road Improvements*	11.1	7.2	67.8		Ongoing
Structural Maintenance	25.5	29.4	55.0		Ongoing
Local Transport and Safety Measures	7.0	9.9	19.0		Ongoing
Street Lighting, Plant and Equipment	3.0	3.0	15.7		Ongoing
Total Roads	235.6	385.5	379.5		
<b>Transport</b>					
New Trains 2	0.9	0.1		114.0	2012
Adelaide Train Maintenance Facility	1.8			27.8	2012
New Trains 2 Platform Extension	1.0			7.9	2012
Class 3000 Overhaul	1.6	2.8	2.5	13.7	2015
Coleraine to Derry Track Safety Improvement Works	2.6			7.7	2012
Coleraine to Derry Track Renewal	23.0			27.0	2013 (Phase1)
Coleraine to Derry Track Renewal		1.5	18.0	20.0	2015 (Phase 2)
Metro/Goldline Fleet Replacement	0.2			15.0	2012
Building Services Upgrade Programme	1.6		1.4	5.5	2016
Other Rail Safety and Infrastructure Projects	9.7	7.0	9.9		Ongoing
Other Bus Infrastructure Projects	1.0				Ongoing
Sustainable Transport	3.5	0.5	11.8		Ongoing
Belfast Rapid Transit	0.8	1.5	10.0	100.0	2017
Total Transport	47.7	13.4	53.6		

	2012-13 £m	2013-14 £m	2014-15 £m	Total Project Cost £m	Estimated Completion Date
<b>Water and Sewerage</b>					
Water Infrastructure	49.7	46.5	50.5		Ongoing
Water Non-infrastructure	25.6	27.2	39.5		Ongoing
Sewerage Infrastructure	26.8	23.5	21.5		Ongoing
Sewerage Non-infrastructure	48.2	56.2	70.5		Ongoing
Total Water and Sewerage	150.3	153.4	182.0		

The information provided above reflects current plans and may be subject to change.

The several hundred Roads Service schemes being undertaken mean that it is not possible to specify these individually. However, a list of these projects broken down by council area can be found at:

[http://www.drni.gov.uk/index/freedom\\_of\\_information/customer\\_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils](http://www.drni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils)

\*At the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) Plenary Meeting held on Friday 18 November 2011, it was noted that provision of further funding by the Irish Government, for progression of the A5 and A8 projects, is being deferred and that, in this regard, the Irish Government will provide £25 million per annum in 2015 and 2016 towards the project.

A new funding and implementation plan is now being prepared for the two projects, for agreement at the next NSMC Transport meeting, with endorsement at the next NSMC Plenary meeting. This process will, undoubtedly, affect the funding available to the Department for Regional Development and, therefore potentially, delivery of the Strategic Road Improvements Programme.

When the funding is confirmed, I intend to review the spending priorities across my Department.

DRD provides funding for Northern Ireland Water's (NIW) capital works programme. The majority of projects are due for completion during the current Budget period. The investment levels and project numbers for 2013/14 and 2014/15 are indicative and will be determined by the Utility Regulator through its next regulatory price control process for water (PC13).

The budget for NIW shown in the table above is slightly higher than the published Budget 2010 capital allocation because NIW receive additional capital contributions from sources such as fees for new connections.

### **Proposed Bridge over the Ballyrainey Road of the Comber Greenway**

**Mr Hamilton** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed bridge over the Ballyrainey Road of the Comber Greenway; and any plans his Department has to assist with the scheme.

**(AQW 6892/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I can advise the Member that following a meeting with Sustrans and users of the Comber Greenway in July 2011, I agreed to secure funding, subject to a satisfactory business case being made for Active Travel funding.

The case presented was successful and £75,000 has been allocated from Roads Service funds to assist with the costs of provision and erection of the bridge.

The design and contract procurement has been completed by Roads Service and work is scheduled to commence on site on 20 February, with a proposed completion date of 30 March 2012.

### **Bus Shelters in North Down**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development how many bus shelters have been erected in North Down in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 6907/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that 14 bus shelters have been provided in North Down during the last five years. The table below provides a year on year break down of this figure:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Total</b>
No. of Bus Shelters	0	2	2	2	8	<b>14</b>

I should also advise the Member that local Councils can also provide bus shelters; however, my Department has no information to indicate if any bus shelters have been provided by North Down Council.

### **Smart Meters for Water Charges**

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister for Regional Development what assessment he has made of the health risks associated with the use of smart meters; and whether he has taken these risks into account in his decision to roll-out the use of smart meters for water charges.

**(AQW 6937/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have not taken such a decision. Whilst I have policy responsibility for water and sewerage, the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006 makes Northern Ireland Water (NIW) responsible for operational matters such as the provision of water meters.

I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it does not use smart meters for billing purposes and has no current plans to do so. In the circumstances it has not been necessary to make an assessment of the health risks associated with the use of smart meters.

### **Disabled Car Parking Bays**

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will consider reviewing the criteria for eligibility to a disabled car parking bay, that would allow a carer or a family member of a resident who has a disability, to apply to have a disabled parking bay.

**(AQW 6948/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that disabled parking bays are only provided for those who would benefit most from their provision and are therefore normally only provided for disabled drivers. They may, however, be provided for disabled passengers where the passenger cannot be left alone, for example, where a child is under 16 and the driver is a permanent resident at the applicant's address. Where the passenger is over 16, the applicant is required to provide evidence from a Consultant Doctor, of the need for attendance.

The inclusion of the attendance element is a fairly recent addition to the policy and therefore I have no further plans to change the current approach at this time.

## **Coach Parking Facilities for Private Tour Bus Operators**

**Mr Byrne** asked the Minister for Regional Development what proposals his Department has to provide dedicated coach parking facilities for private tour bus operators in, or near, the centre of Omagh town. **(AQW 6952/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is not responsible for the provision of dedicated coach parking facilities for tourist coaches in Omagh. Consequently, it has no plans to provide any dedicated coach parking facilities in Omagh.

Roads Service officials further advise that local councils may provide off-street coach parking as part of their tourism strategy, or arrange with Translink and other operators to use their facilities. I am advised that in some towns existing bus stops are utilised for this purpose.

Notwithstanding, these arrangements, I can advise that Roads Service officials in Western Division would be content to discuss the provision of pick up/set down facilities for coaches close to Omagh town centre. I understand that an official will make contact with you soon to arrange a convenient date.

## **Puffin Crossings**

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister for Regional Development when his Department will introduce the new Puffin crossings in (i) Ballymoney; (ii) Ballymena; and (iii) Ballycastle. **(AQW 6974/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has no plans, at present, to install any additional pedestrian crossings, such as the new style Puffin crossing, in the Ballymoney area.

Roads Service officials further advise that although there are no new sites being considered at present in Ballymena town, a new Puffin crossing has just been installed in Main Street, Ahoghill, and work will commence shortly on the upgrading of an existing zebra crossing to a Puffin crossing in Main Street, Portglenone. Work on this crossing will be completed before the end of March 2012.

In addition, I can inform the Member that Roads Service is upgrading the existing zebra crossing to a Puffin crossing in Ann Street, Ballycastle. Work is due to commence early in February 2012.

## **Overtaking Lanes on the A4**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what work is planned to increase the number of overtaking lanes on the A4 road. **(AQW 6980/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I can advise the Member that five 2+1 carriageway improvements have been provided on the A4 Enniskillen to Ballygawley route in recent years. However, changes to road design standards in 2008, particularly relating to the limiting of junctions and accesses, have made the provision of further 2+1 overtaking lanes very difficult. There are very few, if any, stretches of the A4 route, that have no adjoining junctions, private accesses, or field accesses, to allow the provision of a length of 2+1 carriageway.

On a more positive note, I can advise that a review of the effectiveness of the 2+1 overtaking lane constructed on the A4 at Annaghilla, as part of the A4 dualling contract, is underway and I understand that there is potential to convert a section of this eastbound overtaking lane to provide westbound overtaking. This would, in effect, create an additional overtaking lane to complement the present arrangement.

## Bottled Water Received from the Scottish Government

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the quantity of bottled water received from the Scottish Government during the 2010/2011 freeze; (ii) the stocks of water that are still in storage; and (iii) the sell by or use by date of these products.

**(AQW 6984/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the number of bottles of water received from the Scottish Government during the 2010/11 freeze thaw incident, the stocks of this water currently in storage and the best before date of this water, is as detailed in the table below:

Quantity of Bottles Received	Bottles Remaining in Storage	Best Before Date
190,080 x 1.5 litre	21,648	End January 2012
	11,088	End May 2012
87,360 x 2 litre	1,440	End June 2012
	960	End July 2012
	1,440	End November 2012
	56,640	End December 2012
Total bottles 277,440	Total bottles 93,216	
Total litres 459,840	Total litres 170,064	

## Adopted and Unadopted Roads

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Regional Development to list all the (i) unadopted roads; (ii) roads that have been adopted in the last six months; and (iii) roads that are to be adopted within the next six months, in the Upper Bann Constituency.

**(AQW 7026/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that in the Upper Bann constituency, the list of unadopted roads, determined under the Private Streets Order is as follows;

- B2 - Old Railway View, Leitrim Stages 4 & 5.
- B5 - Scarva Heights, Scarva.
- B11a - Chestnut Brae, Gilford Stage 2.
- B15 - Jubilee Rd, Dromore.
- B16b - Barban Mews, Dromore.
- B17 - Windy Ridge, Banbridge.
- B18 - The Slopes, Rathfriland.
- B19 - The Demense, Dromore.
- B21 - Iveagh Manor, Banbridge.
- B26 - Oakdale/Oakridge/Oaklodge, Banbridge.
- B27a - Kinallen Manor, Kinallen.
- B28 - Moorlands, Banbridge.
- B29 - Wallace Park, Dromore.
- B32 - Drumaran View, Gilford.
- B36 - Lotus Green, Banbridge.
- B40 - Cambric Court, Dromore.
- B41 - Kane Terrace, Kinallen.
- B42 - Dolmen Park, Leitrim.
- B47 - Rowanvale, Banbridge Stage 6.
- B53 - Main Street, Scarva.
- B55a - Thorn Heights, Banbridge Stage 7.
- B59 - Rathview, Banbridge.
- B62 - Bannview Mews, Banbridge.
- B68 - Summerhill, Banbridge.
- B70 - Cloverdale, Blackscull.
- B70a - Clover Valley, Blackscull.
- B72 - Fox Ridge, Rathfriland.
- B76 - Old Bleach Green, Banbridge.
- B77 - Bishopshill, Dromore.
- B78 - Linenfields, Lenaderg, Banbridge.

