



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Social Development

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Department for Social Development
Business Plan

27 June 2013

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Committee for Social Development

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Alex Maskey (Chairperson)
Mr Mickey Brady (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Paula Bradley
Mrs Judith Cochrane
Mr Michael Copeland
Mr Sammy Douglas
Mr Mark Durkan
Mr Fra McCann

Witnesses:

Ms Heather Cousins	Department for Social Development
Mr Will Haire	Department for Social Development
Mr Tony McKibben	Department for Social Development
Mr Tommy O'Reilly	Social Security Agency

The Chairperson: I formally welcome Will Haire, Heather Cousins, Tony McKibben and Tommy O'Reilly. I apologise for the delay in the running of the meeting this morning.

Tommy, I know that the Committee wrote to you about the unfortunate death of your mother, but this is the first time that you have been here with the Committee since your family bereavement. On behalf of the Committee, I offer our personal commiserations to you and your family.

Mr Tommy O'Reilly (Social Security Agency): Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson: Without any further ado, it is over to you, Will, and your colleagues.

Mr Will Haire (Department for Social Development): Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this year's business plan. I understand that you have already considered the plan, and your main questions are about housing provision, fuel poverty, new urban regeneration policy frameworks, social enterprise, neighbourhood renewal and Fort George. We hope to take those questions and any others that you have.

I will set the scene quickly. We made good progress on all our commitments, including the ones in the Programme for Government, which are included in the plan. Last year, 88% of our targets were achieved, substantially achieved or likely to be achieved with some slight delay. I am also really pleased that we have achieved all our efficiency targets.

It is perhaps worth noting that, as this Committee knows very well, we are, together, dealing with a massive agenda, and welfare reform is a massive part of that. In addition, Jenny Pyper and her team have been here to talk to you about the reform of local government, and that is obviously a major exercise for us all. We have commenced an extensive programme of engagement with local government to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place to ensure that the councils can take things forward. Our Minister has made it really clear to us that, when we achieve the reform, we must make sure that none of the activity on the ground, either physical or social, that we are sponsoring falters in the process. That is very much a core value that we been pressing on all the teams.

We will carry out a gateway review of our implementation plans in January 2014 to make sure that we are happy that that is going right. We will also bring forward a Bill to give effect to the transfer of the functions and the conferral of the powers to councils. At the same time, Jenny's team has been working to drive forward the implementation of the volunteering strategy.

In social policy areas, we have been doing lots of work on gambling, liquor licensing and the business improvement districts (BIDs). Jim and the team talked about the key issue of the delivery by the Housing Executive, but, at the same time, this year, we delivered the first ever housing strategy for Northern Ireland, and we are trying to have a wider vision on housing to make sure that we do not just look at the present structure and delivery but also at other ways we can get that forward. We will work with you on that process. The whole social housing reform programme is a massive piece of work. We have staffed that issue up and got the necessary resources there, working with the Department, the Housing Executive and the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) to implement the programme work. So, we can work that up and, obviously, engage very much with you, because the decisions that we need to make are very deep and important political ones. This is a highly sensitive subject, and it needs to be handled very well.

Those are the main issues. I sat in on the previous evidence session. As accounting officer, ever since I have come into the Department, I have been trying to make sure that the money being spent in the Housing Executive is achieving what it was meant to. Making sure there is efficiency has been a massive issue for me. You know where we are from the different reports, and we will very much engage with you. Obviously, we are looking for the independent report that the chair of the Housing Executive commissioned. That is a key part of the process, and we have to get this right. A lot of it is about culture and leadership. I respect that we in the Department are part of that process, and we are very determined to make sure we keep a focus on this issue. From my experience, it will take time to get through all these issues. I have to go into every area. I have looked at response maintenance and am now looking at planned maintenance. I have to look at all contract issues. I have to assure myself and assure you that if there are cultural issues, all expenditure is covered. My job is to be relentless and positive on this issue to make sure that we get a decent way forward. The question is always about the service to the tenant.

The Chairperson: Before I bring other members in, there are couple of themes that I want to discuss. One may be simpler to address than the other.

We are receiving complaints on an ongoing basis about the volunteering strategy and the shifting of some resources, which means that some organisations get significantly less money than they are used to getting. That may well be fine — I do not know, and I do not want to be specific about any organisation — but the constant complaint that we have been receiving from those organisations is that they have not been getting what they would call meaningful engagement with the Department. The Department has refuted that here, but it is a recurring argument that we are hearing. Maybe, at some point, we could address that.

