

Written Answers to Questions

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Friday 30 September 2011

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 30 September 2011

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Ministerial Sub-group on Children and Young People

Mr Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) how often the Ministerial Sub-group on Children and Young People met during the 2010/11 Assembly session; and (ii) to detail its forward work programme for 2011/12.

(AQW 1739/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People met on two occasions during the 2010/11 Assembly session: 29th June 2010 and 2nd March 2011.

We will shortly be convening another meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee to discuss how we progress work in order to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people, in line with our joint commitments under the overarching Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A key focus of this discussion will be how we can best integrate and streamline efforts across all departments to ensure maximum impact on priority issues in relation to children and young people. This will help inform the role and focus of the Ministerial Sub-Committee in driving these key issues forward.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the cost to their Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 1949/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: As at 31 March 2011, OFMDFM sponsored seven Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and three other Arms Length Bodies (ALBs). The cost of funding OFMDFM's ALBs in 2009/10 was £29.2m and in 2010/11 was £28.4m, as outlined in the table below.

The grant-in-aid funding of a departmental Arms Length Body relates to the total running costs of the body, and includes programme expenditure by that body, in addition to its staffing, overhead and operating costs.

OFMDFM GRANT-IN-AID FUNDING OF ARMS LENGTH BODIES IN 2009/10 AND 2010/11

OFMDFM Sponsored Body	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000
NDPBs:		
The Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland	2,883	657
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	6,980	6,900
Strategic Investment Board	7,074	6,360

OFMDFM Sponsored Body	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000
Ilex Urban Regeneration Company	1,780	2,406
The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland	1,838	1,599
The Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland	1,264	1,126
Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission	N/A	1,284 ¹
NDPB Total	21,819	20,332
ALBs		
Community Relations Council for Northern Ireland	3,534	3,412
Northern Ireland Memorial Fund	3,575	4,441
Sustainable Development Commission	308	246
ALB Total	7,417	8,099
Grand Total	29,236	28,431

- 1 The Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) was established on 15 June 2005 under the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 as amended by the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2004. On the devolution of policing and justice powers in April 2010, sponsorship of NIJAC transferred to OFMDFM. Consequently, no funding costs were incurred by OFMDFM with respect to NIJAC for 2009/10.

The United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the European Union

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will consider appointing an additional representative to the office of The United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the European Union to provide a greater collaboration between the European bodies and the Department of the Environment and the Department for Regional Development.

(AQW 2016/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) regularly considers appropriate opportunities for secondments to the European institutions including the UK Permanent Representation (UKREP) to the European Union (EU). A central budget has been created to finance secondments for Northern Ireland officials to the EU, targeted at those policy areas agreed by the interdepartmental “Barroso Taskforce Working Group” as a priority in relation to Northern Ireland interests.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has responsibility for appointing staff to work in UKREP. Competitions for vacant posts are run on a regular basis and civil servants from Northern Ireland are eligible to apply for many of these posts. In addition to their normal recruitment procedures, UKREP is open to the secondment of staff from the NICS (where the NICS retains responsibility for the salary and allowances of the individuals concerned).

One civil servant from Northern Ireland is currently working in the Regions and Agriculture section of the UK Representation to the EU.

The Office of the Northern Ireland Executive is in discussions about the possible placement of a member of the NICS in UKREP to support the representation in Regional Policy.

Work is also underway to offer four secondment opportunities to support the work of the “Barroso Northern Ireland Taskforce”. One opportunity is available in each of the following agreed thematic group policy areas – Competitiveness and Employment; Innovation and Technology; Social Cohesion; and

Climate Change and Energy. It is envisaged that these 'desk officer' posts will increase the linkages between NICS Departments and European Bodies.

Attorney General

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many times since taking up office the Attorney General has given (i) oral; and (ii) written advice to Departments.

(AQW 2247/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Attorney General for Northern Ireland (AGNI) discharges his functions independently of government. OFMDFM holds sponsorship responsibility for the Office of the AGNI but has no locus in the statutory functions of the Attorney General.

Attorney General

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many times, since taking up office, the Attorney General has (i) attended meetings of the Executive; and (ii) met with each Minister.

(AQW 2248/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: It is not our practice to disclose details of Executive business. The content of Executive papers and all aspects of Executive business are confidential.

Legislative Programme

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the legislative programme for each Department for the current Assembly session.

(AQW 2285/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are currently considering how Executive Ministers' legislative intentions for this session can best be conveyed to the Assembly at a time and in a way most helpful to the conduct of its business, and we will be writing in due course to the Speaker.

Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) when the last meeting of the Ministerial Sub-committee for Children and Young People took place; and (ii) when is the next meeting due to take place.

(AQW 2344/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The last meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People took place on 2 March 2011.

Junior Ministers will shortly be convening another meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee to discuss how we progress work in order to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people, in line with our joint commitments under the overarching Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Programme for Government 2011-2015

Ms Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Programme for Government 2011-2015 will be (i) completed; and (ii) published for consultation.

(AQW 2361/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A draft of the Programme for Government was given to Ministers and party leaders last week. This draft was the culmination of several months of 'behind the scenes' work by both Ministers and officials, who have canvassed views from, and listened to the opinions of, a wide range of stakeholders and sectoral representatives.

We are of the view that much more work is needed to improve the current draft and that is why we wanted to share it with party leaders who, we hope, will bring it to their respective parties and come back to us with their own ideas.

The document has also been circulated around departments again for further comment and input.

We intend to bring a revised copy of the PfG to the Executive meeting on 6 October, with a view to issuing it for a 12-week public consultation as soon as possible thereafter. Following conclusion of the consultation period, we would anticipate publishing the new Programme for Government within a matter of weeks.

Of course, our capacity to do this is, to a great extent, determined by the co-operation shown by departments and Ministers and political parties in producing and agreeing a final draft for public consultation.

We hope you find this answer helpful

Budget Review Group

Mr Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Budget Review Group will bring recommendations regarding existing arm's-length bodies to the Executive; and whether any recommendations will be made on the potential rationalisation of these bodies.

(AQW 2390/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The responses received from departments on the Review of Arms Length Bodies are being analysed. Following this, we intend to bring a paper to a future meeting of the Budget Review Group (BRG) and the views of the Group will inform the recommendations which we, as joint chairs of BRG, ultimately bring to the Executive.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Rural Development Programme: Local Action Groups

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development at what percentage level of internal audit of their projects are each of the Local Action Groups (LAG) in the Rural Development Programme; and whether she has identified any areas which could reduce the level of audit in each LAG.

(AQW 1834/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): DARD Internal Audit in accordance with Commission Regulation 885/2006: Annex 1 para 4 (B) has a 5 year risk-based audit strategy which delivers a balanced assurance to the DARD Principal Accounting Officer, the Director of the DARD Paying Agency, the NIAO in its role as Certifying Body for the Paying Agency and the EC on the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls operating in relation to the administration of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

The 1st scheduled review of Axis 3 Measures (LEADER - Quality of life in Rural Areas and Diversification of the Rural economy - there are 6 Measures under this Axis) was scheduled and completed in 2010/2011.

In May 2010 when the audit testing sample was selected for the 2010/2011 review, only 3 of the 7 Joint Council Committees (JCCs) had made payments to projects. Three JCCs had made payments under Measures 3.1, 3.2 and one JCC had made a payment under Measure 3.3. No payments had been made under Measures 3.4 – 3.6.

The following samples were selected for testing within the JCCs under each measure:

Measure 3.1:

- 1 JCC - 5 projects had received payments from which 1 was selected i.e. 20%;

- 1 JCC - 5 projects had received payments from which 1 was selected i.e. 20%;
- 1 JCC - 4 projects had received payments from which 1 was selected i.e. 25%.

Measure 3.2:

- 1 JCC - 5 projects had received payments from which 1 was selected i.e. 20%;
- 1 JCC - 7 projects had received payments from which 1 was selected i.e. 14%;
- 1 JCC - 9 projects had received payments from which 2 were selected i.e. 22%.

Measure 3.3:

- Only 1 JCC had made a payment to a project under this measure therefore this 1 project was selected i.e. 100%.

Audit test samples must be representative to enable effective analysis and conclusion. Because of the small population i.e. the number of projects and related payments; the test sample is unavoidably higher in percentage terms as a consequence. The risk factors used for selection related to projects with the highest spend and those which had not been subject to a DARD EU Verification Check. If the test population had been larger i.e. more projects and payments the percentage selected for testing would have been significantly smaller, usually in the region of 5%, depending on the numbers and related testing practicalities.

A relatively short period of time was spent testing at each JCC to ensure that minimal disruption was caused to normal business.

Internal Audit is required to formally follow-up all recommendations. Internal Audit is currently following-up recommendations raised within the 2010/2011 audit report. This may involve limited testing at each JCC.

