

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 1 March 2013

Volume 82, No WA3

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 1 March 2013

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Community Relations Council

Mr Byrne asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the filling of vacant positions on the board of the Community Relations Council, following a request made in May 2012.
(AQO 3231/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Memorandum of Association of the Community Relations Council provides that we have the option of appointing up to one-third of the CRC Board Members.

We have not taken up this option, as the model for strategic direction for the delivery mechanisms for good relations is still under discussion. Options for delivery mechanisms were part of the CSI consultation and part of the ongoing discussions among parties on the best way forward for good relations delivery.

The Council has been advised that they can proceed with a recruitment competition for Board Members to fill available positions.

Race Equality Strategy

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they will publish the Race Equality Strategy.
(AQW 19521/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are fully committed to tackling racial inequalities and promoting good race relations.

The Racial Equality Strategy is key to achieving these twin aims and officials have been working with minority ethnic representatives through the Racial Equality Panel to draft a new strategy that will meet the needs and aspirations of minority ethnic people and wider society.

We want to make sure that the document is fit for purpose and partnership working with representatives of minority ethnic people on the drafting of the Strategy will continue to ensure we achieve this aim.

We envisage that a 12-week public consultation will begin in spring this year.

The Strategy will be launched after this process has been completed and the consultation responses have been considered.

Children's Consultative Group

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) to list the membership of the Children's Consultative Group; (ii) how often the group meets; (iii) how often it met in the last twelve months; and (iv) what is the remit of the group.

(AQW 19684/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The need for a means to engage with stakeholders from the children and young people's sector has been identified within the programme structure for Delivering Social Change. In developing the Children and Young Person's Early Actions Paper two consultative events with key stakeholders were held. A Communication Plan for the Delivering Social Change Framework is in preparation. This will include proposals for engaging with stakeholders.

Civil Contingencies Legislation

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 19131/11-15, why there are no plans to introduce civil contingencies legislation.

(AQW 19714/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It is not appropriate to have the UK civil contingencies legislation introduced because the wider legislative environment, structures, roles and responsibilities that apply within the public sector here are very different to those which apply in GB. To ensure that relevant needs are addressed here, our Department has set out a statement of core civil contingencies principles in the 'Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework 2011' which apply to all public service organisations.

Planning Appeals

Mr Easton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many planning appeals there have been over the last three years.

(AQW 20077/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body. Given its status, we have asked its Chief Commissioner to provide a response directly to you.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Rural Development Fund

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she is aware of the concern within rural development groups in relation to the potential negative impact on programmes following her Department's decision to claw back the underspend from Axis 3 of the Rural Development Fund.

(AQW 18632/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): I have been aware of the concern within Clusters and my Officials have worked closely with the Cluster Networking Group to agree the finer detail of the mechanism to remove unspent Axis 3 funds. The detail has now been agreed with the Cluster Networking Group and I'm sure that everyone will strive to ensure that their quarterly targets are met. Clusters have been aware of my concern at the level of spend within Axis 3 and since the proposed introduction of this mechanism spend targets have started to be met on a much more consistent basis. I have always made it clear that I would take whatever actions had to be taken to ensure that all these funds were invested in rural areas.

TB Cattle Vaccine

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how the statement from the European Health Commissioner, that a TB cattle vaccine will not be available prior to 2023, will affect her departmental plans to tackle TB in the next 5 years.

(AQW 19328/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Currently the EU Commission legislation prohibits the vaccination of cattle against bovine TB, principally because vaccination of cattle can interfere with the single comparative intradermal tuberculin test (SCITT) which is the recognised primary diagnostic test for TB in cattle.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is working with the EU to seek to change the existing legislation which may allow TB vaccination of cattle alongside the use of a test to differentiate infected from vaccinated animals ("DIVA" test) to be used as an additional tool for TB control and may ultimately allow vaccinated cattle to enter trade. My officials will continue to liaise with DEFRA to remain updated on progress on this issue.

Before any change to the legislative position in relation to cattle vaccination would be considered, field trials would have to be approved by the EU Commission prior to being conducted and validated.

In addition, we should wish to be certain that any such vaccine developed would have international acceptance before considering its use here, given the value of our export dependent trade in livestock and livestock products which is worth over £1,000 million per year. We must ensure that our export trade is not compromised as a consequence and care will have to be taken to avoid trade embargoes on the export of livestock and livestock products. It is also desirable that we have an all-island approach on this.

The tentative timeline from the European Health Commissioner indicates the interim steps and milestones that will be needed to achieve the possible use of vaccine in cattle in the EU by 2023. However, this does not mean that we will be inactive in our efforts to tackle bovine TB here as is demonstrated in my Department's formal response to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee's Report into Bovine Tuberculosis.

Crime Reference Number for Cattle Lost or Stolen

Mr Hazzard asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the Newry Divisional Veterinary Office requests a crime reference number for cattle lost or stolen when other Divisional Veterinary Offices do not request this information.

(AQW 19515/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Under The Cattle Identification (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2012 which came into force on 1 January 2013, keepers must now report cattle which are lost or stolen, in writing to DARD, within 7 days of the event being noticed.

It is not a legal requirement that keepers report suspected stolen cattle to the PSNI and even when they do it is not a legal requirement that they tell the Department the crime reference number. Although provision of the information is not compulsory it is not unreasonable for a DARD official to request the additional information where the keeper has indicated they have reported the suspected theft to the PSNI.

Live Cattle Export Business Opportunities

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has discussed with the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Marine the Republic of Ireland pursuing live cattle export business opportunities to Libya.

(AQW 19555/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have not discussed this matter with Minister Coveney.

Urban Foxes

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the threat of urban foxes.

(AQW 19663/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department carries out surveillance on the fox population for the purpose of meeting the EU requirements for demonstrating the north's freedom from certain animal diseases, namely trichinella and echinococcus multilocularis (tapeworm). This surveillance has shown that neither of these infections is present in the fox population here.

The Department also implements border controls and quarantine measures to prevent the entry of rabies, which is not present in the north.

Health and Safety Regulations on Fishing Vessels

Ms McGahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will initiate (i) a co-ordinated approach with the Coastguard and Maritime Agency, the UK Border Agency and the Health and Safety Executive to enforce the health and safety regulations on fishing vessels, in particular the EU Working Time Seafarers Directive 1999 to prevent further losses at sea; and (ii) a registration system to ensure that all seafarers working locally can provide documents to prove they hold (a) the relevant immigration status; (b) the International Seaman Handbook; and (c) proof of the necessary skills to work at sea.

(AQW 19699/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am aware of the dangers faced by seafarers in their working environment locally, and the contribution of immigrants to the fishing industry in particular.

DARD and Maritime and Coastguard Agency have a coordinated approach in place and my Department has the ability to suspend a vessel's fishing licence where the Agency has detected serious health and safety concerns.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency take the lead in marine safety issues, and I am advised that Merchant Shipping Legislation is overarching, ensuring the application of appropriate Health and Safety regulations including the application of the Working Time Directive and the certification of immigrant workers.

Emigration from Rural Communities

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the extent and scale of emigration from rural communities, and to outline her Department's strategy for stemming the flow of people, including young people, away from rural areas.

(AQW 19701/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: During the last 10 years, the population of most towns and villages has been growing at a healthy rate due to a number of factors including natural population growth, migration from Greater Belfast to rural areas and a net inflow of people to the region. However, the most recent statistics available from NISRA on migration show that during 2010-11 there was a net outflow from the north of over 900 people aged between 20 and 29, with the greatest net outflow being from Belfast City Council area.

I am acutely aware of the difficulties facing people, including young people, looking for work in rural areas. My Department continues to provide support and assistance to the agri-food sector which provides much needed jobs in rural areas. The DARD Colleges (CAFRE) play a vital role in helping this sector remain competitive in a global market by delivering higher and further education programmes to those entering the industry and providing services and training for those already working in it.

I can assure you that my Department is working hard to promote other employment opportunities in rural areas by delivering a range of funding opportunities under the Rural Development Programme,

as well as initiatives under the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework. This includes support for two rural youth initiatives, the Youth Employability scheme and the Youth Entrepreneurship programme which are aimed at increasing employability and promoting entrepreneurship among the young and unemployed in rural areas.

Forced Youth Emigration from Rural Communities

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to ensure the forced youth emigration from rural communities is addressed by the Executive.

(AQW 19702/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The most recent statistics available from NISRA on migration show that during 2010-11 there was a net outflow from the North of over 900 young people aged between 20 and 29, with the greatest outflow being experienced by Belfast City Council area. This issue is therefore not confined to rural areas but faces communities right across the North. I can advise that through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation framework, my department is supporting two rural youth initiatives aimed at increasing employability and promoting entrepreneurship among the young unemployed in rural areas.

Firstly the Youth Employability scheme (BOOST) which is co-funded by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) provides almost 1500 unemployed young people with an opportunity to develop skills to increase their employability and improve their chances of securing a job.

Secondly The Rural Youth Entrepreneurship (RYE) programme aims to develop business potential among vulnerable young people in rural areas. The Rural Development Council (RDC) is the lead delivery partner for RYE in the North and are engaging with 600 vulnerable rural young people to stimulate business creation.

The Department's College, CAFRE, also plays a vital role delivering higher and further education programmes to those entering the agri-food industry with almost 1700 students currently enrolled on further or higher education courses, many of those from rural areas. A high proportion of CAFRE students secure employment once they graduate with statistics showing that over 90% are either in employment or continuing in education six months after graduating.

I am confident that these innovative initiatives and the ongoing work of my Department will continue to help address the problem of youth unemployment in rural areas and in doing so will help reduce migration and increase the sustainability of rural communities.

Central Investigation Service

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what role the Central Investigation Service has had, or will have, in relation to the issue of horse meat entering the food chain.

(AQW 19744/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Central Investigation Service does not have a role in relation to the issue of horse meat entering the food chain. The Unit is responsible for investigating any cases of suggested fraud identified by business areas across DARD. As I have consistently stated, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the central competent authority in matters of food safety and authenticity in NI, Scotland and Wales.

Illegal Horse Movements

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Central Investigation Service was alerted to any illegal horse movements from outside Northern Ireland in relation to the Lammas Fair, Ballycastle.

(AQW 19745/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Central Investigation Service has not been alerted to any illegal horse movements from outside the north of Ireland in relation to the Lammas Fair, Ballycastle.

Farm-Reared Salmon

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Escape Monitoring Programme at the River Bush Salmon Station has detected any escaped farm-reared salmon in the last ten years.

(AQW 19821/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I attach a table setting out the number of escaped farm salmon recorded at the River Bush Salmon Station in the last 10 years. You will note that numbers are very low.

The River Bush trap detects those escaped salmon that migrate into the River Bush. This monitoring provides for a relative measure of escapes and would quickly indicate if a significant escape event had occurred since numbers would increase significantly for a time. The origin of the fish could then be investigated.

Year	No. escapees	% escapees
2003	2	0.28
2004	3	0.34
2005	0	0
2006	1	0.09
2007	0	0
2008	0	0
2009	0	0
2010	0	0
2011	1	0.18
2012	0	0

Productive Capacity of Farmland

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the (i) degradation of the productive capacity of farmland that has resulted from the adverse climatic conditions over the past 18 months; (ii) loss of soil nutrients; (iii) loss of biomass and vegetative cover; and (iv) loss of productivity.

(AQW 19834/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) degradation of the productive capacity of farmland
 - My technical teams at CAFRE have advised me that no irreparable damage has been done to the land. As soon as weather conditions allow, significant land improvement/rejuvenation work can be undertaken.
- (ii) loss of soil nutrients
 - My technical teams also advise me that intense rainfall can cause significant losses of nutrients from soil. Research by AFBI has shown that, environmentally and agronomically, the most serious nutrient losses as a result of intense rainfall are those associated with the mobilisation of fertiliser and slurry nutrients.
 - Furthermore wet conditions heighten gaseous denitrification losses of nitrate-N from applied fertiliser and manure. Agronomically, losses of nitrogen and potassium from applied fertiliser and manure are of economic importance, because they can significantly curtail grass and crop production via nitrogen and potassium deficiencies.

- Recent research, undertaken by AFBI in 2009 and 2011, two of the wettest years in recent times, has shown that sulphur deficiency curtailed grass production on more than 25% of silage and grazed swards at first cut or first grazing. From an arable crop perspective, wet conditions result in the leaching of, potassium (K), magnesium (Mg), boron (B) and sulphur (S) out of the crop rooting zone causing significant K and Mg deficiency problems in potatoes and other root crops, and B and S deficiency problems in cereal and vegetable crops.
 - However, the problem of soil nutrient loss is largely self-correcting once drier conditions return, since soils in NI can generally restore or replenish plant available K, Mg, B and S supplies via the breakdown or mineralization of clay minerals and organic matter.
- (iii) loss of biomass and vegetative cover
- Since 95% of the land area in the north of Ireland is grassland there is no concern regarding vegetative cover, as crops are still in place. Bearing this in mind crop cover will ensure the retention of biomass within the soil structure
- (iv) loss of productivity.
- There will be a reduction in livestock performance due to increased incidence of disease e.g. liver fluke and reduced grass intake because of low dry matter, spoilage and poor grazing conditions. To improve land or maintain animal performance will result in increased costs to the farmer and will impact on cash flow.
 - From an arable cropping perspective some autumn sown crops will have lower yields this year. However the high cost of seed and cultivations and the lower yields of spring cereals may mean that the best economic option will be to allow winter sown crops to remain in the rotation through to harvest. On some land where potatoes or other root crops have been harvested in very wet conditions, land drainage may have to be carried out to restore productive capability.
 - While the productivity of land will be affected in the short term, there are opportunities for farmers to take remedial action regarding soil damage.
 - CAFRE are planning to publish a series of press articles on assessing potential soil damage including possible remedial actions.
 - These press articles will be followed up by on-farm events to which farmers will be invited.

Waterlogging

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the temporary and permanent damage caused to agricultural land by waterlogging, in the last 18 months.
(AQW 19836/11-15)

- Mrs O'Neill: My technical teams at CAFRE have indicated that no permanent or irreversible damage to agricultural land has been caused by the waterlogging and heavy rainfall over the last 18 months.
- Any damage caused to soils through poaching with animals or use of heavy machinery can be repaired once weather and land conditions improve.
- Damage will vary greatly from farm to farm depending on soil type, local rainfall levels and stocking rates.
- CAFRE are planning to publish a series of press articles on assessing potential soil damage including possible remedial actions.
- These press articles will be followed up by on-farm events to which farmers will be invited.
- The temporary affect of waterlogging is evident through reduced land and animal productivity and nutrient losses, this has been addressed within AQW 19834/11-15

Memoranda of Dissent

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many memoranda of dissent have been recorded within her Department since May 2011.

(AQW 19865/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I can confirm that no memoranda of dissent have been recorded within my Department since May 2011.

Ash Dieback Disease

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in order to help identify and control future Ash Dieback disease, what consideration she has given to adopting a pre-arrival notification approach at ports and airports as has been enforced in the rest of the UK.

(AQW 19872/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am currently considering further legislation, in conjunction with the South, to introduce a requirement for pre-notification of certain species of trees from within the EU. Pre-notification could assist in preventing disease outbreaks and importantly, provide intelligence about plant movements and assist in tracing problems. It is important our bio-security is strengthened to reduce the risk of entry of pests and disease to our island.

Land Parcel Identification System: Software Error

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to a recent software error in the Land Parcel Identification System mapping system, to detail (i) the estimated cost of repairing the error in terms of (a) resources; and (b) staff time; and (ii) an indicative timescale for the repairs.

(AQW 19970/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I can confirm that the estimated cost of repairing the error in terms of resource is £2,250 and staff time is £3,951.

The software error was resolved by 22nd February 2013.

Slaughter Houses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the action her Department is taking to ensure that no illegal slaughterhouses and/or rendering plants are currently operating.

(AQW 19977/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Veterinary Service's Central Enforcement Team assists local District Councils and FSA in their investigations of any reports of illegal slaughter they receive.

Reports of illegal disposal of Animal By-Products (ABP) are also followed up and investigated by DARD inspectors. None of these investigations have suggested the presence of an illegal rendering plant.

Land Parcel Identification System: Software Error

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to a recent software error in the Land Parcel Identification System, (i) how many maps have been affected; (ii) when affected farmers were contacted by her Department to make them aware of the errors; and (iii) when revised maps will be issued to all affected claimants.

(AQW 20032/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: (i) There were 3,560 farm business affected by the software error which occurred with the last set of maps to issue on 6th February 2013.

- (ii) The Department met with officials from the Ulster Farmers Union, the Northern Ireland Agricultural Producers Association and the Northern Ireland Agricultural Consultants Association to explain the situation and issued a Press Release on 21 February. A letter issued to farmers on 25 February explaining how the Department has dealt with the problem.
- (iii) The affected farm businesses have access to revised maps on line since 22 February and will receive revised maps around the time they receive their 2013 Single Application Forms.

Field Mapping Exercise

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the additional costs, in terms of factors such as overtime, for dealing with problems identified in the field mapping exercise.
(AQW 20043/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I can confirm that the estimated cost of repairing the recent problem with farm business maps in terms of resource is £2,250 and staff time is £3,951, making a total of £6,201.

Overtime has been in operation in DARD Direct offices to facilitate demand from farmers wishing to ensure their maps are as accurate as possible, but this is not specific to the recent problem identified with a minority of maps.

Slaughter Houses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) how many slaughter houses and/or rendering plants are licensed to slaughter and/or process equestrian animals; and (ii) whether they are compliant with animal welfare regulations and supervised by departmental staff including vets.

(AQW 20059/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There are no slaughter plants here currently approved to slaughter horses.

There was 1 slaughter plant in Co Armagh approved for equine slaughter and slaughter of other species but it ceased slaughtering horses completely on 25th January 2013.

All slaughter premises here (including the former equine slaughter facility) are staffed by DARD veterinarians who are present at all times when slaughter is occurring, to ensure the Food Business Operators' compliance with public health, animal health and animal welfare legislation.

Each animal (including equines, when their slaughter was taking place) is individually examined in the lairage for fitness for the food chain before being allowed to be slaughtered. This inspection also verifies their identity, and ensures that their welfare is protected throughout the process.

There are 2 rendering plants approved here to process fallen animals, which may include fallen horse carcasses and parts of carcasses.

Both rendering plants are inspected on a monthly basis by Department staff to ensure that they are complying with the regulations.

Any non-conformances detected have been of a minor nature and have been satisfactorily dealt with during the inspection process.

DARD: Legal Claims

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many legal claims have been taken against her Department in the last three years.

(AQW 20080/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The table below details the number of legal claims taken against my Department and its Agencies since 2009/10.

Year	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13 to date
Claims	22	22	26	21

A legal claim is considered to have been made where my Department has had to involve the Departmental Solicitors Office to provide it with either advice or counsel.

Horse Meat

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps are being taken to improve governance between Departments and external agencies in the wake of the horse meat scandal.

(AQW 20088/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the competent authority in matters of food safety and authenticity here.

DARD Veterinary Service delivers meat hygiene official controls on behalf of the FSA in approved slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments, and its Agri-food Inspection Branch carries out primary production hygiene inspections on dairy and egg-laying premises. These activities are governed by Service Level Agreements with the FSA in the north of Ireland (FSA in NI). Senior officials from DARD and FSA in the north of Ireland maintain regular formal and informal contact to ensure consistent and effective delivery to the agreed standard, and the FSA performs regular checks and independent audits in to ensure the quality of work delivered on its behalf.

There is regular liaison between FSA in the north of Ireland, DARD and District Councils relating to dual enforcement issues in meat establishments. This includes the sharing of audit findings, joint approval visits and regular meetings of an approval forum.

The FSA performs regular checks and independent audits here, to ensure the quality of the work delivered on its behalf.

In response to the recent findings, and current concerns, the FSA has developed a 4 point action plan which is being implemented in conjunction with the food industry and other government departments (including DARD).

The response between NICS Departments has been co-ordinated through the Food and Feed Incident Management Group, chaired by the Chief Veterinary Officer. This group has, to date, met four times on 17 January and 1, 8 and 21 February.

Measure 3.1 Farm Diversification Funds

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the reasons for the transfer of funding from Measure 3.1 Farm Diversification funds to other measures as detailed in a letter to the Chairs of Joint Council Committees on 31 January 2013.

(AQW 20097/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The letter to Chairs of Joint Council Committees (JCC's) was to facilitate a number of requests received from JCC's to transfer funds from Measure 3.1 Farm Diversification to other Measures in Axis 3.

Measure 3.1 Farm Diversification Funds

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the reasons given by groups for why funds in Measure 3.1 Farm Diversification not being been committed.

(AQW 20100/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The window for requests has not closed but to date Clusters have cited several reasons for wanting to move measure 3.1 funds as follows:-

- Inability to get enough applications to fully commit 3.1
- Wanting to ensure all funds were used in the Cluster area
- To guarantee spend

Farm Diversification Funds

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the number of requests received by her Department asking it to consider the reallocation of uncommitted Farm Diversification funds to other measures; and who made the requests.

(AQW 20101/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The window for requests has not closed but to date my Department has received 3 requests from Lagan Rural Partnership (LRP), Generating Rural Opportunities Within South Antrim (GROW) and Southern Organisation for Action in Rural areas (SOAR).

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

World Police and Fire Games 2013

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure where the opening ceremony of the World Police and Fire Games 2013 will take place.

(AQW 19447/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The Opening Ceremony of the World Police and Fire Games will take place at the Kings Hall, Belfast.

World Police and Fire Games 2013 Opening Ceremony

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what urgent action her Department is taking to secure a venue for the World Police and Fire Games 2013 Opening Ceremony.

(AQW 19486/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: 15 venues were scored against a comprehensive set of criteria to identify the most suitable venue to host the Opening Ceremony.

This process identified a preferred option and contingency options for consideration by the World Police and Fire Games Board.

The Board considered these options at its meeting on 20 February 2013 and the venue selected for the Opening Ceremony is the Kings Hall, Belfast.

World Police and Fire Games 2013

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for which locations contracts have been signed for the World Police and Fire Games.

(AQW 19560/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: To date, one sporting venue contract has been signed (Hydebank) and negotiations on the finalisation of contacts for all sporting venues are at an advanced stage.

All of the sporting venues for the Games have been confirmed with venue organisers and were announced on 31 May 2012.

World Police and Fire Games 2013

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for which sporting events in the World Police and Fire Games venues have not yet been finalised.

(AQW 19561/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: All venues for the delivery of sporting events in the 2013 World Police and Fire Games have been confirmed.

To date, one sporting venue contract has been signed (Hydebank) and negotiations on the finalisation of contacts for all venues are at an advanced stage.

Full details of venue locations are provided on the 2013 World Police and Fire Games website (www.2013wpfg.com).

World Police and Fire Games 2013 Opening Ceremony

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what locations are being considered for the World Police and Fire Games opening ceremony.

(AQW 19562/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The venue for the Opening Ceremony of the World Police and Fire Games will be held at the Kings Hall, Belfast.

World Police and Fire Games 2013 Opening Ceremony

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when an announcement will be made on the location of the World Police and Fire Games opening ceremony.

(AQW 19563/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The announcement that the venue selected for the Opening Ceremony is the Kings Hall, Belfast, was made on 20 February 2013.

World Police and Fire Games 2013 Opening Ceremony

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why it has been left so late to find a venue for the opening of the World Police and Fire Games; and where responsibility lies for the delay.

(AQW 19567/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

2013 World Police and Fire Games Limited and Belfast City Council considered sites across the city and undertook a costs analysis in seeking a suitable venue for the Opening Ceremony of the 2013 World Police and Fire Games.

The announcement that the venue selected for the Opening Ceremony is the Kings Hall, Belfast, was made on 20 February 2013. This provides sufficient time to plan and deliver the Ceremony.

Cross-Community Engagement in Sport

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants are available to encourage cross-community engagement in sport.

(AQW 19741/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, which is an arms length body of DCAL, has primary responsibility for the distribution of grants to sport. As part of its grant aiding conditions, Sport NI operates an equality scheme which requires and encourages all recipients of funding to run facilities and services in an inclusive manner and to promote equality and cross community engagement.

In addition, I am aware of a number of other organisations which may provide grant support for cross community engagement in sport. These include:

- Big Lottery Fund – Awards for All, Culture for All;
- Community Relations Council – Engage in community relations work and to enhance the community relations potential of projects; and
- Belfast City Council – Summer Intervention Fund, Summer Playscheme Grant, Community Project Grant.

Boxing Club: Funding

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 18728/11-15, whether she will supply the information for the entire constituency as outlined in the original question.

(AQW 19788/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The answer provided to question AQW 19728/11-15 contains the information requested for the entire constituency.

Amateur Boxing Association

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she plans to support the establishment of a Northern Ireland amateur boxing association, given that the Assembly members supported this on 12 November 2012.

(AQW 19789/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The establishment of an amateur boxing association restricted to the north of Ireland is entirely a matter for the sport to consider.

I have, however, already made clear my view that I see no rationale for any proposal to divide boxing given its strong track record of inclusiveness. The current structures governing boxing across Ireland have delivered consistently good social and sporting outcomes at local, national and international level.

Racism in Sport

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the initiatives that are being used to combat racism in sport.

(AQW 19819/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I have already stated publicly my own commitment to the promotion of equality and anti-discrimination generally as well as to the implementation within sport of the requirements of Section 75 of the NI Act 1998 which specifically places an obligation on public authorities to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity across a range of groups including people from different racial backgrounds. My Department's strategy for sport, Sport Matters, also commits Government to promote community cohesion, including combating racism, through sport in the context of 'A Shared Future'.

In line with these commitments, Sport NI, an arms length body of DCAL, recently produced 'Promoting Fair Play in Sport' - a guide to sport and the equality legislation in the north of Ireland and has a dedicated equality section on its website which provides up-to-date equality information for all sports organisations. Sport NI is also working with all funded governing bodies to support them in achieving the foundation level of the Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport.

Furthermore, as part of its wider safe sports grounds initiative, DCAL supported the Department of Justice in introducing the Justice Act (NI) 2011 which makes it a criminal offence for spectators at regulated matches to engage in racist chanting or to stir up hatred against groups of persons on the basis of race.

Windsor Park

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans her Department has to promote the revamped Windsor Park as a potential venue for the UEFA Super Cup Final.

(AQW 19867/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for promoting Windsor Park as a potential venue for the UEFA Super Cup Final rests, in the first instance, with the governing body of football in the north of Ireland, the Irish Football Association.

Junior Sports Teams

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants are available for setting up junior sports teams.

(AQW 19886/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI, which is an arms length body of DCAL, has primary responsibility for the distribution of grants to sport. However, Sport NI does not currently have any funding programmes open which are specifically aimed at setting up junior sports teams.

Grants for this purpose would have been available in the past under the Sport NI 'Awards for Sport' Programme and 'Sport Matters-Capital and Equipment' Programme. Consideration may be given to re-open the 'Awards for Sport' Programme in future financial years. In the meantime, I understand that there are other funders who may consider grant support for setting up junior sports teams and a list can be obtained from Sport NI's website www.sportni.net/funding.

Inshore Sea Angling

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Department will assume responsibility for the regulation and development of inshore sea angling.

(AQW 19930/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL's remit under the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 is the conservation, protection and development of salmon and inland fisheries. The mouths of rivers are defined in the Act, which establishes the boundary between the sea and inland fisheries.

DCAL's responsibility does not extend to inshore sea angling.

DCAL: Economic, Social and Equality Returns

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline her Department's approach to the development of a model for sustainable economic, social, and equality returns across all departmental work streams.

(AQO 3458/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Programme for Government clearly states the Executive's primary focus and collective responsibility to grow the economy and tackle disadvantage.

I have therefore set tackling poverty and social exclusion as the key priority for my Department. This fully supports DCAL's mission to deliver economic growth and to enhance the quality of life here by unlocking the full potential of the culture, arts and leisure sectors.

This priority is guiding all departmental work streams and will bring concerted effort in proactively tackling patterns of social disadvantage that have existed historically and remain today.

For example, my Department is currently compiling its strategy to ensure delivery against the PfG target to "include Social Clauses in all public procurement contracts for suppliers, services and construction" and to maximise the socio-economic impacts achievable.

Many in our community face profound and persistent barriers to equality of opportunity. These are exacerbated by poverty and socio-economic disadvantage. Therefore it is imperative that everything we do across Government helps to deliver sustainable economic, social, and equality returns.

Question for Written Answer: AQW 18202/11-15

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when she intends to answer AQW 18202/11-15.

(AQO 3462/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The answer to AQW 18202/11-15 issued on the 22nd of February 2013.

First World War: Centenary

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action her Department is taking to acknowledge and commemorate, during the centenary of the First World War in 2014, the service of men and women from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

(AQO 3466/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The First World War is one of several major events and significant anniversaries from the 1912 - 1922 period. The creative and cultural infrastructure and programmes already funded and supported by my Department will play a key role in telling the stories and different interpretations of the First World War and other important events from this Decade of Centenaries.

For example, Libraries NI is developing a programme of exhibitions, talks and book launches to commemorate the start of the First World War.

National Museums NI is planning online access to collections and an exhibition and programming at the Ulster Museum and Ulster Folk & Transport Museum. This will also involve co-operation with the National Museum of Ireland, and the Imperial War Museum and National Portrait Gallery in London.

PRONI is also planning an exhibition and a lecture series as well as collaboration with other archives and museums in Ireland and Britain.

The Somme Heritage Centre is developing a programme of work exploring significant anniversaries during the Decade of Centenaries and this will include a focus on the First World War.

Ulster Folk and Transport Museum

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she has any plans to provide additional funding for the upgrade of exhibits at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra.

(AQO 3470/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: It is a matter for the Board of Trustees to prioritise their budgets, including allocations to renew or upgrade exhibits and exhibitions.

I have no plans to allocate additional funds at present as my Department has provided a £2.2m capital budget to National Museums this year.

The Trustees are spending £450,000 of this budget, plus a further £257k of NITB match funding, at the Folk and Transport Museum site.

This will develop the Folk Museum as a leader in fostering rural crafts, skills and traditions and as a “must-see” cultural and heritage destination.

Department of Education

DE: Special Adviser

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education (i) whether his Special Adviser has made any declarations on interest, pursuant to the obligation of civil servants; (ii) how such declarations are recorded; and (iii) whether they are open to public inspection.

(AQW 19246/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): Like all civil servants Special Advisers are contractually required under the Standards of Conduct Section 6.01 of the NICS HR Handbook to declare any conflicts of interest so that decisions can be made on the best way to proceed. There is no published register of such declarations.

Regional Training Unit: Funding

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to outline the reasons for the removal of funding from the Regional Training Unit, in relation to the Professional Qualification for Headship (NI) award.

(AQW 19559/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Budget 2011-15 outcome for education produced major challenges and a Savings Delivery Plan was developed to ensure that my Department remained within budget.

The saving target for Professional Support Services includes a number of funding areas including the Regional Training Unit (RTU). The budget in respect of the RTU for 2011/12 was £2,363k, and was reduced to £1,032k in 2012/13. There has been a considerable degree of transparency and notice over the savings required for this financial year.

The RTU is not, however, specifically funded for the operation of the Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH). It is a matter for the RTU Management Board to determine which programmes to run, in line with my priorities.

Nurture Units

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 16033/11-15, for an update on the current situation.

(AQW 19597/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Proposals to identify potential locations for new nurture group provision based on objective criteria are under active consideration within DE and DSD.

Continuing Professional Development

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 19225/11-15, how the £11.5 million has been allocated in this financial year.

(AQW 19841/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The budget in respect of Continuing Professional Development across the school sectors in this financial year is as follows:

	£000
Teacher Education (Irish Medium Review)	82
Early Professional Development	234
STEM (Science Technology Engineering Maths)	300
RTU (Regional Training Unit)	1,032

	£000
Teacher e-Portfolio	40
CASS (Curriculum Advisory and Support Service)	9,840 *

* Forecast spend.

Teaching and Non-Teaching Posts

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) teaching posts; and (ii) non teaching posts which have been made redundant in each of the last three years, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 19853/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The tables below detail the number of teaching and non-teaching posts made redundant in each of the last three financial years.

(I) TEACHING STAFF

	Financial Years		
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013 (to date)
BELB	33	40	65
WELB	19	31	103
NEELB	47	76	103
SEELB	25	50	119
SELB	31	47	110
VGS	23	84	138
GMI	8	9	28
Total	186	337	666

(II) NON-TEACHING STAFF (HEADQUARTERS)

	Financial Years		
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013 (to date)
BELB	18	20	8
WELB	26	58	20
NEELB	23	31	19
SEELB	21	20	15
SELB	7	55	2
CCMS	9	9	0
Total	104	193	64

(III) NON-TEACHING STAFF (SCHOOL-BASED)

	Financial Years		
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013 (to date)
BELB	18	24	36
WELB	32	31	71
NEELB	53	75	83
SEELB	39	79	141
SELB	56	63	107
VGS	21	149	110
GMI	9	32	35
Total	228	453	583

Note:

1. VGS: Voluntary Grammar Schools
2. GMI: Grant Maintained Integrated Schools
3. Figures provided by each Education and Library Board in tables (i) and (iii) include staff in Controlled and Maintained Schools.

School Development Proposals

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education which schools submitted development proposals to his Department in (i) 2011; (ii) 2012; and (iii) 2013 to date; and what are the outcomes of these proposals.

(AQW 19961/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A list of the development proposals published in the three years requested and a note of their outcomes is provided in the tables below.