The second point goes back to housing and is a major problem. In the past couple of monitoring rounds, the Housing Executive has handed back money from the social housing strategy or funding stream. It has been requested that some of that be reallocated to, for example, the co-ownership scheme. That is fine for those who will benefit from that, but it does not address housing need. I believe that we are dangerously close to failing our statutory obligation to meet housing need if, in two consecutive monitoring rounds, we are handing millions of pounds back. That money has been reallocated but not to an area that will address housing need. That puts us dangerously close to failing in our statutory duty. I do not make that accusation lightly. I want that to be addressed, because if it is a trend that is going to continue, there is something seriously remiss with whoever is responsible for delivering the social housing programme.

Mr Haire: I will start by talking about housing, Heather will come in with more detail, and Tony will deal with the volunteering side.

You are correct that handing money back is a major issue. I spent a lot of February and March with the housing associations and the Housing Executive, pressing home the point that I had to get commitments to get even last year's stuff to come through. There is a real issue about management and the complexity of the social housing development programme, which is the responsibility of the Housing Executive to deliver. There are complexities in the processes and planning, etc. I got my Minister to write letters — for example, to the Minister of the Environment — to make sure that we cleared everything that we could, and we got a rapid and clear response. There are process issues, and a PEDU review was undertaken. My team is working to find out whether we can improve the process. Obviously, trying to purchase land, and so on, is complex. I agree that it is absolutely crucial that we maximise the amount of housing that we can get from that money. I have a duty to make sure that money is spent by the end of the year. The Finance Minister will be really angry if I do not do that — rightly — so I have to monitor, and if money has to be diverted elsewhere, it is important that that is done so that the money is not lost to Northern Ireland. It is a very high priority that we have been stressing strongly, even in recent times, with the housing associations.

Ms Heather Cousins (Department for Social Development): We also found it completely unacceptable even to be contemplating giving back money from the social housing development programme at this stage in the financial year. We have had urgent meetings with the Federation of Housing Associations to try to explore issues about their capacity to deliver more than the target. Given the economic climate, the number of units in the target can be delivered for less money. Although that is true, there is also the opportunity to deliver more with the cover that is there.

Another complication this year is that a substantial proportion of the social housing development programme was ring-fenced for Bamford units for resettlement of patients from institutions. That was predicated on a newbuild solution to resettling people, and the Health Department has changed its preferred model to people sharing existing properties in the community. That is a more cost-effective solution, but it is more difficult to deliver in practice because of issues in trying to resettle people in established communities.

There are complications, but we have said that if it can be quantified what that will mean, we can bid to reclassify that expenditure for general needs and see what we can do to maximise the programme. We are working on it, and we do not lack ambition. We are struggling to get the Housing Executive and the housing associations to step up, but we continue to put pressure on every week. We are looking at whether there is a way to incentivise housing associations to deliver more than is in their existing programme. We are exploring every possible avenue.

The Chairperson: As you know, it is on the record from Cameron Watt on behalf of the housing associations that they are contesting that argument. The housing associations say that they do have capacity. A letter from Cameron Watt was addressed to Beverley Bigger on 22 May. I do not know whether you have seen that letter. We will hand it over to you. I am not necessarily asking you to answer it today, but I am saying that the housing associations are contesting the argument that they are not able to build more social houses.

Mr Haire: The Housing Executive came back to us and said that it could not spend the money. Cameron and our teams work very closely in this process. We are with you in the sense that this money can be spent. We are not saying that reaching the target is enough. The answer is that if you have money, get more, because the list is longer. That is a very clear point.

The Chairperson: At some point, can we have an assurance, formal or otherwise, that the issue of meeting social housing need has preference over other schemes? Those are important in themselves, and I do not want to rule them out, but there is a statutory requirement to address need. Other things are additional.

Mr Haire: The Programme for Government sets us very clear targets, and our job is to achieve them. That is how it was set out for us, and that is what we are driven to do.

The Chairperson: It might be helpful for us to have an update on matching the Programme for Government commitments. They are a benchmark.

Mr Haire: We are very happy to provide that. Do you want us to deal with the volunteering issue?

The Chairperson: Yes, I would appreciate that.