All Axis 3 measures are scheduled for review at least once over the 5-year period of the Internal Audit Strategy. The need for either additional or reduced coverage will depend on a number of factors including the results of previous Internal Audit reviews; the effective implementation of previous audit recommendations; DARD Corporate Risk Priorities; and the results from other internal (DARD) and external assurance providers. The Audit Strategy and related annual plans will be reviewed on an annual basis by the DARD Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of Rural Development Programme project funding applications which have been withdrawn after receiving approval, broken down by Local Action Group or Joint Council Committee cluster; and for the value of each of these projects and the reasons given for their withdrawal.

(AQW 1836/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Table 1 below details the information you have requested in a summarised format. As regards the reasons these are many and varied and are covered in table 2.

Table 1 Application Status Data						
	Terminated		Withdrawn		Total Apps	Total Sum of Grant Awarded
DA Cluster	Total Apps	Sum of Grant Awarded	Total Apps	Sum of Grant Awarded		
ARC NW	29	£764,146	8	£132,541	37	£896,687.56

Table 1 Application Status Data						
	Terminated		Withdrawn		Total Apps	Total Sum of Grant Awarded
DA Cluster	Total Apps	Sum of Grant Awarded	Total Apps	Sum of Grant Awarded		
DRAP	3	£61,115	7	£134,061	10	£195,176.96
GROW	4	£42,159			4	£42,159.08
LRP	5	£81,205	2	£44,855	7	£126,060.00
NER	24	£435,823	15	£283,963	39	£719,787.19
SOAR	13	£269,927	6	£94,602	19	£364,530.24
SWARD	27	£674,174	10	£246,225	37	£920,399.08
Grand Total	105	£2,328,551	48	£936,248	153	£3,264,800.11

TABLE 2 REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING

Reason	Number
Wrong Measure	11
Withdrawn/terminated by cluster	22
Withdrawn by applicant	39
Economy	12
Lack of match funding	13
Project no longer viable	15
Force majeure	8
Ineligible	7
Cant comply with terms & conditions	12
Financial problems	6
Bureaucracy	3
State aid rules	2
Planning	1
Other	2
Total	153

Rose Energy Biomass Power Plant Development at Glenavy

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the impact on the poultry industry of the delay in the granting of planning approval for the Rose Energy Biomass Power Plant development at Glenavy.

(AQW 1848/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Market demand for poultry products is forecast to increase and this provides potential to expand. In order to maintain existing production and to facilitate future expansion in the north of Ireland, the poultry industry needs reliable and sustainable disposal routes for poultry litter.

The majority of poultry litter produced here is currently land spread as an organic fertiliser. However, the local poultry industry is experiencing difficulty in finding suitable land as a spreading outlet for poultry litter. It is also recognised that land spreading of poultry litter here is not sustainable in the long term at current levels. This is due to its high phosphorus content, the enriched phosphorus status of local soils and the resulting impact of excess phosphorus on water quality.

The industry has reported that the delay in planning approval for the Rose Energy project has created uncertainty over future disposal of poultry litter.

Agricultural Shows and Country Fairs

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the importance of agricultural shows and country fairs; and what her Department has done to promote and assist these events over the last twelve months.

(AQW 1850/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I fully recognise the contribution made by Agricultural Shows and Country Fairs to the agri-food industry and rural communities. I am very aware that agricultural shows are an integral part of the fabric of rural life, giving rural communities a focal point and encouraging interest in farming amongst young people and the general public.

I have attended and promoted a number of shows this year, meeting with both the livestock and trade exhibitors, and other visitors to the events. During my time as Minister, I hope to get the opportunity to visit each of the local Shows.

My Department has provided some financial support to all of the agricultural shows held in the north this year. In addition, DARD has staged advisory exhibitions featuring the Rural Development Programme, at eight of these shows this year, hired trade space and taken advertisements in some of the Show catalogues. DARD funding from the Regional Food Programme has also enabled some shows to mount exhibitions that showcase artisan food producers and quality local produce to the visitors.

Flood Bank Adjacent to the Meadows in Ballymoney

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assessment the Rivers Agency has made of the works carried out as a result of the topographical survey on the flood bank adjacent to the Meadows in Ballymoney.

(AQW 1896/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The topographical survey conducted by my Rivers Agency, following the exceptional flooding during August 2008, identified the level of protection afforded by the floodbank adjacent to the Meadows could be improved by the removal of lowspots. When this work was being undertaken the opportunity was also taken to provide additional freeboard, which provides some increased protection to the properties as clay bank structures are prone to localised settlement and displacement. Rivers Agency is content that no further works are required and, as part of the routine programme of inspection on all designated flood defence structures, will inspect the floodbank adjacent to the Meadows every 3 years.