(I) DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS PUBLISHED IN 2011

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
215	Elmbrook School 231-6601 & Erne School 231-6234	To amalgamate to form a new Controlled Special School on the Derrygonnelly Road, with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	05/01/11	Approved 25/05/11
254	Gaelscoil Aodha Rua 504-6695	To establish a new grant-aided, irish-medium Primary School in Dungannon, from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	17/02/11	Approved 15/06/11
257	Randalstown PS 301-0816	To convert the existing Reception Class to a Nursery Unit with 26 part-time places with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	24/02/11	Not Approved 26/05/11

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
204	Currie PS 101-0063	To establish a nursery unit with 26 full-time places with effect from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	03/03/11	Not Approved 26/05/11
258	Gaelscoil Eanna 304-6685	Establishment of a 26 Place Full Time Nursery Unit, with effect from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	14/03/11	Not Approved 29/08/11
221	Connor House Prep Dept of Bangor GS 462-0015	Closure of Preparatory Dept with effect from 31 August 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter	22/03/11	Approved 08/07/11
220	Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche 404-6648	Establishment of a 26 Place Full Time Nursery Unit, with effect from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	22/03/11	Not Approved 29/08/11
216	Jones Memorial PS 201-6003	Establishment of Autistic Spectrum Disorder Class for Key Stage 1 followed by the Development of a Learning Support Class for Key Stage 2	06/04/11	Approved 15/08/11
206	Vere Foster PS 101-0321	To seek the approval of the Department of Education to cease educational provision with effect from 31 August 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	07/04/11	Approved 20/06/11
259	Braid PS 303-0836	To close on 31 August 2011, or as soon as possible thereafter.	12/04/11	Approved 14/07/11
260	Lourdes PS 303-6093	To close on 31 August 2011, or as soon as possible thereafter.	13/04/11	Approved 14/07/11
263	Gaelscoil Ui Neill 504-6637	To extend the capacity from a 5 to a 7 class base school from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/04/11	Approved 28/07/11
257	Orchard County PS 501-6658	That a new nursery unit be providing 26 full-time places from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/04/11	Approved 21/12/11
255	Bocombra PS 501-6138	For a new nursery unit to be established providing 26 full-time places from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter	21/04/11	Approved 07/06/12
256	Drumadonnell PS 501-6616	That a new nursery unit be established providing 26 full-time places from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/04/11	Approved 15/02/12

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
258	Waringstown PS 501-1598	That a new nursery unit be established providing 26 full-time places, from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/04/11	Approved 30/01/12
259	Seagoe PS 504-6137	That an additional nursery unit be established from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/04/11	Approved 07/06/12
260	St Mary's PS 503-6043	That an additional nursery unit be established from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/04/11	Not Approved 30/01/12
261	St Patrick's PS 503-1697	That the existing Reception Class be converted to a 26 full-time place Nursery Unit with effect from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/04/11	Approved 15/02/12
262	Portadown Integrated PS 506-6553	That an additional nursery unit be established from 1 September 2011, or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/04/11	Approved 07/06/12
218	Portora Royal School 242-0042	Establish Co-Educational Post 16 provision with effect from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	04/05/11	Approved 11/10/11
217	St Mary's Boys' PS 203-2689 & St Mary's Girl's PS 203-6096	Amalgamate to form a new co-educational Primary School with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	05/05/11	Approved 11/10/11
264	St Francis of Assisi PS 503-6610	That a nursery unit be established to accommodate 26 permanent full-time children with effect from 1 September 2011, or as soon as possible thereafter.	26/05/11	Not Approved 28/10/11
205	Gaelscoil na Mona 104-6671	To establish a new grant-aided, Irish-medium nursery unit with effect from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	02/06/11	Not Approved 17/01/12
209	St Vincent's Centre 123-0275	The existing behavioural unit will close with effect from 31 August 2011 and an 11-16 maintained special school be opened on the current St Vincent's site from 1 September 2011, or as soon as possible thereafter.	07/07/11	Not Approved 07/12/11

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
201	Brefne NS 111-0028	To increase full-time provision from 26 full-time places to 36 full-time places with effect from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	07/07/11	Not Approved 30/01/12
207	Cranmore Integrated PS 106-6580	To establish a nursery unit with 26 full-time places within Cranmore Integrated Primary School with effect from 1 September 2011 or as soon as possible thereafter.	07/07/11	Not Approved 07/02/12
230	Aghavilly PS 501-1034	To close on 31 August 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	05/09/11	Approved 03/01/12
266	Keady PS 501-6028	To close on 31 August 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	05/09/11	Approved 03/01/12
265	Edenderry NS 511-0021	That a third full-time unit be established with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	05/09/11	Approved 07/06/12
267	Gaelscoil Eoghain 504-6699	To establish a new grant-aided, Irish-medium primary school in Cookstown, from the 1st September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	14/11/11	Approved 02/05/12
268	Gaelscoil na mBeann 504-6692	To establish a new grant-aided, Irish-medium primary school in Killeel, from the 1st September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	14/11/11	Approved 13/06/12
222	Tonagh PS 401-0885	Convert Reception Class to 26 full-time place Nursery Unit with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	28/11/11	Approved 02/04/12
223	Glenola Collegiate Prep Cygnet House 441-0097	Change to Co-Educational Status with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	28/11/11	Approved 02/04/12
224	Ballykeigle PS 401-1647	To close with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	13/12/11	Approved 20/03/12
225	Dunmurry HS 421-0194	To close with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	13/12/11	Approved 25/04/12
269	Primate Dixon PS 503-6590	That an additional nursery unit be established to increase the enrolment to 52 full-time places, from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/12/11	19/06/12
226	Redburn PS 401-1688	To close with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	20/12/11	Approved 27/03/12

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
210	St Aidan's CB PS 103-0316 & St Bernadette's PS 103-0317	To amalgamate to form a new co-educational primary school initially on the site of the existing St Aidan's Christian Brothers' Primary School with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	22/12/11	Approved 30/04/12
211	Edmund Rice PS 103-0329 & Star of the Sea Girls' PS 103- 6464	To amalgamate to form a new co-educational primary school with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter. The new school will use the sites of the two existing schools in the first instance.	22/12/11	Approved 30/04/12

(II) DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS PUBLISHED IN 2012

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
220	Gaelscoil Neachtain 201-6700	Establish a new grant-aided, Controlled Irish medium Primary School in Dungiven, from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter	11/01/12	Approved 25/05/12
272	Bronte PS 501-6612	Establish a Nursery Unit to provide 26 full time places with effect from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	16/02/12	Approved 15/05/12
273	Iveagh PS 501-1611	Establish a Nursery Unit to provide 26 full time places with effect from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	16/02/12	Not Approved 15/05/12
274	Brackenagh West PS 501-6098	To extend the capacity from 6 to 7 class base primary school from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	16/02/12	Not approved 22/05/12
212	Colaiste Feirste 124-0291	To establish, a post primary satellite of Colaiste Feirste in Maghera	28/02/12	Decision Pending
222	Altnagelvin Hospital School 231-0029	Proposed closure of Altnagelvin Hospital School and Tuition Service	06/03/12	Approved 03/07/12
221	St Canice's PS 203-6045	Proposed closure of the Irish Medium Stream from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter	07/03/12	Approved 25/05/12

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
223	Knockavoe School 231-6528 Sion Mills PS 201-6442	Proposed relocation of the Speech & Language Support Classes from Knockavoe School Resource Centre to Sion Mills PS	08/03/12	Approved 03/07/12
225	Ardstraw PS 201-6376 Drumlegagh PS 201-2392	Proposal that Ardstraw and Drumlegagh amalgamate on the site of the existing Ardstraw Primary School with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	09/04/12	Approved 26/06/12
261	Dalriada School Prep Dept 362-0012	Phased closure commencing with effect from 31/08/12 followed by full closure with effect from 31/08/14 or as soon as possible thereafter	15/05/12	Approved 16/08/12
262	Carlane PS 303-0713	Proposed closure of Carlane PS with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/05/12	Approved 27/07/12
226	Drumragh College 226-0283	Proposal to increase the Enrolment of Drumragh College from 580 to 750 pupils over a period of 5 years.	15/05/12	Not Approved 12/10/12
227	Gaelscoil na Daróige 204-6687	Establish a new Irish Medium Nursery Unit on the site of Gaelscoil na Daróige from 1 September 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/05/12	Not Approved 15/08/12
228	St Eugene's HS 223-0111	Phased closure with effect from 31/08/12. Full closure of the school with effect from 31/08/13 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/05/12	Approved 16/08/12
229	St Peter's HS 223-0181	Phased closure with effect from 31/08/12. Full closure of the school with effect from 31/08/13, or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/05/12	Approved 08/08/12
230	St Davog's PS 203-2664	Proposed closure from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter	04/06/12	Approved 21/08/12
275	Dungannon NS 511-6236	Establish a third full-time unit be with effect from 1 September 2012, or as soon as possible thereafter.	14/06/12	Not Approved 06/12/12
263	Garvagh HS 321-0013	Proposed closure with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	27/06/12	Approved 27/09/12

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
230	St Malachy's PS 403-6454	Proposal that the 3 Moderate Learning Difficulty Units should be changed to Learning Support Units. The modified Units will accommodate 30 P1 to P7 pupils and will be operational from 31 August 2013. (Units from Knockmore PS)	03/09/12	Approved 14/12/12
231	Carryduff PS 401-3044	Proposal that a Learning Support Unit is created. Unit will accommodate 6 to 8 P1 to P7 pupils and will be operational from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter. (Unit From Knockmore PS)	03/09/12	Approved 13/12/12
213	St Gemma's HS 123-0173	Proposal closure with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	13/09/12	Approved 07/01/13
276	Orchard County PS 501-6658	To extend the capacity from a 5 to a 6 class base from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	14/09/12	Decision Pending
277	Fair Hill PS 501-6599	To extend the capacity of Fair Hill Primary School from a 10 to an 11 class base from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	14/09/12	Decision Pending
231	Ballycolman NS 211-6333	Proposed closure from 31 December 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter. Predicated upon prior Ministerial approval being given to DP232	11/10/12	Decision Pending
232	St Mary's PS 203-6696	Proposal that St Mary's PS establish an additional double nursery unit (52 full time places) using the existing site of Ballycolman NS from 1 Jan 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter	11/10/12	Decision Pending
278	New-Bridge Integrated College 526-0285	To increase the admission number from 80 to 100 and sixth form from 100 to 120 pupils from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/10/12	Decision Pending
279	Donacloney PS 501-6178	To extend the capacity from an 8 to a 9 class base from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/10/12	Decision Pending
232	Ballymagee PS 401-6430	Establish a 26 place part time nursery unit with effect from 31 August 2012 or as soon as possible thereafter.	13/11/12	Approved 17/01/13
214	Ballygolan PS 101-0296	To cease education provision with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	15/11/12	Decision Pending

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
264	Gaelscoil Éanna 304-6685	To increase approved total enrolment numbers of 140 to 176 - 205 from September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	13/12/12	Decision Pending

(III) DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS PUBLISHED IN 2013

DP no.	School/ref. no.	Description of proposal	Date published	Decision/ date of decision
233	Belmont House School 231-0015	Relocation of speech and language provision in the North West area. The Woodlands Unit, located at Belmont House School to close with effect from 31 August 2013, or as soon as possible thereafter. This proposal is predicated upon prior Ministerial approval being given DPs 234, 235 and 236.	21/01/13	Decision Pending
234	Ebrington PS 201-0382	The relocation of two speech and language classes from Woodlands Unit to Ebrington Primary School with effect from 1 September 2013, or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/01/13	Decision Pending
235	St Anne's PS, Derry 203-6069	The relocation of two speech and language classes from Woodlands Unit to St Anne's Primary School, Derry with effect from 1 September 2013, or as soon as possible thereafter	21/01/13	Decision Pending
236	Ballykelly PS 201-2298	Speech and Language Provision in the North West Area be expanded by two additional classes being established in Ballykelly PS from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	21/01/13	Decision Pending
237	St Eugene's PS 203-1888	To close with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter	21/01/13	Decision Pending
280	Fivemiletown PS 501-6088	To extend the approved enrolment from a 6 class base primary school to a 7 class base primary school with effect from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter	22/01/13	Decision Pending
238	St Dymphna's PS 203-6186	Increase capacity from 145 to 210, with increase in admissions number from 21 to 30 pupils with effect from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	04/02/13	Decision Pending

233	Christ the Redeemer PS 403-6618	Increase capacity number from 570 to 700. This would permit the school to increase the admissions number from 87 pupils to 100 pupils with effect from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	12/02/13	Decision Pending
234	St Ita's PS 403-6642	Increases capacity number from 525 to 574. This would permit the school to increase the admissions number from 75 to 82 pupils with effect from 1 September 2013, or as soon as possible thereafter.	12/02/13	Decision Pending
215	Orangefield HS 121-0266	To close from September 2013, or as soon as possible thereafter.	12/02/13	Decision Pending
216	Ashfield Boys' HS 121-0015	Increase admissions number to 130 and the enrolment number to 820: rising to 850 by 2018.	12/02/13	Decision Pending
217	Ashfield Girls' HS 121-0014	Increase admissions number to 140 and the enrolment number to 840: rising to 900 by 2018.	12/02/13	Decision Pending
285	St Mary's PS 503-6087	Increase capacity from 230 - 315 from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	18/02/13	Decision Pending
286	St Colman's PS 503-6061	Increase capacity from 134 - 140 from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	18/02/13	Decision Pending
284	St Jarlath's PS 503-6121	Increase capacity from 158 - 210 from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	18/02/13	Decision Pending
283	Roan St Patrick's PS 503-2591	Increase capacity from 83 - 140 from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	18/02/13	Decision Pending
282	St Patrick's PS 503-1697	Increase capacity from 284 - 350 from 1 September 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter.	18/02/13	Decision Pending
239	Bridgehill PS 303-6103	To close with effect from 31 August 2013 or as soon as possible thereafter	21/02/13	Decision Pending

Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many (i) pre-school; (ii) primary school; and (iii) post-primary school children living in the North Down Borough Council area have a statement of special educational needs for autism.

(AQW 20117/11-15)

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

PUPILS WITH A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WHO HAVE BEEN RECORDED AS HAVING AUTISM AND WHO ARE RESIDENT IN THE NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA – 2012/13

School type	Total pupils
Funded pre-school education	6
Primary school age	44
Post-primary school age	47
Total	97

Source: School census

Note:

- 1 Figures include children in voluntary and private pre-school centres, nursery, primary, post-primary and special schools.
- 2 Figures for pre-school children are based on school location, as only aggregate data is held by the Department for children attending voluntary and private pre-school centres.

Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many (i) pre-school; (ii) primary school; and (iii) post-primary school children in North Down, who have been diagnosed with autism, are awaiting a statement of special educational needs; and how many children with autism have been refused a statement in the last twelve months.

(AQW 20118/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that there are currently 40 children, living within the North Down Constituency, who have been diagnosed with autism as their primary special educational need (SEN) as follows:-

Pre-school	0
Primary	25
Post-primary	15

There are 3 children with autism, who are currently having their statutory assessment undertaken, but who have not yet received a final statement of SEN.

No children with autism have been refused a statement of SEN in the period February 2012 – January 2013.

Community Relations Equality and Diversity Policy

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education to outline his Department's expenditure on Community Relations Equality and Diversity for (i) 2011/12; and (ii) 2012/13; and how these funds are allocated.
(AQW 20119/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I can confirm that my Department allocated £1,139k in 2011/12 and £1,163k in 2012/13 to fund implementation of the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity policy. The funds are allocated by applying the Assessment of Relative Needs Exercise (ARNE) formula, which takes into account a number of factors including population statistics for age 14-25, youth TSN data, level of rurality, etc. Funding has been allocated as follows:

	2011/12	2012/13
Belfast Education & Library Board	£221k	£222k
North-Eastern Education & Library Board	£206k	£210k
South-Eastern Education & Library Board	£190k	£195k
Southern Education & Library Board	£223k	£218k
Western Education & Library Board	£161k	£175k
Youth Council NI	£138k	£143k

Community Relations Equality and Diversity Policy

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education what external evaluation has been, or will be, carried out to monitor the effectiveness of the Community Relations Equality and Diversity policy.

(AQW 20120/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As you will be aware, the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) policy was launched in March 2011.

A formal evaluation will be commissioned from the Education and Training Inspectorate once the policy has had sufficient time to embed, likely to be 3-5 years, and any formal review is unlikely to take place before the 2014-15 academic year.

Officials are currently undertaking a series of informal CRED Focus Groups across the north of Ireland involving school principals, teachers, youth workers and young people to inform effective implementation of the policy.

Post-Primary Education

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education when he will progress his Department's plans for post-primary education.

(AQW 20121/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Following my statement to the Assembly on 26 February 2013, the revised area plans for post-primary provision, together with reports on the consultation responses, were released by the Education and Library Boards and made available on each Board's website. I have written to each Board and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) outlining my Department's views on their plans and setting out how I plan to move forward. In the coming weeks my officials will meet with the Boards and CCMS to discuss in detail the Department's assessment of the plans and to identify areas where further work is needed.

A Steering Group will be established to assist the Department to co-ordinate and oversee the continuing development of the area plans. My Department will chair this group and it will include representatives from the Controlled, Maintained, Integrated and Irish-medium sectors. The group's work programme will aim to fill the gaps in the current area plans, to embed a single approach to area planning and to identify priority areas for action in the short to medium term.

Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Education to outline the process that will follow the submission of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Shared Education's report.

(AQW 20122/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Ministerial Advisory Group report will inform policy to determine the most effective way to advance the Programme for Government commitments on Shared Education.

Planning the next stage in the process will be largely dependent on the specific findings of the independent report, but at this stage it would be my intention to embark on a civic debate to further inform the policy direction.

Efficient Discharge Scheme

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education for an update on the establishment of an Efficient Discharge Scheme.

(AQW 20157/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I would refer the member to my answer to AQW 19842/11-15 tabled by Alastair Ross and published in the official report on 22 February 2013.

School Dinners

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Education to detail the total number and average cost of school dinners served in (i) nursery; (ii.) primary; (iii) special; and (iv) post-primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board, over the last 12 months

(AQW 20169/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of the total number and average cost of school dinners in schools have been provided by the Education and Library Boards and are outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1: TOTAL NUMBER AND AVERAGE COST OF SCHOOL DINNERS BROKEN DOWN BY EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD FROM 1 APRIL 2011- 31 MARCH 2012

	Nursery	Primary	Special	Post-Primary	Total
BELB					
Pupil Meals	394,795	2,011,002	181,855	773,494	3,361,146
Average Cost per Meal	£2.22	£2.32	£2.32 (primary) £2.52 (postprimary)	£2.52	
NEELB					
Pupil Meals	90,649	2,647,770	103,666	1,509,504	4,351,589
Average Cost per Meal	£2.42	£2.42	£2.42 (primary) £2.62 (postprimary)	£2.62	
SEELB					
Pupil Meals	133,038	2,190,436	125,315	1,160,390	3,609,179
Average Cost per Meal	£2.24	£2.34	£2.34	£2.54	

	Nursery	Primary	Special	Post-Primary	Total
SELB					
Pupil Meals	291,019	3,430,021	58,938	2,143,683	5,923,661
Average Cost per Meal	£2.28	£2.38	£2.38 (primary) £2.58 (postprimary)	£2.58	
WELB					
Pupil Meals	63,805	3,111,908	98,057	1,796,152	5,069,922
Average Cost per Meal	£2.29	£2.39	£2.39 (primary) £2.59 (postprimary)	£2.59	

The data reflects the position over the period 1 April 2011- 31 March 2012 as this is the last year for which audited and verified expenditure is available. As the price of a meal has changed during this period a weighted average price has been used. Pupil meals include both free and paying pupils.

It should be noted that:

- Some supply kitchens supply meals to a mix of nursery, primary, post-primary and special schools from one site.
- Nursery meal numbers include nursery schools and nursery units in primary schools. The costs in primary schools do not always provide a breakdown of the element associated with nursery units in this regard.
- Special schools comprise a range of age groups which include nursery, primary and post-primary age pupils who will receive different portion sizes. Consequently, different prices are charged to reflect the different age groups and portion size. The SEELB, however, charges one price for a meal provided in a special school.

Due to these variations in the arrangements for the provision of school meals and in how information is subsequently collected and presented it has been necessary to use the pupil meal price and the full cost recovery calculation for a meal as a proxy for the cost of the meal in each sector.

Lisnaskea High School Closure

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the impact on the rural community of south Fermanagh arising from the closure of Lisnaskea High School.

(AQW 20171/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am aware that the Western Education and Library Board is currently processing a statutory Development Proposal to support the merger of Lisnaskea High School with Devenish College. However, until a Proposal is published, the issues involved are a matter for the Western Board to consider.

Staff Travel Claims

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost to his Department of staff travel claims in each of the last three years.

(AQW 20192/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The cost to my Department of staff travel claims in each of the last three years was as follows:

Financial Year	£'000
2009-10	496
2010-11	451
2011-12	408

DE: Information Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education how many staff are employed in his Department's Information Service; and what is the annual cost of this service.

(AQW 20217/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education's Information Service comprises a total of 13 staff. Five information officers are responsible for the Departmental website and social media output, media relations, management of webmail queries, update of the NI Direct website, preparation of ministerial briefings relating to school visits and have oversight of internal communications. A Desktop Publishing Unit, comprising 4 staff, provide a design and print service to the Department and 4 administrative staff provide a support service. Five of the staff work reduced hours, therefore the full-time equivalent figure is 11.65.

The cost of salaries for the most recent financial year available (2011-12) was £406,207.

Integrated Services

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how his Department is supporting the continuing development of Integrated Services.

(AQW 20319/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: From 1st October 2012, operational responsibility for the Integrated Services for Children and Young People (ISCYP) project transferred to the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). I am continuing to support the project through the transfer of £200k from the education budget to DHSSPS to help fund the project from October 2012 until March 2013.

One meeting was held between senior Officials in DE and PHA. A number of telephone discussions also took place with Officials in DHSSPS.

As the Belfast Education and Library Board had operational responsibility for the delivery of the project, any additional meetings to progress the new delivery arrangements would have taken place between BELB and PHA.

Given responsibility has transferred details of schools that are currently receiving support from the project would have to be sought directly from DHSSPS.

Integrated Services

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many meetings his officials have had with (i) Public Health Agency; and (ii) Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety officials to progress the new arrangements for Integrated Services.

(AQW 20320/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: From 1st October 2012, operational responsibility for the Integrated Services for Children and Young People (ISCYP) project transferred to the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). I am continuing to support the project through the transfer of £200k from the education budget to DHSSPS to help fund the project from October 2012 until March 2013.

One meeting was held between senior Officials in DE and PHA. A number of telephone discussions also took place with Officials in DHSSPS.

As the Belfast Education and Library Board had operational responsibility for the delivery of the project, any additional meetings to progress the new delivery arrangements would have taken place between BELB and PHA.

Given responsibility has transferred details of schools that are currently receiving support from the project would have to be sought directly from DHSSPS.

Integrated Services

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to list the schools in (i) North; and (ii) West Belfast which are currently receiving support from the Integrated Services, broken down by sector.

(AQW 20321/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: From 1st October 2012, operational responsibility for the Integrated Services for Children and Young People (ISCYP) project transferred to the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). I am continuing to support the project through the transfer of £200k from the education budget to DHSSPS to help fund the project from October 2012 until March 2013.

One meeting was held between senior Officials in DE and PHA. A number of telephone discussions also took place with Officials in DHSSPS.

As the Belfast Education and Library Board had operational responsibility for the delivery of the project, any additional meetings to progress the new delivery arrangements would have taken place between BELB and PHA.

Given responsibility has transferred details of schools that are currently receiving support from the project would have to be sought directly from DHSSPS.

Department for Employment and Learning

Local Employment Intermediary Service, Moyle District Council

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for a breakdown by district electoral area of the home address location of the present clientele of the Local Employment Intermediary Service within the Moyle District Council.

(AQW 19568/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Network Personnel deliver the Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) in the Moyle District Council area and the wider outreach NI Area 2 for clients with a common employability barrier. The table, which has been placed in the Assembly Library and on my Department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>, provides a breakdown of the number of caseloads and the number of clients who entered employment by electoral areas, since the service began in September 2011.

There are currently 50 active clients; however, the flexible nature of LEMIS allows clients to disengage and re-engage whenever they wish to receive help and support. LEMIS clients can use the service on a voluntary basis at any time that suits them and this will not affect any benefits they may receive.

Local Employment Intermediary Service, Moyle District Council

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for a breakdown by district electoral area of the home address location of the present clientele of the Local Employment Intermediary Service within the Moyle District Council who have been found full-time employment.

(AQW 19569/11-15)

Dr Farry: Network Personnel deliver the Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) in the Moyle District Council area and the wider outreach NI Area 2 for clients with a common employability barrier. The table, which has been placed in the Assembly Library and on my Department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>, provides a breakdown of the number of caseloads and the number of clients who entered employment by electoral areas, since the service began in September 2011.

There are currently 50 active clients; however, the flexible nature of LEMIS allows clients to disengage and re-engage whenever they wish to receive help and support. LEMIS clients can use the service on a voluntary basis at any time that suits them and this will not affect any benefits they may receive.

South West College

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether the 2011/12 Annual Report and Financial Statements of the South West College have been received and approved by the Department and to outline the reasons for any delay.

(AQW 19659/11-15)

Dr Farry: The South West College accounts were signed by the Comptroller and Auditor General on 7 February 2013, received by the Department on 13 February 2013 and laid at the Northern Ireland Assembly on 15 February 2013. There was a delay in finalising the accounts due to a public interest disclosure in respect of the administration of funded projects by the college. An independent review was commissioned to examine the claims and the Northern Ireland Audit Office delayed completion of the external audit until the findings of the review were reported. No adjustments to the accounts were required as a result of the findings.

Youth Employment Scheme

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many (i) businesses; and (ii) young people have signed on to the Youth Employment Scheme; and whether these numbers meet the targets for the scheme

(AQW 19683/11-15)

Dr Farry: At 15th February 525 businesses had entered into at least one agreement to offer young people opportunities under the Youth Employment Scheme. In total 1,076 opportunities have been offered: 721 short, two - eight week work experience placements, 175 six - nine month skills development opportunities and 180 jobs attracting the enhanced employer subsidy. In total 247 young people have availed of these opportunities: 115 have completed or were engaged in work experience, 26 on skills development and 106 into subsidised employment. In total, 125 young people have entered employment: 19 directly from work experience and 106 via the enhanced employer subsidy.

In addition 250 of the 500 temporary employment opportunities available under the "First Start" strand of the Steps to Work programme had been filled.

Performance against targets for 2012/13 will be assessed at the end of March.

Enrolment Numbers in Higher Education

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why there is a notable difference between Cregagh ward and Stormont ward with regard to enrolment numbers in higher education.

(AQW 19707/11-15)

Dr Farry: The broad correlation between areas of high deprivation and low participation rates in higher education is well established and the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure indicates that, out of the 582 wards in Northern Ireland, Stormont is ranked 576 and Cregagh ranked 116 (where 1 is the most deprived and 582 the least deprived).

My Department's Higher Education Strategy, Graduating to Success, has a strong focus on the creation of a more accessible higher education sector and this will be integral to the implementation of "Access to Success" the separate integrated Regional Strategy for Widening Participation in Higher

Education. The Department has been supported in the development of "Access to Success" by the Higher Education Institutions, the Further Education Colleges and relevant experts from the public and private sectors, and other government departments. The strategy, therefore, represents the first inter-institutional and Governmental attempt to address this issue.

"Access to Success" targets those students from groups who are under-represented in higher education and one of the key objectives is to raise aspiration and attainment amongst these groups. My Department, in conjunction with the Higher Education institutions, will develop and implement a single integrated regional awareness raising programme to increase the profile and relevance of higher education and skills in under-represented communities. In addition, my Department will make additional funding available to support the expansion of the range of aspiration and attainment raising programmes in schools, colleges the community and the workplace. Overall, the strategy aims to more closely target resources in areas of most need by identifying individual students who are at risk of multiple disadvantage in order to develop appropriate support solutions tailored to individual needs.

Employer Support Programme

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the operation and oversight of the Employer Support Programme in terms of preventing duplicate funding on project claims and whether any incidents of abuse been identified.

(AQW 19735/11-15)

Dr Farry: Each Further Education college involved in the delivery of the Employer Support Programme, must adhere to the relevant Departmental policy circular, as well as a Letter of Offer, which is signed by the college Director, in his capacity as Accounting Officer. The Letter of Offer sets out strict parameters for the programme, and precludes any economic engagement or business support activities funded by other Government sources.

To help provide assurance, my Department commissions an annual audit of college claims by its internal Financial Audit and Support Team.

Additionally, my Department previously commissioned FGS McClure Watters to evaluate the former pilot Employer Support Programme, which included an examination of how activities throughout the programme fitted with other similar programmes, operated by other Government agencies. This report stated that, while there were low risks of potential duplication, there were controls in place to eradicate this.

I am, however, aware of the potential for duplication of funding within the programme and an assurance exercise is to be carried out across the Further Education sector.

Apprenticeship and Training Schemes

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline all current apprenticeship and training schemes that provide employers with a taxation or monetary benefit.

(AQW 19740/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department's ApprenticeshipsNI programme and the Youth Employment Scheme provide employers with the financial support outlined below.

ApprenticeshipsNI

ApprenticeshipsNI offers training across a wide range of occupational areas to employees who earn a wage while working with experienced staff to learn and develop their skills. An apprentice also receives 'off-the-job' training to work towards achieving a competence based qualification, a knowledge based qualification, and Essential Skills.

For apprentices aged between 16 and 24 years old direct training costs are met in full by my Department. Funding, determined by the level and occupational area, ranges from £2,600 to £10,800.

On achievement of a full apprenticeship framework an employer incentive payment ranging from £500 to £1,500 (determined by the funding band) is paid to the apprentice's current employer.

For apprentices aged 25 years old and older, a reduced level of funding is available for apprenticeship training in economically important sectors. On achievement of a full apprenticeship framework the associated employer incentive payment ranges from £250 to £750.

The Youth Employment Scheme

Two strands of the Youth Employment Scheme offer financial support to help employers meet the cost of training. Both the skills development programme and subsidised employment strands offer up to £750 per trainee or employee to help meet the cost of training in sector-specific skills. In these strands the Youth Employment Scheme targets support at sectors that have the potential to help rebuild and rebalance the Northern Ireland economy.

The provision outlined above does not provide employers with taxation benefit. As you will be aware, taxation matters are not devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly. Should such tax incentives be made available on a UK-wide basis then I would ensure that relevant Northern Ireland policy is enabled to ensure that employers benefit from such measures.

260 Confirmed Redundancies in East Belfast

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the reasons for the 260 confirmed redundancies in East Belfast in 2011.

(AQW 19765/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department was notified of 163 confirmed redundancies for Belfast East Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) in 2011. The table below details the number of confirmed redundancies in Belfast East in 2011, disaggregated by the reason stated by the company for the redundancies on the advance notification of redundancies form (HR1).

Under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (amended 8 October 2006), companies are only legally required to provide notification of the impending redundancy of 20 or more employees at any one site. Also, redundancies do not necessarily equate to job losses; for example, employees who do not qualify for a redundancy package, such as those on temporary contracts, will not be incorporated into the redundancy figures.

TABLE 1: CONFIRMED REDUNDANCIES BY REASON FOR BELFAST EAST PCA IN 2011

Redundancy Reason	Number
Closure/Administration	59
Reduction in Operating budget	14
Reduced demand for products or services	90
Total	163

Local Employment Intermediary Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the outreach arrangements in the boroughs of Ballymoney and Ballymena in respect of the Local Employment Intermediary Service; and (ii) and how many clients are currently being assisted in each of these areas.

(AQW 19814/11-15)

Dr Farry:

- (i) The Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS) has been marketed directly by way of meetings and formal presentations with Ballymena, Coleraine and Limavady Councils (including

community development and neighbourhood renewal teams). An information pack promoting awareness of the service was also forwarded to the community development officer within Ballymoney Council. However, networking and developing good relationships with the Jobs & Benefits Offices (JBOs) and specialist agencies in areas, such as the Youth Justice Agency and organisations that deal with drug and alcohol addictions, are the key means of receiving referrals.

In Ballymoney, the largest proportion of referrals comes from staff in the JBO. Referrals have also been received from Holywell hospital and community addictions team, Triangle Housing, the PSNI, Probation Board (PBNI) and the resettlement team in Maghaberry Prison. Client engagement is usually carried out in the confidential interview rooms within Ballymoney JBO.

In Ballymena, referrals come from a wide range of sources such as PSNI, PBNI, Youth Justice Agency, Careers Service, JBO, Hope Centre, Simon Community Hostel, Living Rivers Hostel, Triangle Housing, Threshold, and the Community Addictions Team. Client engagements tend to be undertaken on an outreach basis often on the premises of the referral organisation, or if this is not possible, then an interview room in a JBO is used.

- (ii) Since 1 September 2011 when the service became available, a total of 2 clients have been caseloaded from the Ballymoney area. One of these clients is currently active. A total of 26 clients from the Ballymena area have been caseloaded, of whom 11 are currently active.

Local Employment Intermediary Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, using home addresses, to detail the number of people who are availing of the Local Employment Intermediary Service, broken down by council area.

(AQW 19815/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have placed tables in the Assembly Library and on my department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>. The tables at Annex A detail the number of people who have availed of the Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS), broken down by council area and the number of people who have found full-time employment, through the Local Employment Intermediary Service, broken down by council area, since LEMIS 2 began in April 2011.

Clients living in LEMIS designated areas are free to choose the services of any provider, except in NI Areas 1, 2 and 3 [see Annex C for details of contract provision in Northern Ireland] where individuals must avail of LEMIS from the contracted provider for those areas.

Local Employment Intermediary Service

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, using home addresses, to detail the number of people who have found full-time employment through the Local Employment Intermediary Service, broken down by council area.

(AQW 19816/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have placed tables in the Assembly Library and on my department's website at <http://www.delni.gov.uk/>. The tables at Annex A detail the number of people who have availed of the Local Employment Intermediary Service (LEMIS), broken down by council area and the number of people who have found full-time employment, through the Local Employment Intermediary Service, broken down by council area, since LEMIS 2 began in April 2011.

Clients living in LEMIS designated areas are free to choose the services of any provider, except in NI Areas 1, 2 and 3 [see Annex C for details of contract provision in Northern Ireland] where individuals must avail of LEMIS from the contracted provider for those areas.

Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what was the total spend on hospitality by his Department in 2011/12.

(AQW 19855/11-15)

Dr Farry: The total spend on hospitality by the Department in 2011/12 was £26,872.

Day Care Nursery on Campus Locations

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what discussions were held before the recent decision was taken to close day care nursery on campus locations; and who was involved in these discussions.

(AQW 19877/11-15)

Dr Farry: On 8 February 2013 the University of Ulster confirmed its decision to close its university managed childcare facilities in the Magee and Jordanstown campuses from 31 July 2013.

The University has advised that the decision has been taken because the childcare provision has continued to sustain a significant annual deficit of approximately £114k and is therefore no longer economically viable. Also, the University points out that between the two campuses 23 students use the childcare facilities with the majority of students with childcare needs choosing to receive direct financial support in order to avail of childcare facilities closer to their homes/places of residence.

The University states that the change is being implemented with the support of its Student Union. The Student Union has indicated that it was involved in the review of student support under which the crèches fall and that it recognises that the crèches are operating on a significant deficit. It has requested that any monies saved as a result of the closures should be reinvested into effectively supporting student parents with childcare costs.

Also, the University held discussions on the proposal with key stakeholders. In line with agreed procedures when any possible restructuring or closure is being considered, the first meeting took place with the relevant Trade Unions. This was followed by meetings with staff in the day care nurseries and staff from Social Services, the body which has an oversight role in this area. At that stage the discussion centred on the proposed closure pending the completion of an equality screening exercise. All parents with children in the nurseries were informed of the proposed closure by letter.

Further meetings were held with the Trade Unions and with the staff in the nurseries in which the decision to close the nurseries was communicated. At that time parents received a second letter advising them of the decision and a meeting was subsequently held with parents to discuss the decision and the alternatives open to them. The University argues that it was not possible to meet with parents until it had met with the Trade Unions and informed the nursery staff in the first instance.

Commissioner for Public Appointments

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 19318/11-15, what role the Commissioner for Public Appointments had in the decision to re-advertise the post; and how this compares with 2004 when the single applicant was appointed.

(AQW 19880/11-15)

Dr Farry: Before the selection panel made its decision to re-advertise the post of Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Stranmillis University College, advice was sought from the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Commissioner had no objections to this proposed course of action.

There is no record of the Commissioner having been approached on a similar issue in 2004.

Affordable Childcare

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what measures he is taking to support staff within his Department and its agencies in accessing affordable childcare.

(AQW 19906/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning provides assistance to staff with childcare costs under the NICS Salary Sacrifice Scheme. This scheme, in partnership with Employers For Childcare, currently offers Salary Sacrifice Childcare Vouchers to employees. Staff participating in the scheme can exchange part of their salary each month for vouchers to contribute towards their childcare costs. The benefit of this scheme is that participants do not pay income tax or National Insurance Contributions on this amount, yielding potential savings of over £900 per parent each year.

Details of the Scheme are made available to staff via HRConnect, the NICS HR Services provider. The Scheme has also been promoted in the Department's Core Brief to staff, and includes information on Employers for Childcare Road shows.

The Department also provides a facility for the reimbursement of reasonable additional care costs for dependants, incurred when staff are required by the Department to attend work outside their normal working pattern. This is in accordance with the Reimbursement of Additional Care Costs section of the NICS HR Handbook.

Unemployment in North Down

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what work related schemes are in place to tackle unemployment in North Down.

(AQW 19917/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is committed to reducing unemployment for all individuals across Northern Ireland, irrespective of where they live. Bangor Jobcentre services the North Down Area and offers a range of services, initiatives and programmes to help jobseekers find employment, particularly people who are unemployed, individuals with disabilities and those with other barriers to work. Services include job search, help with writing a CV or job application form, preparing for interviews, careers guidance, or help with travel costs for job interviews.

In the period of April 2012 to December 2012 my Department helped 952 people move from welfare into work in the North Down area.

Steps to Work (StW) programme

All unemployed clients in the North Down area can participate in the StW programme, which is the Department's main adult return to work programme. The aim of StW is to assist people who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment.

Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, Bangor Jobcentre placed 389 StW clients into employment. From 1 April 2012 to date, 291 StW clients have been placed into employment in North Down. There are currently 627 clients from North Down on the StW programme.

Step Ahead 50+

Part of the Executive's recently announced Economy and Jobs Initiative, Step Ahead 50+ is a new targeted initiative introduced in January 2013 and delivered within the StW programme.

Step Ahead 50+ provides temporary employment with organisations within the community/voluntary sector for up to 26 weeks for those aged 50 years or over who have been unemployed and claiming benefits for at least 12 months.

First Start

Another new initiative recently implemented within the StW programme is 'First Start'. Between now and 2014, First Start will support 1,700 waged employment opportunities across Northern Ireland, each lasting a minimum of six months, for young people aged 18 to 24 who have been in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance for at least six months.