- B81 - Limewood, Banbridge.
- B82 - Quillyburn Manor, Dromore.
- B85 - Drumlin Grange, Moneyslane.
- B86 - Rockvale, Waringsford.
- B88 - Woodside Park, Loughbrickland.
- B89 - Princes Gate, Dromore.
- B90 - Milebush Manor, Dromore.
- B92 - Gowan Meadows, Banbridge.
- B93 - Roes Hill, Lawrencetown.
- B94 - Oak Grove, Banbridge.
- B95 - Laurel Mews, Dromore.
- B97 - Old Mill, Waringsford.
- B98 - Old School Court, Kinallen.
- B100 - Quillyburn Lane, Dromore.
- B102 - Quillyburn Industrial Estate, Dromore.
- B103 - 80 Stramore Rd, Gilford.
- B106 - Brookfield Meadows, Banbridge.
- B107 - Ashbridge Manor, Kinallen.
- B109 - 12 Townsend Street, Banbridge.
- B112 - Beechgrove, Dromore.
- B118 - Millvale Close, Annalone.
- B119 - Gowanvale Drive, Banbridge.
- B121 - 2 Ballydown Rd, Banbridge.
- B142 - Rathfriland Street, Loughbrickland.
- B145 - 10 Mourne View Terrace, Moneyslane.
- C1 - Millennium Way, Lurgan
- C2 - The Hollows, Lurgan
- C19A - Old Portadown Road , Lurgan
- C28 - Silverwood Court, Lurgan
- C30 - Castle Lane Mews, Lurgan
- C33 - Off Rectory Park, Lurgan
- C35 - Kiln Road -5 Houses, Lurgan
- C37 - Shimna Walk/Pollock Mews, Lurgan
- C38 - Derrymacash Cottages , Lurgan
- C40 - Birchdale Manor, Lurgan
- C44 - Ardmore Road , Lurgan
- C46 - Knockramer Meadows , Lurgan
- C49A - Raughlan Meadows, Lurgan
- C53A - Kiln Lodge, Lurgan
- C54 - Silverwood Leaves, Lurgan
- C58 - Kilvergan Heights, Lurgan
- C74 - Bann Close, Lurgan
- C89 - Lilburn Hall, Lurgan
- C99 - Ashford Grange, Lurgan
- C102 - Beechfield Avenue, Lurgan
- C106 - Silverwood Green, Lurgan
- C111 - Hillcrest , Lurgan
- C112 - Glen Park, Lurgan
- C114 - Shannaghmore Park, Lurgan
- C120 - Rectory Park, Lurgan
- C121 - Deerings Wood, Lurgan
- C123A - Willow Common, Lurgan
- C124 - Bowens Lane, Lurgan
- C129 - River Glade Manor, Lurgan
- C130A - Belvedere, Lurgan
- C133 - Ennis Close, Lurgan
- C140 - Derryloiste Meadows, Lurgan
- C151 - Toberhewny Lodge, Lurgan
- C152 - Charles Baron Lodge, Lurgan
- C164 - Foxes Glen, Lurgan
- C169 - Woodvale Gate, Lurgan
- C185 - James St/Market St, Lurgan
- C191 - Bowens Lane, Lurgan
- C193 - Boconnell Lodge, Lurgan
- C201 - Prospect Way, Lurgan
- C226 - Carrickvale Manor, Lurgan
- C230 - Lake Street, Lurgan
- C245 - Derry Park Lane, Lurgan
- C35 - Dwellings at Drumcree Rd, Portadown
- C3A - Development at Drumcree Rd, Portadown
- C5 - Selshion Hall, Portadown
- C7 - Carnreagh,Drumnaggon Rd, Portadown
- C9 - Mahon Industrial Estate, Portadown
- C12 - Lynedale Manor, Portadown
- C13 - Kernan Hill, Portadown
- C17 - Obins St/Park Rd, Portadown

- C21 - Timakeel Manor, Portadown
- C22A - Ballyhannon Lodge, Portadown
- C29 - Breagh Lodge, Portadown
- C43A - Ashgrove Manor, Portadown
- C52 - Seagoe Road, Portadown
- C68 - Swallowfield Court, Portadown
- C72 - Bocombra Manor, Portadown
- C88 - Mahon Court, Portadown
- C90 - Breagh Road, Portadown
- C93 - Orchard Meadows, Portadown
- C107 - Rear 19 Gilford Road, Portadown
- C110 - Loughgall Road Roundabout, Portadown
- C116 - Ashgrove Road, Portadown
- C135 - Obin Street, Corcrain, Portadown
- C147 - College Manor, Portadown
- C154 - Bocombra Hill, Portadown
- C159 - Ballyoran Manor, Portadown
- C168 - Ashford, Drumcree Rd, Portadown
- C174A - Ballynacor Meadows, Portadown
- C174 - Ballynacor Manor, Portadown
- C175 - Keelmount Mews, Portadown
- C90 - Development at Breagh Road, Portadown
- C189 - Development at Dungannon Road, Portadown
- C197 - Selshion Mews, Portadown
- C204 - Lisnisky Lodge, Old Lurgan Rd, Portadown
- C213 - Ripley Terrace, Portadown
- C220 - Development at Dungannon Road, Portadown
- C229 - Lisnagrilly Hall, Long Lane, Portadown
- C232 - Bannfoot Village Development, Portadown
- C239 - Development at Tandragee Rd, Portadown
- C239A - Development at Tandragee Rd, Portadown
- C243 - Development at Killycomaine, Portadown
- C248 - Development at Old Lurgan Rd/ Lisnisky Lane, Portadown
- C260 - The Old Rectory, Loughgall Rd, Portadown
- C157 - Development at Cloncarrish Rd, The Birches
- C172 - Coney Island View, The Birches
- C217 - Development at Robinsontown, The Birches
- C14 - Bluestone Hall, Craigavon
- C39 - Balteagh Road, Craigavon
- C63 - Lismore Manor, Craigavon
- C80 - Limefield Rise, Craigavon
- C83 - Hillcrest Manor, Craigavon
- C98 - Carrigart Manor, Craigavon
- C105 - Drumgor Road, Craigavon
- C109 - Larkfield Meadows, Craigavon
- C126 - leary Road, Craigavon
- C134 - Cedar Wood, Bleary, Craigavon
- C144 - Ballinamoney Heights, Craigavon
- C145 - Old Fort Lodge, Craigavon
- C167 - Carrigart Crescent, Craigavon
- C194 - Craigavon Leisure Centre, Craigavon
- C214 - Development at Marlborough Retail Park, Craigavon
- C92 - Ballynadrone Meadows, Steps Rd, Magheralin
- C94 - Broomhill Grove, Magheralin
- C216 - Lurgan Road, Magheralin
- C238 - Broomhill Court Yard, Magheralin
- C249 - Development at Steps Road, Magheralin
- C170 - Moss View, Moss Rd, Waringstown
- C171 - Waringhall Place, Waringstown
- C218 - Brae Manor, Waringstown
- C8 - Monree Hill, Donaghcloney
- C62A - Winona Manor, Donaghcloney
- C87 - Lagan Lodge, Donaghcloney
- C100 - Monree Court, Donaghcloney
- C153 - Laurelvale Grove, Donaghcloney
- C156 - Strawhill, Donaghcloney



- C34 - Beechfield Hall, Dollingstown
- C203 - Taughrane Lodge, Dollingstown

Roads Service officials further advise that the roads in this constituency that have been adopted in the last six months are:

- ADB212 - Carn Valley , Rathfriland , Stages 3,4,5
- ADB291 - Limewood, Banbridge, Stages1 & 2
- ADB292 - Riverview Court, Banbridge Stage 1
- ADB293 - Bishopshill, Dromore Stages 1,2,3
- ADC620 - The Granary, Waringstown
- ADC621 - River Glade Court, Lurgan
- ADC521 - Windsor Lodge, Waringstown Stages 6-8
- ADC622 - Ardmore Road, Lurgan
- ADC623 - Cornakinnegar Road, Lurgan
- ADC624 - Charles Baron Lodge, Lurgan Stages 1 & 2
- ADC625 - Ballyoran Manor, Portadown Stages 1 & 2
- ADC617 - Lagan View Manor, Donaghcloney
- ADC328 - Chasewood, Portadown
- ADC328 - Chasewood Close, Portadown
- ADC626 - Killycomaine, Portadown
- ADC576 - Grace Manor, Portadown
- ADC627 - Mill Hill, Waringstown

In addition, I can confirm that the roads in the Upper Bann constituency scheduled for adoption in the next six months are as follows:

- B27a - Kinallen Manor
- B51 - Brookdale
- B92 - Gowan Meadows
- B21 - Iveagh Manor, Banbridge
- C58 - Kilvergan Heights, Lurgan
- C111 - Hillcrest, Lurgan
- C28 - Silverwood Court, Lurgan
- C106 - Silverwood Green, Lurgan
- C164 - Foxes Green, Lurgan
- C226 - Carrickvale Manor, Lurgan
- C5 - Selshion Hall, Portadown
- C18 - Kernan Hill Manor, Portadown (stages 18 & 20)
- C110 - Loughgall Road roundabout, Portadown
- C189 - Litters Filling Station Portadown
- C197 - Obin Street, Portadown
- C172 - Coney Island View, Maghery
- C194 - Craigavon Leisure Centre
- C171 - Waringhall Place, Waringstown
- C100 - Monree Court, Donaghcloney
- C156 - Strawhill, Donaghcloney
- C34 - Beechfield Hall, Dollingstown

### Millennium Way, Lurgan

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the completion of Millennium Way, Lurgan.

**(AQW 7033/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that the route selection and preliminary design of the Millennium Way scheme in Lurgan has been completed. A planning application for the renewal of the Planning Approval for the scheme has also been recently submitted to Planning Service, with a view to completing the detailed design and advancing the Vesting Order should resources allow.

I should also explain that the limited funding available for capital improvements has been fully committed to a programme of major improvement schemes on the strategic road network. Furthermore, Budget 2010 and the reduction in the Executive's capital funding, means that there continues to be sizeable pressures on the capital budget within my Department.

Difficult choices will have to be made over the next four years to deliver the best services and infrastructure in water, sewerage, roads, and public transport. I therefore intend to consider the

proposed investment across my Department and explore opportunities for bringing forward schemes, such as Millennium Way. I would point out, however, that the Regional Development Strategy, quite understandably gives preference to the needs of the Strategic Road Network.

### **Links to Belfast International Airport and George Best Belfast City Airport**

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he is taking to improve the links to (i) Belfast International Airport; and (ii) George Best Belfast City Airport in the near future and in the long term.

**(AQW 7039/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department recognises the importance of infrastructure connections to our airports in facilitating economic competitiveness, our tourist and leisure industry and the travelling public. The strategic relevance of these connections over the longer term will be considered within the review of the Regional Transportation Strategy, which will prioritise transportation investment in the period after 2015.

The Investment Delivery Plan for Roads outlines the Strategic Road Improvements envisaged over the ten year period 2008-2018. This includes schemes that will improve accessibility for passengers travelling to Belfast International Airport from across Northern Ireland and from the Republic of Ireland. For example, the recently completed scheme between Beech Hill and Cloghogue, at Newry, has completed the dualling of the A1 from Sprucefield to the border.

Accessibility to both airports, through Belfast, has also been significantly improved following completion of the M1/Westlink and M2 works. Major dualling schemes for substantial sections of the A6 between Londonderry and Randalstown, and for the A26 between Coleraine and Ballymena are also being developed and progressed through statutory processes.

On a smaller scale, the Investment Delivery Plan for Roads envisages the construction of a number of 2+1 carriageway widening schemes on the A26 Nutts Corner to M1 Moira road. These projects, along with the various traffic management schemes that are proposed along this route, should enhance safety and improve journey times.

Although it has not been possible to include an upgrade of the link from the M2 to Belfast International Airport in the Investment Delivery Plan for Roads, this proposal will be assessed along with other potential schemes, for inclusion in future programmes.

The Investment Delivery Plan for Roads will be reviewed as part of the evolution of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, which will consider spending beyond our current budget period.

With regard to George Best Belfast City Airport, 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. However, it is not envisaged that the scheme will proceed to procurement during the current budget period of 2011-15.

There are no plans at present to extend rail links to Belfast International Airport or to realign the existing Belfast to Bangor railway line and create a new station closer to George Best Belfast City Airport. Although these matters are kept under review, given the pressures on the railway capital budget and other priority railway projects resources for such projects have not been identified within the period of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Translink continuously monitors usage on its bus services to Belfast International Airport and George Best Belfast City Airport in order to ensure that there is adequate public transport provision in place.