Flood Bank Adjacent to the Meadows in Ballymoney

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether minor works to landscape the floodbank adjacent to the Meadows in Ballymoney have been completed.

(AQW 1897/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Minor landscaping works to the floodbank adjacent to the Meadows in Ballymoney have commenced and I am informed will be completed by 23 September 2011.

Glenaan River

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what flood alleviation works have been carried out by the Rivers Agency as a result of the feasibility study carried out on the Glenaan River. (AQW 1898/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Glenaan River from upstream of the Primary School to the upper limit of the Dall River has been designated within the terms of the Drainage (NI) Order 1973. Regular maintenance will be performed by Rivers Agency as deemed necessary. Bank stabilisation works were completed in 2010 and flow through the road bridge has improved as a result.

Kellswater (Kildrum/Woodgreen) Study

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what works were identified to be carried out as a result of the Kellswater (Kildrum/Woodgreen) study; and which of these works have been completed.

(AQW 1899/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A study to examine options to reduce the risk of flooding has not identified any works where the benefits exceed the cost, due to the high level of protection that properties already have. In these circumstances my Department does not propose to undertake further work beyond regular maintenance of the watercourse and providing assistance during flood events.

Information is also available through NI Direct for property owners to help them take action to manage the risk of flooding.

Ahoghill Village Stream

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the study on the Ahoghill Village Stream, including what works have been identified and completed.

(AQW 1900/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: A study to examine options to reduce the risk of flooding has identified a viable scheme costing of the order of £2.6m. Details of this study can be found on the Rivers section within my Department's web site.

Given my Department's existing programme of capital works and the available capital allocation it is unlikely that these works will be undertaken within the current 4 year funding period. My Department will continue to bid for additional funding as opportunities arise, however, the current economic situation means that we must prioritise what funds are available.

Spreading of Slurry

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what restrictions are in place on the spreading of slurry.

(AQW 1926/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Nitrates Action Programme (NI) Regulations 2010 place restrictions on the spreading of slurry and other organic manures. The Regulations are joint legislation between my Department and the Department of Environment.

The Regulations prohibit the spreading of slurry between 15 October and 31 January. This is referred to as the 'closed period'.

The Regulations also place restrictions on how much, when and how slurry can be spread outside the closed period. These include the following:

slurry must not be spread when the soil is waterlogged, flooded (or likely to flood), frozen, snow covered, if heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours, or where land is steeply sloping with a significant risk of water pollution occurring.

- slurry must not be spread within 10m of a watercourse, 20m of a lake or 50m of a borehole, spring or well.
- slurry must be spread using inverted splash plate, trailing shoe, trailing hose, soil injection, band spreading or soil incorporation methods.
- single applications of slurry are limited to 50 cubic metres per hectare with a minimum of three weeks between applications.

These measures promote efficient and sustainable use of the nutrients in slurry for crop fertilisation and protect water quality.

A Guidance Booklet for farmers on the Nitrates Action Programme explains the measures in more detail. In addition, my Department's Code of Good Agricultural Practice contains advice on best practice for the management of slurry including minimising odour. Both the Guidance Booklet and the Code are available from the DARD website at www.dardni.gov.uk/environment/countrysidemanagement.

Inspection and enforcement of the Regulations is carried out by the NI Environment Agency, an agency of the Department of Environment.

Spreading of Slurry

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she has any plans to alter the regulations which place restrictions on the spreading of slurry.

(AQW 1928/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (NI) 2010 place restrictions on the spreading of slurry and are joint legislation between my Department and the Department of Environment (DOE).

The Regulations prohibit the spreading of slurry and other organic manures between 15 October and 31 January. This is referred to as the 'closed period'. There are also restrictions on how, when and how much slurry can be spread outside the closed period.

The purpose of these measures is to promote efficient and sustainable use of the nutrients in slurry for crop fertilisation and protect water quality.

At present, the Departments do not intend to alter the current restrictions on the spreading of slurry. However, the European Commission has expressed the view that the closed period for slurry spreading in the north may need to be extended to more effectively reduce the risk of water pollution.

Therefore, my Department has commissioned the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute to conduct local research on the impact of slurry spreading and a survey of slurry spreading practices.

When the research is completed, my Department and DOE will review the restrictions on slurry spreading in light of the findings of the research. Any future changes to the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations would be the subject of public consultation.