Mr Tony McKibben (Department for Social Development): The voluntary and community unit is responsible for implementing the volunteering strategy. That is done in two ways: through a consortium to provide generic infrastructure support to the sector; and through the support of individual organisations. There has been a reduction in that budget, but the unit is confident that the resources are in place to implement the targets.

Mr Brady: Thank you for your presentation. You have a number of milestones in your strategic themes. One is the completion of the Assembly passage of the Welfare Reform Bill by 30 June and the employment and support allowance time limit, which is predicated on the passage of the Bill.

I attended a liaison meeting at a local jobs and benefits office in Newry, which deals with about nine areas. The leaflets sent out about welfare reform almost gave people — claimants in particular — the impression that it was a fait accompli. It is unfair on staff that they now have to deal with questions that they cannot answer because they do not know the answers themselves, such as how people will be affected and what welfare reform issues will be passed.

It is the same with people from the Housing Executive going out to talk to people about underoccupancy and telling them that their housing benefit will be affected. All that is predicated on the fact that the leaflet was sent out and as if everything was going to go through, which, of course, it has not as yet. Presumably, it will not go through the logistics before the summer recess.

That needs to be addressed because the Committee asked for the leaflet not to be sent out. It was sent out and has caused problems, not only for claimants but for social security office staff. Welfare reform will be dealt with at some stage, but, for obvious reasons, the milestones have not been achieved. A number of voluntary and independent advice organisations were present, but staff and management to whom I spoke yesterday are concerned that they are being put in a fairly impossible position. The leaflets have gone out. They state that the information in them is accurate at the time of printing, which, of course, it was not. What are your views on that?

Mr O'Reilly: I am somewhat unclear about the reference to the leaflets going out. With the exception of a very small number that we were unable to stop, the vast majority of the 700,000 leaflets were stopped following the Minister's decision. They were never issued to the public. A small number, because of the process, arrived at some postal addresses, which was regrettable. The leaflet was not widely circulated.

Mr Brady: All I am saying is that the message that I am getting — I know from talking to people on benefit — is that they did get the leaflet.

Mr O'Reilly: Sorry?

Mr Brady: The leaflets were received.

Mr O'Reilly: That is unfortunate. There was a process, and they should certainly have been stopped.

Mr Brady: It is causing confusion and is not fair on the staff who have to deal with queries that they simply cannot answer. That is simply the point that I am making. Irrespective of how many leaflets went out — even if only two went out — they should not have gone out because the Committee was clear in telling the Department that they should not go out. I am making a general point that staff and claimants are trying to deal with issues that have yet to be resolved. I do not want to get into an issue about it, but I am simply making that point.

The Chairperson: The point is made.

Mr Copeland: Given the projected inability or underspend in the social housing budget, will that money be available for the construction of new properties or can the existing satisfactory property mechanism be used whereby a housing association or the Housing Executive buy a house that is vacant? They are a lot cheaper now than they used to be, and they can generally be occupied within six or eight weeks.

Ms Cousins: The programme continues to be a mix. That is part of the reason why it is possible to meet the unit target without spending the amount of money.

Mr Copeland: I can understand that.

Ms Cousins: Weekly, we continue to press to ensure that the whole budget is spent. We are not prepared to take lots of money and hand it back at this point; that is unacceptable.

Mr F McCann: Believe it or not, I will be brief. One consequence of what is happening — especially with the inquiries, the changes in housing in the Housing Executive, and even in the Social Security Agency with welfare reform — is that there is a serious problem with morale in local offices, from middle leadership down in the Housing Executive and even in the housing association movement. You have probably heard this over and over again, but in the SSA and the Housing Executive, people are being told that there will be serious job losses and movements. Members of staff from both organisations are constantly ringing me. I try to calm them down. I will then phone somebody and will be told that that is not the case. I am trying to nail this issue. Will there be any job losses in the Housing Executive or the Social Security Agency?

Mr Haire: I will ask Tommy to talk about welfare reform and modelling.

Mr O'Reilly: If we take welfare reform into account, we have no plans for any redundancies in the SSA as we look forward to the next three years. That is where we are at the moment with the reform programme. We have no plans to make anyone redundant. We fully accept that there will be changes. We have just implemented Customer First across Northern Ireland. That involved the movement of over 700 staff in different forms, but it went very well. In the main, people have settled down in their new processing centres. We continually change arrangements in the organisation because we have to, but we are not planning any redundancies at the moment. However, we need to continue to change the way in which we operate not only to improve the service but to achieve our efficiency targets to release money back to the Executive for other priorities.