### **EU Legislation on Transport Links with Ports and Airports**

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister for Regional Development what EU legislation on transport links with ports and airports is likely to be introduced over the next four years.

**(AQW 7040/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The European Commission published proposals for a regulation on guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network and for a Connecting Europe Facility on 19 October 2011. The draft regulations propose a number of issues with regards to ports and airports, including provision of intermodal connections. These regulations will be subject to agreement by the European Parliament and Council through ordinary legislative procedure. As drafted, they would have limited implications for public transport links to our ports and airports.

### **Infrastructure to Airports**

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he is considering setting up a dedicated group to look at ways to improve all the infrastructure to airports.

**(AQW 7041/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I am not minded to set up a dedicated group for this purpose and consider that the existing arrangements, whereby officials meet with the relevant airport authorities to consider infrastructure improvements, as being adequate.

### **Incomplete Roads in Private Housing Developments**

**Mr Kinahan** asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the number of incomplete roads in private housing developments that are yet to be completed as a result of the developer being in financial difficulties; and what action his Department is taking in relation to this matter.

**(AQW 7050/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that while it is not aware of the financial status of all developers at any given time, it estimates that in the last three years, the completion of approximately 120 new roads in private housing developments have been deferred due to the developers' financial circumstances.

Roads Service officials further advise that where there is undue delay in completing new roads in housing developments, including cases where the developer is in financial difficulties, Roads Service takes action under Article 11 of the Private Streets Order. This action requires the developer to carry out the necessary work. If the developer does not comply, Roads Service can complete the works and recover costs from the road bonds. In the last three years, Roads Service has served 227 Article 11 notices. Of these, 71 have progressed to enforcement stage.

To pursue completion of new roads in private housing developments, Roads Service will continue to liaise with developers, in addition to using Article 11 notices and appropriate enforcement, as provided for under the Private Streets legislation.

### **A48 Newtownards Road/Bailie Terrace Junction**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the plans to improve road safety at the A48 Newtownards Road/Bailie Terrace junction in the Cotton area of North Down.

**(AQW 7051/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has undertaken a technical assessment of the A48 Newtownards Road / Bailie Terrace junction. The results of the assessment indicate that this junction is worthy of further technical consideration and a number of design options are currently being explored.

### **Car Users in North Down**

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Regional Development what initiatives his Department is planning to encourage car users in North Down to use public transport.

**(AQW 7053/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's plans for North Down are included in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan. The Plan provides for, and encourages, greater use of public transport and includes proposals for improved bus and rail services, Park and Ride and Rapid Transit.

My Department is providing funding to allow Translink to purchase 20 new trains, the first of which are already in service. Some of these trains will be deployed on the Belfast to Bangor line in order to increase the frequency and capacity of services on the line. My Department continues to fund the purchase of new modern buses. These will be used across Northern Ireland and will bring benefits to the North Down area.

My Department is also developing a new pilot Rapid Transit system in Belfast. One of the proposed Rapid Transit routes will link East Belfast to the city centre and will include a Park and Ride facility in the Dundonald area. It is anticipated that some car users from North Down will use this facility.

The Travelwise initiative run by my Department continues to promote sustainable modes of transport in all sectors across the North including more use of public transport, car sharing, walking and cycling.

Information about the range of Travelwise initiatives can be found at [www.travelwiseni.com](http://www.travelwiseni.com).

### **Park and Ride Provision on the A4**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what further works are planned to improve the existing park and ride provision on the A4.

**(AQW 7064/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Following recently completed work there are now 100 spaces at the Ballygawley Roundabout at the junction of the A4 and A5 key corridors. My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are currently no further works planned to improve the existing Park & Ride/Park & Share provision on the A4. Although there are no definitive future plans, my Department's Roads Service and Translink continue to keep locations under consideration with a view to developing Park and Ride options, which will be dependent on successful completion of statutory processes and availability of finance.

### **Brookeborough's Road Service Depot**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the reasons behind the decision to transfer equipment back to Brookeborough's Road Service depot that had previously been moved from that depot to Ballyvaden depot; (ii) whether the changes that needed to be made to the Ballyvaden depot had received planning permission; and (iii) how much the movement of equipment from one depot to another, and back again, cost his Department.

**(AQW 7066/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it was aware of the requirement to improve the sight line at the entrance to Ballyvaden depot and this was being progressed with Planning Service, Lands Branch and the landowner. Unfortunately an issue arose on 11 January 2012, in relation to the acquisition of the land, and it was necessary to postpone the transfer from Brookeborough depot until this was resolved. This issue has now been resolved.

With regard to the changes needed at Ballyvaden depot, I understand that Roads Service had been liaising with Planning Service throughout and, although planning permission had not actually been obtained, it was anticipated that it would be forthcoming.

The cost to remove and return equipment to Brookeborough depot, including staff time, is estimated at approximately £1,600 with a further £1,500 to be paid in respect of the cancellation of pre-arranged work on 12 January 2012.

## Customer Satisfaction Levels for Translink and Ulsterbus

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the latest available customer satisfaction levels for (i) Translink; and (ii) Ulsterbus, broken down by district.

**(AQW 7073/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The performance of Ulsterbus, Metro and NI Railways(Translink) is independently monitored against the commitments in the Passenger Charter. The Passenger Charter is agreed between my Department, Translink and the Consumer Council and is based on twice yearly surveys. Customer Performance Ratings which establish customers' opinions of the services provided is part of this process.

The most recent independent monitoring results cover the period Spring 2011. Relevant statistics are attached, showing Customer Performance Index results for Metro, Ulsterbus and NI Railways over time and including the most recent survey. Customer satisfaction levels are not broken down by District. However there is an analysis of Customer Satisfaction ratings for Ulsterbus depots and NIR stations which is attached. There is no comparable information for Metro, as its depots are not passenger facilities.

Customer Performance Index (CPI) is an amalgam of perceived performance on key service attributes factored against the relative importance of these attributes. The five groups of results included in the CPI are Punctuality, Value for Money, Helpfulness, Passenger Comfort and Cleanliness. CPI means that results can be easily benchmarked and they can be interpreted at a glance. CPI is not a national/international standard although other public transport monitors would derive an overall satisfaction value and also satisfaction with specific aspects of service.

Recalibration of CPI ratings takes place to acknowledge aspects of service that have changed in terms of relative importance to passengers over time.

I have placed a copy of graphs showing CPI performance, rating per individual customer performance and customer satisfaction with Ulsterbus stations in the Assembly Library.

## Expenditure on Roads and Dedicated Cycle Paths

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total amount of expenditure on (i) roads; and (ii) dedicated cycle paths in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 7075/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service expenditure on the road, pedestrian and cycle network includes capital investment as well as maintenance costs.

As I advised the Member in my reply to AQW 7074/11-15, Roads Service has not provided any dedicated cycling paths, however, it has provided cycling paths that are shared between pedestrians and cyclists. I am also advised that such expenditure is categorised as 'cycling measures' and that information on costs associated with the maintenance of these cycling paths is not recorded separately.

The amount of expenditure on roads and cycling measures, in the last five financial years, is detailed in the table below:

### EXPENDITURE ON ROADS AND CYCLING MEASURES £'000

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Total Roads Service Capital and Maintenance Expenditure	260,104	219,876	222,042	246,416	198,333
Cycling Measures	1,151	1,056	1,360	981	311

I can also advise that information on completed and proposed cycle path schemes, for the current financial year, can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

[http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom\\_of\\_information/customer\\_information/cinformationtypesresults.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils](http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtypesresults.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils)

### **Car Parking Capacity at the Lurgan M1 Park and Ride and William Street Train Station, Lurgan**

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to increase car parking capacity at the (i) Lurgan M1 park and ride; and (ii) William Street train station, Lurgan.

**(AQW 7076/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Lurgan Rail Station's Park and Ride facility was extended in August 2006 to a capacity of 153 plus 5 disabled spaces. Additional car parking facilities were also extended at the Wesley Place car park near the train station when its capacity was increased by 69 spaces to 240. This will be of benefit to those travelling by train in the Lurgan area. The M1 Park and Ride at Lough Road currently has 105 spaces and is utilised well.

At present, there are no plans to further increase capacity at either Lurgan M1 Park and Ride at Lough Road, or the train station at William Street in Lurgan. However, should opportunities arise to extend parking facilities that can further promote sustainable transport choices, they will be considered by both NI Railways/Translink and my Department's Roads Service.

### **Construction Industry**

**Ms Ritchie** asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he has taken to support and underpin the construction industry; and what progress he has made on the establishment of a taskforce for the construction industry.

**(AQW 7108/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department recognises the benefits to be obtained from infrastructure investment. I am conscious that it is an essential component for jobs and future prosperity, both in the short term through construction employment, and in the longer term as it facilitates economic growth which is key to our future competitiveness.

Communication is vital in this regard and to that end I recently attended the twelfth meeting of the Assembly's All Party Construction Industry Group, along with a number of my Ministerial Colleagues, at the invitation of its Chairman, Patsy McGlone. The meeting was convened to allow engagement between the construction industry and Ministers on the problems facing the industry. The consensus from those in attendance was that the All Party Working Group was the appropriate forum for future engagement with the representatives from the industry.

With regard to the establishment of a taskforce for the construction industry, I would advise the Member that the Department of Finance and Personnel, in its role as sponsor of the construction industry, would normally take the lead in such initiatives. Whilst my Department would be willing to participate in such a working group, in the meantime, my officials will continue to work in partnership with the construction industry, through the established channel of the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland, to help achieve our draft Programme for Government commitments.

### **Utility Companies**

**Mr F McCann** asked the Minister for Regional Development what action can be taken against utility companies whose employees alter streets and roads and do not replace like with like.

**(AQW 7112/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it will notify a utility company where it has not carried out a reinstatement to the required standards. It then carries out follow up inspections, at the utility company's expense, until such time as the defect has been remedied.

Roads Service can also prosecute utility companies for failing to carry out proper reinstatements, but generally only does so in cases where the failure has been particularly severe, or it has identified persistently poor reinstatement performance by an individual utility company and all other approaches have failed to secure the necessary improvement.

## Road Bonds

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline any steps he is taking to ensure that Road Bonds are recovered, and used to complete unfinished and unadopted private roads in cases where the developer has ceased to trade.

**(AQW 7145/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that in cases where housing developers have ceased trading, it will liaise with the responsible parties to seek completion of unfinished roads. If necessary, enforcement action is taken, with road bond monies being accessed and used to complete unfinished street works.

When complete, the road is adopted into public ownership and maintained by Roads Service.

## Road Bonds

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the total value of Road Bonds that are being held; (ii) in how many cases the financial backers of the developers have honoured the Road Bonds; (iii) anything in statute that prevents a bank, that is funding a developer, from holding a Road Bond and considering itself a preferential creditor, if the developer were to cease to trade.

**(AQW 7146/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that the total value of Road Bonds held to the end of the current financial year, 2011/12, is £112,626,205.

Roads Service officials further advise that, with the exception of one case, all bonds/sureties have been honoured.

In respect of the third part of the Member's question, Departmental Solicitor's Office within the Department of Finance and Personnel, has advised that the legal position of an insolvent developer is governed by the terms of the Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, as amended by the Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 2005.

## Parking Tickets

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Regional Development how many parking tickets were issued in (i) Banbridge; (ii) Lurgan; and (iii) Portadown during December 2011.

**(AQW 7169/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in Banbridge, Lurgan, and Portadown in December 2011 are provided in the table below:

Location	Banbridge	Lurgan	Portadown
Number of PCNs Issued	121	143	222

## Public Sewer Facilities

**Mr Allister** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the current rules governing the provision of public sewer facilities for groups of rural houses, including the thresholds for inclusion; (ii) the financial assistance available for this provision; (iii) when the level of financial assistance was last reviewed; and (iv) for his assessment of whether the current arrangements are adequate.