Veterinary Students

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the increase in student fees in Great Britain, whether her Department has any plans to assist veterinary students who travel there to study.

(AQW 1937/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department and the agri-food sector depend on the availability of veterinary advice, but I have reviewed the position and, based on the latest evidence, am satisfied there is no current or emerging risk to the supply of veterinary professionals locally. I met recently with representatives

of the North of Ireland Veterinary Association and the British Veterinary Association and listened to their concerns about the consequences of high tuition fees for students wishing to study veterinary medicine. This is an issue that, of course, affects more than veterinary students and I have considerable personal sympathy with the challenges that future students will face.

As you will be aware, there are no veterinary medicine courses available locally, but they are available in Dublin and at seven universities in Britain. Institutions in Britain charging higher fees will be offering bursaries to students from low income backgrounds as part of their access arrangements. Students from the north will also be able to avail of the means tested support arrangements offered by DEL if they are from lower income households. In the case of those wishing to study in Dublin, I understand that no tuition fees are chargeable, though there is a registration fee which is currently reimbursed by DEL.

I have already relayed the concerns expressed to me by the professional veterinary bodies to the Minister for Employment and Learning and intend meeting with him to seek an assurance that he will keep this issue under review.

Rural Development Programme

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how the Rural Development Programme database helps her Department and the associated organisations in the effective and efficient delivery of the Programme.

(AQW 1961/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Rural Development Programme database, known as System 2007, facilitates the effective and efficient delivery of the programme and does this through:

- I.T. provision which meets all relevant EU regulations pertaining to the operation of the NIRDP 2007-2013;
- the efficient and continuous provision of a modern, centralised, twenty-four hours online website and database system which accommodates the submission and processing of online applications for funding under the Programme's various Axes and associated measures;
- the provision of a secure IT system only accessible to relevant Departmental staff and approved Delivery Agent staff;
- the inclusion of a documented and validated audit trail for all financial transactions;
- the provision of a platform for the delivery of online services to farmers and other programme beneficiaries;
- the provision of an extensive ad-hoc reporting system which can be tailored to meet specific reporting requirements.
- a flexible IT system which can be adapted, if required, to meet changing requirements of users during the course of the programme.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how her Department is tackling Bovine Tuberculosis.

(AQW 1974/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: There has been considerable progress made in reducing TB incidence in cattle in the north of Ireland. The herd incidence has almost halved from nearly 10% in 2002 to 5.03% at 31 July 2011. The number of TB reactor cattle in 2010 at 6,400 was 22% lower than in 2009 and the lowest since 1998. Also, the number of herd breakdowns in 2010 at 1,150 was the lowest since 1996 when TB levels were on a rising trend.

While these figures are encouraging, there is clearly more work to be done. TB is a very complex and challenging disease that is difficult to eradicate and it has an adverse impact on those farm

businesses affected. My aim is ultimately to eradicate TB in cattle here, but there is no simple solution or 'quick-fix'.

We have a rigorous EU Commission approved TB eradication programme in place that includes a strand to address the wildlife factor. This eradication programme is vital in safeguarding our annual £1,000 million plus export-dependent livestock and livestock products industry. Our programme is focused on the detection of diseased or high risk animals; the compulsory removal of those animals from their herd of origin to slaughter; and the restriction of movements of cattle from infected herds until they are tested clear.

My Department continues to enhance its TB eradication programme. We now remove as reactors those animals that give an inconclusive result to a second consecutive TB test rather than after a third test as before. We also use DNA identity tags on reactors to help reduce the potential for animal substitution post valuation, which should help to reduce any risk of fraud and further disease spread.

We have improved the rigour of the TB testing process through regular communications with Private Veterinary Practitioners (PVPs) and improvements in the PVP supervision system; as well as improving DARD's own delivery of TB testing through monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

We are presently reviewing the use of the gamma interferon blood test in the TB programme to ensure we are making best use of the test. We recently completed the fieldwork for a TB Biosecurity Study to assess what critical differences there are between TB breakdown and clear herds in a TB high incidence area in County Down. The results from that Study should add to our knowledge of TB risks and help inform new biosecurity advice for farmers here.

Funding has been reserved in the DARD budget to commission further TB and wildlife research and studies to provide a robust evidence base to guide the TB eradication strategy. It is important that we do not duplicate the expensive research work that is ongoing in other areas, but that we draw down the lessons from that work and collaborate where appropriate.