Mr F McCann: I understand that, Tommy, but you threw in the word "efficiency". To me, efficiency means a reduction in service or the loss of jobs. Are you saying that, over the next three years, there is no intention to shed any staff?

Mr O'Reilly: There is no intention to make any redundancies in the SSA over the next three years.

Mr F McCann: You said "redundancies". Does that mean that no jobs will be lost in the next three years?

Mr O'Reilly: It means that, over the next three years, we will continue to introduce changes that have to come in. At the moment, for example, for disability living allowance, just under 600 staff are employed in Castle Court. Subject to the Welfare Reform Bill being passed, we will introduce the personal independence payment, which will mean that we will have to downsize the DLA staffing but build up a new complement on the other side. There will always be movement in jobs —

Mr F McCann: That is all within your Department.

Mr O'Reilly: That is all within our agency.

Mr F McCann: There is no intention to shed any jobs over the next three years.

Mr O'Reilly: There is no intention to make any redundancies over the next three years.

Mr F McCann: What about the Housing Executive?

Ms Cousins: Likewise in the Housing Executive, we have no plans for redundancies as a result of reform. The Minister has made it very clear that this is not about downsizing the organisation; it is about restructuring to make the organisation fit for purpose. Uncertainty about jobs in the Housing Executive is connected to housing benefit changes that may be introduced when the Welfare Reform Bill is passed. There has also been a statement about ensuring that people are redeployed within the organisation. That is our first desire, but if there are people who, at the end of the process, do not

have a job in the Housing Executive, they would come into the Department. Again, there are no plans for any redundancies.

Mr F McCann: That seems fairly clear. Obviously, the message that is going out has raised concerns. If the message that you have just outlined went out, it would assist in raising the morale of the workforce. For most of the workforce, not a day goes by without their being told that their jobs are at risk or reading that there are serious problems with the structures of the Housing Executive. Morale is being chipped away.

Mr Haire: In both areas, there are good communication structures. Tommy has set up strong communication structures, and there are forums with the trade unions. Likewise, on the housing side, we have set up a new forum with the trade unions, at which there are good open discussions. We share as much as we can. We cannot share things when decisions have not been made or are not clear, but we have processes.

We recognise that any change, even changes in the nature of working, causes concern to staff. Unfortunately, as you say, everybody, including the entire Department and the Housing Executive, is affected by change. So we try the best we can, and we try to be as open and transparent as possible. We cannot tell everybody everything, because, as you quite clearly said, as administrators, we await political decisions. Those decisions will impact on the way in which we do things, the time scales and so on. So we cannot answer certain questions, but we are trying our best. Your point is well made.

Mr F McCann: On a number of occasions, I have raised the issue of reporting the level of newbuild starts and completions. The reporting of those figures sends out a confusing message. This year, for example, the social housing development programme includes 200 units in my constituency of West Belfast. It is an area of high social need and huge waiting lists. We have known about those 200 units for quite a while, but they are still included in the programme and are added in. There has to be a better way. Paper starts are off the shelf, but you can never really get to the bottom of what has and has not been completed.

Mr Haire: I very much agree. I find it quite frustrating. With Heather, I am trying to push to make sure that we get delivery. As you say, in the end, there is so much shifting around. There will be difficulties with some sites due to planning or other issues. We all accept that, but the process is quite confusing, and we have to ask the Housing Executive to be clearer about what people are getting and where people can get a better handle of that issue.

Mr F McCann: Sad person that I am, I look forward to reading the housing bulletins, which provide a lot of information. A couple of months ago, I was told that, although the annual statistical document was published, the bulletin was delayed because of a lack of finance.

Ms Cousins: We are not aware of that.

Mr Haire: I would be surprised if there was a lack of money because a lot of money is being handed back by the Housing Executive.

The Chairperson: Was your photograph in it, Fra?

Mr F McCann: Definitely not. *[Laughter.]*

The Chairperson: Bitter disappointment there.

Mr Brady: Newry is in the process of moving staff from Newcastle, Banbridge and Downpatrick. People have been uprooted, so they need reassurance that their jobs are reasonably safe, or as safe as any job can be in this day and age. That is a big issue because staff are moving quite long distances: Downpatrick to Newry is a fair distance, as is Kilkeel or Newcastle to Newry. It would be reassuring to hear that losses will not be contemplated within the next three years. That is all predicated on welfare reform, but I simply wanted to make that point.