**(AQW 7201/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Extensions to the public sewer network may be requisitioned under Article 154 of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 by owners and occupiers of existing and proposed premises serving a notice on NIW.

Applications received by NIW are assessed under a technical and economic appraisal study. Where a viable technical solution is available to service the premises, NIW makes a reasonable cost allowance of £2,322 for each new build dwelling with planning approval and £4,000 for each existing dwelling constructed prior to 1 January 2000. Where the estimated cost of the scheme exceeds the allowance, applicants can pay the requisition charge to cover the shortfall. For a group of houses, the total allowance available is the sum of the individual allowances.

The level of the reasonable cost allowance was reviewed and consulted upon in 2006/07. The reasonable cost allowance is higher than elsewhere in the UK.

## Trade Union Duties

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in his Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.

**(AQW 7206/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The information available for my Department and its arm's length bodies is shown in the table below:

	2000/01		2005/06		2010/11	
	Number of staff with recorded facility time for trade union duties	Trade Union	Number of staff with recorded facility time for trade union duties	Trade Union	Number of staff with recorded facility time for trade union duties	Trade Union
DRD	9*	NIPSA	13*	NIPSA	6 3 9	TGWU GMB NIPSA
NI Water (created on 1 April 2007)	Not applicable		Not applicable		21 6	UNITE GMB
Translink	Not available		Not available		55 84 17 19	GMB UNITE SIPTU TSSA

\* Figures for these years only available for non-industrial staff in DRD Core and Roads Service.



## Complaints of Bullying on Buses

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister for Regional Development how many complaints of bullying on buses Translink has received in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 7228/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** The following are incidents on Translink services over the period in question, which have been recorded and specifically identified by them as in the category of bullying.

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
0	2	1	1	3

## Speed Limit on Motorways

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has given any consideration to increasing the speed limit on motorways to 80 mph; and for his assessment of the benefits of such an increase.

**(AQW 7241/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department has powers to set speed limits under Article 38 of Part IV of The Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. The Department for Transport's proposal to increase speed limits on motorways to 80 mph will be subject to public consultation and, if approved, will only apply to motorways and some high class dual carriageways in England and Wales.

My officials have investigated this proposal and have also had discussions with their road authority counterparts in Great Britain and Ireland. The free flow speed surveys have indicated an average speed of 65 mph on motorways and 55 mph on dual carriageways. This would appear to indicate that excess speed on these types of roads in Northern Ireland is not really an issue and with the relatively small length of motorway here, there would be negligible impact on journey times. I understand that the Devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales will also resist attempts to raise the speed limit within their territories as they also have concerns about their roads being unfit to drive comfortably at higher speeds, especially at junctions.

Research undertaken for the Department for Transport in England has indicated that if the proposed increase of the speed limit to 80 mph was implemented, it would result in an annual increase of 18 fatalities and 64 serious injuries, while the severity of collisions would also increase. In addition, with increased speeds resulting in higher fuel consumption, there would be a considerable rise in noxious gas emissions.

I would therefore conclude that I would not support a rise in motorway and high class dual carriageway speed limits to 80 mph.

## Direct Bus Route Between Enniskillen and Derry

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on a direct bus route between Enniskillen and Derry.

**(AQW 7245/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** A meeting with representatives from Translink, the Rural Community Transport Partnerships from Fermanagh and parts of Tyrone and my Department was held on 6 February 2012. At that meeting it was agreed in principle that a bus service between Enniskillen and Londonderry, operated by Translink and supported from the Rural Transport Fund, would be introduced as a pilot scheme.

A key objective of the service would be to improve accessibility for people in Fermanagh and parts of Tyrone getting to appointments in Altnagelvin hospital. Therefore where the detail of the route has to be determined, it was felt that any service should include pick up facilities at towns and villages along the route.

The reason for introducing a service as a pilot scheme, which would operate for up to six months, is that the information regarding useage would inform any decision on how to meet the demand for such a service going forward.

The next stage is to liaise with the Western Health & Social Care Trust to determine, from the information they can provide in regard to hospital appointments scheduled when best to provide the service. It will also be established if certain days/times during the week can be allocated by the Trust for appointments for people from the Fermanagh area, this would facilitate better transport planning in regard to when and how often the service will operate.

Given the above and based upon the advice of Translink and the Partnerships, I would envisage that the pilot scheme would commence in September 2012.

### **Potential Upgrading of the Existing A4/N16**

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Regional Development if he would consider raising the potential upgrading of the existing A4/N16 at the next meeting of the North South Ministerial Council, when it meets in Transport Sectoral Format.

**(AQW 7247/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that the upgrade of the existing A4/N16 was discussed at the recent Cross Border Steering Group Meeting, which was attended by senior officials from Roads Service, the National Roads Authority and the Irish Department of Transport. It was accepted that significant progress would not be possible under the current Budget settlements in both jurisdictions.

The upgrade of the A4/N16 was also been discussed on the fringes of a recent North South Ministerial Council Transport Sector Meeting.

Looking to the future, design and development of the A4 Enniskillen Southern Bypass continues to progress and a proposal for a bypass of Fivemiletown is also currently included in the Investment Delivery Plan for Roads. I would anticipate that the ten year Strategic Road Improvement Programme will be reviewed in due course, when a new Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland has been agreed.

### **Bus and Rail Transport in North Down**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development what investments are planned for bus and rail transport in North Down in each of the next three years.

**(AQW 7253/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Translink has advised that the following investments are planned for bus and rail transport in North Down in each of the next three years:

	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
<b>Projects</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
Bangor Integrated Station			
Refurbishment of Public Toilets	40	0	0
Improvements to Rear Path and Fencing	30	0	0
Installation of Barriers	10	0	0

Projects	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Bangor Railway Line Sea Defences Improvements	0	0	10
<b>Other projects being completed across the public transport networks which will have some impact in the North Down Constituency</b>			
Building Services Upgrade Programme	1,599	321	1,877
School Bus Signage & Lighting	240	160	0
Overhaul of the Class 3000 Trains (Phase 1)	1,613	2,779	2,469
Provision of an Interim Sandite Vehicle	81	19	0
Hazardous Tree Survey - Network Wide	68	0	0
Customer Information System Programme	0	39	37
Bridge Refurbishment & Strengthening Programme	0	402	402
Embankments & Cuttings Programme	0	201	201
Hand Held Ticketing Terminals Replacement	959	1,918	0

My Department is providing funding to Translink to purchase 20 new trains some of which will be deployed in the North Down area.

### Investment in Roads in North Down

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Regional Development what investment in roads in the North Down area is planned for each of the next three years.

**(AQW 7255/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is currently preparing a programme of carriageway resurfacing and footway reconstruction schemes in North Down, however, the detailed budgets for each of the next three years have not yet been agreed.

When finalised, details of future works programmes will be presented to the Council in the Spring and Autumn Council Reports. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

[http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom\\_of\\_information/customer\\_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils](http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils)

## Public Bike Hire Scheme for Belfast

**Mrs Cochrane** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his Department's role and level of involvement in the proposed Public Bike Hire Scheme for Belfast; and to detail the funding that his Department has provided for the development of the scheme over each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7279/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** A partnership project was established in 2010 involving Belfast City Council, my Department and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) to investigate the feasibility of introducing a public bike hire scheme in Belfast. In August 2010, following a successful tender, Grant Thornton were appointed by the partnership to complete an outline business case. The final report which has now been received by the partners concludes that an opportunity exists for the introduction of a bike hire scheme in Belfast.

Officials from my Department and Belfast City Council have been considering the report with a view to agreeing the most appropriate way forward. The development of the outline business case was funded by the SIB and no funding has been made available from my Department to date.

## Oil Spillages on Roads

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps are planned to record the number of oil spillages on roads arising out the transportation of fuel products; and what action is planned to ensure that health and safety procedures are enhanced.

**(AQW 7308/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it currently has no plans to record the number of oil spillages on roads arising out of the transportation of fuel products.

Roads Service policy and procedures relating to its response to fuel spillages are aimed at ensuring the safety of road users and to prevent fuel from entering watercourses, or causing other environmental damage.

Treatment of fuel spillages is undertaken by trained personnel in accordance with advice from manufactures and/or other statutory organisations, such as the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, as required.

Roads Service policies and procedures are continually reviewed to ensure that all operations are carried out in line with current health and safety procedures.

I would also remind the Member that Roads Service has plans in place to deal with roads related incidents, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and respond immediately to the initial calls.

## Park and Ride Parking Spaces in North Antrim

**Mr Storey** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department plans to increase the number of park and ride parking spaces in North Antrim.

**(AQW 7393/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department continues to review the availability of Park and Ride facilities in North Antrim and where appropriate we will seek to increase capacity.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that the proposed A26 Glarryford to A44 Drones Road junction dualling scheme includes the provision of a 50-100 space Park and Ride/Share facility. The progress of the scheme scheduling will be dependent on satisfactory progression through the statutory procedures, the procurement process and the availability of finance.

In addition Translink has advised that there are 35 additional spaces being provided at Ballymoney Rail Station with completion in August 2012.

Should opportunities arise to extend parking facilities that can further promote sustainable transport choices, then they will be considered by my Department.

### **Water Leakage**

**Mr Byrne** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the current level of water leakage; and what plans are in place to reduce the leakage.

**(AQW 7406/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that audited leakage levels are calculated on a 12 month rolling average and reported on a financial year basis. The outturn figure for 2010/11 was 177 megalitres per day and NIW is currently on profile to meet the 2011/12 target of 171 megalitres per day set by the Regulator.

NIW will continue to implement its leakage reduction strategy which involves effective leakage management, upgrading the water infrastructure and targeting resources to detect and repair leaks. It aims to reduce leakage to a level of 168 megalitres per day by the end of March 2013.

### **Recent Fire on the Derry-Belfast Goldline Bus**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the cause the recent fire on the Derry-Belfast Goldline bus; and what steps have been taken to reduce the risk of further incidents of fires on buses.

**(AQW 7451/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** This is an operational matter for Translink. However it has advised me that the recent engine compartment fire on fleet number 2008, a double-deck Goldline coach, was caused by a fractured fuel return pipe on the engine fuel injector pump.

As a precautionary measure, Translink issued a general technical instruction bulletin relating to the maintenance of fuel systems to all staff who work on this type of vehicle.

In addition a complete fleet check of fuel system pipes on this vehicle type has been carried out by Translink. They report that no other problems have been detected as a result of these checks.

### **Seven Sisters Stretch of Road on the A25**

**Ms Ruane** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department intends to carry out road improvements on the Seven Sisters stretch of road on the A25.

**(AQW 7475/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it currently has no plans to improve the stretch of road known as the Seven Sisters on the B8. However, in light of a recent collision on this road, I have asked my officials to liaise with the PSNI to determine whether any additional road safety measures are required at this location. I have also asked Roads Service to carry out a review of previous assessments to identify any potential areas for improvements along the B8 road from Newry to Hilltown.

### **Park and Ride Facilities in East Antrim**

**Mr Ross** asked the Minister for Regional Development how many railway passengers have used the park and ride facilities in East Antrim in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 7483/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** Park & Ride facilities are provided at a number of railway stations from Whiteabbey through to Larne, with a total of 559 parking spaces now available.

Translink advises that it does not keep information on how many railway passengers have used these facilities in East Antrim in each of the last 5 years. Instead snap-shot surveys of the utilisation of the facilities are undertaken every 3 years to provide a trend line.