Youth Employment Scheme (YES)

In March last year the Executive agreed a package of new measures, incorporating the Youth Employment Scheme, to help young people gain experience, acquire new skills and find employment.

In the past few months my Department has been actively working with employers to secure opportunities across Northern Ireland. I have been delighted by the response of employers in the North Down area so far and I expect many more to come forward to offer opportunities for young people in the coming months. We are now focusing our efforts on the young unemployed and are encouraging them to participate in the Scheme.

Pathways to Work

The Department's Pathways to Work programme assists people with health conditions and disabilities move into employment. Currently there are 382 clients participating on the programme in the North Down area.

YMCA Craft Programme

Last September, a programme entitled C.R.A.F.T. (Careers Related Advice and Further Training), which is a joint initiative between my Department, North Down YMCA and the South Eastern Regional College (SERC), was piloted in the Bangor area. 11 young people in the 18-24 year old cohort participated in this programme and the outcomes were very positive. The C.R.A.F.T. programme comprises an 8 week structured programme of Careers Guidance Clinics, Employment Adviser liaison and a series of personal development and training opportunities provided by SERC and the North Down YMCA.

Other Departmental training programmes, such as Apprenticeships NI and Training for Success, are also available across Northern Ireland. These opportunities are open to eligible people from all areas and staff at the Bangor Jobcentre can provide advice on all of the programmes and initiatives available.

Magee Campus of the University of Ulster: Daycare Facilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in relation to daycare facilities at the Magee Campus of the University of Ulster, to outline; (i) the financial deficit over the last ten years; (ii) any funding prior to and since the construction of the dedicated facility that was received from the EU; and (iii) what oversight was provided by the University to manage the finances of the unit.

(AQW 20257/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not hold the information requested. However, my officials have contacted the University of Ulster and have been advised that the financial out-turn for the Magee campus day care facility for each of the last ten years was follows. Figures in brackets represent a deficit.

02/03	3,140
03/04	(20,015)
04/05	(11,799)
05/06	(26,919)
06/07	(49,731)
07/08	(52,693)

08/09	(57,552)
09/10	(65,916)
10/11	(38,782)
11/12	(34,762)

The University has also confirmed that a grant of £193,500 was received from the European Union in 1999 towards the construction of the facility. No EU funding has been received since then.

Management oversight of the facility is provided by professional student support staff. Additionally a nominated individual in the University's Finance Department has responsibility for the preparation of the nursery accounts which includes the provision of financial advice.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Hospitality Expenses

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what was the total spend on hospitality by her Department in 2011/12.

(AQW 19629/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): The total spend by DETI on hospitality in 2011/12 was £16,986.

Reduced Fuel Prices for Local Consumers

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the Executive's strategy and action plans for securing reduced fuel prices for local consumers, particularly electricity, home heating oil, petrol and diesel.

(AQW 19694/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Executive approved Strategic Energy Framework, published by my Department in September 2010, addresses the issue of encouraging competitive energy pricing under a number of actions. In particular, ensuring there is transparency in setting of electricity and gas prices, encouraging more companies to enter the gas and electricity markets and helping to create conditions which more readily facilitate customer switching.

In addition, my Department is committed to extending the natural gas network to further towns in the West and North West, including Dungannon, Coalisland, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Omagh, Enniskillen/Derrylin and Strabane. This will give both business and domestic consumers in the new licence area access to a wider, and potentially cheaper, choice of fuel.

My Department has also recently introduced support measures to encourage domestic and commercial customers to utilise innovative renewable heating technologies. The Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme for domestic consumers and the Renewable Heat Incentive for the non-domestic market provide financial support for those wishing to move away from conventional fossil fuels, such as home heating oil.

Whilst my Department has no statutory role in setting electricity prices my officials continue to maintain close contact with the Utility Regulator regarding energy prices, given its important role in electricity and gas regulation.

Retail prices for a range of filling station products and home heating oil fall outside the scope of my Department.

InvestNI Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what measures are in place to prevent InvestNI funding, particularly relating to innovation vouchers from being abused through double funding on project claims, for example under the Employer Support Programme administered by the Department for Employment and Learning, and have there been any occasions when this has occurred, and with what consequences.

(AQW 19731/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's Innovation Voucher scheme has robust procedures in place which are accredited under ISO9001 and subject to regular audits. To avoid instances of potential double funding the following measures are in place:

- On the application form, applicants declare that the project in the application is not already in receipt of, or likely to be in receipt of any other public funding.
- Successful voucher applicants choose a Knowledge Provider who agrees a Terms of Reference for the project. This outlines the stages of the project, timescale and cost. The Knowledge Provider confirms in writing that there is no conflict of interest in relation to their engagement as the knowledge provider on the Project. Invest NI assess all project Terms of Reference prior to the issue of a purchase order direct to the Knowledge Provider. No payment is made to the business.
- On completion of a voucher project, the Knowledge Provider provides a copy of the final report to Invest NI. All reports are reviewed against the original Letter of Notification for quality and challenged if necessary prior to payment being made to the Knowledge Provider.
- Invest NI is unaware of any occasion when funding relating to innovation vouchers has been abused through double funding on project claims, for example under the Employer Support Programme administered by the Department for Employment and Learning.

In addition, the Department for Employment and Learning has informed me that each Further Education (FE) college involved in the delivery of the Employer Support Programme (ESP) must adhere to the relevant policy circular (FE 14/11), as well as a Letter of Offer, which is signed by the college Director, in his capacity as Accounting Officer. The Letter of Offer sets out strict parameters for the programme, and specifically precludes any economic engagement or business support activities funded by other Government sources, including innovation vouchers.

To help assure this, the Department for Employment and Learning liaises with Invest NI on a regular basis and commissions an annual audit of college claims by its internal Financial Audit and Support Team.

Additionally, the Department previously commissioned FGS McClure Watters to evaluate the former pilot Employer Support Programme, which included an examination of how activities throughout the programme fitted with other similar programmes, operated by other Government agencies. This report stated that, while there were low risks of potential duplication, there were controls in place to eradicate this.

The Department for Employment and Learning remains aware of the potential for duplication of funding within the programme and is currently implementing an assurance exercise across the FE sector.

£50 Million Growth Loan Fund for Small Businesses

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how applications can be made for the new £5 million loan fund for small businesses.

(AQW 19754/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Ulster Community Investment plc (a subsidiary of Ulster Community Investment Trust) was awarded the contract to manage the Northern Ireland Small Business Loan Fund on behalf of Invest NI. Applications can be made to the fund managers by first completing an enquiry form available through any of the following sources:

- 1 On-line at www.nisblf.com;
- 2 By calling 0800 988 2879; or
- 3 By e-mailing enquiry@nisblf.com.

The fund manager will then contact applicants for more details and assess the loan applications on receipt of the additional information.

InvestNI

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why InvestNI support for companies in East Belfast fell from £28.62 million in 2010/11 to £13.27 million in 2011/12.
(AQW 19764/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The actual number of offers made by Invest NI to businesses in East Belfast during 2010-11 was lower than in 2011-12, with a total of 195 and 262 made respectively. However, the results are skewed somewhat by the fact that 2010-11 was an exceptional year where four offers alone added to some £19.6 million worth of assistance, resulting in almost £90 million worth of investment in the East Belfast economy.

These figures emphasise the fact that Invest NI has limited scope for 'directing' investment to specific areas and whilst it is able to influence the location decisions of some inward-investment projects, assistance patterns are demand-led by businesses wishing to improve their competitiveness and gain a larger share of international markets. In the case of established businesses, reinvestment patterns will usually be determined by the existing location of the business. In addition, individual company expansion plans will also be influenced by prevailing economic conditions. For these reasons, there will always be year on year fluctuations in the levels of support within specific areas.

Invest NI continues to offer a wide range of support to encourage the start up and growth of businesses in East Belfast. Invest NI's Boosting Business initiative, encompassing support under five themes: Jobs, R&D, Exports, Technology and Skills, is available to local businesses in the area. From the 1st April 2012 to date, Invest NI's Business Support Team has handled 232 queries from the East Belfast area, and under the EU's Local Economic Development Measure, Invest NI continues to work closely with Belfast City Council to develop a range of projects that will deliver a range of tailored support to local businesses in Belfast.

Bankruptcy Cases

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of bankruptcy cases in the current financial year, broken down by constituency.
(AQW 19790/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below shows the number of people made bankrupt broken down by constituency from 1 April 2012 to 13 February 2013.

Constituency	2012/13
Belfast East	46
Belfast North	58
Belfast South	75
Belfast West	36
East Antrim	59
East Londonderry	55
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	64

Constituency	2012/13
Foyle	87
Lagan Valley	72
Mid Ulster	58
Newry & Armagh	83
North Antrim	53
North Down	58
South Antrim	69
South Down	85
Strangford	55
Upper Bann	55
West Tyrone	65
Unknown(1)	63

(1) The number of bankruptcies where postcode data was unavailable

Vacant Factory Space: North Down

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the amount of former factory space that is vacant in North Down.

(AQW 19820/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI maintains an online database which contains the details of a range of available properties across both the private and public sectors. This information, whilst not available at the parliamentary constituency level, can be filtered by council area.

Invest NI is aware of 12 available factories within the North Down council area. Further details on these and other available commercial properties can be found on the NI Business Information website:

www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/search-commercial-property-northern-ireland

It is, however, important to be aware that the information within the database does not comprise a definitive list of all available properties. Invest NI is wholly reliant upon the accuracy of the information provided to it by commercial property agents and developers.

Pop-Up Accommodation and a Residential Rent-A-Room Scheme

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether there will be an exemption from current legislation to allow for pop-up accommodation and a residential rent-a-room scheme.

(AQW 19852/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Under the Tourism (NI) Order 1992, any proposal for an exemption to the certification requirements for accommodation requires a site specific business case to be submitted to my Department for approval. Until such a business case is received, the Department cannot consider, or conclude on, whether an exemption should be granted.

In the case of potential accommodation demand around UK City of Culture events, it is the responsibility of Derry City Council to assess the need and liaise with NITB to ensure that, in the event that a request for an exemption is deemed necessary and appropriate, a business case is developed and presented to the Department for consideration.

Extraction of Shale Oil

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what consideration has been given to the awarding of licences for the extraction of shale oil.

(AQW 19883/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Under the terms of the Petroleum (Production) Act (Northern Ireland) 1964 my Department grants licences to search and bore for and get petroleum in Northern Ireland. The petroleum legislation makes no distinction between the different types of petroleum (oil or gas) or the geological formations (e.g. shale or sandstone) in which the petroleum may be found. The extraction of oil or gas is subject to my Department's approval of a development plan submitted by the Licensee. Such a plan would only follow an extensive programme of exploration and appraisal and it would also be subject to a number of other consents including planning permission. No such plans have been submitted to my Department in respect of shale oil extraction.

City of Culture 2013

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department is considering allocating future additional resource to support the marketing of Derry City in its role as City of Culture 2013.

(AQW 19899/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has successfully secured £400,000 for a bespoke marketing campaign to support Londonderry as UK City of Culture 2013.

In addition I am seeking a further £600,000 for the remainder of 2013 as part of the advertising approvals process for 2013/14. If approved, this will result in my Department providing total support of £1m to the UK City of Culture advertising campaign.

City of Culture and One Plan, Derry

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 19087/11-15, whether permission to spend has been granted for the Tourist Board to deliver the £1m media campaign for Derry; and for an update on the One Marketing Campaign for Derry which was submitted to her Department in 2012.

(AQW 19901/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I can confirm that approval for expenditure of £400,000 has been granted to deliver a bespoke marketing campaign this financial year, in support of Londonderry as UK City of Culture 2013. I am also seeking approval for a further £600,000 of campaign expenditure for the remainder of 2013 as part of the 2013/14 financial year approvals process.

As the responsibility for the development and delivery of the One Marketing Plan rests with Derry City Council, my Department and its agencies are not in a position to provide an update.

Tamboran Resources

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQWs 18021/11-15 and 19123/11-15, when her Department agreed to a technical variation to the work programme of Tamboran resources.

(AQW 19904/11-15)

Mrs Foster: A technical variation to the work programme of Tamboran resources was agreed to on 28 May 2012.

Extraction of Shale Oil

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department has been informed of any proposals to extract shale oil; and to provide details of what methods of shale oil extraction that are being considered.

(AQW 19908/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department has not been informed of any proposals to extract shale oil in Northern Ireland.

Wind Farms

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether there are any plans to create more wind farms.

(AQW 19920/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Strategic Energy Framework, agreed by the Executive, set a target of 40% electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020. This target is technology neutral and it will be for the private sector to bring forward development plans which contribute to the target.

Oil or Gas Extraction

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the financial benefits of oil or gas extraction from the coastline.

(AQW 19922/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Taxable profits from the production of oil or gas in the United Kingdom are subject to Ring Fence Corporation Tax (RFCT) and a Supplementary Charge on the company's ring fence profits. RFCT is levied at 30% and the current rate of the Supplementary Charge is 32%, although a Field Allowance was introduced in 2009 to reduce the impact of the Supplementary Charge on new marginal fields. The UK oil and gas fiscal regime is administered by HM Revenue & Customs, Large Business Service Oil & Gas Sector from whom further information is available.

Oil or gas production onshore Northern Ireland is also subject to a 7.5% 'royalty' payable to the former owners of the rights in minerals and petroleum.

In some circumstances it may be more advantageous to develop oil and gas resources that lie beneath the seabed close to the coast from a coastal onshore location rather than from an offshore platform, for a variety of economic, environmental or engineering reasons.

NI Small Business Loan Fund

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the recently-launched NI Small Business Loan Fund could help start-up businesses such as the Ice Dome at Sandy Row, Belfast.

(AQW 19951/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- 1 Any business applying to the Northern Ireland Small Business Loan Fund must be substantially based in Northern Ireland and must provide evidence of funding decline from the private banking sector in support of all loan applications.
- 2 There is a maximum loan amount of £15,000 to start-up enterprises, with potential for follow-on lending up to £50,000.
- 3 Start-up businesses such as the Ice Dome at Sandy Row which wish to enquire about potential funding from the Fund should contact the fund managers, Ulster Community Investment plc through any of the following means:
 - (a) On-line at www.nisblf.com;
 - (b) By calling 0800 988 2879; or
 - (c) By e-mailing enquiry@nisblf.com.

Multi-Lingual Signage: Down District Council

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has refused to provide funding for multi-lingual signage in the Down District Council area.
(AQW 19980/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has not refused to provide funding for multilingual signage in the Down District Council area.

Multi-Lingual Signage: Down District Council

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to provide the dates on which communication has been made between (i) the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Down District Council; (ii) her Department and Down District Council; and (iii) her Department and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, in relation to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board refused to provide funding for multi-language signage in the Down District Council area.
(AQW 19981/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I would refer the member to the reply I gave to AQW 19980/11-15.

No communication has been made on this basis.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list all cases where the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has turned down applications for funding involving the use of the Irish language and to indicate the reasons in each case.
(AQW 20004/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has not turned down any applications for funding involving the use of the Irish language.

Multi-Lingual Road Signs

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, when considering the most cost effective way to promote tourism signage through the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, what are the cost implications of a number of languages in addition to English being used on signage.
(AQW 20106/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is not possible to provide an overall cost as this will vary by project depending on the number, size and shape of signage required, as well as the number of languages to be incorporated.

NITB is keen to ensure that all tourist interpretation and signage is clear; not confusing; and assists the visitor in understanding the importance of the destination.

City Of Culture 2013

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the recent £400k funding announced for marketing City Of Culture 2013 will be used to implement the One Marketing Plan which was submitted by Derry City Council, or whether it will be used by the Tourist Board for its own plans.
(AQW 20223/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The delivery and development of the One Marketing Plan is the remit and responsibility of Derry City Council.

This extra investment of £400,000 will integrate with the One Marketing Plan, but be delivered by The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB). These monies will be used for a bespoke Derry-Londonderry UK City of Culture campaign in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. This is additional to the activity already being delivered by NITB to support marketing efforts for the City of Culture including strong coverage of the City in the current Spring 2013 campaign and the delivery of a bespoke Derry-Londonderry UK City of Culture Events Guide to every home in Northern Ireland (750,000 residential homes).

I welcome this additional funding and am fully satisfied that every opportunity to promote the city in this momentous year is being fully maximised.

Department of the Environment

National Parks

Mr Cree asked the Minister of the Environment what quantitative research has been carried out with the public to establish their attitude towards national parks (i) within the proposed areas; and (ii) throughout the rest of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 16925/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): Last year my Department published a comprehensive consultation document on enabling legislation for national parks to gauge public reaction. The responses that were submitted, together with my ongoing meetings with interested stakeholders, will help to inform my decision on the most appropriate way forward with this issue.

National Park: North Antrim

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment, in giving consideration to a proposed national park in the North Antrim area, to detail the geographical boundaries of such a proposal.

(AQW 16962/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The boundaries of any national park can only be considered as part of the process to designate a park. At this stage, the debate is around the principle of national parks, benefits and disadvantages. Any issue of boundary would only arise later, following any agreement on and passage of legislation.

World Heritage Site, Giants' Causeway

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has been contacted by UNESCO in regard to a visit to the World Heritage Site at the Giants' Causeway; and if so, when he was contacted.

(AQW 17097/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have made it very clear to UNESCO that I will have fully assisted in the visit by a representative to the WHS, in order to assess its overall state of conservation and to provide technical advice, given the developments on the WHS in recent times.

World Heritage Site, Giants' Causeway

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he has taken secure a visit for UNESCO to the World Heritage Site at the Giants' Causeway.

(AQW 17118/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have made it very clear to UNESCO that I will have fully assisted in the visit by a representative to the WHS, in order to assess its overall state of conservation and to provide technical advice, given the developments on the WHS in recent times.

Local Government Reform

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of the Environment what aspects of local government reform are running two or more full calendar months behind schedule; and when he expects these aspects to be completed.

(AQW 17427/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The scale of local government reform is complex and challenging, so there will be times and places where the timetable changes. That is inevitable and it is necessary, but the overall programme from a DOE perspective and responsibility is on track.

In the past few months the Department has particularly been refining the local government reform timetable, particularly reviewing work in progress and making adjustments to the target dates for specific areas of work, which is normal practice in programme management terms.

In some areas there is cause and time to adjust timescales in order to carry out further work. For example, I decided to slightly delay the introduction of the Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill to the Assembly until early 2013, to enable further engagement with local government on complex finance and human resources issues and to allow further provisions to be drafted on a number of issues, including dual mandate.

I am therefore content that for those areas of the programme under my control, I can advise that no aspects are running two or more calendar months behind schedule.

I will arrange for the most recent timetable to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Fermanagh County Museum

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the artefacts excavated from Drumclay Crannóg being put on permanent display at Fermanagh County Museum.

(AQW 17673/11-15)

Mr Attwood: NIEA Built Heritage has already talked with the Manager of Fermanagh County Museum about creating an exhibition of the Drumclay finds. Due to the nature of the post-excavation work which will be necessary to study and conserve these finds it will be time before this is achieved. Officials in NIEA have been advised by officials in Fermanagh District Council that the Council is in the process of applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to develop a new display area.

I know of other proposals in relation to the management and presentation of the artefacts. For that reason I intend to convene a gathering of interested persons to identify how to maximise the opportunities for the Crannóg works.

National Park: Causeway Coast

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 16919/11-15, how the proposed national parks will help 20,000 unemployed people into work.

(AQW 17838/11-15)

Mr Attwood: National parks elsewhere provide some direct employment, but their impact can be felt more fully in terms of the boost they give to existing businesses and the encouraging environment they provide for the creation of new ones. Some have suggested that national parks provide only part-time, tourist-related jobs. This is not the full story. In the current economic climate we need all the jobs we can get, both full- and part-time. In some of our rural communities, part-time employment can be the difference between people being able to remain in their own locality and having to move away.

National parks are just one way in which to create opportunities for the unemployed. With so many expected to be out of work after welfare reform – and this will be a long-term problem – we need to identify potential employment opportunities. I will therefore continue to meet with interested parties, and consider all that they have to say, before taking a decision on the most appropriate way forward.

It seems a self evident point but one which needs to be made – the economic contribution of our historic environment is substantial but can be multiplied, to have the scale of return in other parts of these islands. To do so requires the protection, the positive development and promotion of our heritage, particularly rural, to, for example, grow tourism to a £1 billion pa industry. Our countryside, rural offering and rural industries are at the heart of economic opportunity. National Parks may or may not be rejected – but rural development and jobs can contribute to addressing not only the in scale represented in potentially 20,000 more being out of work but in tackling the existing 64,000 out of work.

National Park: Causeway Coast

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 16919/11-15, to list the parties with whom he had private meetings; and to detail the content and outcomes of these meetings.
(AQW 17841/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have met with a wide variety of groups, including the Ulster Farmers' Union, Mourne Heritage Trust, the Institute of Directors, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and with Moyle District Council, amongst others.

These meetings provide the opportunity for me both to explain my rationale for advocating national parks and to listen to the opinions and concerns of others. They allow for frank and serious face-to-face discussion in private, as I take stock of where we are in relation to national parks. Such meetings play a valuable role in helping me to determine where we go from here in a situation where there has been some very vocal opposition to the idea of national parks.

I will therefore continue to meet with interested parties, and consider all that they have to say, before taking a decision on the most appropriate way forward.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan.
(AQW 17892/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I refer the member to my answer of 11 December 2012 in respect of AQO 1302/11-15 in which I stated that it is my intention that the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan will be adopted around the end of March 2013 and potentially into April 2013, as habitat and equality obligations are currently being satisfied.

Play Park Named After IRA Terrorist

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment what steps have been taken to encourage Newry and Mourne District Council to review its naming of a play park after an IRA terrorist; and how he is seeking to resolve this matter.
(AQW 18035/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I acknowledge that the decision taken by the Council has been upsetting and caused anger. I believe that, in living up to the values and ambitions of the Good Friday agreement, there is a

responsibility for leadership to demonstrate a commitment to survivors and a process of truth recovery and working to be respectful and sensitive to the needs of victims and the primacy of their needs.

It is the case that Councils are independent of central government and are accountable to their local electorate and ratepayers. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that all public authorities, including district councils, in carrying out their functions in Northern Ireland, shall have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between certain specified individuals and groups, and have desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and religious group.

All district councils are directly answerable to the Equality Commission in respect of their Section 75 Duties. I understand that the Equality Commission has written to Newry and Mourne District Council about its decision.

That said, I am writing to the Chief Executive of the Council requesting a report on the process leading to the decision and on all matters relevant to the making of the decision.

Play Park Named After IRA Member

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment (i) whether he will intervene in Newry and Mourne Council's decision to name a children's play park after an IRA member; (ii) what are the corporate implications for the Council should it be found to have broken the law by glorifying terrorism; and (iii) what input the Council's Good Relations department had in the naming of the play park.

(AQW 18041/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I acknowledge that the decision taken by the Council has been upsetting and caused anger. I believe that, in living up to the values and ambitions of the Good Friday agreement, there is a responsibility for leadership to demonstrate a commitment to survivors and a process of truth recovery and working to be respectful and sensitive to the needs of victims and the primacy of their needs.

It is the case that Councils are independent of central government and are accountable to their local electorate and ratepayers. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that all public authorities, including district councils, in carrying out their functions in Northern Ireland, shall have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between certain specified individuals and groups, and have desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and religious group.

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That said, I am writing to the Chief Executive of the Council requesting a report on the process leading to the decision and on all matters relevant to the making of the decision.

Cost Savings: Timescale

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the timescale for achieving cost savings to the rate payer as a result of local government reform; and whether these savings will be passed on to the rate payer.

(AQW 18246/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The economic appraisal of local government service delivery, published by PricewaterhouseCoopers in October 2009, indicated that under the preferred option (i.e. Transformation with Regional Collaboration), implementation of the local government reform programme could involve expenditure of up to £118 million over five years and achieve savings of £438 million over twenty-five years.

Under this option, it is estimated that the reform programme will begin to realise a reduction in operating costs by 2017/18 with a break-even point in terms of return on the initial investment by 2020/21.

The Regional Transition Committee has commissioned the senior local and central government officers and officials in the Finance Working Group to re-examine the costs and benefits of the local government reform programme.

Work is ongoing with the existing councils and the Voluntary Transition Committees in developing the detailed costs and benefits of the key reform work-streams, identified by the Finance Working Group.

The group's findings and recommendations will be presented to the Regional Transition Committee in March 2013.

Any decisions as to whether savings achieved as a result of local government reform will be passed on to the rate payer will be for the 11 new councils to determine. My view is that with 11 Councils, the escalation of sharing/collaboration between Councils, procurement that supports the local but is also green and value for money (etc) should mean benefits in rate levels to ratepayers.

Sellafield Nuclear Processing Plant

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the extent of his Department's lobbying of and contact with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding accidents which have occurred at the Sellafield Nuclear Processing Plant in the last four years.

(AQW 18332/11-15)

Mr Attwood: At present nuclear energy and nuclear installations are excepted matters under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and, as such, are not within my Department's remit.

My Department has responsibility for monitoring the environment in Northern Ireland to assess the impact of radioactivity produced elsewhere.

A continuing programme of monitoring the effect of radioactive discharges from nuclear installations in Britain on the Northern Ireland coastline has shown that levels of contamination are negligible in terms of impact on the Northern Ireland population or our marine environment, but I remain very vigilant in this matter.

I take a very close interest in what is happening in relation to developing new nuclear power plants in Britain and I wrote to the Infrastructure Planning Commission in February this year, expressing concern about the potential environmental impact of proposed nuclear power plants in the west of England and Wales and, in particular, the possible effect on the population of Ireland, north and south, given the proximity of the proposed facilities.

I can provide an assurance that, in conjunction with colleagues in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII), discharges into the Irish Sea and their impact on the coastline of Northern Ireland will continue to be comprehensively monitored.

Officials from my Department play a part in ensuring that the United Kingdom's obligations under the 1992 Oslo and Paris Convention (OSPAR) for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic are monitored. This includes ensuring that effective evaluation takes place of actual discharges into the marine environment, and that national plans are in place for the monitoring and control of future discharges.

The monitoring programme includes checks on radiation levels on the coastline at approximately 50 locations around Northern Ireland, as well as routine checks on the levels of radioactivity in seaweed, shellfish and fish. The adequacy of the monitoring programme is reviewed annually, and where appropriate will take into account any changes in the discharges of radioactivity from Sellafield.

My officials have also worked closely with their counterparts in Britain to formalise a national plan for reducing discharges of radioactive substances – the UK Strategy for Radioactive Discharges 2006-2030 – and they will continue to monitor the impact of Sellafield and other nuclear power plants on our environment.

My Department is responsible for regulating, and legislating on, matters relating to the management of radioactive waste. This includes participation in the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely programme.

This programme was initiated in 2001 by the UK Government and the devolved administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with the aim of addressing the legacy of radioactive waste from a variety of different nuclear energy programmes in the United Kingdom.

In addition NIEA, together with SEPA, EA and the Health Protection Agency (HPA), has been carrying out public reassurance monitoring to demonstrate that environmental radioactivity remains within internationally agreed safety limits and poses no risks to human health.

Radiation levels in the UK are monitored regularly by the Radioactive Incident Monitoring Network (RIMNET). This network includes 95 monitors stationed across the UK, including five in Northern Ireland, to detect increases in background levels of radiation. Any evidence of a nuclear incident of radiological significance for the UK would result in a national alert being raised. These monitors have not detected any increase in the background level of radiation since the Fukushima incident.

There is also a UK-wide arrangement for sampling air and rainwater as part of the UK's duty under the Euratom Treaty. There are seven fixed sampling stations throughout the UK including one at Conlig, County Down. Analysis of the filters from these stations can detect much lower levels of radioactive materials.

In line with the rest of the UK, the frequency of air and rainwater sampling has increased. Results for Northern Ireland to date are comparable with those obtained in the rest of the UK and Ireland and demonstrate that there is no risk to public health or to the environment.

I am advised that the Department has not made representations with, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs regarding accidents which have occurred at the Sellafield nuclear processing plant in the 30 years before I became Minister.

Planning Application

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of the Environment what is the current guidance for an application being removed from mainstream planning and being sent to, or requested by, the Minister for consideration; and what is the time-frame for a decision on such an application.

(AQW 18410/11-15)

Mr Attwood: During the processing of an application, I regularly correspond with MLAs who have written on behalf of constituents and objectors in connection with certain planning applications. That is proper and I will continue to fulfil that function.

In exercising my responsibility for the direction and control of the functions of the Department consistent with statute and the Ministerial Code, I have a legitimate interest in decision making within the Department.

As Minister, it is therefore appropriate that I take a close interest in the operation and effectiveness of the planning functions of the Department. This interest can extend to scrutiny of the management of individual planning applications so that I can be satisfied that the planning functions of the Department are being undertaken effectively or to respond to any issues of concern raised by elected representatives or others.

In terms of timescales, ambitious targets have been set for the processing of planning applications received on or after 1 April 2012. Recently published statistics have highlighted that DOE Planning is providing a speedier, more decisive service, fitter for purpose to strengthen our economy without compromising on protecting the environment.

That said, there will be times when the proper consideration of an application will take further time, may involve the input from senior management, require inspection of sites and assess exhaustively material considerations.

I have received representations from MLAs across parties to look at and consider planning applications. When this is done for proper planning reasons, this is an important role for a Minister.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Plan

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to ensure that a Cohesion, Sharing and Integration plan is embedded within councils following the reform of local government.

(AQW 18478/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I firmly believe that central and local Government must live up in spirit and substance to the values and practices of “agreement politics”. Recent events confirm the challenge that has yet to be met and the renewed leadership that is required

At the first meeting of the RPA Political reference group on 19/12 and given current circumstances, I raised the issue of flags in the context of council reorganisation. I said there may be a need for this issue to be addressed in the rundown to reform. There may also prove to be a need to also address wider cohesion, sharing and integration issues. If so, that is the approach I will adopt, conscious that Councils in various ways in a number of places are addressing positively CSI issues.

I agree fully that a CSI approach should be embedded in Councils now and in the future. I will look to see if and how this might be done. But it must be all the issues central to CSI, not just some, and all should be addressed comprehensively. Clearly, I will carefully monitor what the political parties together may or may not do and, as CSI is an FMDFM function, what that office is doing. That said, should I need to take forward an RPA/Council initiative, I will seek to do so.

Local Government Reform: Symbols and Flags

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to seek agreement between all the councils on the issues of symbols and flags following the reform of local government.

(AQW 18479/11-15)

Mr Attwood: At the first meeting before Christmas of the Local Government Political Reference Group - to which all Assembly parties are invited - I raised the issues of flags and related matters. I stated that given the profile and importance of the issue, it may be an issue that the PRG may require to address in the rundown to RPA.

If this needs to be done – as it may – the challenge should not be shirked. I will make an assessment of if this is needed – but will clearly have regard to what is or is not happening around other discussions.

Councils are independent of central government and are accountable to their local electorate and ratepayers. All councils have the same legislative powers, but each has the discretion – currently - to place the relevant emphasis on matters within their control.

That said, all district councils are directly answerable to the Equality Commission in respect of their Section 75 Duties. They must and must be seen to comply with these requirements.

Family Car Parking Spaces

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment how he plans to use the planning system to ensure the better provision of family car parking spaces.

(AQW 18596/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am currently considering a number of options in relation to how to use the planning system to provide better provision of car parking for both family parking and pregnant women.

I intend to bring forward proposals for this through the single Strategic Planning Policy Statement which will be made available for public consultation before the end of 2013.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Retail Strategy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment what impact his announcement in January 2013 on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan Retail Strategy will have on the public inquiry into the John Lewis planning application at Sprucefield; and whether altering the planning ground rules at this stage permits a fair process.

(AQW 18614/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department was considering a major Article 31 planning application for a retail scheme including a Department Store, 19 Retail Units, restaurants and associated infrastructural development at Sprucefield, Lisburn for Sprucefield Centre Limited (S/2009/1045/F). The applicant had indicated that the intended occupant of the Department Store associated with this development is John Lewis Ltd so the scale of the Sprucefield proposal was 20 shops and many restaurants. It was many more than John Lewis, a fact that is increasingly recognised. In order to inform my decision on this major planning application my Department had asked the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) to convene a Public Inquiry to hear evidence and prepare a report on its findings. The PAC had set a timetable for the Public Inquiry (PI) to open on the 15 April 2013.

To facilitate the preparation of evidence for the Public inquiry the PAC asked me to release my Department's decisions on their recommendations about elements of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 relating to Sprucefield. In order to provide certainty and clarity for participants in the Inquiry I issued a statement to this effect on the 11 January 2013. This publication constitutes advance notice of what the Department intends to adopt in the final plan subject to completion of all statutory procedures. There are a number of issues which the Inquiry would have had to carefully consider including the economic impacts of the proposal and the relevant planning policy context.

I am disappointed that the PI will not now proceed. My advice to the PAC had been informed and was faithful to the Executive approved RDS 2035 and planning policy statements; was in the context of shop vacancies and economic downturn; on the assessed retail impact on town and city centres in Greater Belfast and beyond and how this would manifest in job losses and shop closures, and how retail should develop in Greater Belfast going forward.

There was no change in planning rules. In fact, I held to planning rules, policy and regional strategy. In doing so, it was the right advice, at the right time and for the right retail outcome.

Planning NI

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what responsibility Planning NI has (i) to meet with the objectors to planning applications; and (ii) to respond to the specifics of objections once planning permission has been granted.

(AQW 18645/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In dealing with a planning application, the Department is required to have regard to the development plan and any other material planning considerations.

Public opinion in the form of objection is a material planning consideration which must always be fully taken into account. The key issue in considering public opinion is for the specific grounds to be noted and balanced against other relevant factors.

During the processing of planning applications, it may be necessary to inform objectors of changes, amendments or additional information – this will generally be done in writing. However, depending on the nature and volume of objections, it may be considered appropriate to meet with objectors to discuss particular issues of concern.

Similarly, where the Department's opinion is presented to Council, and a deferral on planning grounds is secured, DOE Planning will participate in a meeting to enable issues, including those raised by objectors to be discussed.

In the processing of any application, DOE Planning will take account of objections submitted up until the point that a decision is issued and objectors will be notified of the final decision including where appropriate. If an objection is received following the issuing of a decision notice, DOE Planning may advise on the assessment of issues raised in reaching its decision.

Local Government Reform: Total Costs and Savings

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment to confirm the total costs and savings arising from local government reform as projected in the PricewaterhouseCoopers report.

(AQW 18659/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The PricewaterhouseCoopers' economic appraisal of local government service delivery, carried out on behalf of and published by the Department in October 2009, indicated that under the preferred option (i.e. Transformation with Regional Collaboration), implementation of the local government reform programme could involve expenditure of up to £118 million over five years and achieve savings of £438 million over twenty-five years.

The Regional Transition Committee has commissioned the senior local and central government officers and officials in the Finance Working Group to re-examine the costs and benefits of the local government reform programme taking account a range of financial factors. These include the 2015 timescale for reform set out in the Programme for Government 2011-15, the sector's Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency proposals and the changed economic climate in which reform is now being taken forward.

Work is ongoing with the existing councils and the Voluntary Transition Committees in developing the detailed costs and benefits of the key reform work-streams, identified by the Finance Working Group.

The group's findings and recommendations will be presented to the Regional Transition Committee in March 2013.

Local Government Reform

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the current projected cost of local Government reform; (ii) the current projected savings that will be achieved; and (iii) the level of funding that will be made available to local Government by the Executive to meet the costs of transformation.

(AQW 18660/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The PricewaterhouseCoopers economic appraisal of local government service delivery, carried out on behalf of and published by the Department in October 2009, indicated that under the preferred option (i.e. Transformation with Regional Collaboration), implementation of the local government reform programme could involve expenditure of up to £118 million over five years and achieve savings of £438 million over twenty-five years.

The Regional Transition Committee has commissioned the senior local and central government officers and officials in the Finance Working Group to re-examine the costs and benefits of the local government reform programme taking account a range of financial factors. These include the 2015 timescale for reform set out in the Programme for Government 2011-15, the sector's Improvement, Collaboration and Efficiency proposals and the changed economic climate in which reform is now being taken forward.

Work is ongoing with the existing councils and the Voluntary Transition Committees in developing the detailed costs and benefits of the key reform work-streams, identified by the Finance Working Group.

The group's findings and recommendations will be presented to the Regional Transition Committee in March 2013.

