

Written Ministerial Statement

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Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-21

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Mr P Robinson (The First Minister) and Mr M McGuinness (The deputy First Minister): This statement is to update the Assembly on progress with the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-21.

We launched the latest iteration of the Executive's Investment Strategy in October last year, covering the years 2011-21. This Strategy builds on the record level of investment delivered by the Executive since 2008, which has seen new roads, schools, hospitals, and other infrastructure assets delivered right across the region. It underlines our continued determination to secure the physical infrastructure we need to help deliver first-class public services, to regenerate our communities and to help our economy return to growth. The Strategy is informed by, and helps to support, our Programme for Government objectives and targets. It plays an important role too in delivering the infrastructure we need to support our Economic Strategy – building on the high quality jobs we have already attracted here by making this region a more competitive and attractive destination for inward investment. Delivering the Investment Strategy is also helping to support jobs in the hard-pressed construction industry – with the majority of contracts being won by local companies using local labour and materials.

The Investment Strategy covers a 10-year time frame, but is sufficiently flexible to respond to developments in policy and the wider economic context. For example, our recent statement on Together: Building a United Community commits us to invest substantial capital funds in shared education campuses, regeneration of urban villages and shared neighbourhood developments.

One of the benefits of the Investment Strategy is that it allows us to look back and assess our progress.

In the financial year 2012/13, some £1.3 billion was invested in capital infrastructure projects across the region, including approximately:

- £250 million under the **Networks** pillar;
- £130 million under the **Skills** pillar;
- £325million under the **Health** pillar;
- £240 million under the **Social** pillar;

- £175 million under the **Environment** pillar;
- £100 million under the **Productive** Pillar;
- £80 million under the **Justice** pillar.

During 2012/13 and the current financial year a number of important capital projects or programmes were completed. These included:

Networks:

- New park and ride facilities at Millbrook near Larne and at Antrim and Ballymoney Stations.
- Completion of delivery of new trains and a new Train Care Maintenance and Stabling facility at Adelaide.
- Track Safety improvements work on the Coleraine to Derry-Londonderry Line and Phase One of the track renewal project.
- Completion of the upgrade of Portadown Railway Station.
- 87 new Goldliner coaches entered service, which has resulted in improved services and a 6% increase in Goldline passenger journeys.
- Major improvements on the A32 at Shannaragh were completed in March 2013 and at Cherrymount Link in June 2013. Both schemes will significantly improve traffic flow and journey times.

Skills

- Delivery of new and refurbished schools, including St Mary's Primary School, Newcastle, Torbank Special School, Dundonald, Bangor Grammar School, Magherafelt Primary and Nursery School, St Columba's Primary School, Straw, and Lagan College, Belfast and progress is being made with 18 more new build capital schools projects. Arvalee Special School which has been destroyed by arson has been accommodated on temporary classrooms and will have priority for a new school on the Lisanelly site.

Health

- The opening of the £276 million South West Acute Hospital in Enniskillen on time and to budget and completion of the Grangewood Mental Health and Crisis Unit, a new 30 bed acute mental health inpatient unit in Derry-Londonderry.
- Opening of the Northern Ireland Molecular Pathology Lab (NI-MPL) and Northern Ireland Biobank (NIB), in association with Queen's University Belfast.
- The new Emergency Department at Antrim Area Hospital was official opened last week. In addition, Northern Ireland's First Sexual Assault Referral Centre was

completed on the Antrim Area Hospital Site by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in partnership with the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

- Substantial completion of three further capital developments representing an aggregate investment in the Health and Social Care Estate of circa £160million.

Social

- In excess of £160 million was invested in social housing. Schemes completed during the year include: Ballymacoss Hill, Lisburn (£12.5m), Tesco Site, Broadway (£7.5m), and Bligh's Lane, Derry-Londonderry (£6m). A further 40 social housing schemes completed during the year.
- Opening of the Olympic size swimming pool in Bangor.
- The completion of 'The Venue', Ebrington marked a milestone in the transformation of the site and in Derry-Londonderry's preparations for the City of Culture 2013 and associated events programme.
- The Metropolitan Arts Centre (MAC) in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter was officially opened in April 2012.

Environment

- Upgrade to or replacement of waste water treatment facilities at Carnmoney, Keady, Tullygarley and Brockagh Terrace and construction of a new pumping station for the Newtownards area.
- Other environmental measures such as flood alleviation and waste management.