Capacity and utilisation figures for Rail Park and Ride spaces in East Antrim are set out in the table below:

Site	2008 Capacity (spaces)	2008 Typical Utilisation %	2011 Capacity (spaces)	2011 Typical Utilisation %
Whitehead Railway Station	50	90	49	94
Greenisland Railway Station	13	100	79	62
Whiteabbey Railway Station	16	156	75	67
Carrickfergus Railway Station	120	108	294	60
Larne Railway Station	68	88	62	56

### Trips Made by Bicycle

**Mr McDevitt** asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he is aware of any countries in Europe with a lower percentage of trips made by bicycle than Northern Ireland.

**(AQW 7663/11-15)**

**Mr Kennedy:** My Department established an Active Travel Forum during March 2010 with the principal aim of drawing up a high level strategy for active travel, setting out the framework to help people choose more sustainable and active transport modes, including walking and cycling for shorter everyday journeys and linked to public transport for longer trips.

As part of this strategy officials from my Department carried out research on main mode of transport in Europe and USA. This indicated that there are two European countries with a lower percentage of trips made by bicycle than Northern Ireland. These are Malta (0%) and Cyprus (0.3%). Further details can be found by visiting:

[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_312\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_312_en.pdf)

## Department for Social Development

### Average Rent

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the average rent charged by each housing association for non-specialist housing.

**(AQW 6888/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development):** In relation to the average rent charged by Housing Associations I have detailed this information in Annex A.

**ANNEX A****ALL RENTS REFLECT THREE BEDROOM GENERAL FAMILY, NEW BUILD.**

<b>Housing Association</b>	<b>Average Rent</b>
Abbeyfield	*N/A
Alpha	79.13
Apex	75.69
Ark	70.71
Belfast Community	74.71
Broadway	*N/A
Clanmil	67.28
Connswater	86.57
Covenanter	*N/A
Craigowen	*N/A
Dungannon	76.20
Filor	70.02
Flax	77.89
Fold	74.87
Gosford	75.60
Grove	70.49
Habinteg	73.88
Harmony Homes	68.34
Hearth	*N/A
Helm	79.72
Newington	75.48
Ni Co-Ownership	N/A
Oaklee	77.97
Open Door	*N/A
Rural	74.65
Shac	*N/A
South Ulster	84.79
St Matthews	69.90
Triangle	79.41
Trinity	74.26
Ulidia	80.65
Wesley	*N/A

(\*N/A) Housing Association does not have any properties in this category.

## Housing Executive's District Office in North Belfast

**Ms P Bradley** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the (i) number; and (ii) religious background of staff currently employed in the Housing Executive's district office in North Belfast.  
**(AQW 6934/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The table below details the religious background of the staff: -

Roman Catholic	Protestant	Not known
83	17	4

## Trade Union Duties

**Mr McCallister** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in his Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.  
**(AQW 7020/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Department does not hold the information required to answer parts (i), (ii) and (iii) of the question in relation to trade union representatives in the Department for Social Development.

With regard to the Department's three arms-length bodies, both Ilex and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland have stated that they had no staff carrying out trade union duties during trade union facility time in the years 2000/01; 2005/06; and 2010/11. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has advised that it does not hold the information required to answer parts (i), (ii) and (iii) of the question.

## Repossessed Houses

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses have been repossessed in each of the last four years, broken down by constituency.  
**(AQW 7043/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** My Department does not hold the information requested. The Department of Justice has also advised me that the information is not available in the format requested but has provided the following information.

Orders made in respect of mortgages include possession, declaration, sale and possession; dismiss action, suspended possession and other orders, for example, stay of eviction.

A plaintiff begins an action for an order for possession of property. The court, following a judicial hearing, may grant an order for possession. This entitles the plaintiff to apply to have the defendant evicted. However, even where an order for eviction is issued the parties can still negotiate a compromise to prevent eviction. Not all writs and originating summonses lead to eviction or repossession.

The table below details possession. Possession is when the court orders the defendant to deliver possession of the property to the plaintiff within a specified time. If the defendant fails to comply with the court order the plaintiff may proceed to apply to the Enforcement of Judgements Office to repossess the property and give possession of it to the plaintiff.

### ORDERS MADE [1] IN RESPECT TO MORTGAGES – BY CONSTITUENCY

Constituency	Possession			
	2007	2008	2009	2010
Belfast East	30	39	45	59



<b>Possession</b>				
<b>Constituency</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Belfast North	31	57	96	120
Belfast South	24	39	61	75
Belfast West	44	67	86	77
East Antrim	34	62	87	100
East Londonderry	27	64	91	124
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	46	75	81	117
Foyle	61	91	125	123
Lagan Valley	31	59	86	95
Mid Ulster	41	69	85	109
Newry and Armagh	45	81	111	118
North Antrim	47	63	65	114
North Down	31	69	87	86
South Antrim	42	73	96	134
South Down	49	66	80	103
Strangford	32	63	78	72
Upper Bann	41	81	128	129
West Tyrone	31	55	98	108
Postcode Missing [2]	24	20	26	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>1193</b>	<b>1612</b>	<b>1872</b>

[1] More than one order can be made per case so these figures do not necessarily equal the number of cases disposed of.

[2] It is not a mandatory requirement to provide a postcode. The software used by DOJ to determine constituency is based on postcode and, where that has not been provided with the case papers, it cannot then identify the constituency and these instances are recorded as 'postcode missing'.

## **Mortgage Relief Scheme**

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has considered establishing a mortgage relief scheme, as part of the Programme for Government, to assist in alleviating the difficulties faced by a large number of home owners.

**(AQW 7046/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** A large number of people here experience difficulty meeting mortgage payments. As a result, my Department funds a contracted Mortgage Debt Advice Service, operated by the Housing Rights Service. This service provides advice and is preventing people here from becoming homeless as a consequence of housing related debt. I have recently awarded additional money due to increased demand for the service. I have previously expressed my support for the introduction of a Mortgage Rescue Scheme in the Assembly but believe that it would either help only a small proportion of those facing repossession or would be extremely expensive to operate. I am conscious that, when allocating money, the Executive must weigh-up other needs, such as those presented by education and health.

## Social Security Benefits

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister for Social Development how many households in the 2010/11 financial year received benefits in excess of £26,000.

**(AQW 7048/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Of approximately 340,000 households in receipt of social security benefit in 2010/11, paid by the Social Security Agency, early analysis indicates that more than 99% of households are in receipt of less than £500 per week in social security benefits.

## Cost of Benefit Fraud

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost of benefit fraud to his Department in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7083/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The most recently published information is set out in the tables below. Table 1 shows the estimated cost of benefit fraud for benefits administered by the Social Security Agency. Table 2 shows the estimated cost of Housing Benefit fraud. The estimated levels of benefit fraud are shown in terms of losses and also expressed as a percentage of benefit expenditure.

**TABLE 1**

### SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS – ESTIMATED COST OF BENEFIT FRAUD.

2008			2009			2010		
Benefit Expend £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud %	Benefit Expend £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud %	Benefit Expend £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud %
£3789	£12.6	0.3	£4176	£17.2	0.4	£4352	£20.5	0.5

**TABLE 2**

### HOUSING BENEFIT - ESTIMATED COST OF BENEFIT FRAUD

2008			2009			2010		
Benefit Expend £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud %	Benefit Expend £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud %	Benefit Expend £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud £m	Estimated Benefit Fraud %
£467.9	£3.0	0.6	£538.5	£5.0	0.9	£606.8	£1.7	0.3

## Co-Ownership Budget

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the co-ownership budget for the 2012/13 financial year.

**(AQW 7085/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** £25 million has been allocated to the Co-ownership scheme for the 2012/13 financial year.

## Assistance with Repairs and Extension Grants the Housing Executive

**Mr F McCann** asked the Minister for Social Development how many applications for assistance with repairs and extension grants the Housing Executive has received from home owners in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7088/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The table below details the number of formal applications received by the Housing Executive in each of the last three years: -

Year	2000/09	2009/10	2010/11
Total	5,660	3,007	2,724

These figures do not include those Preliminary Enquiries which were made to the Housing Executive regarding grant aid for which formal applications were not subsequently received.

## Incapacity Benefit and Employment and Support Allowance

**Mr F McCann** asked the Minister for Social Development how many claimants have lost their entitlement to (i) Incapacity Benefit; and (ii) Employment and Support Allowance, in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7093/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** A customer's entitlement to Incapacity Benefit or Employment and Support Allowance will cease when they no longer satisfy the conditions of entitlement to that benefit. This can occur when the Department establishes that the conditions of entitlement are no longer met or when the customer's circumstances change and entitlement ceases.

The table below shows the total number of claims where entitlement, to Incapacity Benefit or Employment and Support Allowance, has ceased in each of the last three years. For some customers benefit entitlement may have ceased on more than one occasion.

Year	Incapacity Benefit*	Employment and Support Allowance*
Apr 09 to Mar 10	15,663	12,827
Apr 10 to Mar 11	9,027	17,672
Apr 11 to Dec 11	7,982	14,807

\*The figures provided have been derived from scans of the Department's Matching Intelligence Database Analysis and General Matching Service systems and include cases where a customer has been found fit for work, has failed to attend a medical assessment or has not provided the required information. The figures also include claims where entitlement has ceased following changes in a customer's circumstances including when a customer returns to work, claims an alternative benefit or the death of a customer.

The figures include a number of claims where the customer was not receiving payment of Incapacity Benefit but a weekly National Insurance credit.

## Disability Living Allowance

**Mr F McCann** asked the Minister for Social Development how many claimants have lost their entitlement to Disability Living Allowance in each of the last three years.

**(AQW 7094/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available in the format requested. However, Table 1 below details the number of customers who lost their entitlement to Disability Living Allowance on application of a renewal claim, in each of the last three years; and

**TABLE 1 - DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE - RENEWAL CLAIM DISALLOWED**

Year	Number of renewal claims disallowed
2008/09	3,277
2009/10	2,523
2010/11	2,522

**TABLE 2 BELOW DETAILS THE NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS WHO HAD THEIR RATE OF ENTITLEMENT TO DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE MAINTAINED, REDUCED OR DISALLOWED FOLLOWING A SUPERSESSION\* OF THEIR AWARD, IN EACH OF THE LAST THE LAST THREE YEARS. TABLE 2 - DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE- SUPERSESSIONS REJECTED**

Year	Number of supersessions where the rate of entitlement was maintained, reduced or disallowed
2008/09	4,092
2009/10	4,201
2010/11	3,953

\* A supersession is when a change has occurred in a customer's circumstances, outside the one month disputes period, subsequent to the date the original decision was made.

### Charges Imposed by Doctors for Releasing Medical Notes

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Social Development what steps he intends to take to limit the charges imposed by doctors for releasing medical notes for appeal tribunals.

**(AQW 7117/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Ownership of medical notes lies with the appellant's doctor. If the doctor refuses a request for the release of these notes for an appeal tribunal, the appellant may request them via a Freedom of Information enquiry and the associated fee will be imposed. My Department has no control over the fee charged.

### Work Capability Assessment

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people, in each constituency, have failed the Work Capability Assessment since ATOS Origin began conducting the assessment; and how many people, in each constituency, have appealed the decision.

**(AQW 7147/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Department's management information system does not differentiate between customers, by constituency, who have undertaken a Work Capability Assessment conducted by Atos Healthcare and those who participated in a Work Capability Assessment before Atos Healthcare took over on 20 June 2011.

The decision on whether or not a customer is to be disallowed benefit following a Work Capability Assessment is the responsibility of a Social Security Decision Maker.

## Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

**Mr McCartney** asked the Minister for Social Development whether it is a legal requirement for private landlords to install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms in their premises.