The Chairperson: That is the fifth time that you have made that point. Well done. *[Laughter.]*

Mr Brady: Thank you, Chair.

The Chairperson: I am a bit concerned. We have had assurances, and that is important. I know that you have had ongoing meetings with the unions and have been giving the same assurance that this is not about removing jobs from the system. As far as I am aware, that dialogue is ongoing. As an MLA, I recently received correspondence, as have others, from workers and union reps about jobs being lost. All we can do is keep rehearsing what you are telling us, which is that this is not about job cuts. I have written to people to tell them to go back to their union reps because they are having ongoing discussions with the Housing Executive. We are being assured of one thing, which is that this is not about jobs being taken out of the system. If unions are telling people that it is, they should go back to their unions because they are engaged with the Department, as they should be.

I want to address one issue, perhaps in September, for further reassurance purposes. Change needs to be managed in this process. Every now and again, workers will be told something in a briefing that causes a scare. At some point, I want to know about the parallel processes involved with delivering the current programme alongside changes in welfare reform and in housing. Although there are big discussions about housing, there are always questions about what will replace the Housing Executive. What process is in place to make sure that we manage the current programme and deliver it? You said that you have weekly meetings, which are important. So perhaps you could give us a refresher briefing in September.

Mr Haire: We could also try to work out the time frames, and we will make sure that the Committee is briefed so that nothing comes as a surprise. Three hundred of our staff will be affected by the reform of local government, so it will be important for them. Some of them are spread out in the process, and we are discussing how that works for them. It is another important part of the package. Those people are also concerned about change.

The Chairperson: That means that three sets of workers affected — local government, welfare reform and housing. I want a sense of the process of managing that.

Mr Haire: We are happy to do that.

Mr Durkan: Thank you for your presentation. Chair, you articulated my concerns about housing pretty well. From the outset of this mandate, I have said that the targets in the social housing development programme were not ambitious at all; I thought that they were particularly unambitious. The fact that money that was not spent on housing or on building houses is now coming back demonstrates that that was the case from the start. The Welfare Reform Bill has not completed its passage through the Assembly, so that ship has sailed, and there is a knock-on effect on all the other milestones.

I am glad that Fra brought up the issue of jobs. I accept that Heather said that there will be no job losses in the next three years. The Minister has said that that will not happen on his watch. However, is it not the case that the outline business case for universal credit states that there will be a reduction of around 1,600 posts?

Mr O'Reilly: Yes. At the time when that outline business case was brought to this Committee —

Mr Durkan: It was not.

Mr O'Reilly: That is correct. Subsequently, however, we provided you with a range of information about the business cases. That was the first iteration of the outline business case, which is now almost two years old. We have said that that case will continue to be revised, and it is being revised at present. You refer to 1,600 jobs, or whatever number of jobs it might be because of universal credit. Those jobs will move because certain benefits will disappear. Jobs will disappear in jobseeker's allowance, employment and support allowance, housing benefit and working tax credits, but the question is how many jobs will be created by universal credit. It is about that process being netted off. We are not at the point of fully understanding all the details of the roles and the number of jobs, but it is a work in progress. As we said at the time, we cautioned heavily against the use of any specific number of job losses because we felt that it was inappropriate and would cause unnecessary concern for staff and families. That is why we did not publish a figure. It was not the Department or the Social Security Agency that put that information into the public arena.

Mr Durkan: One strategic theme in the business plan is titled "strengthened communities and vibrant urban areas" and refers to a review of the neighbourhood renewal programme. What do you expect to

get from that review? Will it be a review of the policy, the areas or the constitution of the neighbourhood renewal partnerships?

Mr McKibben: When the neighbourhood renewal strategy was launched in 2003, it was intended to be a seven- to 10-year strategy. Two years ago, it was subject to a mid-term review, which looked at the impact of what had changed on the ground. In line with all public expenditure, a policy or programme that is coming to an end or reaching a critical point is subject to an evaluation.

From 2015, the power to take forward our spatial regeneration programmes will transfer to local government. The review is looking at all aspects of neighbourhood renewal: how it was targeted, the processes used to deliver it and its impact. We will also look at the value for money of what was received. It is also critical at this point that any lessons from that process are learned and fed through to local government because it will be responsible for delivering that sort of initiative post-2015.