In relation to Executive funding for local government reform, my bids to the Executive for local government reform funding in the past two Monitoring Rounds were not successful. However, I continue to press for my paper, seeking the Executive's agreement to fund the transition costs that will not release any long term cash savings to be formally considered by the Executive.

Local Councils

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the (i) amount owed from borrowing; (ii) current rates level; and (iii) penny product for each local council.

(AQW 18662/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Answers to the questions can be found in the tables below. Penny product values have been provided by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

(i) Position of Council Debt as of 31 March 2012 is recorded in the table below.

NB: GLF = Government Loan Fund administered by Department of Finance and Personnel.

Council	Non GLF Capital Debt £	GLF Capital Debt £	Total £
Antrim	5,000,000	14,817,656	19,817,656
Ards	7,775,000	5,977,224	13,752,224
Armagh	0	26,929,965	26,929,965
Ballymena	0	26,239,361	26,239,361
Ballymoney	0	9,533,362	9,533,362
Banbridge	0	20,704,940	20,704,940
Belfast	3,000,000	25,465,855	28,465,855
Carrickfergus	1,620,144	19,809,064	21,429,208
Castlereagh	0	17,856,096	17,856,096
Coleraine	14,275,438	21,563,345	35,838,783
Cookstown	0	1,450,468	1,450,468
Craigavon	6,500,000	1,464,823	7,964,823
Derry	0	25,476,154	25,476,154
Down	0	23,365,257	23,365,257
Dungannon & S Tyrone	0	5,227,982	5,227,982
Fermanagh	0	3,331,959	3,331,959
Larne	0	15,722,967	15,722,967
Limavady	0	12,660,161	12,660,161
Lisburn	0	19,997,814	19,997,814
Magherafelt	0	0	0
Moyle	0	8,659,895	8,659,895
Newry & Mourne	0	18,772,166	18,772,166
Newtownabbey	0	46,836,936	46,836,936
North Down	0	36,888,706	36,888,706
Omagh	391,000	9,936,495	10,327,495
Strabane	0	2,275,116	2,275,116
Total	38,561,582	420,963,767	459,525,349

(ii) 2012/2013 District Council Rates (Non Domestic and Domestic)

Council	Non-Domestic Rate	Domestic Rate
Antrim	27.5346	0.3672
Ards	22.6693	0.2746
Armagh	30.0720	0.4052
Ballymena	27.2042	0.3758
Ballymoney	27.4720	0.3525
Banbridge	27.2767	0.3626
Belfast	27.0236	0.3094
Carrickfergus	27.8548	0.3810
Castlereagh	17.7629	0.2136
Coleraine	23.8497	0.3146
Cookstown	22.0894	0.2797
Craigavon	24.7682	0.3846
Derry	28.3045	0.4092
Down	25.8586	0.3423
Dungannon & S Tyrone	20.8151	0.2542
Fermanagh	18.1148	0.2501
Larne	25.0360	0.3694
Limavady	27.7302	0.4050
Lisburn	19.7825	0.2592
Magherafelt	20.9291	0.2641
Moyle	31.0552	0.3832
Newry & Mourne	23.8534	0.3261
Newtownabbey	26.3905	0.3379
North Down	21.1110	0.2852
Omagh	23.2063	0.3772
Strabane	24.3621	0.3580

(iii) DFP/LPS have provided the table below in respect of information sought on the penny product for each council:

ACTUAL DISTRICT COUNCIL RATES PAID FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2012

District	Rates Paid
Antrim	17,849,088.39
Ards	16,491,593.37
Armagh City & District	14,967,129.66

District	Rates Paid
Ballymena	19,463,214.21
Ballymoney	6,096,734.96
Banbridge	11,085,291.32
Belfast	126,173,820.52
Carrickfergus	10,400,420.28
Castlereagh	13,825,055.08
Coleraine	17,554,723.26
Cookstown	7,447,212.30
Craigavon	23,687,180.50
Down	16,814,355.99
Dungannon & South Tyrone	10,579,736.45
Fermanagh	12,350,011.14
Larne	9,048,766.64
Limavady	7,617,732.46
Lisburn	25,524,123.08
Derry	33,448,567.46
Magherafelt	7,261,415.25
Moyle	4,726,258.55
Newry	23,135,177.14
Newtownabbey	23,940,156.16
North Down	21,751,034.99
Omagh	12,879,700.73
Strabane	7,379,223.59
Totals	501,497,723.48

Cycling Casualties

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of the Environment what actions his Department is taking to reduce cycling casualties.

(AQW 18696/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The DOE has a statutory duty to promote road safety. One of the ways it raises awareness of road safety issues is through the Department's road safety advertising campaigns.

PSNI data shows that drivers are responsible for the majority of collisions and, as such, DOE continuously targets drivers to amend their driving behaviour, encouraging them to never ever drink and drive, to pay attention and to slow down. By changing the attitudes and behaviours of drivers, this is the most effective way of protecting all road users – cyclists, pedestrians, motorcyclists, horse riders, passengers and drivers themselves.

In October 2011 the Department launched the 'Be Cycle Aware' campaign, employing radio and bus rear advertising, in order to remind drivers and cyclists alike to pay attention when sharing the road.

A radio advert targets drivers at the point of danger as they travel in the car during daytime hours when they would be expected to share the road with cyclists.

A second radio advert and bus rear advertising targets cyclists, reminding them of their vulnerability and the need to pay attention and stay safe on the roads. Resources have specifically been directed towards the 'Be Cycle Aware' campaign and it is currently on air every month as part of the Department's monthly road safety intervention radio activity throughout the year.

This activity is in line with Action Measure 124 of the Road Safety Strategy 2020 - "We will give consideration to measures that improve the safety of cyclists; including what cyclists can do to keep themselves safe and what other road users can do".

In May 2012 I launched a campaign that encourages road users to 'respect everyone's journey'. Even though cyclists are not referred to specifically, it is anticipated that the messages to drivers are such that all vulnerable road user groups, including cyclists, will benefit from the safety messages contained within them.

In September last year, I launched a campaign focusing on wider road user responsibility. This campaign urges all road users to behave appropriately and to take responsibility for their actions on the road. The opening scene of the advert addresses cyclist vulnerability by showing an injured cyclist in hospital saying "I was cycling in the bike lane. The driver said the sun was in his eyes." This campaign highlights the fact that over 95% of road deaths and serious injuries are caused by human error and carries the strapline "Kill the Excuses. It's no Accident".

In addition, a 'Cycling Skills & Cycling Safety' leaflet has been developed jointly by DOE and DRD to provide a basic guide for adult cyclists.

The leaflet provides information on the benefits of cycling, advice on basic safety requirements for a cyclist, information on the rules of the road as they apply to cyclists and advice for cyclists on safe use of the road and on interacting with other users, both vehicular and pedestrian. The leaflet is being distributed widely across Northern Ireland.

Currently all road users are provided with detailed guidance through the current edition of the Highway Code which contains rules, information and advice that helps prepare them for the demands of today's roads. Advice on how drivers should treat vulnerable road users, including cyclists, with extra care and attention is covered specifically by Rules 204 to 218 of the Code. Advice for cyclists can be found under Rules 59-82.

Furthermore, the Cycling Proficiency Scheme (CPS) is offered by the DOE Road Safety Education Officer Service (RSEOS) to every primary school in Northern Ireland. The decision to take up the offer lies with the individual schools, as does the decision on whether to include on road / off road training. Over 500 Primary Schools participate in the scheme each year with between 8,500 and 9,000 children benefiting from the scheme annually.

A review of the CPS commenced in August 2012 and is due to be completed in March 2013. The CPS continues to be offered to all primary schools in Northern Ireland while the review is in progress and schools offering CPS are fully supported by DOE RSEOS.

Travel by Bicycle

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the effectiveness of current planning policy in encouraging travel by bicycle.

(AQW 18699/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Cycling is promoted through various planning policies and guidance - PPS 3 'Access, Movement and Parking', PPS 7 'Quality Residential Environments' and PPS 13 'Transportation and land use'. These policies require developers to consider the needs of cyclists in bringing forward proposals

for residential development and for development that provides jobs, shopping, leisure and services. Relevant guidance is included in 'Creating Places, Achieving Quality in Residential Developments' which refers to the layout and design of cycle routes, to ensure they are safe and pleasant to use.

I am satisfied that current planning policy and guidance sets the right direction in encouraging travel by bicycle however, its effectiveness is difficult to assess as these policy instruments in themselves cannot guarantee increased cycle usage.

Wind Turbine Applications

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications are currently in the planning system for single wind turbines with an output level of (i) 0kW to 50kW; (ii) 50kW to 100kW; (iii) 100kW to 200kW; and (iv) 200kW to 250kW; and how many of these applications propose the use of second hand wind turbines.

(AQW 18730/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department welcomes the contribution that renewable projects make to the reduction of carbon emissions and acknowledges the importance of processing these applications in a consistent and timely manner. As Minister I am fully supportive of renewable energy and believe firmly in the contribution that renewables make to the economy.

The information provided in planning applications for wind turbines does not always include the output level of the proposed turbine nor whether the proposed turbine will be new or second hand. It is therefore not possible from the information held on the database to provide validated statistical information in relation to this request.

Commercial Car Washes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment what regulations are in place to regulate the disposal of waste water from commercial car washes.

(AQW 18731/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In relation to car washes making a discharge to a storm sewer or directly to a waterway, Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Water Management Unit protects the water environment primarily through the administration, monitoring and enforcement of discharge consents, in accordance with the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999.

The Water Order empowers the Department to take enforcement action should a car wash development fail to comply with its requirements.

NIEA has worked with the Environment Agency in England and Wales, and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency to produce Pollution Prevention Guideline 13 (PPG 13) 'Vehicle washing and cleaning'. PPG 13 details the statutory requirements for vehicle wash operators and highlights best practice measures to prevent such developments causing pollution in the water environment. PPG 13 can be viewed and downloaded from the following web address:

<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/PDF/PMH00307BMDX-E-E.pdf>

NIEA has also published a guidance leaflet, "Vehicle Wash Operators Guidance", which details the Agency's policy for dealing with this type of effluent, and the environmentally acceptable disposal options. This guidance can be viewed and downloaded from the following web address:

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/water-home/development_management.htm

Shale Gas: Mining The Data

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the research paper Shale Gas: Mining The Data, published by Durham University, which recommends that fracking should not be permitted in an area where there is less than 1.2km between fresh water aquifers and the fracking

zone, and the statement by Professor Peter Styles that a 500m depth between the aquifer and the fracking zone is too shallow; and whether any decision on granting permission for shale gas extraction will comply with these recommendations.

(AQW 18732/11-15)

Mr Attwood: No applications for planning or environmental permissions have yet been received by my Department. However, should such applications be received the nature of the proposal will be assessed against the existing and emerging scientific evidence base. This scientific evidence base will include the work done by Durham University, Professor Peter Styles and a range of other sources, national and international.

In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ireland, in conjunction with a Steering Committee, which includes officials from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, is taking forward a programme of research into the issue of Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction. This research will provide a local context to the growing body of research being done elsewhere.

I have always said it is essential to get a full scientific understanding before decisions are taken on hydraulic fracturing.

European Heritage Label

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment what benefits the European Heritage Label brings to the local economy.

(AQW 18739/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Adoption of the label was considered by Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on behalf of the UK Government in December 2008 in their consultation document 'World Heritage for The Nation, Identifying, Protecting and Promoting our World Heritage'. Having considered responses, DCMS / London decided not to participate.

The consultation considered the extent to which alternative designations 'might help us to respond to the rising costs of bidding for inscription on the World Heritage List, the difficulties of matching the heritage we most value with gaps on the global list, and the steer from the World Heritage Committee that well-represented countries should slow down or suspend nominations'. It noted that 'The UK is broadly content with the principles of the scheme, in particular that it is proposed that the scheme is to be voluntary, which will allow the UK to decide on the extent of any future participation. If we were to participate in the scheme we would need clarity on a number of issues including the costs and responsibilities of involvement; how duplication with the World Heritage List will be avoided; and the extent to which the process for nomination will be open, accountable and inclusive.'

The DOE response on 16 Feb 2009 was: 'Because of the potential of such work to act as a catalyst we favour participation in the European Heritage Label. This may allow a way of compensating for efforts which have not achieved nomination to UNESCO and of allowing further development of such a process to contribute to wider social and economic aims. We agree, however, that, to be fair, any designation should be rigorously assessed and subject to similar criteria to World Heritage Designation.'

DCMS reported as follows at the end of the consultation: 'There was no clear support for the idea of alternative designations such as the European Heritage Label or the putative National Heritage List, because resources that would have to be deployed on other such schemes would simply reduce the resources for already hard pressed World Heritage Sites, and the benefits of these alternative designations was not clear. The Government agrees with that these proposed designations do not offer a viable alternative to inscription on the World Heritage List.' That is the current position of the UK Government which has the final say on such matters in the EU. Clearly, it is not one I share or the DOE argued for.

I therefore agree with the view expressed by my predecessor, however, that the European Heritage Label does have the potential to highlight important parts of our heritage. The Walls of Derry/Londonderry are a good example of this.

Their bid to the UK Tentative list was unsuccessful in March 2011 partly because European walled cities are represented on the International list. That said, I have again been considering how to take this idea forward – namely, how to potentially get NI heritage sites listed as World Heritage sites.

European Heritage Label Programme

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment what correspondence his Department has had with the British Government regarding its decision not to participate in the European Heritage Label programme.

(AQW 18741/11-15)

Mr Attwood: It was the British Government that decided not to participate in the EHL programme. DOE argued for participation. I agree with that argument. I understand that the London decision was based upon the results of a public consultation on World Heritage which mentioned this as a potential alternative.

They concluded that: 'There was no clear support for the idea of alternative designations such as the European Heritage Label or the putative National Heritage List, because resources that would have to be deployed on other such schemes would simply reduce the resources for already hard pressed World Heritage Sites, and the benefits of these alternative designations was not clear. The Government agrees that these proposed designations do not offer a viable alternative to inscription on the World Heritage List.

As I have confirmed, the Department of the Environment expressed support for the Label during the consultation. Following the outcome of the consultation, officers participated in the next stage of the process of assembling an updated Tentative List of World Heritage Sites. This list was published by Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in March 2011.

At that time, an argument was advanced for the Walled City to be prepared for the tentative list. It did not happen. I have recently been talking about this issue, raised it with DCMS officials and a representative of UNESCO at a meeting on 21 February 2013. This is a matter I intend to again push.

Snowfall

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of how local councils are coping with the current snowfall.

(AQW 18768/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Most councils reported that they were unaffected to any significant degree by the recent snowfall. Of those that were, all reported that their winter preparedness plans had coped well with maintaining council functions and that it was mainly refuse collections and cleansing operations that were disrupted. Six councils implemented gritting agreements to clear pedestrian areas at the request of the Department for Regional Development.

Aerial Surveillance Equipment

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment how much has been spent by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency on aerial surveillance equipment in the last five years.

(AQW 18780/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Over the last five years a total of £5,438 was spent on aerial surveillance equipment by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

This equipment comprised camcorders, BluRay recorders, televisions, batteries, memory cards and cables, and is used for the monitoring of site integrity of areas of special scientific interest (ASSIs).

Local Government Reform: Resource Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment why it was necessary to bid for a further £16.2m resource funding in respect of Local Government Reform in the January monitoring round; and what are the consequences of the refusal of the request.

(AQW 18782/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As the reform of local government is an Executive commitment, I believe that some of the costs might reasonably be expected to be funded by the Executive. It is my view that the transition phase of the local government reform programme is critical to success and the Executive should meet the upfront costs - particularly those that have no cash releasing benefits for the sector.

This will ensure that delivery of the key implementation work streams is achieved.

I have taken the opportunity at each of the 2012-13 monitoring rounds to bid for reform funding. The most recent bid, in the January Monitoring Round, was for £16.2 million and, unfortunately, was not successful.

My view was supported by the Assembly on Monday 28th January when it agreed a Motion acknowledging the significant workload and substantial costs involved in the delivery of the Executive's local government reform transition, as proposed under the Review of Public administration; believing that the Executive should provide financial support for the reform process, including for future rates convergence; and calling on the Executive to provide financial support to councils to cover the upfront costs of RPA, which yield no short-term savings, and to ensure that these costs do not result in rate increases.

I am in ongoing discussions with Executive colleagues to agree a funding package for local government reform.

Statutory Duty to Promote Economic Development

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how the introduction of a statutory duty to promote economic development in the planning bill would impact on planning decisions.

(AQW 18789/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Clause 2 of the Planning Bill will place a duty on the Department in formulating planning policy to do so with the objective of furthering sustainable development; promoting or improving well-being and promoting economic development. Clause 2 will also place a similar duty on any body or person exercising any future development plan functions.

These policies and plans are key material considerations which are to be taken into account in the determination of planning applications along with all other material considerations relevant to any particular planning application.

Clause 2 of the 2012 Planning Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether a regulatory impact assessment was conducted on clause 2 of the 2012 Planning Bill prior to its introduction.

(AQW 18790/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Planning Bill was subject to a regulatory impact assessment which was conducted by the Department prior to its introduction to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The regulatory impact assessment can be viewed on Planning NI website www.planningni.gov.uk.

2012 Planning Bill

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether the proposals in the 2012 Planning Bill will apply to planning appeals that are currently being assessed.

(AQW 18792/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Clauses 11, 12 and 21 of the Planning Bill bring forward reforms to planning appeals. These reforms will not apply to appeals that are currently being assessed.

It is anticipated that Clause 11 'Appeals: time limits' will take effect in relation to planning decisions issued by the Department after the commencement date of this provision.

Similarly it is anticipated that Clauses 12 and 21 'Matters which may be raised in an appeal' and the "Power of planning appeals commission to award costs" will apply to planning appeals which are received by the Planning Appeals Commission after the commencement date of this provision.

The Right to a Fair Trial

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has conducted an assessment to ascertain whether clause 10 of the 2012 Planning Bill is compatible with clause 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees the right to a fair trial.

(AQW 18793/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has assessed whether Clause 10 of the Planning Bill is compatible with Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Department considers that clause 10 is not incompatible with that Article (see section 6(2)(c) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998) and would in its view be within the legislative competence of the Assembly.

Inconsistencies of Application in Different Planning Divisions

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will initiate a review of the application of PPS18, similar to that conducted on PPS21, to address the inconsistencies of application in different planning divisions.

(AQW 18855/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department welcomes the contribution that renewable projects make to the reduction of carbon emissions and acknowledges the importance of processing these types of applications in a consistent and timely manner.

In order to improve consistency in decision making I have established a Sub Group of the Planning Forum to look at measures to improve planning performance for renewables and to consider issues such as licensing requirements, resources and structures.

To date this work has resulted in the majority of renewable applications being redirected from Strategic Planning Division to the Area Office network which has increased capacity to speed up the decision making process. Prior to the redistribution of this work training was rolled out across the Area Offices to ensure consistency in decision making.

Performance within each area office is carefully monitored and a Performance Action Plan has been put in place in order to improve and manage performance. This action plan identifies a number of initiatives and allows for the monitoring and active management of performance against challenging targets.

However, applications for wind turbines differ in complexity and in quality of submission and are attracting increasing levels of objection. Consultation with a number of statutory and non-statutory bodies is required to inform the decision making process and all of these issues may prolong the processing of an application.

To improve the consultation process and to reduce the number of consultations staff have been provided with additional training to ensure consistency in carrying out consultations and reminded that they should only consult in the correct circumstances and avoid unnecessary consultations and delays.

I will continue to work with key stakeholders to ensure that Planning delivers in an efficient and timely manner and continue to monitor performance to ensure consistency across the area office network.

I therefore have no plans to review the operation of PPS18 at this time.

Illegal Hare Coursing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment how many times Section 38 of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 has been used to convict a person of illegal hare coursing.

(AQW 18858/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Section 38 of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act 2011 prohibits hare coursing events. The PSNI is responsible for enforcement of this legislation and I am informed that no prosecutions have been taken for organising or participating in a hare coursing event.

This is a matter I will raise at the next Partnership for Action against Wildlife Crime (PAW) meeting on 18 April 2013.

Taxi Legislation

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department plans to introduce any new legislation on taxis.

(AQW 18913/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As part of the suite of subordinate legislation to give effect to the Taxis Act 2008 approved by this house, Taxi Operator Licensing was introduced in September 2012. Building on this positive change I remain fully committed to providing a safe, fair and fit for purpose taxi industry in Northern Ireland. Other important changes which will help achieve this goal include introducing the ability for the public to hail any taxi in the street; new specifications on wheelchair accessible vehicles; and a taxi vehicle licensing regime that make it easier to tell if a taxi is legal. All of these in combination will give customers more choice of taxis and taxi owners more opportunities for business. In addition, taxi meters will be rolled out, to the benefit of drivers and customers, and a regulated maximum fare will be introduced for all taxis.

While I am committed to introducing the changes in a timely manner, the timing of each change will be subject to the legislative scrutiny process.

I will shortly confirm the timeline to bring about these reforms. In doing so, I will work to ensure that the interests of drivers and owners and their needs are properly recognised, mindful that these are difficult economic times. I firmly believe that these changes will bring about benefits for operators, drivers and passengers alike.

Taxi Metering: Foyle Constituency

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of the Environment when taxi metering will be introduced for operators in the Foyle Constituency.

(AQW 18979/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I remain committed to reform of the taxi industry in Northern Ireland.

I am considering the timeline to bring about these reforms, including the introduction of taxi metering, which is an essential element of working towards providing a fit for purpose taxi industry. In doing so, I will work to ensure that the interests of drivers and owners and their needs are properly recognised mindful that these are difficult economic times. I firmly believe that these changes will bring about benefits for drivers and passengers alike.

Taxi Fare and Taxi-Meter Consultation

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the taxi fare and taxi-meter consultation.

(AQW 18981/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I consulted on proposals to introduce new taxi fare and taximeter regulations between 17 November 2011 and 17 February 2012. The Department received written responses representing the views of 3,637 people.

These responses have been analysed and a synopsis was provided to the Environment Committee for its consideration. The synopsis is also available on the Departmental website:

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/foi/recent-releases/publications-details.htm?docid=8756>

Taxi fares and taxi-meters are being implemented as part of the Taxi Reform Programme. I will shortly confirm the timeline to bring about these reforms, which will include the introduction of taxi metering.

Planning Applications: Interventions

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of the Environment to list the planning applications, apart from Article 31 applications, in which he has intervened since May 2011.

(AQW 19029/11-15)

Mr Attwood: During the processing of planning applications I regularly correspond with MLAs who have written on behalf of constituents and objectors in connection with certain planning applications.

In exercising my responsibility for the direction and control of the functions of the Department consistent with statute and the Ministerial Code, I have a legitimate interest in decision making within the Department.

As Minister, it is therefore appropriate that I take a close interest in the operation and effectiveness of the planning functions of the Department. This interest can extend to scrutiny of the management of individual planning applications so that I can be satisfied that the planning functions of the Department are being undertaken effectively or to respond to any issues of concern raised by elected representatives or others.

I can confirm that I have received representations from members of all political parties in the Assembly, met delegations involving these parties and made inquiries in relation to a number of applications.

John Lewis Planning Application

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment why his Department refused planning permission for the John Lewis store at Sprucefield.

(AQW 19090/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I have not refused the major Article 31 planning application for a retail scheme including a Department Store, 19 Retail Units, restaurants and associated infrastructural development at Sprucefield, Lisburn for Sprucefield Centre Limited (S/2009/1045/F). However the applicant has exercised their right to withdraw the planning application rather than participate in a Public inquiry which has now been terminated.

In light of the nature of this proposal, the complex issues involved and the significant third party interest my officials had asked the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) to convene a Public Inquiry to hear evidence and prepare a report on its findings. The PAC had set a timetable for the Public Inquiry to open on the 15 April 2013 and I am disappointed that the applicant has chosen to withdraw at this late stage.

The PAC asked me to release my Department's decisions on their recommendations about elements of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 relating to Sprucefield to facilitate the preparation of evidence for the Public inquiry. In order to provide certainty and clarity for participants in the Inquiry I issued a statement to this effect on the 11 January 2013. This publication constitutes advance notice of what the Department intends to adopt in the final plan subject to completion of all statutory procedures. The Inquiry would have allowed careful consideration of the issues including the economic impacts of the proposal and the relevant planning policy context on which the PAC could provide an Independent Inquiry Report. This would have allowed the planning application to be considered in light of a careful

interrogation of all the relevant issues within the Public Inquiry Report before a final Ministerial decision was made.

In my view, the PI would have been the best course to pursue. Among other matters, it would have assessed the retail impact of the 20 stores Sprucefield application on Belfast, Bangor, Lisburn and other Greater Belfast town centres and many other locations outside Greater Belfast. The information would have been of major and multiple retail impacts, which in my view would be measured in multiple retail closure and major job losses. In my firm judgement, if I did not acknowledge this and give advice, *inter alia*, informed by this stark reality, I would have failed in my Ministerial duties.

Historical and Heritage Sites

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to task an organisation, other than the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, with the promotion of historical and heritage sites.

(AQW 19093/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The economic potential of our heritage sites was powerfully revealed in the report I commissioned last year: 'A Study of the Economic Value of Northern Ireland's Historic Environment' which received much positive comment in the Assembly debate on Monday 21st January. I am determined that the full value to the community of our rich built heritage is realised. I am therefore convening a Summit in April of key stakeholders to examine ways in which the report's recommendations and the issues raised in the debate can be progressed, including the question of how to strengthen the performance of the Built Heritage Directorate of the Environment Agency. I will make appropriate changes to promote our rich built heritage in Northern Ireland once I have heard community views at the Summit.

The 'summit model' which I have deployed on a number of issues has worked well, moved issues forward, brought wise advice from outside government into government. I believe that likely conclusions and actions coming out of the summit will see a further strategic shift in protection and positive development of our built heritage and heritage led development.

MOT Checks

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to introduce an online system for checking vehicle MOT history, similar to that provided by Vehicle and Operator Services Agency in England, Wales and Scotland.

(AQW 19102/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I am aware that the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) in Britain has an online vehicle MOT history check facility. This enables the user to check previous MOT test dates, odometer reading (mileage) and details of any failure items, or to check whether an MOT test certificate is authentic. The vehicle registration mark and MOT test number or V5 (registration document) number are necessary in order to access these MOT test details.

I clearly see the benefits of this system; however implementing such a system in the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) would require significant IT development. My Department is currently progressing a review of the future delivery of vehicle testing which will identify and evaluate technical options for the delivery of vehicle testing services. An online vehicle MOT test history check facility, similar to that provided by VOSA in England, Wales and Scotland, will be considered as part of this review.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment which departmental functions will be transferred to local government under the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 19104/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The package of functions to transfer to the new councils from central government departments is currently under review by Ministers and the Executive. Confirmation is expected soon.

Planning Enforcement Orders: Lisburn District Council Area

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment how many Planning Enforcement Orders are currently outstanding in the Lisburn District Council area; and what procedures he has put in place to speed up this process.

(AQW 19117/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning Enforcement Notices are provided for in Planning legislation rather than Planning Enforcement Orders and there are currently 8 Enforcement Notices where court action is being considered by the Department or is pending within the Lisburn City Council area.

I am fully committed to swift and robust enforcement action being taken whenever it is warranted. This is a message that I have conveyed to all of my officials - including those in the Downpatrick Area Planning office who are responsible for planning enforcement in the Lisburn City Council area.

In recognition of the need to enhance the standard of service delivery in planning enforcement, additional staff resources were recently devoted to the enforcement section in Downpatrick and the office is now in the process of implementing a more focussed and proactive approach to this area of work.

The Department already has in place an Enforcement Strategy which sets out the objectives for planning enforcement, the guiding principles and priorities for enforcement action and performance targets. Officials in the Downpatrick Area Planning office are committed to complying with the strategy and the agreed targets.

I have asked Senior management to closely monitor how the additional resources and a more focussed and approach are impacting and improving performance in the Lisburn City Council area.

G8 Summit

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what additional resources his Department will receive to cover any additional costs from the G8 summit taking place in Fermanagh in June 2013 and from where the resources will be allocated.

(AQW 19150/11-15)

Mr Attwood: On 4th February I announced a £1 million funding package for environmental improvements to tackle dereliction and dilapidation in towns and cities. As part of this package, £380k has been made available to Fermanagh District Council, as hosts for the G8 summit, to tackle dereliction and decay in the area. I have identified this funding from within my Department's budget and will continue to carefully monitor budgets to ensure the best use is made of all available resources.

It may be possible to further enhance the environmental landscape in Fermanagh, ahead of the G8 summit, at the beginning of the next financial year. In which case, I will be seeking early confirmation that additional funding will be made available to my Department in the June Monitoring Round.

Environmental Damage

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what fines his Department has imposed for environmental damage, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19193/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The scale and imposition of fines imposed on environmental offenders is not a matter for my Department. The courts independently impose penalties on the evidence gathered by the Department and presented by the Public Prosecution Service (PPS).

Table one below summarises the total value of fines levied by the Courts for breaches of environmental regulations or pollution cases and the value of assets recovered under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Table One	2010	2011	2012
Court imposed fines	£114,650	£153,398	£193,075
Recovery under POCA	£200,000	£662,300	£ 50,001

See Note 1.

It should be noted that the courts have also applied custodial sentences for the most severe offences.

In addition, the Department's Planning Service, which prosecutes cases where damage has been caused to our Historic Environment, has recorded the fines imposed on Table Two – based on the last three financial years.

Table Two	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Court imposed fines	£35,400	£350	nil

Notes:

- 1 The figures provided do not include the small number of fines associated with Wildlife Order offences which are prosecuted via the PSNI.
- 2 The Member may wish to refer to the enforcement, compliance and other statistical reports available on the NIEA website where further detail is available.

Kindertransport Farm, Millisle

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment whether he has given any consideration to the listing of the Kindertransport Farm, Millisle.

(AQW 19265/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The department has considered these buildings for listing on three separate occasions. They were first recorded in 1973 and again visited in 1998 as part of the more detailed Second Survey of Buildings of Architectural and Historic Interest. On each of these occasions they were considered not to meet the statutory test of Article 42 of the Planning Order (1991) i.e. they were not assessed as 'buildings of 'special architectural or historic interest'.

They were inspected and recorded again in 2009 following a Listing Query from the President of the Belfast Jewish Community. This survey has not yet been fully assessed.

I have asked the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to complete this review and I will write to you again when this has been carried out.

Kindertransport Farm, Millisle

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment, given the disrepair of the Kindertransport Farm, Millisle, and the historical significance it has in the legacy of Holocaust survivors, whether there has been a decision made to restore the site.

(AQW 19266/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The structures on this site are not designated and are therefore currently not eligible for support from the Department of the Environment. However, this status is currently under review and, should they become listed, then eligible works of repair would attract assistance under the terms of the Listed Building Grant-Aid Scheme.

Tackling Dereliction

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, following his Department's announcement that £1m will be spent to tackle dereliction, whether any towns in North Down will be included; and to detail the criteria by which towns have been, or will be, chosen.

(AQW 19368/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In November 2012 the Department invited all councils to make bids for dereliction funding. No proposal was received from North Down Borough Council, thus there were no towns in North Down included in the funding allocations announced.

Councils were asked to set out how their bid would provide one or all of the following

- benefits to tourism;
- a contribution to regeneration and tackling social need;
- an impact in strengthening and reinforcing existing co-operation and collaboration between NICS departments;
- a spin-off "multiplier" effect on the local economy, both in terms of jobs created, and the positive impact on the private sector and the local community.

The detailed criteria against which proposals were assessed were:

- need – an examination of the need for the work, its wider contribution to the area and any potentially complementing interface with initiatives of other Departments;
- impact – including consideration of the context and timing of any related event or projects which prompt and support the council's proposal;
- preparedness – account being taken of the council's thoroughness in planning the project and developing tenders etc. to ensure a practical ability to spend funding in line with its allocation; and
- synergies with relevance to the local community - consideration of the views and aspirations of local interest groups or residents and assessing how the work would interface with local priority needs and what longer term benefits might ensue.

It was based on a scoring matrix informed by the above criteria that monies were allocated with additional particular regard to the main Belfast – Derry road at Dungiven and the Newry and Mourne Council area give the world Fire and Police games.

As a result £2.2 million has now been allocated in an initiative that did not exist years ago. Given the popularity and impact of the scheme, I believe my argument for continued dereliction funding, including from monitoring rounds, is strong.

Larne Borough Council: Intervention Money

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment why Larne Borough Council's bid for Intervention money was unsuccessful; and to outline the criteria used to examine applications.

(AQW 19404/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Following a call for proposals to tackle dereliction in our towns and cities, the Department received bids from 22 councils, as well as one from the Causeway Coast and Glen cluster. I have committed over £1million from my own Departmental budget to fund this work, but as my bid for additional funding in January Monitoring was unsuccessful, it was not possible to fund all bids in this financial year, and therefore the bids had to be prioritised. I hope to be in a position to offer funding to more councils, including Larne, if further finance is forthcoming. I look to members to support me in this effort.

The individual proposals were assessed and scored against the criteria set out below.

Councils were asked to set out how their bid would provide one or all of the following

- benefits to tourism;
- a contribution to regeneration and tackling social need;
- an impact in strengthening and reinforcing existing co-operation and collaboration between NICS Departments;
- a spin-off “multiplier” effect on the local economy, both in terms of jobs created, and the positive impact on the private sector and the local community.

The detailed criteria against which proposals were assessed were:

- need – an examination of the need for the work, its wider contribution to the area and any potentially complementing interface with initiatives of other Departments;
- impact – including consideration of the context and timing of any related event or projects which prompt and support the council’s proposal;
- preparedness – account being taken of the council’s thoroughness in planning the project and developing tenders etc. to ensure a practical ability to spend funding in line with its allocation;
- synergies with relevance to the local community - consideration of the views and aspirations of local interest groups or residents and assessing how the work would interface with local priority needs and what longer term benefits might ensue.

It was based on a scoring matrix informed by the above criteria that monies were allocated with additional particular regard to the main Belfast – Derry road at Dungiven and the Newry and Mourne Council area give the world Fire and Police games.

As a result £2.2 million has now been allocated in an initiative that did not exist years ago. Given the popularity and impact of the scheme, I believe my argument for continued dereliction funding, including from monitoring rounds, is strong.

Maze/Long Kesh Site

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the historical legal advice that he, or his predecessors, requested regarding the listed status of the Maze/Long Kesh site.

(AQW 19405/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I confirm that I have not sought legal advice previously in this matter, but also confirm that advice was sought in the previous mandate.

The concept of legal professional privilege safeguards the rights of a person or organisation, including the Department, to obtain legal advice on a confidential basis and to refuse to disclose such information in the interests of the wider administration of justice. It has been the settled view that in this context, legal advice is not disclosed.

I will however consider the matter further.

Planning Enforcement Orders: North Down Borough Council

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning enforcement orders are outstanding for the North Down Borough Council area; and how this quantity of orders will be addressed.

(AQW 19406/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning Enforcement Notices are provided for in Planning legislation rather than Planning Enforcement Orders. There are currently 5 Enforcement Notices outstanding within the North Down Borough Council area; for three of these court action is being considered by the Department or is pending, one is the subject of an appeal and is within the jurisdiction of the Planning Appeals Commission and the other is in the process of being complied with.

I am fully committed to swift and robust enforcement action being taken whenever it is warranted. This is a message that I have conveyed to all of my officials - including those in the Downpatrick Area Planning office who are responsible for planning enforcement in the North Down Borough Council area.

In recognition of the need to enhance the standard of service delivery in planning enforcement, additional staff resources have recently been devoted to the enforcement section in Downpatrick and the office is now in the process of implementing a more focussed and proactive approach to this area of work.

The Department already has in place an Enforcement Strategy which sets out the objectives for planning enforcement, the guiding principles and priorities for enforcement action and performance targets. Officials in the Downpatrick Area Planning office are committed to complying with the terms of the strategy and the targets set out therein. These targets include bringing 70% of cases to a conclusion within 39 weeks (9 months) of receipt of complaint.

I am monitoring how with additional resources in place and a more focussed and proactive approach now being taken to enforcement, progress is being made towards improving performance in the North Down Borough Council area.

Dereliction Fund: Unsuccessful Applications

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the unsuccessful applications from each local council to the Dereliction Fund.