**(AQW 7150/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** All landlords of Houses In Multiple Occupation, which are governed by “The Housing (Management of Houses In Multiple Occupation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993, are legally required to ensure working smoke alarms in their properties.

In addition, since June 1994 landlords of other private rented properties are required by Building Regulations to have smoke alarms fitted in all newly built properties, although there is no legal requirement for private landlords to install smoke alarms in properties built before that date.

The Department of Finance and Personnel has recently consulted on a proposal to require the installation of carbon monoxide detectors/ alarms in all dwellings where a new or replacement combustion appliance is installed. A final decision on this proposal has not yet been taken by that Department.

## Summer Intervention Youth Work in the Upper Bann Area

**Mr Moutray** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the level of funding his Department allocated to summer intervention youth work in the Upper Bann area, in each of the last three years (i) in total; and (ii) in each council area.

**(AQW 7167/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** While the Department for Social Development has not allocated any funding to specific summer intervention youth work in Upper Bann, it has, through its Neighbourhood Renewal and Areas at Risk programmes, funded a number of youth projects many of which operate all year round. The level of funding allocated to these programmes is as follows:

District Council Area	Funding Allocated		
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
Banbridge	Nil	£2,116.67	£3,466.66
Craigavon	£72,014.00	£100,032.00	£168,469.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>£72,014.00</b>	<b>£102,148.67</b>	<b>£171,936.24</b>

## Homeless People

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are currently homeless and sleeping on the street.

**(AQW 7173/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** In Northern Ireland the propensity to rough sleep is confined largely to Belfast and to a much lesser extent Londonderry. By applying the Department for Communities & Local Government’s (DCLG) guidance on counting rough sleepers fewer than 10 individuals rough sleep in Belfast on a given night. There are, however, up to 100 individuals who could sleep rough regularly if appropriate services were not provided.

In Londonderry the problem is largely confined to street drinking, although again, without appropriate services, there is the capacity for this to become a rough sleeping problem. Currently there are very isolated incidences of rough sleeping. Appropriate services can vary, based on the geographical circumstances; however there are core services that are common to all locations, street outreach support services, access to

crisis accommodation, comprehensive assessment and the development of a continuum of services from crisis accommodation to move on services through to resettlement.

## Department Land

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how much land his Department plans to sell in the 2012/13 financial year.

**(AQW 7174/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The current Urban Regeneration and Community Development Group budget for the sale of land in the 2012/13 financial year is £5m.

## People Entitled to Benefits

**Mr Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of his Department's efforts to ensure that all people who are entitled to benefits are claiming them.

**(AQW 7175/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Promoting benefit uptake is a key priority for my Department and the Social Security Agency has taken a proactive approach to increasing uptake. Since 2005 a number of new and innovative approaches have been taken in addition to on-going promotional activity, which has resulted in 400,000 people being offered benefit entitlement assessments which has generated an additional £37.6 million in annual benefit and arrears for over 11,000 people across Northern Ireland. The return on investment being achieved is 1:8 ie £1 spent has generated £8 in new and additional benefits and arrears.

In 2011/12 significant additional investment has been made in benefit uptake, taking the annual spend to in excess of £1.3m across 4 complementary approaches:

- 25,000 people, selected from existing customer data, have received a personal invitation to have a full benefits assessment through a contracted partner in the independent advice sector.
- A promotional outreach to older people approach at council and community level involving trusted partners such as community and older peoples' groups, GPs, pharmacies and church/faith based groups. Entitlement checks are delivered by telephone with home visits offered to those who require assistance with making a claim.
- The "Make the Call" advertising campaign - a television, radio, press and outdoor advertising campaign aimed at older people. Over 10,000 calls have been received to date and ongoing monitoring indicates that 40% of callers have potential entitlement.
- A £375,000 Innovation Fund for Increasing Benefit Uptake has funded 7 projects led by the community and voluntary sector partners to test new and innovative ways of reaching people with potential unclaimed benefit entitlement.

Early evaluation of the 2011/12 programme is underway and outcomes for 3 of the 4 approaches will be reported in June 2012. The outcomes from the Innovation Fund for Increasing Benefit Uptake will be known in March 2013.

The Agency is also working increasingly across government to optimise opportunities for increasing uptake of a wide range of benefits, services and supports. This work includes sharing data to aid targeting where legal gateways exist. It also includes joint delivery of uptake activities with Departments and Agencies. These include, Land and Property Services and Northern Ireland Housing Executive on housing benefit and rates relief, Department for Rural Development in relation to rural poverty and the Public Health Agency on assisting those with neurological health conditions.

A wide range of general services are also in place to make people aware of their potential entitlement to benefit. These include the production of specific publications, some in minority ethnic languages; NI Direct website; an online Benefits Adviser Service; general assistance with information available through our network of local and centralised offices.

## Work Capability Assessments for Employment and Support Allowance

**Mr F McCann** asked the Minister for Social Development what action he has taken to address concerns about the Work Capability Assessments that are carried out by ATOS Healthcare for people on Employment and Support Allowance.

**(AQW 7176/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Social Security Agency has a dedicated Medical Support Services Contract Management Team that monitors the performance of Atos Healthcare. The Work Capability Assessment medical assessments for Employment and Support Allowance are subject to monthly audits. The audit results are reported to the Social Security Agency's Health Assessment Advisor who is responsible for reviewing the quality and consistency of medical assessments. In the event that there are any concerns about the quality of the assessments, they are addressed directly with Atos Healthcare.

## Belfast City Centre

**Mr F McCann** asked the Minister for Social Development what action he has taken to end the policy on the sequencing of developments in Belfast City Centre.

**(AQW 7177/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** My Department's policy of sequencing retail-led regeneration in Belfast City Centre is designed to ensure that the expansion of retail floor space is planned and implemented at a pace which the retail market can absorb while extending consumer choice. This policy has served Belfast well by securing the £400m private sector investment at Victoria Square, despite the difficult trading conditions in the retail sector, and moving forward the Royal Exchange project through planning in order to be ready to take advantage of the upturn in the retail sector when this arrives.

## Social Fund Reform

**Mr Campbell** asked the Minister for Social Development whether he intends to carry out an analysis, during the Social Fund Reform, of the wide disparity in success rates for Crisis Loans, whereby Londonderry and Strabane had 95 percent success, while Ballymoney and Banbridge has less than 60 percent success.

**(AQW 7212/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** In order to help shape the future design of discretionary support to replace the existing system of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses and items, the Social Fund Research study is considering both the strengths and weaknesses of the current provision. In order that future customers receive as consistent a service as possible, I will be considering the factors which contribute to the variation in the percentage number of successful applicants.

## Welfare Reform Bill

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department is taking to ensure that people with learning disabilities understand the changes proposed by the Welfare Reform Bill.

**(AQW 7223/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Officials have been engaging with Customer Representative Groups to explain the changes proposed by the Welfare Reform Bill. In particular, the Personal Independence Payment project have established a specific forum for Disability Groups and members of the Voluntary and Community Sector. Two successful meetings have been held to date which are the first in an extensive programme of planned engagement to inform the future delivery arrangements for this new benefit.

In addition, individual disability organisations have been offered the opportunity to avail of one to one meetings to address a wider cross section of individuals within the organisation concerned. Mencap was the first to take up this opportunity and others are pending.

I have also recently launched a 15 week public consultation on the assessment criteria for the Personal Independence Payment. I am keen to ensure that people here and their representatives

have the opportunity to provide input to the development of the assessment criteria and to determine whether further changes are required to reflect individual needs.

### **Social Security Benefits**

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Development how many households per constituency have been in receipt of (i) less than, and inclusive of, £26,000; and (ii) in excess of £26,000 from social security benefits over the last four years.

**(AQW 7225/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Of approximately 340,000 households in receipt of social security benefit in 2010/11, paid by the Social Security Agency, early analysis indicates that more than 99% of households are in receipt of less than £500 per week in social security benefits. This weekly amount equates to a net yearly income of £26,000 per year. It is not possible to provide breakdowns by constituency as geographical indicators are not available.

### **Work Capability Assessments**

**Mr McCartney** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the annual cost of carrying out Work Capability Assessments to date; (ii) the annual cost of carrying out appeals against assessments to date; (iii) whether the assessments are carried out by qualified doctors; and (iv) whether it is a requirement to have a medical qualification to carry out the assessments.

**(AQW 7244/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:**

- (i) It is not possible to provide an overall cost of administering the Work Capability Assessment process within the Social Security Agency as it is an integral but not specific activity within the entire claims process. The Agency costing and financial systems do not capture the cost of administering the end to end Work Capability Assessment process.
- (ii) The Agency does not gather information in respect of appeals against specific aspects of the claims process. It is therefore not possible to provide the annual cost of carrying out appeals against Work Capability Assessments.
- (iii) Medical assessments in relation to the Work Capability Assessment are carried out by Healthcare Professionals who may be a registered medical practitioner or a registered nurse.
- (iv) The Healthcare Professionals who carry out the assessments are required to be medically qualified or hold a nursing qualification.

### **Average Level of Housing Benefit**

**Ms Lo** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the average level of Housing Benefit for people in housing association accommodation.

**(AQW 7269/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not categorise tenants of Housing Association properties separately from other private Housing benefit claimants.

However, the Housing Executive estimates that benefit spend for Housing Associations makes up approximately 23% of the total Private Housing Benefit spend, which would amount to an estimated £80,884,042 for 2010/11, with a caseload of 22,299, giving an estimated average weekly award of £69.75.

### **Disability Living Allowance**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many people who are, or were, in receipt of Disability Living Allowance have had their benefit (a) reduced; or (b) withdrawn, after



assessment under welfare reform; and (ii) of these, how many people have indicated that they wish to appeal the decision.

**(AQW 7320/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The provisions in the Welfare Reform Bill, currently progressing through the Westminster Parliament, which impact on Disability Living Allowance will not come into force until 2013. Therefore no customer in receipt of Disability Living Allowance has had their benefit reduced or withdrawn as a result of assessment under welfare reform.

### **Derelict Homes on the Ballysally Estate, Coleraine**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) what action he intends to take to ensure that derelict homes on the Ballysally Estate, Coleraine, are demolished or refurbished; and (ii) when he expects the work to commence.

**(AQW 7327/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Tackling the issue of empty homes not only provides the opportunity to make more housing available for those in housing need, but it can also help reduce blight and regenerate communities. Nearly 100 existing homes that were long term voids in Antrim, North Belfast and Downpatrick have already been identified to bring back into use and more will follow, including some in Ballysally.

In Ballysally Estate there are a total of 20 properties currently steeled up. The majority of these (18) are owned by SHAC Housing Association while the Housing Executive has secured two following severe fire damage.

Plans are already underway by SHAC (who are currently being managed by Oaklee Housing Association) to bring their housing back into use on a phased basis. Phase 1 will start this summer with three voids refurbished alongside upgrades to seven adjacent occupied properties. Work to bring the remaining homes back into use will be programmed following that.

### **Tenancy Agreements of Tenants who have Convictions for Drug Dealing**

**Mr Dallat** asked the Minister for Social Development whether he intends to review the tenancy agreements of tenants who have convictions for drug dealing on housing estates in Limavady.

**(AQW 7328/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive is aware of the recent arrests made in Limavady and is liaising closely with the PSNI on the matter. The Housing Executive does review the tenancy of any individual engaged in serious anti social behaviour in, or in the locality of, one of its properties. It also reviews the tenancy of any tenant convicted of serious criminal activity in or around the locality of his or her dwelling. In this instance, those arrested have not yet appeared in court and there have been no convictions yet. Until the legal position is clarified in the courts, the Housing Executive would not be in a position to use its enforcement powers.