In summary, the review will look at all aspects of delivery, planning and funding over the 10-year period and make recommendations on how that sort of approach to deal with area deprivation can best be delivered in future. Those valuable lessons will be passed on to local government, which will have responsibility for this after 2015.

Mr Durkan: I welcome that. A review is long overdue. Neighbourhood renewal is great in theory, but, aside from some successes, it could certainly work much better.

I will now be a little parochial: a stated commitment on page 13 of the business plan refers to Derry:

"Continue to work with OFMDFM and Ilex on the regeneration".

of the city, and one milestone is:

"Up to 31 December 2013, to ensure that the temporary [UK City of Culture] Events Pavilion [known locally as the Venue] is fully functioning and operates within budget".

Many, if not everybody, in the city would like the Venue to be retained beyond 2013. We are the second city in the North and do not have a permanent events venue anywhere near that scale or standard. I asked the Minister a question about the possibility of support after 2013, which was passed to the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), which passed me to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). Rather than cross-departmental collaboration, there seems to be cross-departmental confusion. People are passing the buck, but no one is passing the bucks, unfortunately. Do you envisage the Department for Social Development (DSD) supporting that in any way beyond 2013?

Mr Haire: It is not in our budget. We were asked, as part of the City of Culture, to produce that, and I am very glad that the team there put a good package together. We were able to ensure that the financial package was the best that we could do during this year. My understanding is that we have no budget or other involvement beyond 2013. Like other Departments, we are receiving representations on the issue, but I cannot say any more than that.

Mr Durkan: A second milestone under the same commitment states:

"By 31 March 2014, secure outline planning permission for the Fort George Development Framework".

Has any work been carried out since the Department took over responsibility for Fort George from Ilex on 1 April?

Mr Haire: I think that there is a fair amount of work being done there.

Mr McKibben: Since 1 April this year, the Department has had operational responsibility for the development of Fort George. The responsibility for that site has been placed with one organisation, so the Department has responsibility for producing plans for the redevelopment and for project managing the consultancy and construction work that will be required to deliver those plans. A project board is in place. We invited Ilex to sit on that board because of its experience, and it has nominated a

representative. The Department will bring forward work on drawing up the plans for the site with OFMDFM and Ilex. We are at that point currently.

Mr Douglas: Thanks for your presentation. I was going to ask Tony about neighbourhood renewal, but I think that you answered the question about areas of risk by saying that they are also under consideration and review.

Mr Haire: Yes.

Mr Douglas: I hope that my asking a question about the John Peel mural at the bottom of the Newtownards Road is in order. I was inundated with e-mails —

The Chairperson: You were a boy when that was painted — I don't think.

Mr Douglas: I contacted the Belfast Regeneration Office (BRO), and the officials were more than helpful in providing me with information, but the issue is ongoing in social media. Is it still the plan that local people from Short Strand and the Newtownards Road will be involved in creating some kind of mural, which may be of John Peel?

Mr Haire: Likewise, it was only after last week's event that we suddenly realised how local people felt: you can plan for some things; others just come along. We are very open to engaging with people. Of course, this is about environment improvement for the community, and we are very positive about driving that work forward.

Mr Douglas: It boils down to the point that the local people are involved there, and, if they wish to paint a John Peel mural, there would be no problem.

Mr Haire: Certainly not. It is, in that sense, a local decision.

The Chairperson: You were showing your age there, Sammy.

No members have indicated that they want to speak, but I have just a couple of points. We recently had the Together: Building a United Community announcement, which will impact quite significantly on the Department's targets. How does that fit in?

Mr Haire: I am waiting to see. OFMDFM has already put together some work, and we have been involved in a number of groups. We are trying to get the project planned and clear, as well as resourced, which is the big issue for me. The strategy is an addition, and there are some questions. How do we juggle those issues? Is there more resource for us to do that? I understand that there will be a central programming process. DSD is heavily involved and very keen to work with this to ensure that we get the best return.

The Chairperson: We raised that at the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister yesterday. We asked what mechanism was in place to ensure that it is driven, because it is cross-departmental and a very significant programme of work.

Thank you very much, Will, Tony and Heather, for your presence and your presentation. Thanks also to Tommy, who had to leave just a few minutes ago.