(AQW 19409/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The councils which were not allocated funds in the phase of the dereliction funding programme announced on February 4th were -

- Antrim Borough Council
- Armagh City and District Council
- Ballymena Borough Council
- Ballymoney Borough Council
- Banbridge District Council
- Carrickfergus Borough Council
- Castlereagh Borough Council
- Coleraine Borough Council
- Cookstown District Council
- Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
- Larne Borough Council
- Limavady Borough Council
- Newry & Mourne District Council
- Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Omagh District Council
- Strabane District Council

Ards Borough Council withdrew its bid.

A proposal received from the Causeway Coast and Glen Cluster was not allocated funds.

Since that time it has been possible to fund the proposal of Limavady Borough Council and Newry & Mourne Council.

Councils were asked to set out how their bid would provide one or all of the following

- benefits to tourism;
- a contribution to regeneration and tackling social need;
- an impact in strengthening and reinforcing existing co-operation and collaboration between NICS departments;
- a spin-off “multiplier” effect on the local economy, both in terms of jobs created, and the positive impact on the private sector and the local community.

The detailed criteria against which proposals were assessed were:

- need – an examination of the need for the work, its wider contribution to the area and any potentially complementing interface with initiatives of other Departments;
- impact – including consideration of the context and timing of any related event or projects which prompt and support the council’s proposal;
- preparedness – account being taken of the council’s thoroughness in planning the project and developing tenders etc. to ensure a practical ability to spend funding in line with its allocation; and
- synergies with relevance to the local community - consideration of the views and aspirations of local interest groups or residents and assessing how the work would interface with local priority needs and what longer term benefits might ensue.

It was based on a scoring matrix informed by the above criteria that monies were allocated with additional particular regard to the main Belfast – Derry road at Dungiven and the Newry and Mourne Council area give the world Fire and Police games.

As a result £2.2 million has now been allocated in an initiative that did not exist years ago. Given the popularity and impact of the scheme, I believe my argument for continued dereliction funding, including from monitoring rounds, is strong.

People Living Close to Wind Farms

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of the Environment which Departments have been consulted on the effects on people living in close proximity to wind farms.

(AQW 19604/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning Policy Statement 18 ‘Renewable Energy’ (PPS18) sets out my Department’s policy for development that generates energy from renewable resources.

The key objective of PPS18 is to ensure that the environmental, landscape, visual and amenity impacts associates or arising from renewable energy development are adequately addressed.

To ensure there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on public safety, human health or residential amenity arising from any wind farm proposal, my officials routinely consult with the relevant Council’s Environmental Health Department. Where specific concerns are raised, my officials will also consult with the Public Health Agency.

Taxi Operator Licences

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment how many taxi operators have applied for a taxi operator’s licence in the last three years, broken down by council area.

(AQW 19642/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Table 1 below details the numbers of applications received by the Driver & Vehicle Agency for taxi operators’ licences, from September 2012 to 13 February 2013, set out by district council area. These figures have been sourced from the Agency’s own internal information systems and have not been validated as Official Statistics.

Aggregation by district council area has been made using the latest central postcode directory (Jan 2013), which is available from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

TABLE 1

District Council	Taxi Operator Licence Applications
Antrim	97
Ards	70
Armagh	61
Ballymena	30
Ballymoney	29
Banbridge	36
Belfast	376
Carrickfergus	20
Castlereagh	42
Coleraine	118
Cookstown	52
Craigavon	96
Derry	79
Down	68
Dungannon	65
Fermanagh	69
Larne	24
Limavady	42
Lisburn	143
Magherafelt	48
Moyle	33
Newry & Mourne	93
Newtownabbey	87
North Down	45
Omagh	74
Strabane	52
All District Councils	1,949

Taxi Operator Licences

Mr Storey asked the Minister of the Environment whether he is satisfied that all taxi operators have a taxi operator's licence.

(AQW 19643/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Since the introduction of taxi operator licensing in September 2012, a total of 1,916 applications for operator licences have been received. It is estimated that, of the currently licensed 9,500 taxi vehicles, 7,100 are covered by the applications received, and that would represent a compliance rate of 75%.

While I cannot be satisfied with that level of compliance with what is an important road safety and customer service initiative, positive progress is being made, and my Department will continue to use all of the measures available to it to promote and improve compliance.

Single Wind Turbine Applications

Mr Ross asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the current planning applications for single wind turbines on agricultural land in (i) East Antrim; and (ii) Northern Ireland.

(AQW 19727/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As of 31 December 2012, there are 18 current planning applications for single wind turbines on agricultural land in East Antrim and a total of 639 single wind turbine applications in Northern Ireland. Please note that this information has been sourced from a live database, is subject to change following validation, and will not equate to any finalised official statistics which may be later published on the topic.

Wind Turbines

Mr Ross asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the current planning applications for multiple wind turbines on agricultural land in (i) East Antrim; and (ii) Northern Ireland.

(AQW 19728/11-15)

Mr Attwood: As of 31 December 2012, there are no current planning applications for multiple wind turbines on agricultural land in East Antrim and a total of 37 multiple wind turbine applications on agricultural land in Northern Ireland. Please note that this information has been sourced from a live database, is subject to change following validation, and will not equate to any finalised official statistics which may be later published on the topic.

Reduce Road Deaths

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to further reduce the number of people killed on roads.

(AQW 19733/11-15)

Mr Attwood: I welcome the further reduction in road deaths during 2012, with the recorded level of 48 being the lowest since records began in 1931. One death is, however, one too many and I have started the conversation about moving towards a vision of zero fatalities.

As Minister of the Environment, I have responsibility for co-coordinating a strategic approach to road safety. This is achieved primarily through the delivery of the Road Safety Strategy to 2020 which contains over 200 action measures aimed at further reducing the number of people killed on our roads. Responsibility for delivering individual measures falls to each relevant department and agency, working in partnership and a report on progress is published annually by the Department of the Environment.

Within the context of the Strategy, I am bringing forward a number of new road safety initiatives. To improve the position further will require bold and radical action and the introduction over the next few months of new legislation will be of particular note.

A Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill will introduce measures to tackle drink driving and introduce a system of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL). This Bill will, along with other provisions, lower the drink drive limit and amend the learner and novice driver regimes, the latter with the objective of reducing the number of new driver casualties and of other road users killed and seriously injured by new drivers. The Bill will also cover the wearing of helmets on quadricycles on public roads. The Bill is expected to be introduced

in April 2013. Drink drive and helmet-wearing provisions will begin to come into operation as soon as possible after the legislation is in place and GDL measures will begin to be seen from April/May 2014.

A further Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill is planned for 2014 which will introduce the recognition, between Northern Ireland and Ireland, of penalty points for key motoring offences and may also be used to introduce other provisions including new anti-drug driving laws.

Through its ongoing programme of awareness campaigns, my Department will continue to deliver road safety messages to all road users. A new campaign will represent a progression towards the 'Vision Zero' philosophy and help pave the way for the operationalisation of the new legislation. This will begin a step change in road safety but is a natural progression from our current casualty position and the core messages in DOE's most recent campaigns: 'Respect Everyone's Journey' and 'Kill the Excuses. It's No Accident!'.

This new campaign will aim to engage everyone in adopting, pursuing and owning a goal of zero road deaths. It will challenge us all to take personal responsibility for our own road safety and for that of other road users.

A second campaign later in the year will address seatbelt wearing. The DOE's most recent seatbelt survey has shown that, although seatbelt wearing rates remain high at 98%, around 6% of back seat passengers are still not using a seatbelt or other suitable restraint. The Survey also shows that adults are less likely to wear a seatbelt than children. Despite moving from having the lowest rate of seatbelt wearing to the highest, when compared with England, Wales and Scotland, significant challenges remain if we are to move towards 'Vision Zero'. It has been estimated that some four lives, thirty-nine serious injuries and one hundred and seventy-six slight injuries would have been saved each year (from 2008-2010) had a 100% wearing rate been observed. The purpose of our new campaign will be to renew the 'No Seatbelt, No Excuse' message to prevent a drift away from compliance, in particular amongst younger and older passengers, in some of our most vulnerable age groups.

An ongoing programme to modernise the Department's Road Safety Education Officer Service (RSEOS) will result in a fit for purpose service for our young people that is specifically designed to meet their needs. New, high quality road safety teaching resources, developed to address local issues, will help to strengthen our collaboration with teaching professionals. New resources are being developed for both primary and post-primary schools which will be made available through NI Direct and the C2K educational website or issued to schools as the year progresses. These resources, together with existing initiatives, will support the continuing delivery of road safety education by professional teaching staff in a regular structured way through the curriculum, in line with best practice. By making our resources available through C2K, we will bring them directly to teaching professionals, making it easier for them to plan a road safety lesson. A number of the new resources will also be available to youth and sporting organisations to help deliver the road safety message to the traditionally hard to reach target audience 17 to 24 year old male and those not in education, training or employment. The RSEOS will continue to work closely with schools and partners to ensure road safety education remains high on the agenda.

Establishing a sound evidence base is crucial in identifying key road safety issues and problems and deciding how to tackle them. The road safety research programme, established as part of our work on developing the Strategy and involving road safety partners, helps to identify emerging trends and assist in targeting interventions more effectively. A number of research projects have been carried out and have led to the development of 22 new action measures that were added to the Strategy in 2012. The programme, which is reviewed annually, includes ongoing statistical analysis, projects carried out by partner organisations and assignments commissioned by DOE.

Exemption of Pre-1960 Classic and Historic Vehicles from MOT Testing

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 12917/11-15, for an update on the development of a policy on the exemption of pre-1960 classic or historic vehicles from the MOT test. **(AQW 19774/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: I have answered a number of similar questions over the past months, most recently in December 2012 (AQW 17367/11-15).

The Department consulted on possible exemption of certain categories of historic vehicles from MOT testing. The responses indicated that there is broad support for exemption of pre-1960 vehicles from periodic testing.

The Environment Committee has indicated that it is content with the Department's proposed way forward following the consultation, which is to make use of the exemption in Roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC concerning the periodic testing of pre-1960 vehicles. This would align with the British Government's exemption, from 18 November 2012, of pre-1960 vehicles from MOT testing.

However on 13 July 2012, the European Commission published a 'Roadworthiness Package' which, amongst other things, addresses periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles, therein making changes to the rules that apply to historic vehicles; the proposals are expected to be introduced no earlier than August 2014.

I explained in my most recent written answer on this matter that, if implemented as then drafted, these proposals would narrow the parameters within which the Department can provide for exemptions to historic vehicles, as the definition of an historical vehicle was more prescriptively described. While the Department's policy intentions remained the same; that is to make exempt pre-1960 vehicles from the MOT regime, we had to be mindful of the changing legislative context, to ensure that any changes we make are not made redundant by incoming EC Regulations.

Following receipt of a further update on the EU negotiations regarding the roadworthiness package, one of the main amendments in which was a change to the definition of "historic vehicles" which allows vehicles that have not undergone "substantial" changes to be still classed as historic, I have instructed officials to proceed with legislative amendment to exempt pre-1960 vehicles from the MOT test.

There are a number of issues that have needed to be resolved, including provision for a voluntary MOT test for such vehicles (for purposes including cherished plate transfer), where Northern Ireland law differs from British law and have needed careful attention. However, I believe that we are now close to resolving these issues with the Departmental Solicitors. Subject to receipt of final advice, the Department will now amend the relevant legislation to exempt pre-1960 vehicles from MOT testing and I will shortly confirm the timescale to bring about this legislative change.

Local Council Beach Cleaning

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what more his Department can do to enforce beach cleaning by local councils.

(AQW 19827/11-15)

Mr Attwood: District Councils are already under a legal duty, as respects relevant land for which they are responsible, to ensure that the land is, so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter. The legal definition of "litter" is quite wide and includes, for example, any refuse, filth, garbage or any other nauseous, offensive or unsightly waste. The law, namely the Litter (Northern Ireland) Order 1994, also provides that District Councils shall have regard to a Code of Practice on Litter in discharging the litter clearing duty. The Code provides Councils with practical guidance on the discharge of the litter clearing duty, including specific guidance on beaches.

The Code of Practice on Litter is a statutory Code which Councils must have regard to. In respect of beaches the Code makes clear that amenity beaches (including inland beaches where a substantial number of bathers or beach users congregate) should, as a minimum standard, generally be kept clear of all types of litter during the traditional bathing season from 1 May to 30 September inclusive. The Code states that it is expected that during this time of the year, beaches be subject to a frequent monitoring routine and be cleansed to as practicable a standard as possible.

The duty to clean beaches applies to items or materials originating from discharges directly to the marine environment as well as discarded items from beach users. As a guide, only litter comprising

manufactured or processed items or materials that have been discarded, disposed of or abandoned, by intent or accident, should be removed. Litter should include processed food items but it does not include seaweed or twigs, which contribute to maintaining the local ecosystem. The Code also makes clear that there may be issues of practicability relating to litter removal from beaches and particular care will be needed in respect of sensitive habitats.

The law also provides that a court may act on a complaint made by any person on the ground that he or she is aggrieved by the defacement, by litter, of any relevant land of a district council. If the court is satisfied that the land in question is defaced by litter the court may make an order (“a litter abatement order”) requiring the district council to clear the litter away. Failure to comply with a litter abatement order is an offence.

The legal position is therefore quite robust as, in addition to placing a legal duty on Councils to, as far as is practicable, keep land clear of litter it allows the Courts to act on a complaint by any person on the ground that he or she is aggrieved by the defacement, by litter, of any relevant land of a district council. The Department does not have any legal power to enforce cleaning of land, including beaches, by District Councils. It is only the courts that are empowered to make a litter abatement order as referred to above.

In addition to the legal position as outlined above, the Department is also moving forward in developing a Northern Ireland Marine Litter Strategy which seeks to build on the strengths of existing measures, identify proposals that will help overcome weaknesses, and maximise opportunities and minimise threats to addressing the levels of litter present in the coastal and marine environment.

The important role of Districts Councils in beach cleaning will be highlighted within the Marine Litter Strategy, which also makes reference to the inclusion of beach cleanliness in the annual Northern Ireland Litter Survey. The availability of accurate and reliable information on the levels of coastal litter will help identify those District Councils which are delivering on their commitment to keep our beaches clean.

It is also important to point out that beach cleaning is only one of a series of activities undertaken by District Councils to deliver clean beaches. Councils deliver education initiatives and awareness campaigns, such as the Coleraine Borough Council “Line Out” campaign, which raises awareness among anglers on appropriate waste disposal. Also, projects like the Coastal Guardians Project being delivered by Ards, North Down and Down District councils in partnership with the Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership help to maintain beach cleanliness. This project has produced the “Coastal Guardian Pack” containing litter pick equipment, and has strengthened the capacity of local volunteers to remove litter.

These measures are aimed at effecting behavioural change to reduce reliance on the activity of beach cleaning to deliver a clean and healthy coastline.

In addition to these matters, I have convened a series of Beach Summits, the purpose and outcome of which is to address beach issues – litter, water quality, signage, information, awards (etc) all of which demonstrates a firm DOE commitment to beach management and coastal development.

Recycling

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment what percentage of (i) mixed plastics; (ii) paper; (iii) newspapers and magazines; and (iv) plastic bottles that are sent to reprocessing plants can't be recycled; and what is done with these materials.

(AQW 19881/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department has no regulatory reason to hold this information. Further there is currently no direct legislation relating to the quality of recyclates. This has meant a large variation of quality standards in re-processing plants and Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs).

In Britain, DEFRA has recently published proposals for a Quality Action Plan (QAP) to promote high quality recycling of dry recyclates. The QAP sets out a range of measures to be implemented in the

coming years, including the reporting on recycling rates. The QAP applies to England, however it is hoped that all the Devolved Administrations will work closely together on the issue of quality to help:

- Increase public confidence and participation in recycling
- Support growth and the economy
- Improve market inefficiencies, and
- Deliver significant environmental benefits.

Alongside the QAP, DEFRA has published a Consultation Paper on draft Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) Regulations for insertion into the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) (Amendment) regulations (2013). The amendment regulations could potentially come into force in October 2013 and MRFs over a certain size will be required to measure quality from April 2014.

In conjunction with the new regulations, DEFRA intends to publish a mandatory Code of Practice for MRFs in England and Wales. This will require MRFs to put in place robust quality management systems and take representative samples of the facility's input and output material (including the residual stream) and measure the composition of each sample by material type (i.e. paper, glass, plastic and metal). DEFRA aims to get over 90% of MRFs measuring quality.

Scotland issued similar proposals on the 21 February 2013 and Zero Waste Scotland and WRAP have proposed undertaking a joint UK-wide study of waste transfer/bulking stations to determine the average quality of each of the key recyclate streams. Both DEFRA and the Welsh Government have stated their willingness to participate in the study.

To ensure a level playing field for recyclates, provide consistency, prevent upsurges of waste movements and achieve higher quality of recyclates it will be important that the Department follows a similar and timely pathway as the rest of the UK. This should include the publication of a Quality Action Plan, MRF Recyclate Regulations and a mandatory Code of Practice.

Failing to do so will mean that there will be a lack of robust data and a continued variation of standards in local MRFs. More importantly it will exacerbate the growing trend locally to produce solid recovered fuel (SRF) and refuse derived fuel (RDF) from residual waste materials for recovery in incinerators and cement kilns.

Biodiversity

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 19046/11-15, whether the 2016 target on biodiversity commitment still stands or has been pushed back to 2020; and to outline the reasons for any change in the target date.

(AQW 19892/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The new target date reflects the renewed focus, both within the EC and the wider international community, to halt biodiversity loss by 2020. I am currently reviewing the NI Biodiversity Strategy so that it sets out specific and challenging targets for on-going action, both within DOE, other government departments and agencies, as well as business and voluntary organisations.

To that end, I see this revised Strategy as a means to increase awareness and focus attention on the importance and benefits of protecting our biodiversity, within the wider EC and international objectives. The strategy proposes to include actions from a wider sector of the community. I am committed to implementing on-going practical measures to halt biodiversity loss through safeguarding vulnerable habitats and species and whenever possible, restoring important ecosystems.

The revised Strategy's targets will be regularly monitored which will assist determine if the overall objective of halting biodiversity loss will be realised during the period covered by the strategy.

Surface Water Flooding

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of (i) residential; and (ii) commercial properties at risk due to surface water flooding.

(AQW 19910/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Historically many cities and towns in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere in UK, have been built in valleys and along river corridors and thus have resulted in increased flood risk. The Department recognises that the effects of flooding on human activity are wide ranging, impacting on the economy, social well being and the environment.

The Department consults with Rivers Agency when a development plan is being prepared to ensure that such plans do not bring forward sites or zone land that may be susceptible to flooding, unless there are exceptional circumstances, or it is considered appropriate to put mitigation measures in place.

However, the planning system cannot in itself prevent the flooding of properties but it does acknowledge the risks and uncertainties associated with climate change. The Department considers that actions to address these matters through the planning system should be based on a precautionary approach. This approach is embodied in the policies set out in Planning Policy Statement 15 'Planning and Flood Risk' to ensure that the development decisions we make today and in the future does not increase flood risk. The Review of PPS 15 will bring forward new planning policy and guidance in addressing surface water flood risk to new development.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the applicant to identify potential flood risk as early in the development process as possible and demonstrate how the development can be made safe through design and flood resilient construction and that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere. The Department's responsibility in respect of flooding does not affect the liability position of developers or owners.

Surface water flooding maps were published by Rivers Agency in December 2011. In the period between December 2011 and September 2012 1,273 residential and 134 commercial applications have been approved within these areas. This figure includes new and replacement as well as alterations and extensions to existing properties. The Department does not monitor the commencement or completion of building works and therefore cannot advise how many of these are actually constructed.

Planning Service: Professional Planners

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many professional planners are employed by Planning Service in each division.

(AQW 19921/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning and Local Government Group employs the following number of professional Planning Staff in each of the following locations:

Location	Number of Professional Planning Staff Employed
South Antrim Area Planning Office, Ballymena	34
Belfast Area Planning Office, Belfast (Bedford House)	44
Planning & Local Government Group Headquarters, Belfast (Millennium House)	75
Northern Area Planning Office, Coleraine	20
Southern Area Planning Office, Craigavon	54
Downpatrick Area Planning Office, Downpatrick	44

Location	Number of Professional Planning Staff Employed
Western Area Planning Office, Enniskillen	9
Northern Area Planning Office, Londonderry	26
Western Area Planning Office, Omagh	34
Total	340

Dereliction Funding

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment whether he plans to have any further rounds of dereliction funding for town centres.

(AQW 20003/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Following my announcement on 4 February 2013 of a £1 million funding package to tackle dereliction in Fermanagh, Down, Lisburn, Moyle and Belfast councils, a further £0.2 million has been identified for properties within Newry & Mourne District Council, Limavady District Council and Belfast City Council.

I see dereliction funding as a rolling programme which I am planning to maintain into the next financial year and beyond. Existing bids will be reconsidered as and when further funding becomes available and councils will have the opportunity to refresh their bids at that point if they so wish. I believe monitoring rounds provide a mechanism to roll out the scheme across the Council areas, particularly those which have not benefited to date. For a relatively small sum the dereliction fund can have a big impact. The evidence is for all to see. I hope others will back me.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency Office and Jobs in Coleraine

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the future of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency office and jobs in Coleraine; and what assurances he can give that the facility and jobs will be maintained.

(AQW 20258/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Vehicle licensing is delivered in Northern Ireland by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA), under an agreement between my Department and the Department for Transport. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in Swansea, which is responsible for vehicle licensing services across the United Kingdom, is nearing completion of a project to integrate the separate NI and GB computer systems in order to produce an integrated system capable of meeting the vehicle licensing needs of customers across the UK.

DVLA have proposed to use the integrated computer system to transfer all the work not done online or in Post Offices to Swansea and to terminate the agreement with DVA, mirroring developments in Britain, where the closure of all the regional and local motor tax offices is currently under way.

I am completely opposed to this proposal because of the impact on staff in DVA, who have consistently provided high standards of service; because of the impact on the local economy, especially in Coleraine, where most of the jobs are based; and because of the impact on the economy of NI as a whole. I have made it clear to Ministers in London repeatedly since becoming DOE Minister that I oppose reduction in public sector jobs, when public expenditure should be used as a stimulus to growth and when NI is so deeply hit by recession.

Since June 2011, I have been lobbying Ministers at Westminster about the threat to jobs, and encouraging local public representatives from right across the political spectrum to do likewise. I have presented a dossier of evidence to London on the reasons why jobs should be retained and how they can be.

I shall also be meeting with Stephen Hammond, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, in London on 5 March 2013 to discuss the matter further, and at that meeting I intend to again make the case for the retention of vehicle licensing services, and the associated jobs, in Northern Ireland.

I again request support for my efforts to protect jobs and resistance to the approach London has already deployed in Britain.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Aerial Photography Costs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cost to Land and Property Services of the use of aircraft for aerial photography and other related purposes in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19639/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): The cost to Land & Property Services for the use of aircraft for aerial photography and other related purposes in each of the last five years is detailed below:

2012/2013	£155,532.36 (at 11 February 2013)
2011/2012	£131,788.08
2010/2011	£ 55,971.02
2009/2010	£ 68,693.70
2008/2009	£ 51,545.99

Barnett Consequentials

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what assessment his Department has made of the Barnett consequentials as a result of the proposed changes to inheritance tax to help fund elderly care in England.

(AQW 19658/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Recent announcements have been made proposing changes to how care for the elderly will be funded in England. My officials have spoken with HM Treasury officials about the implications of these announcements for Northern Ireland.

The detail of these changes, along with the budgetary implications, are still being analysed in HM Treasury so at this early stage the amounts are not known. However, it has been confirmed that Northern Ireland will receive Barnett Consequentials as a result of any changes to relevant Whitehall budgets.

My officials will continue to liaise with HM Treasury on this issue and I will update the Assembly of developments in due course.

Rates Arrears: North Down Borough Council

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people in the North Down Borough Council area were in rates arrears in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19914/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of people in the North Down Borough Council Area who were in rates arrears in each of the last three years is not available. Information is available on the number of

occupancies in the North Down Borough Council Area that had rates outstanding at the end of each rating year. An occupancy represents a liable ratepayer at a property at a given time.

The table overleaf shows the number of occupancies in the North Down Borough Council Area with rates arrears at the end of each rating year.

NUMBER OF OCCUPANCIES IN THE NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA WITH RATES ARREARS AT END OF YEAR

Financial Year Ending:	Number of Occupancies
31st March 2010	4,421
31st March 2011	3,696
31st March 2012	4,342

Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit Reports

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list the number and type of Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit reports that are currently active or have been commissioned by each Department since 2007.

(AQW 19943/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf sets out the number of reports by the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU) that are currently active or which have been commissioned since the unit was established in April 2008.

The types of report produced by PEDU are mainly in respect of securing improvements in the delivery of services or reducing the costs of providing services.

It should be noted that most of the work of PEDU has been commissioned by the Executive, reflecting the requirements of all Departmental Ministers. In addition the table excludes the reports produced by PEDU in respect of the monitoring of the delivery of the Executive's Programme for Government, and the provision of advice when the monitoring reports have shown less than expected levels of progress. This work is taken forward in support of officials in OFMDFM.

TABLE: PEDU REPORTS 2008-2013

Department	Delivery Reports	Efficiency Reports
NI Executive	1	4
Agriculture and Rural Development	0	0
Culture, Arts and Leisure	1	0
Education	0	0
Employment & Learning	0	0
Enterprise, Trade & Investment	0	0
Finance and Personnel	2	2
Health, Social Services and Public Safety	0	0
Environment	1	0
Justice	0	0
Regional Development	0	1

Department	Delivery Reports	Efficiency Reports
Social Development	1	0
Office of First Minister & Deputy First Minister	1	0

Vacant Properties

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether it is the responsibility of home owners to notify Land and Property Services of vacant properties in their ownership.

(AQW 20064/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There is no legal requirement for homeowners to notify Land & Property Services (LPS) of vacant properties in their ownership. However, there is a moral obligation on all ratepayers to pay what they rightfully owe to help maintain the public services that we all avail of and rely on. It is also in the home owners' best interests to notify LPS, as failure to provide timely ownership information can lead to a large backdated bill.

Vacant Property

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in instances where Land and Property Services discover a vacant property, how far back can the property be rated.

(AQW 20069/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Rating of Empty Homes legislation was introduced on 1st October 2011. As a consequence, any domestic property that was vacant at 1st October 2011 will be liable for rates from that date.

Rate Debt

Mr Clarke asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the amount of rate debt in (i) Antrim; and (ii) Newtownabbey Borough Council areas, for each of the last five years.

(AQW 20070/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the amount of rate debt in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Areas in each of the last five years is not available. Information is available for the last three financial years.

The table overleaf shows the rate debt in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council Areas at the end of each rating year. The figures for the year ended 31st March 2012 include debt arising from empty homes which became liable for rates on 1st October 2011. They are therefore not directly comparable with previous years.

Rating Debt at End of Year

Financial Year Ending:	Antrim Borough Council	Newtownabbey Borough Council
31st March 2010	£4,086,811	£6,826,648
31st March 2011	£3,977,115	£6,512,287
31st March 2012	£3,853,551	£6,944,950

Mortality Statistics

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the mortality statistics for each of the last five years, broken down by cause of death.

(AQW 20124/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The table overleaf details the number of deaths registered by cause of death¹ from 2007 to 2011. More detailed statistics are available in the 2011 Registrar General Annual Report published on the NISRA website: www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/annual_reports/2011/Table6.1_2011.xls

1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision

TABLE: NUMBER OF DEATHS REGISTERED BY CAUSE OF DEATH (ICD10 CHAPTER), 2007 – 2011

ICD 10 Codes	Description	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
A00-Y98	All causes	14,649	14,907	14,413	14,457	14,204
A00-B99	I. Certain Infectious And Parasitic Diseases	184	183	164	174	157
C00-D48	II. Neoplasms (Cancer)	3,992	4,086	3,992	4,111	4,159
D50-D89	III. Diseases Of The Blood And Blood-Forming Organs And Certain Disorders Involving The Immune Mechanism	39	36	28	26	33
E00-E90	IV. Endocrine, Nutritional And Metabolic Diseases	299	254	319	291	238
F00-F99	V. Mental And Behavioural Disorders ¹	514	575	525	569	894
G00-H95	VI-VIII. Diseases Of The Nervous System And The Sense Organs	588	600	618	569	672
I00-I99	IX. Diseases Of The Circulatory System ¹	4,838	4,752	4,485	4,476	3,951
J00-J99	X. Diseases Of The Respiratory System	1,992	2,096	2,017	1,886	1,923
K00-K93	XI. Diseases Of The Digestive System	711	682	686	715	657
L00-L99	XII. Diseases Of The Skin And Subcutaneous Tissue	26	24	38	32	23

ICD 10 Codes	Description	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
M00-M99	XIII. Diseases Of The Musculoskeletal System And Connective Tissue	76	85	84	100	103
N00-N99	XIV. Diseases Of The Genitourinary System	381	400	367	369	331
O00-O99	XV. Pregnancy, Childbirth And The Puerperium	-	-	5	2	4
P00-P96	XVI. Certain Conditions Originating In The Perinatal Period	50	67	60	77	57
Q00-Q99	XVII. Congenital Malformations Deformations And Chromosomal Abnormalities	61	74	82	85	72
R00-R99	XVIII. Systems, Signs And Abnormal Clinical And Laboratory Findings, N.E.C.	125	139	138	135	145
V01-Y98	XIX. External Causes Of Mortality	773	854	805	840	785

- 1 Due to improvements in automatic coding, deaths previously jointly coded as I63.9 'Cerebral infarction, unspecified' and F03.0 'Unspecified dementia' are now coded to F01.1 'Multi-infarct dementia'. This has been implemented in Northern Ireland for 2011 Registrations onwards. This change in coding has had an impact on Cause of Death figures by decreasing the overall number of deaths from 'Diseases Of The Circulatory System' and increasing the number of deaths from 'Mental And Behavioural Disorders'

DHSSPS: Budget

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the increased budget allocation to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety during 2012/13.

(AQO 3485/11-15)

Mr Wilson: During 2012-13, the DEL budget allocation to DHSSPS increased by £62.597m comprising a net increase of £53.885m in Resource provision and £8.712m in Capital provision.

These changes reflect the net impact of allocations by the Executive, technical transfers between departments and internal reclassifications initiated by DHSSPS in Monitoring Rounds; allocations in relation to the Executive's Invest to Save Scheme, the Childcare Strategy, Delivering Social Change initiatives and reduced requirements in respect of depreciation and delayed capital projects.

Efficiency Delivery Programme: NIAO Report

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the Northern Ireland Audit Office report on the Review of the Efficiency Delivery Programme.

(AQO 3486/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I welcome the report by the Audit Office on the Efficiency Delivery Programme. The report contains a number of recommendations for departments in relation to the assessment and monitoring of any efficiency programme and anything that encourages transparency and accountability is to be welcomed. The report also calls for greater challenge and scrutiny of how departments deliver efficiencies. I am firmly of the view that this is a role that Assembly Committees should undertake – holding departments to account for delivery of efficiencies. The Audit Office report also contains a number of recommendations for my department and my officials are due to report on these to the Finance Committee next month.

Income Tax Revenue

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has requested an accurate figure of income tax revenue from the Treasury rather than estimates.

(AQO 3494/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have not requested an actual income tax revenue figure for Northern Ireland as regional tax data is not routinely published by HM Treasury or HMRC. This would not be a straightforward exercise and I do not have any expectation that it is one that the Treasury would be willing to undertake at this time. That is why it has been necessary to estimate Northern Ireland's share of the various tax revenues that are collected nationally in the UK. Scotland have had to do likewise in producing their Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland report.

DFP: Contracts

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why his Department predominantly uses multi trade term contracts which may discriminate against Small and Medium sized Enterprises.

(AQO 3495/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Most construction contracts in both the private and public sectors are let as multi trade contracts. This ensures that the responsibility for the management of individual subcontractors rests with a main contractor, who is best placed to coordinate the different trades. This approach is much more cost effective for public bodies as it has lower staffing and operating costs, compared to placing individual trade contracts.

Multi-trade procurements are particularly relevant in the use of frameworks to deliver maintenance and minor works. Many public bodies simply do not have sufficient technical and professional staff to be able to procure and manage the number of individual contracts that changing from multi-trade contracts would require.

Rates: Arrears

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the current levels of rates arrears and recovery for commercial and domestic properties.

(AQO 3496/11-15)

Mr Wilson: At the end of the 2011/12 financial year there was an outstanding debt of £70.7 million associated with domestic properties (including £7.9 million debt associated with vacant domestic properties) and an outstanding debt of £90.8 million debt associated with non-domestic properties. These figures do not take into account almost £609,000 that had been receipted at year-end but without the required level of detail provided to allow the payment to be allocated to an account.

Land & Property Services provides ratepayers with a number of opportunities to pay their rate bills, or to put in place a payment arrangement. If payment or a payment arrangement is not forthcoming,

Land & Property Services will use the court process to attempt to collect the debt or to enforce the judgement of the Court against the rate payer.

Land and Propety Services

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the work of Land and Property Services.

(AQO 3497/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The work of Land & Property Services (LPS) plays a key role in supporting the delivery of the NI Executive's Programme for Government for Northern Ireland 2011-15 in many areas.

LPS is currently making good progress against most of the corporate targets. The position as at 31st January 2013 against LPS three Key Targets is as follows:

- (i) LPS has collected £1057.2 million in rates against the target "To collect £1.1 billion (cash value of rates) and transfer to Paymaster General's Account during 2012-13" ;
- (ii) LPS is focusing on extensive recovery action and is making steady progress to reduce the level of rating debt against the target "Value of the end of year rating debt to be £145 million excluding rating of empty homes"; and
- (iii) INSPIRE* Annex I and II download services implemented at 31 December 2012.

* The aim of Infrastructure for Spatial Information In the European Community (INSPIRE) is to establish a data sharing portal which meets the demands of the EU Directive for Northern Ireland for discovering, viewing and downloading spatial data.

During the next few years, LPS will face additional challenges because of the review of public administration (RPA), Non-Domestic Revaluation and even Welfare Reform. I am committed to ensuring that LPS, as a key part of my Department, has the required resources to manage these additional challenges.

Net Fiscal Balance Report

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the Net Fiscal Balance Report 2009-10 and 2010-11 methodology, originally designed to produce the Government Expenditure and Revenue in Scotland, is intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items.

(AQO 3498/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The methodology and consequently the report is not intended to provide an accurate estimate of individual revenue items – many of these have been estimated, in the absence of actual regional data, on the basis of high level assumptions and apportionment factors. Rather the report provides an overall assessment of Northern Ireland's aggregate fiscal position, and as such, the report indicates that individual estimates should be interpreted with caution.

Corporation Tax

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any recent discussions that he has had with the British Prime Minister on the devolution of Corporation Tax.

(AQO 3499/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have not had any discussions with the Prime Minister recently in respect of corporation tax.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister wrote to the Prime Minister on 29 November 2012 to request a meeting to discuss the findings of the Joint Ministerial Working Group on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland (NI) economy, which had considered the scope to devolve responsibility for corporation tax to the NI Executive.

The Prime Minister replied on 9 January 2013 agreeing to the request, with a date for the meeting now arranged for the end of March.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

DHSSPS: Special Adviser

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether his Special Adviser has made any declarations of interest, pursuant to the obligation on civil servants; (ii) how such declarations are recorded; and (iii) whether they are open to public inspection.

(AQW 19292/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety):

- (i) My Special Adviser has not made any declarations of interest;
- (ii) My Special Adviser is required to declare any potential conflict of interest to the Establishment Officer in Departmental HR in accordance with the conduct provisions in Section 6.01 of the Employee Relations part of the NICS HR Handbook. Records of declarations of potential conflict of interest are held by Departmental HR in a Register of Interest and on the individual's Personal File;
- (iii) The Register of Interest is not open to public inspection, with the exception of declarations made by Departmental Board members, which are published in the Department's Annual Resource Accounts.

Rare Disease Plan

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the rare disease plan will be implemented.

(AQW 19776/11-15)

Mr Poots: In line with the 2009 European Council Recommendation on Rare Diseases, the final UK plan representing all four Countries is expected to be published by the end of 2013. When the Plan is published it will be for each devolved administration to decide how to implement it within their respective jurisdictions and my Department will set out its proposals on how it should be implemented in Northern Ireland.

Ambulances from Altnagelvin Area Hospital

Ms Boyle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the arrangements for the deployment of ambulances from Altnagelvin Area Hospital to hospitals in each of the other Health and Social Care Trust areas, outside high demand times.