Interventions to address the wildlife factor may include improving biosecurity, as well as more direct intervention such as the vaccination of badgers, which may be the most feasible solution in the long-term. My officials are closely tracking the studies being conducted in the south of Ireland and in England to develop a viable oral badger vaccine and cost-effective means of vaccine deployment, and also the developments to produce a viable cattle vaccine.

Direct interventions in wildlife will incur substantial cost and must be fully justified in cost-benefit terms. We need to be certain that the benefit would justify the considerable costs.

Action to deal with cattle to cattle transmission of TB will continue to be an important element of the TB strategy as we move forward

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether her Special Adviser is paid within Band A or Band B of the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scale; and, if it is within Band B whether, in light of the DFP decision to increase the upper limit of the Band B scale to £90,000, there has been an increase in salary or an increase is planned.

(AQW 1975/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Special Adviser in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is paid within Band B of the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scale. There has been no increase and are no plans to increase the Special Adviser's salary following DFP's decision to raise the upper limit of Band B to £90,000.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the cost to her Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 1991/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The cost to my Department of its arms-length bodies in each of the last two years is detailed below. This includes the cost of Sponsor Branches.

	2009/10	2010/11
Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute	£41,637,625	£41,905,746
Agricultural Wages Board	£24,560	£22,912
Livestock and Meat Commission for NI	£237,593	£181,085
NI Fishery Harbour Authority	£24,249	£37,999
Loughs Agency of the Foyle and Carlingford Irish Lights Commission	£2,661,000	£2,009,500
Drainage Council for NI	£2,284	£1,895

Woodland Cover on the Public Sector Estate

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) what steps are currently being taken to extend woodland cover on the public sector estate, particularly on land which is currently unused but still needs to be maintained; (ii) what plans are in place to encourage Departments and local Councils to use their land for tree planting schemes in future; and (iii) for an estimate of the potential savings on maintenance per hectare over a ten year period.

(AQW 2018/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department's Forest Service offer advice and grant assistance to create new woodland under the Woodland Grant Scheme and these grants are available to public bodies such as Councils, as well as private landowners.

My Department also manages a significant land area, much of which is already managed for forestry purposes by Forest Service. The Forest estate includes some areas of land which are retained unplanted due to their unsuitability to support tree growth for biodiversity landscaping and public access purposes.

Forest Service has written to all Councils, providing information on woodland creation and describing how Councils can consider new woodland areas to deliver their commitments on public access, biodiversity and wood production. Forest Service has had follow up meetings with those Councils which expressed an interest and to date has approved a planting application from one Council and is currently processing another. Forest Service has also met with the Housing Executive on the subject of new woodland creation and has subsequently approved a planting application.

Although Government departments are not eligible for planting grant assistance, Forest Service has met both the Department of Regional Development's Road Service and the Ministry of Defence to encourage them to consider, where appropriate, the creation of new woodland on land they manage.

The savings in maintenance costs of land as a result of woodland creation vary considerably on a site by site basis, depending on the previous land use and requirements for maintenance. Creating new woodland, is widely acknowledged to be an inexpensive way of restoring or maintaining the environment whilst contributing to wider goals of community and economic regeneration where woodland is an appropriate land use.

Comprehensive Woodland Inventory

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the comprehensive woodland inventory that has been produced by Forest Service will not be signed-off until March 2012.

(AQW 2019/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Forest Service is working to develop a woodland inventory, using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, from existing data sources.

Work to generate combined woodland data commenced in the 2010/11 business year. Further analysis is being carried out this year, taking account of new data, to validate the combined woodland data. This will result in a further refinement of the woodland data and at the end of this business year, Forest Service will publish improved baseline information of woodland area in the north of Ireland.

Fracking

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the practice of fracking and its effects on the agriculture industry.

(AQW 2178/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: To date my Department has made no assessment of the effects of the practice of fracking on the agriculture industry.

Capital Projects

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what capital projects her Department has planned for the East Londonderry constituency in each of the next three years.

(AQW 2279/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Department will carry out a number of capital investment projects within this constituency over the next three years. The current position in respect of planned capital projects is shown on Table 1, below.

Additional capital investments may be funded over the budget period; however, at this stage, commitments have not yet been confirmed.