### **Housing Rights Service**

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the remit of the Housing Rights Service.  
**(AQW 7330/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The remit of Housing Rights Service covers the following:

- Providing a housing advice line
- Undertaking advocacy and legal representation work on behalf of people with housing problems
- Providing dedicated debt advisers to advise and represent families threatened with repossession
- Delivering skills and knowledge based training on housing and related issues
- Producing information resource materials on housing law and practice in Northern Ireland

- Providing client based comment to influence the development of relevant public policy and legislation
- Providing a public information website on housing and related issues in Northern Ireland (www.housingadviceNI.org)
- Providing a specialist housing advice service within the prisons in NI, and
- Supporting (in partnership with Citizens Advice and Advice NI) generalist advice agencies to deliver quality housing in their local communities (through the Community Housing Advice Project)

### Housing Rights Service

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding has been allocated to the Housing Rights Service in each of the last five years.

**(AQW 7331/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** All funding allocated to Housing Rights Service by my Department in the last five years is detailed in Annex A.

#### ANEX A

Financial Year	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
Amount £	736,000.00	760,878.00	782,852.00	822,878.00	767,178.65

### Housing Waiting List for the Magherafelt and Cookstown District Council Areas

**Mr McGlone** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people on the housing waiting list for the (a) Magherafelt; and (b) Cookstown district council areas, broken down by the towns/settlements within these areas.

**(AQW 7353/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive cannot break the district waiting list into towns/settlements within the areas in question. However, the table below provides details of the waiting list in those areas by Common landlord Area.

NIHE District	Common Landlord Area	Applicants
Magherafelt	Ballymaguigan/St. Treas	4
	Bellaghy	20
	Carmean	1
	Castledawson	40
	Clady Magherafelt	10
	Culnady	3
	Curran	2
	Desertmartin	1
	Draperstown	51
	Fallahogey	1
	Gulladuff	6
	Innisrush	1
Kilross	2	

NIHE District	Common Landlord Area	Applicants
	Knockloughrim	7
	Lisnamuck	1
	Maghera	96
	Magherafelt	225
	Magherafelt Rural Area	4
	Moneyneaney	4
	Swatragh	16
	Tamlaght	2
	Tobermore	12
	Upperlands	5
Cookstown	Finnobar, Coagh	11
	Tynure, Lissan/Dunman	2
	Ardboe/Moortown/Ballinderry	24
	Ballyronan	4
	Cookstown North	164
	Cookstown South	147
	Dunamore/Orritor	1
	Labourers Cottages	2
	Moneymore	13
	Pomeroy	11
	Rock	2
	Sandholes	1
	Stewartstown	22
	Tullyhogue	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>929</b>

### Local Housing Allowance Payments

**Mr Byrne** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people, aged between 25 and 34, have been affected by the changes to Local Housing Allowance payments in the (i) Omagh; and (ii) Strabane areas.

**(AQW 7415/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Housing Executive carried out an exercise in November 2011 to identify the number of Housing Benefit claimants who would be affected by the changes to Local Housing Allowance for persons aged between 25 and 34 years and wrote to those affected to advise them of the forthcoming changes. From the list of cases identified there were 155 claimants affected in Omagh and 175 in Strabane.

## Mortgage Debt Advice

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have availed of his Department's mortgage debt advice since its establishment, broken down by constituency.

**(AQW 7441/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Mortgage Debt Advice Service contract commenced on 14 June 2011. Since then, 794 people have used the service. 662 clients provided postal addresses; the table below details the breakdown of the number and percentage of these clients, experiencing mortgage difficulties, contacting the service for advice up to 31 January 2012.

<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Number of service users, 14 June 2011 to 31 January 2012</b>	<b>%</b>
North Belfast	28	4.2
South Belfast	29	4.4
East Belfast	17	2.5
West Belfast	91	13.7
South Antrim	60	9.1
North Antrim	26	3.9
East Antrim	37	5.6
Newry & Armagh	42	6.3
Strangford	44	6.6
South Down	23	3.5
North Down	53	8
Lagan	29	4.4
Upper Bann	28	4.2
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	37	5.6
West Tyrone	21	3.1
Mid Ulster	29	4.4
East Londonderry	31	4.7
Foyle	37	5.6

## Pension Age

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Development for an estimate of the savings that might be made by delaying 6,800 women from receiving the pension, if the first acceleration is enacted to increase the pension age to 65 by 2018.

**(AQW 7442/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** Equalising women's State Pension age with men's at 65 by November 2018 would result in an estimated reduction in expenditure on pensioner benefits of £57m over the 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 tax years. Expenditure on working-age benefits would increase by an estimated £10m.

## Mobile Phone Applications

**Mr McKay** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) any mobile phone applications that have been designed by his Department, and its arm's length bodies, for use by members of the public; and (ii) any that are currently being developed.

**(AQW 7459/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Department, including its agencies, does not have any mobile phone applications deployed at present. However, the Housing Executive are currently developing a version of their "Report a Repair" application which is currently available for use on the Housing Executive website, for use by the public on smaller devices including mobile phones.

## Social Security Benefit

**Mr Weir** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are currently receiving at least one social security benefit.

**(AQW 7474/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The table below shows the number of people in receipt of at least one main social security benefit at August 2011. Customers have been assigned to only one Client Group.

Client Group	Number of claimants
Children	14,610
Working Age	263,090
Pension Age	305,310
<b>Total</b>	<b>583,010</b>

Data source MIDAS scans August 2011

## Green New Deal

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Social Development what action his Department has taken to progress the Green New Deal since receiving the Green New Deal business plan; and to detail his Department's forward work programme on the Green New Deal.

**(AQW 7523/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** A Cross Departmental Group which is chaired by my Department and includes representatives from DETI, DARD and DFP are currently examining the options for the delivery of the £12m that has been set aside for the Green New Deal programme over the next 3 years. The Cross Departmental Group have developed a full economic appraisal to determine the most cost effective way of spending the £12m, ensuring that the maximum benefit is realised from the expenditure.

The different options that have been examined for the delivery of the programme, which includes the Green New Deal Group's business proposal option, have been assessed on the basis of what they propose to deliver in the context of improving energy efficiency in domestic properties, any associated benefits or costs and any associated risk around the potential to deliver the proposal including where those risks may lie.

The full economic appraisal will be presented shortly to my Ministerial colleagues of the Cross Departmental Group for approval following which it will proceed through the normal DFP process to approve funding. When the economic appraisal has been approved a detailed forward work programme will be developed for the preferred option within the appraisal.

## Departmental Revenue Expenditure

**Mr Copeland** asked the Minister for Social Development whether his departmental revenue expenditure varies proportionately to his capital budget allocation.

**(AQW 7551/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The overall ratio of capital to revenue expenditure for the Department over the next 3 years is illustrated by the following table:

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	£m	£m	£m
Revenue	525.5	537.4	523.4
Capital	127.1	104.6	120.3
<b>Ratio of Capital:Revenue</b>	<b>24.2%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>23.0%</b>

## Disability Living Allowance Appeal Panels

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) when Disability Living Allowance appeal panels were instructed to review all aspects of an appellant's claim and not just the section(s) which are in dispute; and (ii) whether this might cause a claimant not to appeal.

**(AQW 7552/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** (i) The Appeal Tribunal is an independent judicial body. Therefore neither the tribunal, nor the tribunal members, fall within the responsibility of the Minister. The responsibility for tribunals falls within the statutory function of the President of Appeal Tribunals, Mr Conall MacLynn. The President can be contacted directly at Office of the President of Appeal Tribunals, 6th Floor Cleaver House, 3 Donegall Square North, Belfast BT1 5GA.

(ii) The option to appeal against any Social Security Benefit decision is a matter for the claimant.

## Eco-Village in Enniskillen

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the development of an eco-village in Enniskillen.

**(AQW 7576/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** An outline planning application for 200 housing units has been submitted for the Grosvenor Barracks site and is currently being assessed by Planning Service.

Clanmil Housing Association has refurbished the 10 existing former MoD houses at Ballaghmore Heights and have all now been allocated to tenants. The Association has also submitted a planning application for a further 16 units on the adjacent undeveloped land.

## Gambling Legislation

**Mr Agnew** asked the Minister for Social Development when he intends to bring forward a Bill to update the existing gambling legislation.

**(AQW 7670/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** I would refer the Member to the answer to question AQW 3842/ 11-15, put down by Peter Weir, Member for North Down.

The answer is contained in the Written Answers Booklet for week ending 4 November 2011.

## Boiler Replacement Scheme

**Mr Molloy** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of successful applications for the Boiler Replacement Scheme to date in the Mid-Ulster constituency.

**(AQW 7702/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not collate this information by parliamentary constituency.

The Mid Ulster parliamentary constituency comprises the Housing Executive district office areas of Magherafelt and Cookstown. It also comprises part of the Dungannon district office area.

99 eligible households have been given approval to start boiler replacement works broken down by district area as follows:

	Magherafelt	Cookstown	Dungannon
Eligible applications	31	12	56

The scheme will close on 31 March and therefore I would urge anyone still waiting for work to be carried out in their home to make contact with their preferred installer urgently to ensure the work is completed as soon as possible.

## State Pension Age

**Mr Durkan** asked the Minister for Social Development how many females in the Foyle constituency will be affected by the acceleration of the changes to the state pension age.

**(AQW 7838/11-15)**

**Mr McCausland:** The Pensions Bill currently before the Assembly proposes a number of changes to existing legislation relating to State Pension age – the equalisation of Women's State Pension age with men's at 65 by November 2018 instead of April 2020 and the phased increase in State Pension age for both men and women to 66 between December 2018 and October 2020 rather than between April 2024 and April 2026.

An estimated 400 women in the Foyle Parliamentary Constituency may be affected by the new timetable for equalisation of State Pension age. A further 4,800 may be affected by the proposed increase to age 66 between December 2018 and October 2020.

## Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

### Visitors to Parliament Buildings

**Mr Flanagan** asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) the groups from Fermanagh and South Tyrone that have visited Parliament Buildings since 2007; (ii) how this number compares with the number of visitors from other constituencies; and (iii) what action the Commission is taking to improve engagement within Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

**(AQW 7068/11-15)**

**Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** In accordance with the Assembly's strategic objective to ensure that its work is accessible to all and communicated widely, the Outreach and Education Service has developed a number of programmes and resources.

Engagement by the Outreach and Education Service is not based on specific constituencies, however the Commission is aware that distance from Parliament Buildings can hinder public engagement with the business of the Assembly. Consequently, for those unable to visit Parliament Buildings, a number of additional programmes and resources have been developed, including web-based resources.

Public engagement with the business of the Assembly is promoted in a variety of ways as outlined below.

### Education Service

The Education Service provides educational programmes and resources to support teaching and learning about the Assembly and encourages the participation of young people in the democratic process.

Table 1 below indicates the total number of groups and individuals visiting Parliament Buildings from each constituency between May 2007 and January 2012. It can be seen that 97 groups (3,064 visitors) from Fermanagh and South Tyrone visited Parliament Buildings during this period.

**TABLE 1**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>No. of groups (Ave.= 100)</b>	<b>No. of participants (Ave. = 3,228)</b>
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	97	3,064
East Antrim	96	3,210
East Belfast	160	4,796
East Londonderry	71	2,442
Foyle	92	3,070
Lagan Valley	121	3,879
Mid Ulster	101	3,542
Newry and Armagh	171	5,837
North Antrim	101	3,442
North Belfast	64	1,669
North Down	45	1,537
South Antrim	66	1,767
South Belfast	119	3,667
South Down	126	4,064
Strangford	68	2,257
Upper Bann	124	4,325
West Belfast	111	3,337
West Tyrone	64	2,200
Outside NI	252	6,984

The Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency ranks 10th out of the 18 constituencies in terms of the number of groups visiting Parliament Buildings to participate in the Education Service Programme. Comparatively more groups from Fermanagh and South Tyrone visit than groups from several constituencies in closer proximity to Parliament Buildings.