(AQW 19782/11-15)

Mr Poots: The deployment and dispatch of ambulances are entirely operational matters for which the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) is responsible. It should be noted that NIAS is a regional service which dynamically deploys its emergency response resources both within and outside times of high demand. This means that the nearest available ambulance will respond to any emergency call. Therefore it is quite possible that resources based outside its Western Division area will respond to calls within the Western Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust. Similarly, ambulance vehicles normally based outside the Western HSC Trust area will respond to calls within that area if required.

ENT Treatment

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to detail the number of new patients requiring an ENT outpatient appointment or treatment in each of the last four years, in each of the Health and Social Care Trusts; (ii) whether demand for ENT treatment has risen over the last four years; (iii) why demand for ENT treatment has risen; and (iv) whether his Department intends to employ more doctors to undertake ENT outpatient appointments or treatment to ensure that waiting lists for ENT treatment are reduced, and to provide further details on this recruitment.

(AQW 19846/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of new patients who were waiting for a first Consultant-led outpatient appointment in the ENT Specialty has risen steadily over the last four years. Details in respect of each Health and Social Care Trust are set out in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

HSC Trust	Quarter Ending			
	31/03/09	31/03/10	31/03/11	31/03/12
Belfast	1,672	2,243	2,143	3,892
Northern	1,560	1,682	2,567	2,667
South Eastern	1,263	1,950	1,455	1,737
Southern	1,586	1,832	1,888	1,984
Western	1,071	1,457	1,472	1,712
N. Ireland	7,152	9,164	9,525	11,992

Inpatient admission in the ENT specialty has also steadily risen over the last few years, as detailed in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2

HSC Trust	Quarter Ending			
	31/03/09	31/03/10	31/03/11	31/03/12
Belfast	972	966	1,605	1,660
Northern	518	474	433	461
South Eastern	236	132	230	316
Southern	671	454	486	599
Western	473	470	511	729
N. Ireland	2,870	2,496	3,265	3,765

The reasons for the increase in demand for elective care services, including ENT treatment, can include demographic changes, changes in primary care, greater public awareness and reduced waiting times.

I am advised that the Health and Social Care (HSC) Board has recently allocated an additional £514,000 to meet demand and reduce waiting times across both assessments and treatments in the ENT specialty.

The Southern HSC Trust is currently recruiting an ENT consultant, and the Northern Trust is looking at increasing clinical capacity within its ENT service. The Belfast Trust has a vacancy caused by a consultant's retirement which has been advertised as a locum post. The Western Trust and South Eastern Trusts have no plans to recruit additional doctors however additional Outpatient Clinics and Theatre Lists will be undertaken by the South Eastern Trust's ENT Consultants between now and the end of March 2013 to ensure ENT waiting lists are reduced.

Hollywood Arches Health Centre

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the care in the community centre service in Hollywood Arches Health Centre was stopped; (ii) which management body in his Department made this decision; and (iii) how much it would cost to reinstate the scheme.

(AQW 19847/11-15)

Mr Poots: The service at the Hollywood Arches Health Centre was approved by the HSCB Primary Care Partnership Project Board as a pathfinder pilot to evaluate the potential for a GP-delivered service outside hospital.

It was commissioned by the Belfast Local Commissioning Group (LCG) in September 2011 to run as a pilot until June 2012; the LCG subsequently decided to extend it to December 2012.

The pilot will now be evaluated by the HSCB with the aim to test the potential of the scheme to be extended regionally. The cost of the pilot scheme was £10,250 per month.

Missed Hospital Appointments

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what strategies are being pursued to reduce the number of missed hospital appointments.

(AQW 19869/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised by the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) that HSC Trusts have implemented or are implementing a number of measures to reduce the number of missed hospital appointments. These include:

- Applying flexible partial booking systems for most outpatient appointments and some review appointments, as opposed to fixed appointment booking systems. Partial booking allows patients to choose an appointment time of their choice no more than six weeks in advance of attendance;
- By the end of 2013 all Trusts should have some form of text messaging or voice messaging service in place to remind patients of their appointment date; and,
- Trusts now require hospital consultants, under the terms of the Integrated Elective Access Protocol (IEAP) to provide at least six weeks notice of annual leave to allow outpatient and review clinics to be planned with some degree of assurance.

The number of patients who “Did Not Attend” their appointment and the number of cancelled appointments by hospitals has reduced in recent years and I welcome this improvement.

Family Fund

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the current level of funding that his Department provides to the Family Fund; and what funding is planned for the next financial year.

(AQW 19924/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Family Fund has already received its total funding allocation of £1.57m from my Department for this financial year. Funding allocations for the next financial year in respect of voluntary organisations, including the Family Fund, are currently being assessed in line with my Department's priorities.

Antrim Area Hospital: Laboratory Assistants

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why some laboratory assistants at Antrim Area Hospital are still being paid within Band 2 while other assistants within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust are on Band 3 or higher, given that they were advised that their Band 3 pay had been approved in March 2012; and (ii) when they will receive the pay rise and back pay.

(AQW 19931/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised that the process for considering applications submitted by staff under the Agenda for Change (AfC) Clustering Agreement has not yet been completed.

Laboratory Assistants in Antrim Area Hospital have not been advised of the outcome of any applications which have been submitted. The Laboratory Assistants who have submitted applications will be advised of the outcome when the process in respect of their application is complete.

Independent Living Fund

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he will maintain the Independent Living Fund after 2015.

(AQW 19953/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department is now doing all it can to help ensure that those disabled people in Northern Ireland who are most in need of care and support are not disadvantaged by the decision of the Department for Work and Pensions to close the Independent Living Fund (ILF) with effect from April 2015.

The ILF monies will not be lost to NI and my officials will develop transitional arrangements for current recipients of the ILF. They will also work closely with the other devolved administrations to help develop alternative longer-term arrangements for the future provision of the care and support previously funded by the ILF. Draft proposals will be submitted to the NI Executive for consideration in due course.

Health and Social Care Trusts: Statutory Continuing Care

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether all Health and Social Care Trusts commission statutory continuing care; and how the Trusts that do not commission this care are meeting the needs of patients who have been assessed, using the Single Assessment Tool, as requiring continuing care.

(AQW 19956/11-15)

Mr Poots: Departmental Circular ECCU 1/2010 'Care Management, Provision of Services and Charging Guidance' provides Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts guidance on the provision of continuing healthcare in NI. Within our integrated health and social care system, HSC Trusts are responsible for carrying out assessment of needs for individuals with continuing healthcare needs. All HSC Trusts have confirmed that they comply with the aforementioned Departmental guidance.

Residents of Statutory Residential Homes

Ms Maeve McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assurances he can give that residents of statutory residential, homes which are facing closure, will not be subject to top-up fees in their new place of residence and that good practice will be followed for those transferring to other accommodation.

(AQW 19957/11-15)

Mr Poots: The TYC proposals around statutory residential care describe a phased closure of a number of older people's statutory residential homes in a managed way over a 3-5 year period. Part of the TYC vision is that in future people will be offered alternatives to such formal care via 'enhanced' domiciliary care packages in their own homes or by the provision of accommodation in 'supported living' environments.

Should a statutory residential home be identified as suitable for closure and residents are required to transfer other accommodation, it is current Trust practice to always seek care placements at the regional tariff rate in the first instance. Where a suitable residential placement at regional rate is not available, there is an existing policy in place whereby the Trust will fund any 'top up' charge without the requirement for an individual or family member to fund this cost differential. This approach will continue as the planned changes to statutory residential provision are rolled out.

It is anticipated that numbers of residents transferring to other accommodation will be kept to a minimum by ceasing new admissions to homes which are identified for closure. However, it is inevitable that some residents may have to transfer and when this occurs they will be fully supported by the trust to find a suitable alternative. I can assure you that the health and wellbeing of the current residents will be central in this change process.

Advertising of Foods

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration his Department has given to a ban on the advertising of foods high in saturated fat, sugar and salt before 9pm.

(AQW 20008/11-15)

Mr Poots: Broadcast advertising is a reserved matter, and is therefore not within the remit of my Department. However, the Obesity Prevention Framework, known as A Fitter Future for All, recognises the impact of advertising food high in fat, salt, and sugar, particularly on our children and young people.

I have therefore raised this issue with my counterparts in the UK Government, calling for greater restrictions on advertising these products, including potentially introducing a 9pm watershed or making it a requirement that companies that want to continue to advertise such products have to provide funding to support the advertising of our public health messages.

Eating Establishments: Menus

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what efforts his Department has made to encourage eating establishments to display calorie counts on their menus.

(AQW 20009/11-15)

Mr Poots: I launched the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Caloriewise pilot scheme on 24 April 2012. This pilot aimed to encourage caterers to display calorie information on their menus. A number of catering companies participated in the pilot including Sodexo, Mount Charles, the Streat, Botanic Inns, and Aramark. In addition, three Health and Social Care Trusts are displaying calories in staff and visitor cafes and restaurants.

This pilot finished in October 2012 however the companies involved continue to display Calorie information whilst the evaluation of the pilot is underway. A detailed evaluation report of the scheme is due to be published in July 2013, and following this consideration will be given to rolling the scheme out across Northern Ireland.

Family Fund: Reductions

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the impact of recent reductions in funding for the Family Fund on (i) families who will now be unable to receive funding; and (ii) the Health and Social Care Trusts and other associated services.

(AQW 20027/11-15)

Mr Poots: No such assessment has been undertaken. I regret that it was necessary to reduce my Department's support for the Fund in 2011/12 but in a very challenging financial climate, I must ensure that the funding I have available is maximised to meet the needs of as many people as possible who rely on health, social care and public safety services.

My Department's contribution of £1.57million during this financial year has enabled the Family Fund to help almost 2,700 families with disabled children in Northern Ireland.

Family Fund

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the meetings that he has held with representatives of the Family Fund on securing funding for 2013/14.

(AQW 20028/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have not met personally with representatives of the Family Fund to discuss funding for 2013/14. However, my officials met with their representatives on 31 January 2013 when a range of issues, including funding provision for 2013/14, were discussed.

State Registration of Sports Therapists

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration has been given to the state registration of sports therapists, in light of the recommendation by the Health and Care Professions Council.

(AQW 20038/11-15)

Mr Poots: The recommendation by the Health and Care Professions Council for the regulation of sports therapists has to be reconsidered in light of the coalition government's priority for reducing regulation.

Currently, Sports Therapists have the option to voluntarily register with the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CHNC) which is sponsored by the Department of Health.

My Department will continue to work with the other UK countries in considering any future arrangements for this particular group.

Organ Donation Waiting List

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people were on the organ donation waiting list in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20045/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is held by NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), which is the organ donation organisation for the UK. The latest published information can be found on the NHSBT website at:

http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/statistics/downloads/northern_ireland.pdf

Organ Transplants

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many organ transplants have been carried out in each of the last five years.

(AQW 20049/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is held by NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), which is the organ donation organisation for the UK. The latest published information can be found on the NHSBT website at:

http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/statistics/downloads/northern_ireland.pdf

Servicing Through-Floor Lifts

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety which companies are employed by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to service through-floor lifts.

(AQW 20074/11-15)

Mr Poots: We have been advised by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust that Pollock Lifts currently install lifts within the Trust. They are responsible for the repair and maintenance of all lifts during the one year warranty period from the date of installation.

Following cessation of the warranty period responsibility then transfers to the Trust's Repair/Maintenance Contractor who is currently Olympic Lifts.

All contracts are procured through PALS.

Tenders Awarded for Surgical Gloves

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (a) company name; (b) lot; and (c) unit price of the tenders awarded for surgical gloves and surgical under gloves under the tri-nations tender (NP569/11).

(AQW 20098/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is shown in the table below. It should be noted that, until it is known which gloves in each lot will be used by each Health & Social Care Trust, the exact prices payable cannot be determined.

Lot	Supplier	Unit Price £
1 General Surgical Gloves Latex	ANSELL	0.34
	ANSELL	0.36
	ANSELL	0.45
	PH MEDISAVERS	0.30
	PH MEDISAVERS	0.44
	PH MEDISAVERS	0.38
	MEDLINE	0.30
	MEDLINE	0.45
	MEDLINE	0.40
	MEDLINE	0.52
2 General Surgical Gloves Latex-Free	ANSELL	0.75
	MEDLINE	1.00
	MEDLINE	1.00 (Sensicare glove)
	MEDLINE	0.747
	MEDLINE	0.83
	MEDLINE	0.91
	PH MEDISAVERS	0.95
	PH MEDISAVERS	1.00
	PH MEDISAVERS	0.96
	PH MEDISAVERS	0.90
	MOLNLYCKE	0.98
	MOLNLYCKE	0.98 (Ultratouch M Glove)
	MOLNLYCKE	1.28
	SEMPERMED	0.99
	SEMPERMED	1.49
SEMPERMED	1.49 (Syntegra Green Underglove)	
3 Enhanced Grip Latex	MEDLINE	0.45
	MEDLINE	0.45 (Triumph LT Glove)
	SEMPERMED	0.54
	MEDICARE	0.52

Lot	Supplier	Unit Price £
4 Enhanced Grip Latex-Free	MEDLINE	0.80
	MOLNLYCKE	1.25

Family Fund

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans his Department has to help the Family Fund meet the needs of low income families with children with a severe disability or illness.

(AQW 20218/11-15)

Mr Poots: In the current financial year, my Department provided £1.57million to the Family Fund to support approximately 2,700 families with disabled children in Northern Ireland. The Fund was able to provide the families with a range of help with items such as beds, bedding, clothing, computers, games consoles, sensory equipment and specialist toys, day trips, family breaks, washing machines and other white goods. My Department will continue to support the family fund in the forthcoming financial year.

DHSSPS: Transport Services

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what efforts his Department, in conjunction with other Departments, has made to co-ordinate transport services.

(AQO 3501/11-15)

Mr Poots: Officials from my Department met with Department of Regional Development (DRD) officials in early 2012 to explore the potential for a collaborative approach between Northern Ireland's health and public transport sectors. Following this, DRD developed a proposal to run a pilot project in the Dungannon and Cookstown District Council areas to assess the benefits of a more joined up approach to the design and delivery of publicly funded passenger transport services. My Department is a member of the Project Board along with representatives from the Departments of Regional Development, Education and Agriculture and Rural Development

Older People: Social Care

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he intends to reform the system of social care for the elderly.

(AQO 3500/11-15)

Mr Poots: Every day thousands of vulnerable people in our communities – and not just older people – are supported by the full range of social care services. Members will be aware, however, that social care is coming under increasing pressure because of demographic change, increasing expectations and a challenging financial climate.

That is why I have committed to a three stage process of reform in Northern Ireland. The first stage commenced on 17th September 2012 when I launched 'Who Cares? The Future of Adult Care and Support in NI' for a six month period of public consultation.

Following consideration of the responses to this ongoing consultation my department will prepare a further paper outlining a number of potential reforms. This will then be subject to further consultation before final reforms are identified and agreed.

Organ Donation

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the public consultation on new proposals around organ donation will be launched.

(AQO 3507/11-15)

Mr Poots: Mr Speaker, with your permission, I will answer questions 8 and 10 together, as they relate to organ donation.

I am aiming to announce in the near future the process and timetable for a consultation exercise which will seek the views of the general public, transplant related charities, donor families, those on the waiting list and the health service community on proposals to increase organ donation in Northern Ireland. This will include exploring public attitudes towards an opt-out system. In all of this my clear aim is to send out a strong message for people to sign on to the organ donor register.

ENT: Waiting Lists

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients have had to be referred for private ENT procedures because of the long health service waiting lists.

(AQO 3508/11-15)

Mr Poots: The latest figures available for the period from 1 April 2012 to 31 December 2012 show that 2289 outpatients and 318 inpatients and daycases were referred to the Independent Sector. It is unacceptable that anyone has to wait overly long for treatment and I look to the Health and Social Care Board and Trusts to achieve the waiting time targets that I have set for all specialties including ENT. The Board has recently allocated an additional £514,000 to meet demand and reduce waiting times across both assessments and treatments within the ENT specialty.

Organ Donation

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the timescale for the consultation aimed at maximising organ donation rates.

(AQO 3509/11-15)

Mr Poots: Mr Speaker, with your permission, I will answer questions 8 and 10 together, as they relate to organ donation.

I am aiming to announce in the near future the process and timetable for a consultation exercise which will seek the views of the general public, transplant related charities, donor families, those on the waiting list and the health service community on proposals to increase organ donation in Northern Ireland. This will include exploring public attitudes towards an opt-out system. In all of this my clear aim is to send out a strong message for people to sign on to the organ donor register.

Paediatric Congenital Cardiac Services

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Paediatric Congenital Cardiac Surgery public consultation, including when he intends to make a decision.

(AQO 3510/11-15)

Mr Poots: You will be aware that I asked the Health and Social Care Board, in association with the Public Health Agency, to establish a Working Group to consider the future requirements for delivering a paediatric congenital cardiac surgery and interventional cardiology service for Northern Ireland. Following public consultation on a draft document which included a commissioning specification, criteria, and options for the future delivery of this service, the Working Group submitted a post-consultation document, to the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) for consideration.

This document is in the form of a framework which includes amended service specification, options and scoring, agreed by the Working Group, following consideration of representations received during the public consultation.

The Board approved this document on 14 February 2013 and has submitted it to my Department for consideration. I am aiming to reach a decision on whether to approve the document as soon as possible.

If I approve the framework it will then be applied by the HSCB to each of the options outlined in it, with the aim of identifying a preferred way forward for the provision of services for children with heart disease in Northern Ireland. The preferred way forward will then be submitted to me for consideration and I am aiming to make my final decision on the future arrangements for this service within the coming months.

The post consultation document is available on the HSC Board website.

Accident and Emergency Departments: Belfast

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the closure of the Accident and Emergency unit at Belfast City Hospital has been a contributory factor in increasing waiting times across the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQO 3511/11-15)

Mr Poots: The temporary closure of the Accident and Emergency unit at the Belfast City Hospital has not had any significant impact on waiting times across the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. In fact, the Belfast Trust has made particularly good progress in reducing 12 hour waiting times for patients. In January 2012, 416 people waited longer than 12 hours in Belfast Trust emergency departments; compared with January 2013 when no one waited longer than 12 hours in any of the Belfast Trust hospitals.

While I welcome this improvement there is no room for complacency in further reducing patient waiting times and I continue to look to the Health and Social Care Board to work with all Trusts to ensure that a focus remains on improving the performance of our emergency departments.

On 5 February 2013 I launched the consultation document on proposals for the future configuration of emergency department services in Belfast. I encourage everyone to respond to the consultation giving their views on the proposals to the Health and Social Care Board.

Transforming Your Care: Stakeholders

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on plans for engagement with key stakeholders during the implementation of Transforming Your Care.

(AQO 3512/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Health and Social Care Board has undertaken an extensive range of engagement activities in the development of the Transforming Your Care Review in 2011, during the development of local Population Plans in 2012 and throughout the recent public consultation for Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action which completed on 15th January 2013.

The HSCB is currently analysing all of the consultation responses for Transforming Your Care: Vision to Action and will be reporting to my Department shortly on the findings of this consultation. I will consider the HSCB's consultation report and then make an announcement on the way forward.

During the implementation phase of Transforming Your Care, a programme of engagement with staff, service users, the general public and key stakeholder organisations will be undertaken. Vision to Action proposed that implementation would take place over a 3-5 year period and engagement would be ongoing throughout this time. Where any significant specific local changes are to take place, a further formal period of public consultation would take place with specific involvement of local stakeholders.

Tobacco Products

Mrs Overend asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department still supports a move to standardised packaging of tobacco products.

(AQO 3513/11-15)

Mr Poots: I am supportive of any measure which would lead to a reduction in smoking prevalence and, in particular, a reduction in the uptake of smoking by young people. That is why I agreed in March last

year to the inclusion of Northern Ireland in a UK-wide consultation exercise on standardised packaging for tobacco products. The consultation ended in August 2012 and the Department of Health in London is due to issue a summary of the consultation responses in the near future.

Only when I have received and fully considered the consultation summary report and a separate analysis of local responses, will I make a decision as to whether standardised packaging should be considered for introduction in Northern Ireland.

Department of Justice

Northern Ireland Policing Board: Percentage Disablement Reviews

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice on what basis does the Northern Ireland Policing Board initiate Percentage Disablement Reviews for retired Police Officers aged over 65; and what guidance pertains to such reviews.

(AQW 17851/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): The Policing Board is legally obliged, where an injury pension is payable, under the Police Service of Northern Ireland and Police Service of Northern Ireland Reserve (Injury Benefit) Regulations 2006 to periodically review the degree of the former officer's disablement.

The Northern Ireland Office issued guidance relating to the calculation of the percentage disablement award for over 65s in their circular 6/2007. Following the "Simpson" judgment this guidance was withdrawn by the Department of Justice and on 20 June 2012 new guidance issued. Copies of the letters can be obtained from the Department's website www.dojni.gov.uk under Medical appeals.

The administration of the Injury Benefit Scheme is the responsibility of the Policing Board. As I am committed to respecting the independence of its role you may wish to direct any further queries to the Chief Executive of the Policing Board.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18621/11-15 and in light of legislative requirements and government policies, why the Northern Ireland Prison Service is unable to comply by processing and providing such information in a way so as to facilitate access in an accurate and timely manner.

(AQW 19601/11-15)

Mr Ford: There is no legislative basis or policy which requires the information requested to be held centrally. It is recorded on individual staff files.

Belfast Crown Court: Mr Alastair Hetherington

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, for a breakdown of the costs of the prosecution and subsequent acquittal of Mr Alastair Hetherington at Belfast Crown Court on Wednesday 6 February 2013.

(AQW 19618/11-15)

Mr Ford: The estimated costs to date of the prosecution and subsequent acquittal of Mr Alastair Hetherington at Belfast Crown Court are detailed in the table below:

Cost Type	Estimated Cost £
PSNI ¹	Not Available
PPS Prosecution ²	1,366.73
Defence (Legal Aid Costs) ³	13,001.50
Court (Judiciary and Staff Costs)	4,930.26
Jury Costs	1,181.32
Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	675.00
Total	21,154.81

- 1 The PSNI have not provided costs as all costs associated with attendance at court was pre-detailed duty and no additional costs were incurred.
- 2 This figure represents the PPS costs paid to date, however final costs for all fees for counsel and witness expenses have not yet been billed.
- 3 This represents an estimated cost from the Legal Services Commission for Crown Court fees. No claims have been received to date in this case.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, to detail (i) the number of outstanding recommendations in respect of HMP Maghaberry, Magilligan and Hydebank Wood that have not been implemented arising from death in custody investigations or other external reviews; (ii) the authors of such reports/recommendations with the dates of publication; and (iii) why senior Northern Ireland Prison Service management has not yet implemented the recommendations.

(AQW 19620/11-15)

Mr Ford:

- (i) The number of outstanding recommendations in respect of each of the establishments is contained in the table below:

	Total Number of NIPS Recommendations	Total Number of Outstanding Recommendations
Hydebank Wood	193	126
Maghaberry Prison	248	143
Magilligan Prison	174	45

- (ii) A list of the reports specific to each unit is provided at Annex A.
- (iii) The recommendations contained in these reports serve as an important driver for change and the main themes have, where appropriate, been incorporated into the wider Strategic Efficiency and Effectiveness (SEE) and Prison Reform programmes. The scale of the change programme currently underway is considerable and, as I have said on a number of occasions, it is clear that lasting and effective reform will take time.

ANNEX A

Report	Date of Report
The Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority report on the Young Offenders Centre	7 October 2011
The Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority report on Hydebank Wood women's prison	7 October 2011
The Prisoner Ombudsman report into the death in custody of Mr Allyn James Baxter	3 June 2011
The Prisoner Ombudsman report into the death in custody of Mr Samuel Carson	8 November 2012
The Prisoner Ombudsman report into the death in custody of Mrs Frances McKeown	22 November 2012
The Independent Monitoring Board report on Hydebank Wood 2010/11	16 September 2011
The Independent Monitoring Board report on Hydebank Wood 2011/12	14 December 2012
Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland – Announced Inspection of Maghaberry Prison	17 December 2012
Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland – Follow up Inspection of NIPS Mistaken Prisoners releases	3 April 2012
Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland – Life Sentence Prisoners	2009
Prisoner Ombudsman Death in Custody Prisoner B	15 November 2010
Prisoner Ombudsman Death in Custody Colin Bell	9 January 2009
Prisoner Ombudsman Death in Custody Aaron Hogg	28 June 2012
Prisoner Ombudsman Death in Custody Mark Maginnis	21 March 2012
Prisoner Ombudsman Death in Custody Patrick Duffy	13 June 2012
Independent Monitoring Board Maghaberry Prison	2011/2012
Investigation Report into Separated Accommodation in Roe House	2012
Interception of Communication Commissioners Office – Maghaberry Prison Inspection	18 June 2012
Regulation, Quality, Improvement Authority – Roe House Maghaberry	19 August 2011
CJINI Magilligan Inspection	September 2010
Death in Custody – RBG – Prisoner Ombudsman	April 2010
Death in Custody RD Prisoner Ombudsman	October 2007
IMB Magilligan Prison	2012
Interception of Communications Commissioners Office (IOCCO) Magilligan Prison Inspection	July 2012

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18697/11-15 and AQW 17826/11-15; (i) whether he wishes to revise his answer in terms of the non-inclusion of transport costs given that the answer to AQW 16983/11-15 stated that the cost of the clinical sessions involving the prisoner's wife as well as her travel costs to the Prisoner Assessment Unit was around £8,000 and; (ii) to clarify the status of the review.

(AQW 19622/11-15)

Mr Ford: A Prison Service review has established that the actual cost to NIPS of treatment, in respect of the prisoner's wife, was £4800, not £8000.

AQW/18697/11-15 confirms that NIPS did not meet any costs for transport for the prisoner's wife.

The review into the circumstances surrounding this case is still ongoing.

Londonderry Crown Court: Harold Greer

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail a breakdown of the costs in the case of Harold Greer at Londonderry Crown Court.

(AQW 19623/11-15)

Mr Ford: The estimated costs to date of the trial and associated hearings relating to the case of Harold Greer at Londonderry Crown Court are detailed in the table below:

Cost Type	Estimated Cost £
PSNI ¹	Not Available
PPS Prosecution ²	3,404.04
Defence (Legal Aid Costs) ³	13,585.20
Court (Judiciary and Staff Costs)	4,586.50
Jury Costs	1,044.63
Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	485.00
Total	23,105.37

- 1 The PSNI have not provided costs. All duty associated with the case was pre-detailed duty and no additional costs were incurred.
- 2 This figure represents the costs paid by PPS to date, however final costs for all fees for counsel and witness expenses have not yet been billed.
- 3 This represents an estimated cost from the Legal Services Commission for Crown Court fees. No claims have been received to date in this case.

Northern Ireland Civil Service Appeals Board

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18806/11-15, to detail the reason for applying an exemption under the Data Protection Act 1998 in terms of withholding the requested information.

(AQW 19664/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) withheld the information requested to protect the identity of those concerned as disclosure would be contrary to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18877/11-15, and given the delay in producing a new Code of Conduct and Discipline whether senior Northern Ireland Prison Service management gave consideration to adapting the Ministry of Justice National Offender Service Conduct and Discipline Code issued on 4 March 2010 for those directly employed by NOMS and Her Majesty's Prison Service to meet the needs of the NI Prison officers.

(AQW 19670/11-15)

Mr Ford: As stated in my answer to AQW/18877/11-15, the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) has overall policy responsibility for Conduct and Discipline in the Department of Justice. The new Prison Service Code of Conduct has therefore had to be developed with appropriate input from DFP as well as other business partners including the National Offender Management Service.

Beech House, Hydebank Wood

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18619/11-15, whether the prisoners in question have been afforded adequate association under Rule 55, which states that every prisoner shall be given the opportunity of association for not less than one hour each day which may be taken as exercise in the open air, weather permitting.

(AQW 19671/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prison Rule 55 does not apply to inmates of a Young Offenders Centre. Recreation for this category of inmate is provided for in Prison Rule 96 (2). This states that 'inmates shall regularly be given such physical recreation, training and exercise as are required to promote health and physical well-being'.

I am satisfied that this Rule is being correctly applied within Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre.

Offences Relating to 'Kerb Crawling'

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many convictions, broken down by court division, have been secured for kerb crawling in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19672/11-15)

Mr Ford: Kerb crawling may be prosecuted under Article 60 of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. This act came into effect on 2nd February 2009 and data shows there were no convictions for kerb crawling in 2009, the latest year for which data is available.

Data are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

Conditional Discharge

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AWQ 19272/11-15, whether a conditional discharge is to be treated as a conviction once the related proceedings have come to an end and the individual concerned has not breached its terms.

(AQW 19687/11-15)

Mr Ford: Further to my previous answer, a conditional discharge is given by the court following a conviction and as such will form part of any criminal record used by the court for sentencing purposes in any subsequent conviction. The conditional discharge does not however constitute a conviction for the purposes of putting a suspended sentence into effect.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 also applies to the conditional discharge. The rehabilitation period for a conditional discharge is one year or the period of conditional discharge whichever is longer. Once the rehabilitation period has been completed the conviction is treated as spent and in many instances need not be declared for employment purposes.

There are nevertheless certain occupations or situations where the conditional discharge must still be made known. As also indicated in my previous answer, the conditional discharge will form part of a standard or enhanced criminal record conviction certificate – though not part of a basic certificate – as produced by AccessNI.

The full legislative provisions on the conditional discharge are provided in Articles 4 to 7 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 1996.

Legal Aid

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the total amount of Legal Aid provided, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19691/11-15)

Mr Ford: The total amount of expenditure on legal aid funding, excluding administration costs, in each of the last three financial years is as follows.

09/10	£96.9m
10/11	£93.3m
11/12	£101.7m

Prison Officers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18759/11-15, to provide a breakdown of how many are (i) male; (ii) female; and (iii) former prison officers.

(AQW 19743/11-15)

Mr Ford: Of the 79 staff recorded as having declared a disability 37 are male and 42 are female. This total includes two male prison officers who left the Service during the past year.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18877/11-15 and given that the Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline is almost 18 years old, for his assessment of prison officers not being afforded fairness comparable to that of their counterparts in Great Britain where the discipline code is up-to-date and includes mandatory fundamental procedures that are not applicable to Northern Ireland prison officers,

(AQW 19755/11-15)

Mr Ford: It would be inappropriate to compare the operation of the current Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct, which was agreed locally, with the disciplinary codes of other jurisdictions.

Unlicensed Gangmasters

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many convictions have been secured against unlicensed gangmasters, per court division, in each of the last five years,

(AQW 19756/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Gangmasters Licensing Authority has confirmed that in the last five years there were 3 convictions against unlicensed gangmasters – one in 2010 at Omagh Magistrates' Court and two in 2012 at Armagh Magistrates' Court.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17821/11-15, to detail (i) the grade of the staff member of the Northern Ireland Prison Service leading the Code of Conduct and Discipline

project; (ii) when the person was appointed and by whom; (iii) how many Northern Ireland Prison Service staff, broken down by grade, are involved in the project; and (iv) when they were appointed and by whom.

(AQW 19757/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Grade 7 developing the new disciplinary system for the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), including the new Code of Conduct, was appointed on 16 January 2012 through the HR Directorate in Prison Service Headquarters.

As stated in my answer to AQW 17821/11-15, the Grade 7 is working on this process alongside a range of key stakeholders from the Department of Justice, the Department of Finance and Personnel, the Prison Governors' Association, and the Prison Officers' Association.

Prisoners Qualifications

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the number of prisoners who gained GCSE qualifications in grades A* - C or equivalent; and (ii) the number of qualifications broken down by age group, in the last three academic years.

(AQW 19760/11-15)

Mr Ford: During the calendar years 2010, 2011 and 2012 the numbers of prisoners who gained GCSE qualifications in grades A* - C or equivalent are as follows:

Grade	C		B		A		A*		
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	
18 - 25	43	51	2	-	1	-	-	-	
26 - 35	115	91	3	4	-	1	-	6	
36 - 45	45	37	4	1	2	-	-	-	
46 - 55	35	16	1	-	-	1	1	-	
56 + over	5	4	-	-	1	-	-	2	
Totals	243	199	10	5	4	2	3	8	
									2

Prisoners with Qualifications

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number and age profile of prisoners who have been awarded higher education qualifications, in the last three years.

(AQW 19761/11-15)

Mr Ford: During the last three years the number and age profile of prisoners awarded higher education qualifications are included in the tables below:-

**TABLE A
HYDEBANK WOOD**

	2010	2011	2012
18 – 25	1	6	7
Totals	1	6	7

**TABLE B
MAGHABERRY**

	2010	2011	2012
18 – 25	2	0	0
26 – 35	5	4	6
36 – 45	3	3	2
46 – 55	1	1	0
56 + over	0	0	0
Totals	11	8	8

**TABLE C
MAGILLIGAN**

	2010	2011	2012
18 – 25	0	0	2
26 – 35	16	15	21
36 – 45	5	14	7
46 – 55	10	9	6
56 + over	2	1	4
Totals	33	39	40

High Court Case Costs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 17560/11-15, to detail the estimated costs in Legal Aid for a typical case of this nature, taking into consideration the level of counsel and the duration.

(AQW 19796/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission does not receive any bills or indication of the costs of High Court cases until the bill has been taxed by the Taxing Master.

The average cost paid by the Commission for High Court cases of this nature during the period April – December 2012 was £9,138. The Commission cannot indicate if the costs in this case are likely to be greater or lesser than this figure.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Annual Reports and Accounts

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18448/11-15, to detail (i) the average number of training days each prison staff member received in 2011/12 and; (ii) how this compares with 2010/11 when the Key Performance Target was five days but the average training was 3.4 days. **(AQW 19799/11-15)**

Mr Ford:

- (i) In 2011/12 an average of 2.6 training days was delivered per staff member.
- (ii) The average training days for 2011/12 were limited as a direct result of staff not being available for training due to operational needs.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the total number of officers and healthcare staff dismissed from the Northern Ireland Prison Service since 2005, broken down by grade and gender; (ii) the number of staff that, on appeal to the Northern Ireland Prison Service, were notified that the Code of Conduct and Discipline and/or other statutory procedures during the investigation and adjudication were not adhered to; (iii) the number of successful appeals; and (iv) the number of staff that appealed to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Appeals Board and in respect of each, whether the panel found that the decision to dismiss was unfair or that proper procedures were not complied with. **(AQW 19807/11-15)**

Mr Ford: Since 01 January 2005, 30 officers including healthcare staff were dismissed from the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) for either disciplinary or inefficiency reasons. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of numbers by grade in view of the necessity to protect the identity of those concerned. However, the breakdown by gender is 21 male and nine female.

Of those who appealed the dismissal to NIPS none were notified that the Code of Conduct and Discipline and/or other statutory procedures during the investigation and adjudication were not adhered to; but this may have been raised as mitigation and discussed at appeal. There were no successful appeals.

Since 1 January 2005, 14 officers dismissed from NIPS appealed to the Civil Service Appeal Board (CSAB). To date, in six of the appeals the CSAB found that either the decision to dismiss was unfair or proper procedures were not followed.

The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust assumed responsibility for the delivery of prison healthcare services in April 2008, though staff remained employed by NIPS. In April 2012, the Trust assumed employment responsibility for prison healthcare staff. Since 1 April 2012, the South Eastern Trust has not implemented any disciplinary procedures in relation to any member of prison healthcare staff.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18388/11-15, to detail any exemption used applied by the Northern Ireland Prison Service within the scope of the Data Protection Act in respect of each of the five parts of the question. **(AQW 19809/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service withheld the information in respect of each of the five parts of the question in order to protect the identity of those concerned.

Northern Ireland Prison Service Code of Conduct

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 18877/11-15, to detail (i) the complexities; (ii) the reasons for the delay, given that the Code of Conduct and Discipline was raised in the Pearson Review Team Report in June 2009, in the Ackah and Deane Report in December 2009, in the NI Civil Service Appeals Board Annual Report of 2009/2010 and by various external agencies since those dates; (iii) whether the new Code of Conduct and Discipline is in development or draft format; and (iv) when the new system will be fully operational.

(AQW 19811/11-15)

Mr Ford: A draft format of the new Code of Conduct is currently being considered by the Northern Ireland Prison Service along with key business partners. With regard to the other points raised, I refer the Member to the responses given to AQW 17821/11-15 and AQW 18877/11-15.