TABLE 1

The Capital investment projects planned for the East Derry constituency.	
Project	Description
Capital: Rivers Agency	1 project at Coleraine, Lodge Burn under Flood Alleviation and Drainage Infrastructure in the 2011/12 financial year. Refurbishment of the Portna Sluice Gate on the Lower Bann at Kilrea in the 2011/12 financial year. 2 projects to refurbish Lyttlesdale Drain Grille at Garvagh in the 2011-12 financial year.
Capital Grants, Axis 1: Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (NIRDP)	Farm Modernisation Programme tranche 2: investment in new plant and machinery – 172 projects in the 2011/12 financial year. Manure Technology Efficiency Scheme tranche 2: 7 projects in the 2011/12 financial year.

The Capital investment projects planned for the East Derry constituency.	
Project	Description
Capital Grants, Axis 3: NIRDP	Diversification of Farm Businesses: 12 projects in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years. Business Creation and Development: 16 projects in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years. Tourism Activities: 7 projects in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years. Improving Basic Services in Rural Areas: 3 projects in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years. Village Renewal: 1 project in the 2011/12 financial year.

Project	Description
Capital Grants, Interreg IV	Environmental Improvements: 1 project at Kilrea in the 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 financial years.
Capital Grants, Biomass Processing Challenge Fund	Anaerobic Digester: 1 project in the 2011/12 financial year.
Capital Grants, Fisheries Division	European Fisheries Fund: Lobster V notching programme will fund projects in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years. Vessel Modernisation will fund 2 projects in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years.

Countryside Management Scheme

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on payments under the latest Countryside Management Scheme.

(AQO 402/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I can confirm that in 2010, my Department received 913 claims to the new Countryside Management Scheme (the CMS) on the Single Application Form. At 1 September 2011, 455 of these claims had been paid.

I anticipate that all outstanding payments will be made before 31 December 2011 providing that there are no claim validations which need further investigation. The reason that the remaining inspections are progressing more slowly compared with the 2009 claim year is because DARD must inspect an additional 400 claims. The number of claim inspections has been increased in line with EU Regulations, because when initial inspections were carried out earlier this year, a high level of non-compliance and over-declaration was detected. This additional work has placed pressure on resources in my Department, however we are progressing claims as quickly as possible.

Anaerobic Digestion Plants

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) on how many occasions in each of the last two years her Department has been consulted by Planning Service on applications for

Anaerobic Digestion Plants; (ii) to how many requests the Department has responded; (iii) how many responses are currently being processed; and (iv) what is the average time taken to issue a response. (AQW 2284/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department's records regarding Planning Service Applications for Anaerobic Digestion Plants indicate

- (i) that the number of occasions in each of the last two years on which DARD has been consulted is as shown in Table 1:

TABLE 1

Year	1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010	1 September 2010 to 23 September 2011
Number of occasions	4	1

- (ii) Responses have been completed for four of these; (iii) one response is in the process of consultation; (iv) the average time taken to respond to the completed requests was 22 working days.

Irish Ploughing Championships

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) whether she attended the Irish Ploughing Championships on 20 September 2011 in her official capacity; (ii) whether her Department will pay the expenses of the visit; and (iii) to detail the cost of the visit.

(AQW 2391/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) I attended the National Ploughing Championships on 20 and 21 September 2011 in my official capacity as Minister for Agriculture & Rural Development. This event provided me with a valuable opportunity to meet and network with counterparts and industry representatives from across the island and show my support for exhibitors and ploughing competitors from the north.
- (ii) This visit was official business, and the costs will be covered by the Department.
- (iii) The cost of the visit for the ministerial party has not been finalised but should be approximately £1,700 for accommodation and meals.

Groceries Code Adjudicator

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the introduction of a Groceries Code Adjudicator.

(AQO 397/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: As the regulation of issues affecting competition is a reserved matter you will understand that the introduction of a Groceries Code Adjudicator is not within my remit. However, I support fully the concept of fair pricing and welcome the decision by the British Government in August 2010 to proceed to establish a Grocery Code Adjudicator.

On 24 May 2011 the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) published a draft Groceries Code Adjudicator Bill and invited Parliament to undertake pre-legislative scrutiny. Scrutiny of the Bill was undertaken by the BIS Committee which held four evidence sessions with a cross-section of stakeholders, including large retailers and suppliers' organisations. BIS also received a written contribution from the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee. BIS are now considering these and other comments received and will provide a Government response in due course.

I also want to place on record that I hope that the British Government will introduce an adjudicator with real power at an early date. I believe that all links in the food chain are dependent on each other; that

farmers and food processors should be treated fairly and have confidence that the new Adjudicator will deal effectively with local complaints. In my view this is relevant, as there are some supermarkets here that operate on an all island basis.

Single Farm Payments

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on Single Farm Payment applications, including the percentage of applications that have been selected for further investigation.