A number of measures to improve engagement with schools that are more geographically remote from Parliament Buildings have been introduced. For example a video conferencing facility is now available in Parliament Buildings, allowing schools and other education bodies to engage with the Assembly without leaving their locality. The Education Service is also working with C2K (responsible for Information



Technology in schools) to pilot an online teaching resource that will further promote linkages to schools where distance is a barrier. In addition, the Education Service launched its new website in October 2011, designed to promote engagement with the Assembly regardless of proximity to Parliament Buildings.

Since 2010, an outreach programme has been available to all schools. The Education Service delivers the programme within the school, providing an opportunity for Members from the relevant constituency to meet with young people, hear their views and answer their questions.

Table 2 below shows the schools from Fermanagh and South Tyrone which have taken part in the outreach programme:

**TABLE 2**

<b>Date</b>	<b>School</b>
18 May 2010	St. Comghall's College, Lisnaskea
18 May 2010	St Francis of Assisi Primary School, Castledearg
19 May 2010	St Joseph's Primary School Ederney
20 May 2010	St Martin's Primary School, Garrison
20 May 2010	St John the Baptist Primary School, Roscor
26 November 2010	St Comghall's College, Lisnaskea
26 November	St Eugene's College, Rosslea
30 March 2011	St Joseph's, Donaghmore
1 April 2011	St Michael's College, Enniskillen

Research by the Assembly Youth Panel involved holding regional meetings to hear the views of young people on the establishment of a Youth Assembly. Young people from Fermanagh gave their views on a Youth Assembly at two meetings in the Lakeland Youth Centre on 13 November 2010 and 3 December 2010.

### **Functions and Tours**

The Events Office provides Members with an events co-ordination, management and planning service, ensuring successful undertaking of events in a manner reflecting the dignity of Parliament Buildings.

Table 3 below shows the number of visitors to Parliament Buildings by constituency for functions or tours between May 2007 and the end of January 2012. The majority of the functions and many tours within Parliament Buildings are directly sponsored by Members themselves.

The average number of visitors per constituency is 1716. The Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency has the lowest number of visitors to Parliament Buildings for functions and tours of any of the 18 constituencies during the period May 2007 and the end of January 2012.

**TABLE 3**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>No. of Visitors</b>
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	552 (Ave. = 1,716)
East Antrim	596
East Belfast	3,602
East Londonderry/East Derry	865

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>No. of Visitors</b>
Foyle	966
Lagan Valley	1,989
Mid Ulster	944
Newry & Armagh	1,807
North Antrim	2,308
North Belfast	861
North Down	1,537
South Antrim	1,562
South Belfast	5,290
South Down	1,718
Strangford	2,668
Upper Bann	1,737
West Belfast	847
West Tyrone	1,046

Table 4 below shows specific groups from Fermanagh and South Tyrone which have visited Parliament Buildings since May 2007.

**TABLE 4**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>No. in Group</b>
11 May 2007	Fermanagh Shadow Youth Council	25
17 May 2007	Newtownbutler Women's Union	50
14 June 2007	Fermanagh Herald	10
7 July 2007	Northern Ladies Fishing Group	15
18 August 2007	1st Sion Mills Scout Group	16
12 November 2007	Portora Royal School	15
23 November 2007	Erne West DUP Branch	50
9 June 2009	Ballinamallard RBP	30
1 July 2009	Fermanagh Cardiac Support Group	14
3 October 2009	Lisbellaw Orange Lodge	50
18 January 2010	Club Tyrone	50
19 June 2010	Dungannon Disabled Christian Fellowship Group	60
31 January 2011	Ballinamallard Group	15
22 March 2011	Kesh Enterprises	16
23 March 2011	Glebe House	30
4 June 2011	Ballinamallard Mothers' Union	56

Date	Name of Group	No. in Group
13 September 2011	Lisbellaw & Longford Historical Society	30
7 July 2011	National Trust, Fermanagh	20

### Community Outreach

The Outreach and Education Service also provides an outreach service to representatives from statutory agencies, voluntary and community groups and business groups to explain how the Assembly works and to encourage involvement and engagement.

The Outreach Service, in conjunction with NICVA, has carried out a number of training events to build the capacity of individuals and groups in the community and voluntary sector looking to engage with the Assembly and MLAs. Since 2009 this programme has worked with over 300 people, 39 of whom are based in Fermanagh and South Tyrone, and four of the sessions were held in the Aisleen Centre in Enniskillen.

In April 2009 the Assembly 'roadshow' visited Enniskillen and there were approximately 60 attendees. A question and answer session took place at the event with five MLAs in attendance.

On 23 February 2012 the Outreach team will be facilitating an event with the Community Development Health Network which is targeted at individuals working in the Western Health Trust, including those that work in Fermanagh and South Tyrone. The Community Outreach team is also planning to host a "Get Involved Conference" in Enniskillen later this year.

The 2009 Public Attitude Survey identified that "distance is a barrier to visiting Parliament Buildings". Whilst there is no apparent disparity in the number of educational groups visiting Parliament Buildings, there is an obvious disparity in the number of groups participating in functions and tours in Parliament Buildings. Whilst the onus for encouraging groups to visit Parliament Buildings rests primarily with individual Members, the Commission is always looking for new ways to engage as widely as possible and would be happy to receive any suggestions that you might wish to make.

The Head of Outreach and Education is Peter Hall. Peter will contact you shortly to gauge your thoughts on how to further improve engagement of the public in the Fermanagh & South Tyrone constituency with the business of the Assembly.

### Assembly's New Website

**Mr Swann** asked the Assembly Commission to detail (i) the cost of the Assembly's new website, from design to going live; (ii) whether the subscription service was part of the original design; (iii) why the subscription service is not yet operational; and (iv) when this service will be operational.

**(AQW 7124/11-15)**

**Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):**

- (i) As published on the Assembly website on 12 December 2011 the total cost for research, design and build of the new website was £182,730.
- (ii) The subscription service was not a mandatory requirement of the website redevelopment project.
- (iii) The subscription service was not a mandatory requirement of the new website however this capability is part of the system that has been implemented. A decision was therefore taken to provide a subscription service on the new website. Due to the complexity of the website, and the necessary security considerations that need to be managed, it has taken longer than would normally be expected to implement the subscription service however officials are working very closely with the supplier to resolve this issue.
- (iv) Assembly officials anticipate that the issue with the subscription service will be resolved within the next few days, and that the service will be operational by 13th February 2012.

## Trade Union Duties

**Mr McCallister** asked the Assembly Commission to detail the number of full-time equivalent staff, in its Department or its arm's-length bodies, who carried out trade union duties, during trade union facility time, in (i) 2000/01; (ii) 2005/06; and (iii) 2010/11, broken down by trade union.

**(AQW 7207/11-15)**

**Mr Weir (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The Assembly Commission does not retain information on day to day facility time arrangements for trade union activities for 2000/01 and 2005/06. However, during this period the Assembly Commission recognised the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) for consultation and negotiation purposes and reasonable provision was made for staff of the Commission to engage in trade union activities connected with consultation and negotiation on staffing matters.

During 2010/11, NIPSA remained the only trade union recognised by the Assembly Commission. In 2010/11, the Assembly Commission had on secondment one Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) member of staff to NIPSA to assist with the development of effective industrial relations. Under the terms of a Joint Agreement with NIPSA, the Commission also permits certain Officers of the local Branch of NIPSA to undertake reasonable trade union activities such as attendance at meetings and providing advice to trade union members. Such activities are not centrally recorded but are undertaken without adverse impact on business requirements.

## Mobile Phone Application

**Mr McKay** asked the Assembly Commission whether it has considered developing a mobile phone application to keep members of the public updated on Assembly business.

**(AQW 7302/11-15)**

**Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The IS Office is currently developing a mobile web application which will improve access to AIMS-based procedural data from a range of web-enabled mobile devices. We hope to trial this web application before the summer recess. At that time IS Office will be in touch with Members to give them the opportunity to provide feedback and comment on the service.

## Assembly Chamber

**Mr McKay** asked the Assembly Commission what consideration has been given to allowing Members to carry out business electronically in the Assembly Chamber as well as by paper; and for an assessment of how this might improve attendance in the Chamber.

**(AQW 7304/11-15)**

**Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The Speaker wrote to the Chair of the Committee on Procedures on 4 October 2011 concerning the use of electronic devices in the Assembly Chamber. The Committee on Procedures subsequently considered the use of such devices in the Chamber at its meeting on 8 November 2011 and agreed to put it on its Forward Work Programme for 2012. The Committee is to consider research on the issue at its meeting on 27 February 2012.

There are currently no technical impediments restricting the use of electronic devices to enable members to carry out business electronically. However the use of a '3G' enabled device has the potential to interfere with the audio system used in the Chamber. Until the matter is formally considered the Speaker's Ruling on the use of mobile phones and other communication devices in the Chamber continues to apply.

It is not possible to assess how the use of such devices might improve attendance in the Chamber. In October 2011, the House of Commons agreed to the use of electronic devices in its Chamber. Figures are not held on attendance in the Chamber but there appears to have been no discernible impact on attendance.

## Assembly Chamber: Electronic Devices

**Mr McKay** asked the Assembly Commission whether further consideration will be given to the use of laptops and computer tablets in the Assembly Chamber.

**(AQW 7305/11-15)**

**Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** The use of electronic devices such as laptops and computer tablets in the Chamber is on the Committee on Procedures' Forward Work Programme for 2012. The Committee is to consider research on the issue at its meeting on 27 February and may, in due course, bring a proposal on the matter to the Assembly.

## Inventory of Works of Art

**Mr Allister** asked the Assembly Commission, pursuant to AQW 6192/11-15, where each of the works of art described as being 'currently in offsite storage' is stored.

**(AQW 7310/11-15)**

**Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** I can confirm that all of the works of art described as being "currently in offsite storage" are stored in a secure commercial storage facility at Mallusk in Newtownabbey.

I hope that the above information provides the detail that you sought, however should you require any supplementary information I would be very happy to assist with your enquiry.

## Inventory of Works of Art

**Mr Allister** asked the Assembly Commission, pursuant to AQW 6192/11-15, whether this represents the totality of the inventory of art works which the Commission inherited on coming to office; and, if not, what has become of the other art works.

**(AQW 7311/11-15)**

**Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** I can confirm that, further to AQW 6192/11-15, the list provided represents the total art works inherited by the Assembly Commission.

I hope that the above information provides the detail that you sought, however should you require any supplementary information I would be very happy to assist with your enquiry.

## Mahogany Table

**Mr Allister** asked the Assembly Commission where the mahogany table, upon which the Royal Assent to the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland was signed, and which was formerly in the Great Hall, is now located.

**(AQW 7312/11-15)**

**Mr P Ramsey (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** I can confirm that the table purported to be the "Act of Union" table is in secure offsite storage at Mallusk.

I hope that the above information provides the detail that you sought, however should you require any supplementary information I would be very happy to assist with your enquiry.

## Assembly Chamber: Electronic Devices

**Mr McKay** asked the Assembly Commission whether any assessment has been made of the impact on Members' work and response time to constituents due to the fact that electronic devices not being allowed to be used in the Assembly Chamber.

**(AQW 7370/11-15)**

**Mr McElduff (The Representative of the Assembly Commission):** No assessment has been made of the impact on Members' work and response times to constituents arising from electronic devices not being allowed to be used in the Assembly Chamber.



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