Union Flag

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice to list all the courthouses that did not fly the Union flag on a designated day during the last twelve months and to detail the action taken by the Department in each case.

(AQW 19813/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Union flag was not flown at Ballymena, Enniskillen, Londonderry and Dungannon Courthouses on 6 February 2013 due to an oversight by G4S Secure Solutions (UK) Limited (G4S), the security and ancillary services provider to the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS). This is being addressed through contract management mechanisms.

There has been one other instance when the Union flag was not flown on a designated day in the last 12 months. This occurred at Newtownards Courthouse on Sunday 11 November 2012, when G4S could not get access to the flagpole as contractors had inadvertently sealed the access window during repairs. G4S reported this to the NICTS site Premises Officer and the contractors were recalled to reinstate access.

Inquests

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, following the announcement that up to 21 inquests are now likely to proceed, to outline the expected duration of these inquests and the estimated total cost.

(AQW 19817/11-15)

Mr Ford: The duration and cost to prepare for and hear an inquest can vary significantly depending on a range of factors including the volume of evidence and complexity of the issues to be considered.

It is not therefore possible to provide accurate estimates of either the duration or costs of these inquests.

Bangor Courthouse

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to outline the projected annual maintenance costs of Bangor Courthouse when it has closed.

(AQW 19818/11-15)

Mr Ford: The projected maintenance costs for Bangor Courthouse, after closure, are estimated at between £2,500 and £3,000 per annum.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what measures his Department uses to tackle anti-social behaviour.

(AQW 19826/11-15)

Mr Ford: The measures which my Department uses to tackle anti-social behaviour are based on partnership working at a strategic and local level to deliver a range of interventions based on a model of prevention, intervention and enforcement.

The Community Safety Strategy 'Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities' recognised that several statutory agencies have a role to play in addressing anti-social behaviour and in order to effectively tackle anti-social behaviour all of these agencies would have to work in unison.

To enhance partnership working at a strategic level my Department has established an interagency anti-social behaviour Delivery Group, to take forward the delivery of the strategic objectives of the Community Safety Strategy. The Delivery Group has developed an Action Plan which incorporates measures designed to agree roles and responsibilities of agencies in responding to incidents of anti-social behaviour, ensuring appropriate powers are in place to tackle anti-social behaviour and to take forward recommendations from the recent Criminal Justice Inspection report on the criminal justice system's approach to addressing anti-social behaviour.

At a local level, tackling anti-social behaviour is a strategic priority for the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships and their local action plans include measures and initiatives to deal with locally identified problems of anti-social behaviour. These measures will vary depending on local concerns but include neighbourhood watch, use of CCTV, community safety wardens, educational programmes, engagement and diversionary programmes and intergenerational programmes.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to provide a breakdown by prison facility of (i) number of prison staff who were declared unfit for duty in 2011 because of illness or injury; (ii) number of days for which they were absent; and (iii) the cost of their absence to the Northern Ireland Prison Service. **(AQW 19854/11-15)**

Mr Ford: The table below shows the number of prison staff declared unfit for duty broken down by prison establishment, and covers the period 1 January 2011 - 31 December 2011:

Establishment	Number of Staff Absent	Working Days Absent
Hydebank Wood	181	5180
Maghaberry	486	15244
Magilligan	173	4608
PECCS	108	3868
Total	948	28900

The cost during that period to the Northern Ireland Prison Service in terms of Occupational Sick Pay was £3,460,079.18.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether newly qualified prison staff shadow experienced prison officers when they are first in contact with prisoners or enter landings; and how long any such shadowing is carried out before new officers are allowed to operate without supervision. **(AQW 19856/11-15)**

Mr Ford: Within each prison establishment newly qualified prison staff shadow experienced prison staff when they initially come into contact with prisoners or enter landings. The length of time shadowing experienced staff continues is dependent on operational constraints.

Northern Ireland Prison Service

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 5315/11-15, whether he consider any revision to his answer in light of the assertion that two Northern Ireland Prison Service staff were instructed to take the money to the home of a relative of the prisoner in question in full knowledge that it was to settle a drug debt and commit a crime of aiding and abetting the commission of an offence.
(AQW 19857/11-15)

Mr Ford: The response to AQW/5315/11-15 was based on a full and thorough investigation of all of the circumstances and information available at that time.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service does not have any new or additional information that would require any further consideration to be given to the outcome of the investigation and the preventative actions already taken.

Full-Body Imaging Scanners in Prisons

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what is the cost to date of the prison scanner search pilots in (i) HMP Hydebank; and (ii) HMP Magilligan, including equipment and staff training.
(AQW 19864/11-15)

Mr Ford: The costs to date of the pilots of millimetre wave technology are as follows:

Magilligan Prison	Hydebank Wood
£14232	£22019

The costs included in these prices are for installation of the equipment, leases, enabling works and staff training.

The equipment leased for Magilligan was an ex-demonstration machine hence the differential in costs.

Body Scan Pilot Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice, if the outcome of the current body scan pilot scheme for prisons proves to be inconclusive, whether he intends to commission a further pilot scheme with other machines.
(AQW 19876/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am committed to seeking a viable, less intrusive alternative to our existing practice of full searching.

Although the recently completed pilot and evaluation of Millimetre Wave technology showed that there were limitations to it as an alternative to full body searching, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) will, if possible, continue to work with suppliers to see if such technology can be improved for application in the prison environment.

I also intend to take forward a Justification Application under the Justification of Practices Involving Ionising Radiation Regulations 2004 in relation to the initial piloting and possible use of Transmission X-ray scanners.

This application is well advanced and it is expected that it will be ready for submission to the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) within a few weeks.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been issued, broken down by (i) gender; (ii) age group; and (iii) constituency in the last 12 months.
(AQW 19937/11-15)

Mr Ford: The most up-to-date statistics from the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service show there were 12 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) issued during 2012.

The 12 ASBOs are broken down as follows:

- (i) Gender - 12 male, 0 female,
- (ii) Age group - Six ASBOs were issued to males aged under 18, five ASBOs were issued to males aged over 18 and the age of one ASBO recipient was unknown, and
- (iii) Assembly Constituency - Three ASBO recipients lived in North Belfast, three lived in South Antrim, two lived in North Antrim, two lived in South Down, one lived in East Belfast and the Assembly Constituency of one ASBO recipient was unknown.

Historical Enquiries Team

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Justice why he is unable to answer questions relating to the Historical Enquiries Team.

(AQW 19972/11-15)

Mr Ford: As Minister of Justice I am responsible for providing the legal and resourcing framework for the Historical Enquiries Team's (HET) reviews into past cases and am happy to answer any questions on these matters. However the scope and remit of the HET is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct any operational questions you may have about the HET to the PSNI.

Injury on Duty Award Reviews

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether he has considered suspending Injury on Duty Award Reviews for retired officers reaching the age of 65.

(AQW 19987/11-15)

Mr Ford: Under Regulation 35 (1) of the PSNI and PSNI Reserve (Injury Benefit) Regulations the Policing Board is legally obliged to periodically review the degree of disablement of an Injury on Duty award. It is a matter for the Policing Board to decide if a suspension of reviews is appropriate.

Injury on Duty Award Reviews

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many Injury on Duty Award Reviews for those aged 65 have been carried out, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19988/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Policing Board provided the following details of reviews carried out at age 65 by the Selected Medical Practitioner:

2008	11
2009	31
2010	1
2011	0
2012	36
2013 (as at 20/02/13)	1
Total	80

Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department has sought legal advice on the legality of reviewing Injury on Duty Awards when the recipient reaches the age of 65.

(AQW 19989/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department has not sought legal advice on reviews of Injury on Duty awards when the recipient reaches the age of 65. The arrangement of reviews is the responsibility of the Policing Board as per Regulation 35 (1) of the Injury Benefit Regulations 2006.

Results of Injury on Duty Awards

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the arrangements in place to convey, in confidence, the Results of Injury on Duty Awards to recipients, given the security threat posed to former police officers.

(AQW 19990/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department and the Policing Board take all measures possible to ensure the security of former officers is not compromised. It would not be appropriate to detail the arrangements in place as to do so would, in itself, compromise such arrangements.

Community Restorative Justice Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many Community Restorative Justice Schemes are in operation.

(AQW 19997/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are 15 community-based Restorative Justice Schemes accredited under the Government Protocol which are currently operational.

Human Trafficking

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Justice to detail the aspects of the Criminal Justice Bill that will tackle Human Trafficking.

(AQW 20051/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Criminal Justice Bill introduces new offences of human trafficking which will bring Northern Ireland law into line with the criminal aspects of the EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings. The new offences respond to the international dimension of human trafficking and ensure that those operating across international borders are not immune from prosecution.

Clause 5 will create an offence to enable the prosecution of a British citizen, habitual resident of Northern Ireland or body incorporated under the law of a part of the United Kingdom who has trafficked someone anywhere outside the United Kingdom for sexual exploitation. Clause 6 will create a similar offence where a person has been trafficked outside the United Kingdom for labour or other exploitation. Clause 6 also removes the requirement for the victim to have been previously trafficked into the United Kingdom so that an offence will have been committed where a person who has not previously been trafficked into the United Kingdom is trafficked within the United Kingdom for the purposes of labour or other exploitation. This is already an offence in relation to trafficking for sexual exploitation.

In addition, Clause 6A of the Bill will remove the existing provision for summary conviction of human trafficking offences, to make human trafficking offences triable on indictment in the Crown Court, where the maximum term available is generally 14 years. As a consequence, sentences for human trafficking offences will be included in the schedule of offences referable to the Court of Appeal by the Director of Public Prosecutions on the grounds that he considers them to be unduly lenient.

Flying of the Union Flag

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Justice to outline the number and location of court estate properties that are subject to the designated days principle for the flying of the Union flag.

(AQW 20105/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are currently 21 courthouses subject to the flying of the Union flag on designated days. These are listed on the table below:

Building	Location
Antrim Courthouse	Castle Way, Antrim
Armagh Courthouse	The Mall, Armagh
Ballymena Courthouse	Albert Place, Ballymena
Bangor Courthouse	Quay Street, Bangor
Coleraine Courthouse	Mountsandel Road, Coleraine
Craigavon Courthouse	Central Way, Craigavon
Downpatrick Courthouse	English Street, Downpatrick
Dungannon Courthouse	Killyman Road, Dungannon
Enniskillen Courthouse	East Bridge Street, Enniskillen
Laganside Courts	Oxford Street, Belfast
Larne Courthouse	Victoria Road, Larne
Limavady Courthouse	Main Street, Limavady
Lisburn Courthouse	Railway Street, Lisburn
Londonderry Courthouse	Bishop Street, Londonderry
Magherafelt Courthouse	Hospital Road, Magherafelt
Newry Courthouse	New Street, Newry
Newtownards Courthouse	Regent Street, Newtownards
Old Townhall Building	Victoria Street, Belfast
Omagh Courthouse	High Street, Omagh
Royal Courts of Justice	Chichester Street, Belfast
Strabane Courthouse	Derry Road, Strabane

Anti-Social Behaviour

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Justice what action is being taken to tackle anti-social behaviour in (i) Bangor; and (ii) Hollywood town centres.

(AQW 20176/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department supports a range of initiatives designed to tackle anti-social behaviour across North Down at both a strategic and local level.

North Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) has identified tackling anti-social behaviour as one of its key strategic priorities. The PCSP Action Plan for 2012-2013 includes several local initiatives aimed at addressing anti-social behaviour 'hotspots' within the North Down Borough.

These initiatives include the Priority Youth Engagement and the Streetsafe Mobile Youth Engagement projects, both working with 'hard to reach' young people to provide advice and support, as well as educational and personal development opportunities. These programmes are delivered within areas of identified need throughout North Down, including Bangor town centre and the Hollywood districts of Redburn and Loughview.

At weekends, Bangor town centre also has in place a Street Pastor Service, the Community Safety Warden scheme and a project called Bangor Against Night-time Disorder (BAND), all of which are aimed primarily at reducing and preventing violent and alcohol-related crime, as well as anti-social behaviour.

Through local consultation, North Down PCSP is currently developing its action plan for April 2013 to March 2015. This will aim to address locally identified policing and community safety issues, including anti-social behaviour.

Union Flag

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) whether a member of staff in a courthouse has been suspended for failing to take down a Union flag; (ii) on what date the alleged incident occurred; (iii) when and how the matter was reported; (iv) when the member of staff was suspended and on what grounds; (v) which court house was involved; (vi) on what date he was made aware of the incident; and (vii) whether an allegation such as this constitutes a criminal offence.

(AQW 20184/11-15)

Mr Ford: No member of Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service (NICTS) staff has been suspended for failing to take down a Union flag.

The raising and lowering of the Union flag on NICTS buildings on designated days is carried out under contract by G4S Secure Solution Ltd (G4S). Any disciplinary action regarding the performance of duties by G4S employees is a matter for G4S.

Flying the Union flag on a day not designated under The Flags Regulations (NI) 2000 is not a criminal offence.

Department for Regional Development

Translink Pupil Pass

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how many pupils applied for a Translink Pupil Pass; and (ii) how many Pupil Passes were issued, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19608/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): The table below sets out the information provided by Translink.

	Applications	Passes issued
2011/12	2,614	1,601
2010/11	3,087	1,949
2009/10	3,882	2,393

Translink Pupil Passes

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) for a breakdown of the numbers of Translink Pupil Passes issued for (a) Metro only services; (b) Ulsterbus only services; (c) NI Railways only services; and (d) a combination of services; (ii) to detail the annual cost for Pupil Passes issued;

and (iii) to itemise the separable costs of passes issued for (a) Metro only services; (b) Ulsterbus only services; (c) NI Railways only services; and (d) a combination of services, for each of the last three years.
(AQW 19609/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below sets out the information provided by Translink.

	Metro Only		Ulsterbus Only	
	Passes	Costs*	Passes	Cost*
2011/12	261	£57,335.53	1055	£284,375.98
2010/11	305	£87,064.74	1339	£369,653.36
2009/10	348	£81,071.59	1707	£458,769.78

	NIR Only		Combination	
	Passes	Cost*	Passes	Cost*
2011/12	271	£79,127.35	14	£5,398.27
2010/11	292	£68,195.32	13	£4,415.19
2009/10	319	£94,183.41	19	£5,913.87

* Costs = Costs to customer and revenue to Translink

Narrow Water Bridge Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 19002/11-15, what are the implications on the proposal for the Narrow Water bridge project; and whether there is a requirement for legislation to enable this proposal.

(AQW 19657/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As a general principle, obstruction or extinguishment of public rights of navigation requires legislation. The extent to which any public rights of navigation in Northern Ireland may be obstructed, by the proposed bridge, is being taken account of as part of a detailed consideration of the proposed design.

Where a person other than DRD proposes to construct a bridge over navigable waters in circumstances to which Article 4 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993 applies, DRD must seek to make an Order under that Order and in accordance with Schedule 8 to the Roads (NI) Order 1993.

20 MPH Speed Limit

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration he has given to reducing the speed limit in built up areas to 20 miles per hour.

(AQW 19661/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Roads Service's existing speed management policy is highly supportive of the roll-out of 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits in residential areas and in urban locations, where high numbers of vulnerable road users are present. The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020 contains Action Measures which are reflective of Roads Service policy.

When assessing the potential for a road to have a 20 mph speed limit introduced, many factors have to be taken into account, such as mean speed, collision history, streetscape, community support, function and demographics. Each road will likely be different in terms of its suitability to have a reduced limit applied and the normal solution has been to install engineering measures, such as road humps and central islands, so the reduced speed limit is, in effect, self enforcing.

The Road Safety Strategy also contains a commitment to pilot schemes for 20 mph limits without additional self-enforcing engineering measures. All these commitments are subject to the availability of funding in these financially-constrained times. Agreement has now been reached with the PSNI on enforcement issues for 4 pilot schemes and Roads Service is currently identifying suitable sites. Roads Service will, in due course, be monitoring the effectiveness of these schemes, along with similar pilots being undertaken in tandem by road authorities in Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland, to inform the way forward on this issue.

Rural Roads Maintenance and Capital Works

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on rural roads maintenance and capital works in the Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt Council areas, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 19673/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service accounts do not separately distinguish between urban or rural roads, however, details of the maintenance and capital expenditure for the entire road network in Dungannon, Cookstown and Magherafelt council areas in the 2009/10 – 2011/12 financial years are provided in the table below:

		2009/10 (£k)	2010/11 (£k)	2011/12 (£k)
Magherafelt	Capital	3,190	2,843	3,216
	Operation & Maintenance	1,925	2,797	2,207
Cookstown	Capital	2,365	2,520	3,778
	Operation & Maintenance	1,866	1,902	2,109
Dungannon	Capital	6,750	5,509	7,573
	Operation & Maintenance	3,149	4,446	3,290

It should be noted that, while base levels of expenditure will generally reflect the size of the relevant network, substantial variations across boundaries and years can arise, primarily due to expenditure on major capital works schemes, such as the A4 and Carland Bridge and/or the relative success of bids during the various Monitoring Rounds.

Half Price Bus Passes for People with a Disability

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the criteria used on applications to half price bus passes for people with a disability.

(AQW 19674/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: There are currently 4 different categories under which a person may apply for a Half Fare SmartPass. The categories and their respective criteria are:

Disability Living Allowance: The applicant must be in receipt of either the higher or lower Mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

Partially Sighted: The applicant must be registered with a Health & Social Care Trust as partially sighted.

Learning Disability: The applicant must be known to a Health & Social Care Trust as having a learning disability.

Licence Refused: The applicant must have had a driving licence refused or revoked on medical grounds.

Annual Revenue from Water Charges

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the annual revenue from water charges for businesses.

(AQW 19688/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the revenue for all non-domestic properties liable for measured and unmeasured water and sewerage charges was around £70 million in 2012. This revenue will change each year as tariffs are updated.

Non-Payment of Water Charges

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what was the level of non-payment of water charges by businesses in each of the last two years.

(AQW 19695/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that out of a total annual revenue of around £70 million for all non-domestic properties liable for measured and unmeasured water and sewerage charges the level of non-payment was around £1.7 million in 2011 and £1.8 million in 2012.

Londonderry to Coleraine Railway Line

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development, following the planned reopening of the Londonderry to Coleraine railway line on 24 March 2013, what marketing will be used to promote the service.

(AQW 19737/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that it plans a significant integrated marketing campaign for the end of March/beginning of April to coincide with the re-opening of the line on 24 March.

An advertising campaign will include radio, press, outdoor, digital and social media. It will be targeted to locations on the Londonderry Line, including Derry~Londonderry, Coleraine, Ballymena, Antrim and Limavady.

Greater Belfast media release and public relations activity will also target daily, regional and broadcast press. A household mailing of the timetable and a voucher to incentivise travel will be undertaken.

An official opening event will take place, along with a series of local community events and joint marketing with local stakeholders (including Councils, Tourism partners and City of Culture) will be delivered.

On-Street Parking Facilities, Belfast

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the monies generated from motorists using on-street parking facilities in Belfast, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 19739/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of income generated from the use of on-street parking facilities in Belfast, in each of the last five financial years, are provided in the table below:

Financial Year	Income Generated
2011/12	£2,710,492
2010/11	£2,485,701
2009/10	£2,435,486
2008/09	£2,437,581
2007/08	£2,398,818

er will be aware that the costs associated with the provision of parking services and parking enforcement, including contractual payments to NSL Services Group, exceed income received from the use of on and off-street parking and parking enforcement and the deficit is funded by my Department.

Street Lighting

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the criteria that determine whether a road is eligible for street lighting.

(AQW 19742/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service uses a wide range of criteria to determine whether a road is eligible for street lighting, depending on the type of road and situation being considered. The key issues are generally whether lighting will enhance safety for road users, and improve the effectiveness of the road network.

At a more detailed level, the following criteria are the most commonly used:

- for major traffic routes, street lighting is provided where it is justified on the basis of economic appraisal, and at roundabouts and certain types of junctions;
- in urban areas, street lighting is generally provided for most built-up roads within the speed limit, although paths which only give rear access to properties, or are alternative routes to already lighted roads or footpaths, will generally not be lit; and
- in rural areas, street lighting may be provided where it would contribute to a reduction in the number of night-time collisions, or where there is a community of at least 10 dwellings located within a 200m road length. In applying this criterion, each public building, which has a significant level of evening use by the community, will count as two dwellings.

Further detail in relation to the relevant criteria for any specific situation may be obtained by contacting the street lighting engineer at the local Roads Service Divisional Headquarters.

Translink Buses: Fuel

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much Translink has spent on fuel for buses, for each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 19749/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The following table details the relevant information which has been provided to me by Translink. It should be noted that the fuel costs quoted are the gross cost, not reduced by fuel duty rebate. It should also be noted Translink fuel costs are impacted by fuel hedging arrangements.

	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
Ulsterbus	£20,758,769	£20,018,734	£23,067,273
Metro	£6,966,597	£6,903,049	£7,725,032

Traffic Wardens

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many traffic wardens are employed.

(AQW 19750/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is assumed the Member's question refers to within Northern Ireland. Traffic Attendants are employed by a private company, NSL Services Group, which is contracted by my Department's Roads Service to provide parking enforcement and car park management services.

NSL has confirmed that, as of 13 February 2013, a total of 177 Traffic Attendants and Senior Traffic Attendants are employed by the company.

Parking Tickets

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many parking tickets have been issued for cars overstaying their time at sites operated by his Department.

(AQW 19751/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: 7,678 Penalty Charge Notices (parking tickets) were issued, during the period 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012, to vehicles in Roads Service's Pay and Display car parks that had stayed beyond the permitted time period, as displayed on the parking ticket.

In the same period, 4,924 parking tickets were issued to vehicles, after the expiry of time paid for at on-street Pay and Display locations and 104 parking tickets were issued to vehicles which were parked for longer than permitted at on-street 'limited waiting' locations.

It should be noted that in all cases, a ten minute grace period is allowed beyond the period permitted for parking, whether it be paid or limited free waiting.

Door-to-Door Transport Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development in light of his statement on door-to-door transport on 12 February 2013, whether there will be any reduction in the services.

(AQW 19753/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I refer to my statement to the House. In bringing forward the changes, my Department does so with the intention that the maximum level of service cannot only be maintained but improved. There will be no cut to the budget for the delivery of services under this interim arrangement and it would be my hope that Disability Action and the operators will have success in not only maintaining services but improving them.

A4 Dual Carriageway: Compensation to Householders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development how many householders who live alongside the A4 dual carriageway have been compensated as a result of damage to their property following its construction.

(AQW 19759/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: To date, my Department has received 185 claims for compensation for loss of property (Part 1 Claim under the Lands Compensation (Northern Ireland) Order), following vesting of lands in respect of the A4 dual carriageway, and the A4 Annaghilla and A5 Tullyvar road realignments. Of these, 157 have been agreed under all heads of claim, including injurious affection to retained lands. Injurious affection includes, for example, severance and physical factors, such as noise, vibration etc.

My Department is also in receipt of 15 further claims for injurious affection to properties where land has not been vested from the owner (Part 2 Claims under the Lands Compensation Order). None of these have currently been agreed for payment.

Derry to Coleraine Railway Line

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place to promote and market the re-opening of the Derry to Coleraine railway line.

(AQW 19763/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised it plans a significant integrated marketing campaign for the end of March/beginning of April to coincide with the re-opening of the line on 24 March.

An advertising campaign will include radio, press, outdoor, digital and social media. It will be targeted to locations on the Londonderry Line, including Limavady, Antrim, Ballymena, Coleraine and Londonderry.

Greater Belfast media release and public relations activity will also target daily, regional and broadcast press. A household mailing of the timetable and a voucher to incentivise travel will be undertaken.

An official opening event will take place, along with a series of local community events and joint marketing with local stakeholders (including Councils, Tourism partners and City of Culture) will be delivered.

A6 Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed A6 scheme. **(AQW 19767/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware that the Northern Ireland Executive Budget 2011-15 allocated funds to continue development work of a dual carriageway from Londonderry to Dungiven, including a dual carriageway bypass of Dungiven, as one overall project.

I am highly supportive of this particular scheme and a number of other significant projects, including the A26 Glarryford Dualling, York Street Interchange and A6 Randalstown to Castledawson.

I can confirm that development work for the complete Londonderry to Dungiven project is well advanced. Following the publication of Draft Orders for the overall scheme, in December 2011, I approved the holding of a Public Inquiry to give objectors, supporters, my Department's Roads Service and others a fair opportunity to be heard and put forward their case either for, or against, the scheme. The Public Inquiry sat for six days between 24 September and 2 October 2012. The Inspector expects to complete his report before the end of March 2013. Having given careful consideration to his findings and recommendations, I will, in due course, issue a response in the form of a Departmental Statement.

The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-2021 includes construction of a number of high priority schemes on the M2, A6 and A26, as part of a £390 million package funded through alternative finance in the period 2015/16 to 2020/21. However, a commitment to fund the revenue consequences of this roads package will be required, therefore, the timing will depend upon future resource budget settlements. In the event of alternative finance not being available, the scheme could be included, together with other priority schemes, in the bidding process for conventional funds, in the next Budget period.

Traffic Bridge over the River Foyle, Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the plans for a new traffic bridge over the River Foyle, Derry. **(AQW 19768/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that following a review of the strategic road network around Londonderry, a report, published in 2010, concluded there would be a benefit in providing a new road bridge across the Foyle in the vicinity of Newbuildings. This was only in the context of a larger project linking the A6 to the A5 and on to other possible National Roads Authority schemes in County Donegal.

This link is still at the conceptual stage and is not part of the current strategic roads programme, but may be considered, along with other competing priorities, for inclusion in future roads programmes.

Belfast Harbour Commissioners

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 19202/11-15, why the anticipated £40m transfer from the Harbour Commissioners to the Executive budget will not be available and why it was not known when the announcement was made that it would be secured as part of the Executive's fundraising efforts. **(AQW 19812/11-15)**

Mr Kennedy: My previous answer explained that the detail on delivering the Belfast Harbour Commissioners' contribution was delegated to the Budget Review Group.

The Budget Review Group agreed that the Department should focus on working collaboratively with the Belfast Harbour Commissioners on release of value projects. As I previously explained, it was agreed that

the Commissioners would take forward, from within their resources, proposals for investment in Foreign Direct Investment accommodation in 2013/14 and consider other suitable projects in future years.

Average Speeds of Traffic at Peak Times

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 19051/11-15, to detail the average peak speed of traffic on arterial roads in Greater Belfast between 2001 and 2011.

(AQW 19823/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware that Roads Service carries out a Journey Time Survey for the Belfast Metropolitan Area on a biennial basis, to measure the journey times on 11 predetermined routes in the Belfast Metropolitan Area during the morning peak traffic period.

Details of the results of the surveys carried out in 2001, 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2011, indicating the average speeds during the morning peak period (07.30 – 09.15) are provided in the table below:

Routes	Total Average Speed (mph)				
	2011	2009	2007	2005	2001
M2 / A2 Westbound	36.27	35.58	40.30	34.23	34.03
M2 / A2 Eastbound	37.15	32.66	27.89	38.66	44.71
Newtownards Road Inbound	10.66	15.58	8.86	8.58	15.83
Newtownards Road Outbound	17.73	23.24	21.47	18.16	28.77
Orbital (A55) Eastbound	21.33	25.20	22.71	24.75	21.79
Orbital (A55) Westbound	19.19	25.20	21.08	25.46	20.69
Castlereagh Road Inbound	10.71	14.12	17.17	17.48	13.43
Castlereagh Road Outbound	17.16	18.91	19.11	20.15	21.52

Routes	Total Average Speed (mph)				
	2011	2009	2007	2005	2001
Ormeau Road Inbound	6.37	11.96	10.19	10.29	7.13
Ormeau Road Outbound	21.8	24.16	19.68	21.47	22.50
Lisburn Road Inbound	13.85	17.44	15.32	16.20	13.38
Lisburn Road Outbound	18.12	22.39	23.45	23.43	22.84
M1 / Westlink Inbound	24.57	33.72	16.77	17.55	23.88
M1 / Westlink Outbound	49.64	44.47	29.70	30.90	39.79
Falls Road Inbound	10.73	15.01	8.61	9.09	11.15
Falls Road Outbound	18.5	17.33	16.50	16.39	17.39
Crumlin Road Inbound	16.71	12.45	11.59	12.23	15.34
Crumlin Road Outbound	16.46	19.87	15.94	17.00	22.82
Antrim Road Inbound	18.13	20.70	11.36	11.87	18.27
Antrim Road Outbound	22.32	21.25	24.26	25.77	21.81
Shore Road Inbound	19.03	18.14	18.18	19.94	18.54

Routes	Total Average Speed (mph)				
	2011	2009	2007	2005	2001
Shore Road Outbound	21.46	23.66	23.34	24.79	25.89

Note: The survey was not carried out in 2003.

Pot Holes: Cannyreagh Road, Donaghadee

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what action is being taken to repair potholes on the Cannyreagh Road, Donaghadee.

(AQW 19824/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Cannyreagh Road, Donaghadee is inspected on a two monthly cyclical basis and any defects, considered to be hazardous to the public, are identified and programmed for repair in accordance with established Roads Service maintenance guidelines.

The most recent routine inspection of Cannyreagh Road, undertaken on 29 January 2013, identified four recordable defects, in the form of potholes. Defect repairs are carried out within pre-determined target timescales ranging from one day to four weeks, depending on a combination of the severity of the defect and the type of road, as set out in the above-mentioned guidelines. With regard to the four defects noted on the last inspection of Cannyreagh Road, two have been repaired and the remaining two have a target repair date of 26 February 2013.

Other potholes, which may develop between routine inspections and are noted by Roads Service officials or reported by members of the public, are also dealt with in accordance with the maintenance guidelines.

Blue Badge Holders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) whether the procedure for renewal of a Blue Badge has changed, particularly in relation to the issue of medical evidence; (ii) to outline any changes that have been made; (iii) when these changes were introduced; (iv) what consultation was taken prior to any changes; and (v) whether all Badge Holders were notified of the changes which would apply at the time of renewal.

(AQW 19859/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has not made any recent changes to the procedure for renewing a Blue Badge, particularly in relation to the issue of medical evidence.

However, Roads Service is currently developing proposals for changes to the Blue Badge Scheme in Northern Ireland, to take account of the UK wide reform of Disability Living Allowance and how it will use the new assessment for Personal Independence Payment to determine eligibility for a Blue Badge. A number of other administrative changes and improvements to the Blue Badge Scheme are also being considered. Any proposed changes to the Blue Badge Scheme in Northern Ireland will be subjected to full public consultation.

Charge Point Management System

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development how many times each E-car charge point has been used since the activation of the Charge Point Management System in July 2012.

(AQW 19866/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Data on charging point usage is compiled quarterly. The latest data is for the period up to 31 December 2012.

The number of charging events for each charge post from the activation of the Charge Point Management System in July 2012 to 31 December 2012 is contained in the attached table.

Charge Point Location	Charge Point ID	ID number	Number of Charging Events to 31 December 2012
Belfast	Little Victoria Street Car Park	SC22	1
Belfast	Little Donegall Street	SC23	2
Belfast	Cromac Street Car Park	SC33	1
Belfast	Hope Street North	SC03	3
Belfast	Adelaide Street on street	SC19	40
Belfast	Dublin Road on street	SC08	2
Belfast	Lower Crescent on street	SC21	2
Belfast	Central Station car park	SC09	5
Belfast	Cairns Hill Park and Ride	SC35	4
Armagh	Linenhall Street car park	SC02	1
Armagh	Lonsdale Street car park	SC15	
Armagh	Cathedral Road Recreational Centre	SC40	
Armagh	Palace Demense	SC04	3
Newry	Bagenal's Castle	SC05	1
Newry	Bridge Street car park	SC28	1
Newry	Basin Walk car park	SC10	1
Newry	Monaghan Street car park	SC32	1
Newry	Hill Street on street	SC30	
Newry	Canal Court Merchants Quay	SC37	2
Newry	Newry Train station	SC41	3
Londonderry	Victoria Market car park	SC27	8
Londonderry	Bishop Street car park	SC39	
Londonderry	Railway Yard	SC06	
Londonderry	Strand Road	SC07	
Londonderry	Carlisle Road on street	SC25	1
Londonderry	The Diamond on street	SC34	5
Londonderry	Templemore Leisure Centre	SC26	1
Fermanagh	Down/Market/Cross Street	SC18	2
Fermanagh	Eden Street	SC13	9
Fermanagh	Quay Lane North	SC11	1
Fermanagh	Wellington Street	SC16	8
Fermanagh	Queen St, Carpark, Enniskillen	SC17	1
Fermanagh	Cross Street, Carpark, Lisnaskea	SC31	2

Charge Point Location	Charge Point ID	ID number	Number of Charging Events to 31 December 2012
Fermanagh	Main Street, Irvinestown – DRD	SC29	
Fermanagh	Main Street, Belleek – DRD	SC12	1
Larne	Narrow Gauge Road	SC14	1
Larne	Agnew Street	SC20	2
Larne	Riverdale	SC01	
Larne	Carnlough Havelock Place	SC36	1
Cookstown	Southwest College	SC38	2
Dungannon	Rapid Charge Point	RC01	12
Maghera	Rapid Charge Point	RC03	18
Newry	Rapid Charge Point	RC02	43
Portrush (from August 2012)	Rapid Charge Point	RC04	47

Local Car Parks

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on any plans to transfer control of local car parks to local councils.

(AQW 19871/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: In September 2012, I announced a moratorium on the increase in car parking fees which the Executive had sanctioned and funded. As part of this initiative, I undertook that my Departmental officials would consider, with councils who expressed an interest, alternative arrangements for the management of car parks, other than Park and Ride sites.

As explained in my response to the Member's Assembly Question, AQW 19096 11-15, the Minister for the Environment is currently consulting with Executive Colleagues on the list of functions to transfer under the current programme of Local Government Reform. As part of these consultations, I indicated that off-street car parks (other than Park and Ride) could transfer to councils under Local Government Reform proposals. However, this would be subject to there being no detriment to my Department's financial position. Transfer of this function is also subject to careful consideration of a number of other issues. These include, having adequate enforcement, IT and management systems in place in councils, consistency of approach across the councils and the identification of a suitable mechanism for consultation between Roads Service and councils regarding traffic management.

Street Lighting in the Galliagh Area of Derry

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact that the removal by Roads Service of street lighting in the Galliagh area of Derry will have on residents' safety.

(AQW 19900/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is renewing the street lighting system in the Galliagh area of Londonderry to upgrade it to modern standards in terms of performance, safety and reliability. The new street lighting will comply with current Roads Service policy and standards. Under that policy, roads and footpaths, which only give rear access to properties or are alternative routes to already lighted roads or footpaths, will generally not be lit.

Given that all houses in the area will have improved street lighting on the roads and footpaths to their front accesses, it is considered that removal of the old street lighting from rear pathways should have no significant impact on the safety of residents.

Millisle Sewerage Treatment Works

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed sewerage treatment works in Millisle.

(AQW 19919/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that its £2.2 million capital project to upgrade the sewerage system in Millisle, to deliver improved bathing waters and reduce the risk of out-of-sewer flooding within the area, is included in its PC13 Business Plan covering the period April 2013 to March 2015.

Negotiations to obtain a site for a new pumping station at Millisle Presbyterian Church car park were inconclusive and NIW is now in the process of negotiating with Ards Borough Council for a suitable site on council land adjoining the Church car park. When agreement for a suitable site has been reached, NIW will seek planning permission for the pumping station and the consent of Northern Ireland Environment Agency for construction of a new sea outfall pipeline. Subject to obtaining statutory approvals and completion of lands acquisition, NIW will be seeking tenders in late 2013 with the view of construction commencing in Spring 2014 with completion approximately one year later.

Surface Water Flooding

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development how many (i) residential; and (ii) commercial properties are at risk due to surface water flooding.

(AQW 19929/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service does not hold the information you have requested.

Responsibility for drainage infrastructure is shared between Roads Service, Rivers Agency and Northern Ireland Water (NIW). Accordingly, officials from these agencies have produced Best Practice Guidelines and a Flooding Hotspots register, detailing procedures for liaison and co-ordination of emergency response. The combined flooding hotspots register, maintained by Rivers Agency, provides details of locations across Northern Ireland at greatest risk of flooding.