Productive

- Opening of the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre and a further £6million investment in improving the region's tourism offering.
- Almost £2 million was invested in the Walled City Programme and Lighting in preparation for hosting the inaugural City of Culture.
- Over £35 million of enterprise support was offered to Invest NI clients.
- Over £30 million investment in the Rural Development and Primary Industries including significant processing and marketing, fisheries and woodland grants and the completion of a £2.5million new dairy unit and office block at Greenmount College, Antrim.

Justice

- Investment of £30million in new police vehicles.

The Strategy also gives structure and direction to the ongoing delivery of projects and the Executive is on track to invest more than £5 billion in infrastructure projects during the

current budget period to March 2015. Since the publication of the Strategy we have benefitted from additional allocations of capital and borrowing flexibility. As a result we are now in a better position to deliver the £8 billion of capital investment that was originally set out in the Strategy for the period beyond 2014/15 and will aim to go further, improving on this. Recent agreements as set out in the joint document 'Building a Prosperous and United Community' and in the Chancellor's recent Spending Round 2013 announcement will allow us to further review our infrastructure investment plans to ensure that the maximum possible capital is spent.

A significant number of projects are also currently in the process of being delivered or are in the pipeline, for example:

- Regional Sports stadia at Ravenhill, Casement Park and Windsor Park.
- New build schools projects plus the new shared campus projects at Lisanelly.
- Significant road improvement schemes.
- Ongoing regeneration work at Maze Long Kesh and Ebrington.
- The Bank Square regeneration project in Belfast and planning for the major Royal Exchange scheme.
- Significant investment in social housing.
- Health and care centres in Banbridge and Ballymena, plus two revenue funded primary healthcare hubs in Newry and Lisburn.
- A new Royal Maternity Hospital and new Regional Children's Hospital and work at Omagh Local Hospital and the Northwest Radiotherapy Unit.
- In 2012/13 investment of £160 million in water and waste water was delivered and a similar level of investment is expected in 2013/14.
- A new Community Safety College at Desertcreat and the Forensic Science Laboratory Services Accommodation project.
- A new accommodation block at Maghaberry prison.

The Strategy also allows us to plan ahead so that projects are progressed at the correct rate to take advantage of capital funding when it is available. This planning is dynamic to allow us to respond to changes in priorities and policies, unavoidable delays in certain projects and changes in the level of capital funding available.

Since the launch of the Investment Strategy the Executive has been able to announce a number of additional capital projects. In January 2013 the Education Minister announced that he was making an additional £220 million available to advance planning for a further 22 primary and post-primary new build schools. The intention is that these projects will be ready to make full use of any additional capital funding available in the next budget period. The Executive also committed to part-funding a new gas infrastructure in the West with an input of some £32.5 million – potentially leveraging a total investment of some £200 million.

Effective investment is not just about quantity. In times when budgets are tight it is even more important that we make good investment decisions that provide the maximum possible benefit for every pound spent. To this end, world-class collaborative research is ongoing between the Strategic Investment Board and Queens University on new strategic infrastructure planning models. These tools will help to ensure we deliver the right assets in the right place by providing the best information possible to inform investment decisions. It is innovation like this that will set our Investment Strategy apart – an intelligent strategy driven by evidence of what works best.

We are also continuing to examine models that will allow us to accelerate investment in infrastructure by using revenue funds in addition to capital funds. These revenue funded approaches can be used where they are affordable, offer value for money and do not undermine the future delivery of frontline services. The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety recently announced two revenue funded projects to deliver integrated primary healthcare hubs for the people of Lisburn and Newry. The acceleration of these projects will allow some of the important changes set out in Transforming Your Care to take place.

All of this investment not only allows us to deliver high-class and efficient public services but supports the re-balancing of our economy by creating the physical and educational environment which supports expansion of our own businesses and attracts inward investment. Investment in infrastructure and other public works delivered by the Executive is estimated to support some 30,000 jobs per year, more through the filtering of wages out into the wider economy and many more through creating the right environment to grow and attract businesses.”

The Executive values the support of the business community and is working with sector representatives to ensure that small and medium size enterprises across the region are helped to bid for public works. To ensure that everyone has the chance to contribute, departments now publish comprehensive up-to-date information on all planned capital works funded under the Investment Strategy. This information is freely available on the Executive’s Investment Strategy website, www.isni.gov.uk.

We are determined to maximise the impact on jobs of every pound invested in order to speed up economic recovery and when it is appropriate, departments will seek to bring forward investment in those public works that are more labour intensive in preference to schemes that would deliver a lower employment impact.

A modern, user-focused infrastructure is critical to our future success. Improving quality of life and job opportunities for our people requires continued investment in essential infrastructure – and we are pleased to report progress so far to this Assembly and look forward to the increased investment which we can deliver as a result of recent economic announcements.