In addition, officials from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development have advised that a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment indicates that around 20,000, or 2.5% of the properties in Northern Ireland, are sited in an area that is shown to be at risk of surface water flooding to a depth greater than 300mm, from a 1 in 200yr [0.5% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP)] rainfall event. Approximately three quarters of these properties are listed as residential.

Road Noise Levels

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the permissible increase in road noise levels before his Department will consider mitigation measures.

(AQW 19934/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Increases in noise levels, arising from the construction of a new road, should be considered in terms of both the interior and exterior of residential buildings.

The statutory permissible noise level, arising from construction of a new (or altered) road as set out in the Noise Insulation Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (NIR), is 68 decibels (dB). This legislation is intended to ensure that increases in noise levels within the interior of residential buildings, arising from a newly constructed road, should not constitute a nuisance. This legislation sets an exterior noise level of 68 dB as the threshold to establishing whether interior noise levels should constitute a nuisance. The legislation requires that greater than 1dB of noise must be attributable to the new road. In instances where exterior noise levels, arising from a new road, exceed 68dB, my Department has a

duty to provide mitigation either by way of a sound barrier (if practicable) or, alternatively, through the provision of noise insulation to residential buildings.

There are no statutory limits on acceptable exterior noise levels to safeguard the enjoyment of gardens/barbeque areas etc by residents. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), which has been adopted by the four UK Highway Authorities, recommends that when road traffic noise, as a result of a new road, causes an increase in exterior noise levels of 3dB in the long term, a detailed noise assessment should be undertaken, to establish if mitigation measures should be considered. It should be noted that whilst 3dB is the limit to establish if a detailed assessment is required, a 3db increase in noise level cannot automatically be held as constituting a nuisance. The 3dB increase is not seen as a trigger whereby mitigation measures must be implemented, but is instead a threshold of potential significance from which other factors should also be considered, to determine if the impact would be considered significant. If the impact is deemed to be significant, the practicality of mitigation can be reviewed, to establish if the effect can be ameliorated.

Public Car Parks

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the current policy on the use of public car parks for events.

(AQW 19938/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The use of car parks is regulated by the Off-Street Parking Order (Northern Ireland) 2000. In addition to setting out conditions relating to the parking of vehicles, the Order only authorises the use of car parks for:

- the collection of recyclable materials;
- advertising; and
- displaying information to the public.

For each of these purposes, a licence, issued by my Department, is required.

However, my Department's Roads Service permits councils to use public car parks to facilitate council sponsored events, provided that:

- Roads Service is indemnified against all claims arising from the use of the car park;
- the use of the car park does not contravene the legislation governing the car park, in particular attention would be drawn to the requirement that trading is not permitted; and
- they accept responsibility for the management of the car park, including any temporary diversions required by the use of the car park.

Car parks are generally not made available to private organisations. However, when organisations such as the Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Scouts or Guides request permission for car parks to be used on Sunday afternoons as a starting point for church parades, Roads Service offers no objection, provided anyone with a right to park in the car park is not denied that right.

Complaints by Whistleblowers

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) all investigations arising from complaints by whistleblowers to Roads Service in relation to contracts in the last three years; and (ii) the outcomes of the investigations.

(AQW 19945/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The term "whistleblower" has no formal legal definition; however, it is generally taken to refer to those who are described as "workers" who can make "qualifying disclosures" under the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Order (Northern Ireland) 1998. Whilst there have been four investigations arising from complaints to Roads Service, in relation to contracts, in the last three years, I am able to confirm that only one was made by a "whistleblower" based on the above definition,

whereas it is unclear if the sources of the other three complaints were internal or external. Details of all four investigations and the outcomes are provided in the table below:

Nature of Complaint	Outcome of Investigation
Contractor, working for Roads Service, hiring plant from a company in which a RS employee has an interest.	No evidence of impropriety or wrongdoing found.
Shortcomings in Procurement of Maintenance Contract.	Complaint substantiated and disciplinary action taken against a member of staff.
Contractor, working for Roads Service, sub-contracting work to a company run by a family member of a RS employee.	No evidence of impropriety or wrongdoing found.
Roads Service employee hiring plant and labour from a company in which he has an interest.	Ongoing.

Roads Service has also received some complaints from 'aggrieved' contractors relating to the procurement of contracts, which have been the subject of investigations, however, details are not included in this answer as officials do not consider such individuals to be whistleblowers.

Roscor Bridge in Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the upgrading of Roscor Bridge in Fermanagh.

(AQW 19952/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service plans to lay a new skid resistant surface on the 'Bailey bridge' section at the northernmost span of Roscor Bridge. In addition, it plans to attach steel mesh panels to the existing steel parapets to enhance pedestrian safety at this location. Roads Service anticipates this work will commence in April/May 2013.

Longer term plans for Roscor Bridge include, replacement of the 'Bailey bridge' section with a reinforced concrete structure, and structural repairs to the existing reinforced concrete bridge. However, due to the high costs associated with this work, progression will be dependent upon special funding being made available, as the extent of these repairs is well beyond the scope of what can be achieved within current maintenance and bridge strengthening funding allocations.

Road Service Claims

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many claims have been made against Roads Service, in the last three financial years.

(AQW 20001/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of claims made against my Department's Roads Service, in each of the last three financial years, are detailed in the table below:

Year	Employer's Liability	Public Liability	Total
2009/2010	19	3,629	3,648
2010/2011	17	3,727	3,744
2011/2012	13	2,908	2,921

Final figures for the current financial year, 2012/2013, are not yet available.

Lane Improvements: A37 between Limavady and Coleraine

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the progress that has been made in implementing lane improvements for overtaking on the A37 between Limavady and Coleraine.

(AQW 20019/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Planning for the Gortcorbies Climbing Lane scheme on the A37 is well advanced and my Department's Roads Service has now developed an environmentally friendly and cost effective design that is suitable for the attractive Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This addresses the earlier concerns about disposal of surplus material, arising from construction of the scheme.

At present, there is no provision in the 2011-2015 budget for construction of this scheme. Spending beyond the current budget period on schemes of this nature will depend on future budget settlements and consideration of the competing priorities.

Resident Parking Schemes

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 19219/11-15, to list any areas where resident parking schemes have been refused because they do not meet his Department's criteria.

(AQW 20020/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The areas where Residents' Parking Schemes have been refused due to their not meeting criteria set down by my Department's Road Service are listed below:

- Riverside, Antrim;
- Victoria Street, Armagh;
- Cullybackey Road, Ballymena;
- James Street, Ballymena;
- Bushmills Road, Coleraine;
- Circular Road, Coleraine;
- Prospect Terrace, Dromore (Co. Down);
- Fairview Avenue, Enniskillen;
- Aberfoyle Crescent, Londonderry;
- Bond Street, Londonderry;
- Newry Street area, Markethill;
- Campsie Avenue, Omagh;
- Gallows Hill area, Omagh;
- Johnston Park, Omagh; and
- Alexander Terrace, Strabane.

NI Water Sewers and Pumping Stations

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Regional Development, following the latest spill of raw sewage at Millisle Beach Park, what steps will be taken to prioritise the installation of a new pumping station which NI Water had indicated would be in place by 2013.

(AQW 20271/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the out-of-sewer flooding was caused by heavy rainfall which overwhelmed the existing pumping station at the same time there was a collapse on the emergency overflow pipeline from the pumping station.

A £2.2 million capital project to upgrade the sewerage system in Millisle, in order to reduce the risk of out-of-sewer flooding within the area and to deliver improved bathing waters, is included in NIW's PC13 Business Plan covering the period April 2013 to March 2015. The project was programmed to be delivered in 2013 but has been delayed by the legal process associated with the acquisition of a site for the new pumping station. NIW is now in the process of negotiating with Ards Borough Council for a suitable site on Council land. When agreement has been reached, NIW will seek planning permission for the pumping station and the consent of Northern Ireland Environment Agency for construction of a new sea outfall pipeline. Subject to obtaining statutory approvals and the completion of lands acquisition, NIW will be seeking tenders in late 2013 with the view of construction commencing in Spring 2014 with completion approximately one year later.

Future Railways Consultation

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasons for holding public meetings on the Future Railways Consultation document only in Belfast, Londonderry and Dungannon and not at locations along the Larne, Newry and Bangor routes.

(AQW 20327/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The public meetings were arranged to give people the opportunity to find out more about the costs and benefits of further railways investment and to hear views on how the strategic direction for capital expenditure should be prioritised. In order to facilitate as many people as possible participating in those events, the three locations for the Future Railway Investment consultation meetings were chosen to provide a reasonable geographical spread across Northern Ireland. However, my Department will consider any requests from interested parties to hold further meetings before the close of the consultation period on 12 April 2013.

Department for Social Development

Social Security Benefit Appeal Hearings

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of social security benefit appeal hearings in North Down in each of the last five years, broken down by venue.

(AQW 19408/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The information cannot be provided in the format sought. However, the table below sets out the number of sessions convened by The Appeals Service (TAS) at the venues included in the Newtownards tribunal district for each of the last five financial years. TAS currently uses venues at Bangor Signal Centre, Ards Business Centre and Newtownards Courthouse. It also used Sketrick House until July 2011.

	June 2007 to March 2008	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Number of sessions convened	145	317	333	353	352

Notes:

- (1) The Appeals Service cannot provide information before June 2007.
- (2) During the period June 2007-March 2008 appeals emanating from this area were also listed in Belfast.
- (3) The Newtownards tribunal district includes venues at Newtownards and Bangor.
- (4) The number of appeals within each session can vary and is dependent on the type of benefit involved, type of hearing requested (oral or on the papers) and complexity of appeal.

Social Housing New Builds: Locations

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development for a breakdown of the locations of social housing new builds, in each of the last three financial years and in this year to date.

(AQW 19466/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The tables attached detail the locations of social housing new builds for the last three financial years and the year to date. It should be noted that the tables do not include “Off the Shelf” or “Rehabilitation units”.

Year	Number of New Builds
2009/10	1,243
2010/11	1,752
2011/12	984
2012/13 (year to date)	157

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: STARTS – 2009/10

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
Jamaica Street Phase 2, Belfast (T)	16	General Needs
Monagh Road Phase 2, Belfast (Travellers)	5	Travellers
43 Whitewell Road, Belfast	15	General Needs
Bass Brewery Site, Glen Road, Belfast	166	General Needs
100 Cliftonville Road, Belfast (ALP)	9	Cat 1 Elderly
36A - 38 Park Avenue, Belfast	20	General Needs
Tesco Site, Donegall Road, Belfast	31	General Needs
Tesco Site, Donegall Road, Belfast	40	General Needs
Roden Street Phase 2, Belfast (T)	43	General Needs
Ivan Street, Belfast	10	General Needs
St Patrick's Primary School, North Queen Street, Belfast (T)	28	General Needs
98 Whitewell Road, Belfast	8	Cat 1 Elderly
Shiels Street, Belfast (ALP)	6	General Needs
St Teresa's Site, Glen Road, Belfast	18	General Needs
Highway, Highfield Estate, Belfast (T)	1	General Needs
Carrick Hill/Library Street, Belfast (T)	11	General Needs
270-272 Falls Road, Belfast (Surplus Site)	10	General Needs
Ladas Way, Belfast (ALP)	16	General Needs
Grove Street East, Belfast	17	General Needs

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
Dunmisk Park Phase 2, Belfast	28	Cat 1 Elderly
Finaghy Road South, Belfast	12	General Needs
Charter Youth Club, Sandy Row,	3	General Needs
Eden Orbits, Phase 3A, Carrickfergus (T)	12	General Needs
51 Main Street, Crumlin	5	General Needs
Drumalla House, Carnlough (Surplus Site)	11	General Needs
Caherty Road, Broughshane	48	General Needs
Garryduff Gardens, Ballymena Road, Ballymoney	5	Learning Disabilities
Drumawill Phase 1, Enniskillen	34	General Needs
Enniskillen EMI	30	Frail Elderly/Dementia
Crossmaglen Phase 4 (T)	18	General Needs
Old Warrenpoint Road, Newry	26	General Needs
Carrowshee Park, Lisnaskea (T)	19	General Needs
Thomas Street, Portadown	15	Mental Health
Beechgrove Phase 2, Dromore (T)	5	General Needs
Ennis Green, Lurgan (T)	7	General Needs
Prince's Close / Street, Craigavon	4	General Needs
Killough Road, Downpatrick (T)	19	General Needs
Rosevale Avenue, Newtownards	15	General Needs
Upper North Street, Newtownards	31	General Needs
Dunsy Way, Comber (Council Site) (T)	33	General Needs
The Brae, Ballygowan	14	General Needs
Regent Street, Newtownards	43	General Needs
Rathgill Zone 1, Bangor (T)	28	General Needs
6-12 Breda Park, Newtownbreda (Surplus Site)	34	General Needs/Cat 1 Elderly
Central Avenue, Bangor	47	Cat 1 Elderly
PSNI Site, Newcastle Road, Castlewellan, (Surplus Site)	6	General Needs
Gibson's Lane, Bangor	17	General Needs
Strand Avenue, Holywood (T)	19	General Needs/ Cat 1 Elderly
21 Ashley Park, Dunmurry	8	Cat 1 Elderly
Appletree House, Bridge Street, Downpatrick	24	Cat 3 Frail Elderly
PSNI Site, Rosemount, Londonderry (T) (Surplus Site)	17	General Needs
West Bank, Londonderry	124	General Needs

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
Coolnagard, Omagh (Challenging Behaviour)	12	Learning Disabilities
Total Dwellings	1243	Total Schemes

SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: STARTS – 2010/11

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
314 Ravenhill Road, Belfast	67	General Needs/Complex Needs
Rosapenna Parade, Belfast	2	General Needs
1a - 5 Upper Suffolk Road, Belfast	14	General Needs
2A Cherryville Street, Belfast (T)	11	Cat 1 Elderly
Boiler House Site Stewart Street,	16	General Needs
32 Whiterock Road / Whiterock Grove,	7	General Needs
North Infill Hatfield Street, Belfast (T)	4	General Needs
155 Glen Road, Belfast	15	Cat 1 Elderly
Gainsborough Infill, Belfast (T)	17	General Needs
North Rugby Club Grounds Phase 3, Belfast	42	General Needs
Sunningdale Gardens, Belfast (T)	46	General Needs/ Cat 1 Elderly
100 Holywood Road, Belfast	16	General Needs
2 Sunnyside Drive, Belfast (T)	2	General Needs
Prospect Park, Belfast	2	General Needs
Ladbrook Drive, Belfast	1	General Needs
Brookfield Mill, Belfast	40	General Needs
Lawnbrook URA, Belfast (T)	26	General Needs/ Complex Needs
Alliance Avenue, Belfast (T)	4	General Needs
Lands at Oldpark Avenue	3	General Needs
Loughview Terrace, Belfast (T)	9	General Needs/ Complex Needs
Shankill House Replacement, Belfast (T)	35	Cat 3 Frail Elderly
Lily Bar, Sandy Row, Belfast (T)	18	General Needs
Ormeau Embankment, Belfast	47	General Needs
Boundary Way, Belfast	12	General Needs
The Glen, Limestone Road	24	General Needs
Stanhope Street Phase 2, Belfast (T)	11	General Needs
Factory Site, Alliance Avenue, Belfast	29	General Needs

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
Hosford House / Skanios, Belfast	31	Homeless/Supported
186 Cliftonpark Avenue, Belfast	8	General Needs
Hollywood Road, Belfast	19	General Needs
Tudor Phase 4, Belfast (T)	11	General Needs
St Anthony's Church, Willowfield	16	General Needs/ Complex Needs
Darkfort Drive Phase 1, Portballintrae (T)	6	General Needs
Rathcoole Gardens, Newtownabbey (T)	28	Cat 1 Elderly
Garvaghy Crescent Phase 1, Portglenone (T)	16	General Needs
Templepatrick Library Site, Templepatrick (Surplus Site)	2	General Needs
Neilsbrook, Randalstown (T)	25	General Needs
Springfarm Phase 2, Antrim	8	General Needs
Monkstown Gardens, Newtownabbey	6	Cat 1 Elderly
Cunningham Way, Antrim	12	General Needs
Rashee Drive/Ballycorr Rd, Ballyclare (T)	15	General Needs
Mount Street / High Street, Bawnmore (T)	4	General Needs
1 Doagh Road, Newtownabbey	13	Cat 1 Elderly
Ballyduff Primary School, Newtownabbey (Surplus Site)	20	General Needs
466 Shore Road, Newtownabbey	6	General Needs/ Complex Needs
PSNI Site, Lisbellaw (Surplus Site)	12	General Needs
Site rear of Derrybeg Villas, Newry (Surplus Site)	2	General Needs
Orchard Park, Aughnacloy (T)	15	General Needs
Granville Primary School, Derryveen, Dungannon (ALP) (Surplus Site)	32	General Needs
PSNI Cullion Road, Tempo (Surplus Site)	4	General Needs
Martins Lane, Newry (Surplus Site)	6	General Needs
Prospect Way, North Lurgan (T)	5	General Needs
Derrymacash, Craigavon (T)	14	General Needs/ Complex Needs
Mullacreevie Phase 1, Armagh (T)	21	General Needs
Newtowncloghogue (T)	22	General Needs
Lisnahull Road, Dungannon (T) (PassivHaus mini competition)	5	General Needs
Gullion View, Meigh (T)	10	General Needs

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
Adrian Heights, Donagh, Fermanagh	5	General Needs
Annaghdale Place & Garvaghy Road, Portadown & Rectory Road, Lurgan	4	Physical Disabilities
Ennis Green Phase 2, Lurgan (T)	8	General Needs
Greenfield Park, Newry (T)	2	General Needs
Derrybeg Small Sites, Newry (T)	11	General Needs / Cat 1 Elderly
Woodside Park, Loughbrickland (T)	24	General Needs
Main Street PSNI, Middletown (Surplus Site)	12	General Needs
Ardmore Drive, Hilltown (T)	8	General Needs
Weir Court, Comber	15	Cat 1 Elderly
Blenheim Drive, Newtownards (T)	15	General Needs
Castlewellan Road, Phase 1, Newcastle	130	General Needs
Moss Road, Millisle	10	General Needs
Crewhill Gardens, Ardglass (ALP) (T)	26	General Needs
Summerhill Road, Twinbrook (T)	14	General Needs
73 Bangor Road, Newtownards	4	General Needs
51 Newtownards Road, Comber (T)	12	General Needs
8-12 Reaville Park, Dundonald	12	General Needs
Drumaness Road, Drumaness (ALP)	12	General Needs / Cat 1 Elderly
Lagmore Phase 7, Poleglass (T)	37	General Needs
Tirowen Drive, Knockmore, Lisburn (T)	6	General Needs
Killaney Avenue, Old Warren, Lisburn (T)	20	General Needs
Church Avenue, Kircubbin	7	General Needs
22 - 24 Comber Road, Dundonald	18	General Needs
Nettlehill Road, Lisburn (ALP)	21	Cat 1 Elderly
Ballymacoss Hill Phase 1, Lisburn (T)	146	General Needs
Buncrana Road, Londonderry	67	General Needs
Apex Housing Rural Cottages Phase 8 (T)	1	General Needs
Apex Housing Rural Cottages Phase 8 (T)	1	General Needs
Apex Housing Rural Cottages Phase 8 (T)	1	General Needs
Desmonds Factory Site, Magherafelt	30	General Needs/ Complex Needs
Iona House Phase 1, Strabane	12	Learning Disabilities
Circular Road Phase 1, Londonderry (T)	67	General Needs

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
42-45 Fergleen Park, Londonderry (T)	6	General Needs
Apex Housing Rural Cottages Phase 8 (T)	1	General Needs
Bligh's Lane, United Technologies Site, Londonderry	61	General Needs
Loughrey Terrace, Drumquin (T)	2	General Needs
PSNI Melmount Road, Sion Mills (Surplus Site)	6	General Needs
Newtownstewart (Forthill Park) (T)	4	Complex Needs
Total Dwellings	1752	Total Schemes

SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: STARTS – 2011/12

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
212 Cliftonville Road, Belfast	10	General Needs
Ballymacarrett Library Site, Templemore Avenue Belfast (Surplus Site)	4	General Needs
Andersonstown Social Security Office, Slieveban Drive, Belfast (Surplus Site)	25	General Needs
Andersonstown Library Site, Belfast, (Surplus Site)	4	General Needs
Clara Street, Belfast	22	General Needs
Mountpottinger PSNI, Belfast (Surplus Site)	10	General Needs
Tiger's Bay / Limestone Road, Rehabs, Belfast (T)	10	General Needs
2 Allworthy Avenue, Belfast	3	General Needs
North Rugby Club, Belfast Phase 4	8	General Needs
Village URA Phase 2, Belfast (T)	50	General Needs/
Village URA Phase 1, Belfast (T)	37	General Needs/
Ross Street Flats, Belfast (T)	12	General Needs
1-39 Leopold Street, Belfast	10	General Needs
Thompson House, Belfast	4	Ex-offenders
167 Andersonstown Road, Belfast	11	Cat 1 Elderly
Coulters Site Antrim Road, Belfast (T)	10	General Needs
Mill Court Phase 2, Falls Road, Belfast	24	Cat 1 Elderly
Blackmountain Bungalows Phase 2A, Belfast (T)	2	Physically Disabled
142 -144 Clifton Park Avenue, Belfast (T)	6	General Needs
91 - 97 Inverary Avenue, Belfast	14	General Needs
Brookfield Gardens, Ahoghill (T)	9	General Needs/
Church Bay, Rathlin Island	10	General Needs

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
Rush Park, Newtownabbey	17	General Needs/
Brook Street Library Site, Ahoghill (Surplus Site)	6	General Needs
27 - 33 Queen Street, Ballymena	14	Cat 1 Elderly
Ards Drive, Monkstown (T)	12	General Needs
Tobar Park, Cullybackey (T)	17	General Needs
Eden Phase 3B, Carrickfergus (T)	22	General Needs
Fenton Park, Cloughmills (T)	6	General Needs
PSNI Site, Ferniskey Road, Kells (Surplus Site)	6	General Needs
Lerwill House, Coleraine	14	Learning Disabilities
Mullaghacall Road, Portstewart (T)	1	Physical Disabilities
Cloneen, Dungannon	48	General Needs
3a The Square, Brick Row, Moy	7	General Needs
Rathkellan Park, Crossmaglen (T)	1	General Needs
Newtown Villas, Rostrevor (T)	2	General Needs
Rectory Close, Loughgall (T)	6	General Needs
Longstone Road, Annalong	6	General Needs
Glen View, Rathfriland (T)	2	General Needs
Ardmore Road, Phase 1, Armagh (T)	26	General Needs
Millview, Richill, Armagh (T)	6	General Needs
Springhill Drive, Newry (T)	6	General Needs
Coolmillish Road, Markethill (T)	8	General Needs
254 Kingsway, Dunmurry	27	General Needs
Loch Cuan, Newtownards Replacement/Ward House	34	Cat 3 Frail Elderly/Learning
Castlewellan Road, Phase 2, Newcastle	16	General Needs
St Patrick's Road Raholp, Downpatrick	8	General Needs
Bloomfield Road/South Circular Road Bangor (T)	37	General Needs
68 Lower Braniel Road, Castlereagh	15	Cat 1 Elderly
41 Movilla Street, Newtownards (T) (Includes 43 Movilla St Surplus Site)	12	Cat 1 Elderly
Hillhall Road Primary School, Lisburn (Surplus Site)	19	General Needs/
Mitchells GAA, Poleglass	65	General Needs/Physical
Grahamsbridge Road (T)	1	Physical Disabilities
Crossbill Place, Pond Park (infill), Lisburn	10	General Needs
Primacy Road, Bangor	13	General Needs

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
188-190 Lower Braniel Road, Castlereagh (T)	11	General Needs/Physical
Glenbrook Road, Newtownards (T)	10	General Needs
Craigmore Road, Maghera	12	General Needs
Circular Road, Phase 3, Londonderry	72	General Needs
Hass Road, Dungiven (T)	10	General Needs
Marian Hall, Londonderry (ALP)	24	General Needs
Tamlough Park, Ballykelly (T)	13	General Needs/
Circular Road Phase 2, Londonderry (T)	41	General Needs
McGurks Villas, Gulladuff, Maghera (T)	6	General Needs
Total Dwellings	984	Total Schemes

SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: STARTS - 2012/13

Scheme Name	Dwellings	Client Group
Springfield Crescent, Belfast	9	General Needs
Arundel Replacement, Belfast (T)	8	General Needs
Parkside URA, Limestone Road Belfast (T)	36	General Needs
73 Islay Street, Antrim (Springfarm Phase 3)	1	General Needs
Todd Close, Phase 2 (Oriel Replacement)	5	Learning Disabilities
Ballaghmore Heights Backlands, Enniskillen	14	General Needs
Father Cullen Park, Bessbrook, Newry (T)	62	General Needs/Travellers
School Road (MOD/PSNI site), Forkhill (Surplus Site)	10	General Needs
The Heathers Replacement, Phase 3	5	Learning Disabilities
Rectory Close Extension, Loughgall (T)	2	General Needs
Knockbracken PSNI Site, Saintfield Road	2	Physical Disabilities
Ashleywood House, Phase 2	3	Vulnerable Women
Total Dwellings	157	Total Schemes

Ballycastle Town Masterplan

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the implementation of each of the 33 recommendations in the Ballycastle town Masterplan.

(AQW 19798/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Ballycastle Strategic Town Development and Action Plan published in April 2009 is a long term strategy lasting up to 15 years. This work was commissioned by my Department and produced in partnership with Moyle District Council. Responsibility for the implementation of the individual actions set out in the strategy rests with the relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and public bodies including Government Departments and other statutory agencies. The strategy covers a wide range of regeneration actions to realise the full social, economic and environmental potential of the town.

One of the earliest actions completed in the Strategy was establishing a new town centre partnership to co-ordinate its delivery. This partnership comprises members from Ballycastle Chamber of Commerce, Councillors, and public sector agencies including DSD. To date the work completed includes four actions on the organisational structures and three actions for environmental improvements on gateway signs, a town trail and a river walk. These schemes have been funded by DSD, NITB and Moyle District Council.

My Department will continue to work with Ballycastle Town Partnership and Moyle District Council to assist where possible in the delivery of the other initiatives in the town strategy.

Empty or Run Down Business Premises

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what grants are available to tidy up shop fronts for empty or run down business premises.

(AQW 19828/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department's Urban Development Grant scheme is targeted at bringing derelict or vacant Town Centre properties back into productive use and at enhancing the commercial viability of existing properties. Owners of eligible properties in specific priority urban areas can apply to the Department for grant aid.

My Department has also provided funding for seven pilot ReStore projects in Belfast, Londonderry, Larne and Lurgan over the past four years. The greater part of the funding was allocated towards enhancing shop fronts of existing businesses. This scheme is currently being evaluated.

In addition, my Department, in conjunction with district councils and traders forums, has undertaken a programme of revitalisation schemes designed to refresh local business premises in town centres. The schemes undertake a number of approaches designed to make town centres more attractive to shoppers, including painting shop fronts and providing new signage where appropriate. To date, 17 regional towns and cities have availed of these schemes, with schemes due to commence in another 14 towns by March 2015.

Housing Executive Stock

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of suggestions that the Housing Executive stock is one of the best in Western Europe, to detail the calculation used to arrive at the figure of £1billion needed to bring the stock up to standard.

(AQW 19830/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advise that the £1 billion figure is taken from the Housing Executive's Maintenance Investment Strategy. It was estimated that £945.3 million would be required for the following five years in order to maintain progress and to meet 'Decent Homes Standard Plus' by 2021.

The figure comprises:

- £673.3 million to meet/maintain Decent Homes Standard (DHS) Plus, as defined by Savills;
- £110.1 million for what were deemed essential landlord costs that had not been included by Savills; for example: Fire Doors, general maintenance, estate infrastructure works, anticipated demolitions etc;
- £51.8 million for Disabled Persons Adaptations;
- £110.1 million for what were deemed desirable (albeit non-essential) works that had not been included by Savills; for example: replacement of Economy 7 heating; upgrading to double glazing; cladding for multi-storey blocks; and environmental improvements.

Housing Executive: Responsibilities

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development why it is not considered best practice for the Housing Executive to have responsibility for its own borrowing, investment, financial and accounting duties.

(AQW 19831/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive's Accounting All Government Departments including their Agencies, NDPB's, Public Corporations and Arm Length Bodies are governed by HM Treasury rules and should operate within the broad framework established by HM Treasury.

In Northern Ireland, Managing Public Money Northern Ireland (MPMNI) is the guidance issued by DFP which relates mainly to the proper handling and reporting of public money and the main principals for dealing with resources used by public sector organisations in Northern Ireland.

Officer must ensure that his organisations' activities achieve high and reliable standards of regularity and propriety as laid down in HM Treasury guidelines.

As part of the public sector the Housing Executive's responsibilities for borrowing, investment, financial and accounting duties are governed by HM Treasury rules and MPMNI guidance.

Double Glazed Windows

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the timeframes for the replacement and installation of double glazed windows in Housing Executive properties in Donaghadee.

(AQW 19849/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive advises that it has a double glazing scheme on site for the Ards Peninsula, which includes 59 properties in Donaghadee. The contractor started in Portaferry, is working up through the Peninsula, and should be starting work in Donaghadee in approximately four to five weeks time, which should complete double glazing installation in Donaghadee.

Double Glazed Windows

Mr Dunne asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the timeframes for the replacement and installation of double glazed windows in Housing Executive properties in Millisle.

(AQW 19851/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that there are no double glazing installations programmed for Millisle, as all their properties in the village have already been double glazed through previous External Cyclical Maintenance schemes.

Warm Homes on the Area Based Approach

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development what was the cost of the insulation supplied to households through Warm Homes on the Area Based Approach pilot compared to the insulation price for households not qualifying under Warm Homes.

(AQW 19884/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is not possible to directly compare the costs associated with the two schemes without making assumptions about the nature of the work, the location of the properties and the size of the dwelling. However, on an indicative basis, assuming 200mm of insulation for an 80 m² loft, the figures are as follows:

- 1) With soffit Vents
Warm Homes: £8.70 per m²
Affordable Warmth: £9.60 per m²

- 2) With Slate Vents
Warm Homes: £14.22 per m²
Affordable Warmth: £12.75 per m²
- 3) With Tile Vents
Warm Homes: £12.88 per m²
Affordable Warmth: £12.00 per m²

These figures should be taken as indicative only because of the complexities involved.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development (i) the number of queries to the Boiler Replacement Scheme since the scheme was launched; (ii) the number of jobs completed; (iii) the target number of jobs which would have been expected to be completed at this stage; and (iv) for a breakdown of the types of replacement, such as oil to oil, oil to gas, or oil to renewable.

(AQW 19885/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Since the Boiler Replacement Scheme was launched in September 2012:

- 28,223 queries have been received;
- 9,992 completed applications forms have been received;
- 4,908 approvals have been issued;
- 1,348 boiler replacements have been completed;
- 1,051 oil to oil replacements have been completed;
- 297 conversions to gas have been completed.

The number of boiler completions at any time depends on the response times of the applicants. Over the Christmas period and in to January 2013 it is to be expected that there will be less installations. From February 2013 onwards it is reasonable to expect that the number of installations will increase as at present. The number of completions to date is consistent with a reasonable response time from applicants coupled with the time of year.

The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Youth Groups and Project Grants

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what grants are available for setting up youth groups and projects.

(AQW 19887/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Within my Department there are no specific funding programmes for setting up youth groups and projects. However as previously advised there are a number of Programmes accessible to young people, these include the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme and the Volunteering Small Grants Programme.

Funding through the above Programmes may be made available for setting up youth groups and supporting projects where a priority need has been identified and resources can be made available.

Apex Housing Association

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the rent increase for tenants of properties in Rinmore Drive, Derry since the transfer of the properties to Apex Housing Association.

(AQW 19896/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There was a total of 55 houses in Rinmore Drive, Creggan that transferred from the NIHE to Apex Housing Association. Of the 55 properties, 14 have had improvements completed with the rent charge increasing accordingly, 4 are currently undergoing improvements and the rent charge has not changed at this stage. Improvements to the remaining 37 properties have not yet commenced and the rent charge has also not changed.

The table below details the properties that have had improvements carried out with the amount charged in rent shown before and after improvements

RINMORE DRIVE

REIMPROVED PROPERTIES

Number	Improved Property Current Rent Charge £	Umimproved Previous Rent Charge £	
1	73.60	54.39	charges increased 04/06/12
3	71.76	54.39	charges increased 04/06/12
5	69.92	54.39	charges increased 04/06/12
7	71.76	54.39	charges increased 04/06/12
9	71.76	54.39	charges increased 11/06/12
11	71.76	54.39	charges increased 11/06/12
13	71.76	54.39	charges increased 29/10/12
15	71.76	54.39	charges increased 29/10/12
17	69.92	54.39	charges increased 29/10/12
19			
21	71.76	54.39	charges increased 29/10/12
23			
25	69.92	54.39	charges increased 05/11/12
27	69.92	54.39	charges increased 05/11/12
29	71.76	54.39	charges increased 19/11/12
31	71.76	54.39	charges increased 19/11/12

REIMPROVEMENT WORKS NOT YET COMPLETE

Number	Current Rent Charge £	Previous Rent Charge £
33	54.39	54.39
35	54.39	54.39
37	54.39	54.39
39	54.39	54.39

Under-Occupation in the Foyle Constituency

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development how many people or families are at risk of financial penalty for under-occupation in each district within the Foyle Constituency.

(AQW 20015/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary Constituency.

However, the Housing Executive estimates that within its District Office areas of Waterloo Place, Waterside and Collon Terrace, the number of cases at risk of financial penalty for under-occupation is 3,364. This information is drawn from Housing Benefit claimants affected which includes families, couples and single people.

Impact of Emigration

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Social Development whether levels of emigration impacts on his departmental budget.

(AQW 20034/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department's main business areas are social security (including child maintenance & enforcement), housing and urban regeneration/community development. As such, emigration, which by implication could potentially reduce the demand for these services, is not factored into departmental budgetary considerations.

Under-Occupation in the North Belfast Constituency

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Social Development how many people or families are at risk of financial penalty for under-occupation in the North Belfast constituency.

(AQW 20050/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by Parliamentary Constituency.

However, the Housing Executive estimates that within its District Office areas of North Belfast, Newtownabbey 1 and Newtownabbey 2, the number of cases at risk of financial penalty for under-occupation is 4,160. This information is drawn from Housing Benefit claimants affected which includes families, couples and single people.

Volunteering Infrastructure

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development when he will make a decision on the volunteering infrastructure.

(AQW 20203/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am committed to ensuring effective infrastructure support for volunteering in order to successfully deliver on Northern Ireland's first ever Volunteering Strategy. My Department is presently considering delivery options for such support and I expect new arrangements to be put in place later this year. In the interim period arrangements are being developed by my officials to ensure the continued support for volunteering.

Volunteering Funding Package

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will grant an extension on the volunteering funding package.

(AQW 20204/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am committed to ensuring effective infrastructure support for volunteering in order to successfully deliver on Northern Ireland's first ever Volunteering Strategy. My Department is

presently considering delivery options for such support and I expect new arrangements to be put in place later this year. In the interim period arrangements are being developed by my officials to ensure the continued support for volunteering.

Advice Sector in Northern Ireland

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Advice Sector in Northern Ireland will be able to avail of the £65 million Advice Services Transition Fund that was created by the Cabinet Office and The Big Lottery Fund.

(AQW 20226/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The £65m for Free Advice Services announced by the Cabinet Office on 26 October 2012 represents a mix of existing public spend and Big Lottery funding for advice services in England only.

However my Department provides funding of approx £4.5m per annum for a range of advice provision, including regional advice support, frontline advice support, housing advice and advice supporting benefit uptake.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 1 March 2013

(AQW 12900/11-15)

A revised Environmental Impact Assessment determination was carried but it concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement was not required as the nature and extent of the amended development proposal was judged not to give rise to significant environmental effects.

I have asked for a full submission on this matter to consider the issue further.



Published by Authority of the Northern Ireland Assembly,
Belfast: The Stationery Office

and available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

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PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

Telephone orders/General enquiries: 0870 600 5522

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ISSN 1463-7162

Daily Editions: Single copies £5, Annual subscriptions £325

Bound Volumes of Debates are issued periodically during the session: Single copies: £90

Printed in Northern Ireland by The Stationery Office Limited

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ISBN 978-0-339-70284-4