(AQO 400/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Although the member's question refers to the Single Farm Payment scheme, I understand that further clarification has determined that the question refers to inspections regarding the new NI Countryside Management Scheme. I can confirm that in 2010, my Department received 913 claims to the new Countryside Management Scheme (the CMS) on the Single Application Form. At 1 September 2011, 455 of these claims had been paid. In line with EU Regulations, a minimum of 5% of claims must be inspected and earlier this year 66 inspections were carried out, which is equivalent to 7% of scheme claims. These inspections detected a high level of non-compliance and over-declaration and as a result an additional 400 claims must be inspected. This means that almost 44% of claims have been selected for further inspection. These inspections are on-going.

The need for additional inspections has placed pressure on resources in my Department. This means that the remaining payments for the 2010 NICMS claims will progress more slowly compared with the 2009 claim year.

I anticipate that all outstanding payments will be made before 31 December 2011 providing that the additional inspections do not indicate that there are claim validations which may need further investigation.

Flooding: East Belfast

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the East Belfast flood alleviation plan.

(AQO 406/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am aware of recent media interest and can confirm that the integrated contract for the Greenway environmental scheme and flood alleviation works is continuing. While I am disappointed at the rate of progress I can advise that one major culvert on the Loop River is substantially complete. I remain committed to providing flood alleviation for the people of East Belfast.

Agri-food

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her plans for developing growth within the agri-food sector.

(AQO 407/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am grateful for this opportunity to outline my plans for developing growth within the agri-food sector. Since taking up office, I have consistently stated my belief that the focus for the wider economy moving forward must be to ensure sustainable growth that can create jobs. The key to this is through the type of export-led growth demonstrated by the agri-food sector, whose external sales have increased in value by 66% over the past 10 years.

Further growth within this sector has to be a team effort, with DARD, DETI/InvestNI and DEL who each have a remit within the agri-food sector. There are also arrangements in place for close working with industry representatives and it is through this collaborative approach that a strategy for the sector was produced last year. Undoubtedly this provides good foundations and we now need to build on this to develop a longer-term strategic vision for the sector, focussing on export-led growth targets.

My plans for doing this involve working closely with DETI and InvestNI to establish a Food Strategy Board, made up of industry representatives, with an independent Chair. The key role of this Board, working alongside Government, will be to take the existing strategy to the next level, developing challenging targets for growth and development in the longer term.

Of course, in addition to this, my Department continues to provide a wide range of service to the industry through knowledge transfer and education services at CAFRE, research and innovation support through AFBI, as well as financial support through the Rural Development Programme.

I am committed that my Department will continue to support the sector in its efforts to grow further and that we will continue to work alongside other Executive Departments and industry to maximise the potential of this crucial part of our economy.

Agricultural Wages Board

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why she will not abolish the Agricultural Wages Board.

(AQO 409/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My view is that the Agriculture Wages Board is a valuable forum for wage negotiations and importantly is used as a benchmark for the wider Agri-food industry and other rural occupations.

It ensures that agricultural workers have at least a minimum basic wage and reasonable minimum terms and conditions of employment; provides a statutory level of protection for agricultural workers, which goes beyond that provided by general employment law; and provides a pay-bargaining structure for employers and workers.

Although it is no longer necessary to carry out quinquennial reviews of Non-Departmental Public Bodies, the Agricultural Wages Board's (AWB's) management statement requires regular reviews and in line with good practice, I intend to complete a review of the Agricultural Wages Board in the coming months.

Following the review I will consider the views expressed and options available and make a decision on the way forward.

Marine Bill

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she is liaising with the Minister of the Environment on the content of the Marine Bill.

(AQO 410/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I am liaising with the Minister of the Environment on the Marine Bill and we had a useful meeting on 21 July at which the Bill was discussed. In fact we are meeting again later to-day and again the Bill will be on the agenda. The main issues we are focusing on are management of marine environment and establishment of marine conservation zones.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Libraries NI

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for further details of Libraries NI store losses which included £98,988 of stock-taking discrepancies as highlighted in its accounts for the 2009/10 financial year; and what procedures have been put in place to prevent a recurrence.

(AQW 1790/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The total amount of stores losses for 2009/10 was approximately £287,000, made up as follows:

- £160,000 non-returned stock items
- £99,000 stock taking discrepancies
- £26,000 vandalism
- £2,000 vehicle accidents

1 Non return of Items of Stock

55,459 items of stock items (books, DVD's etc) were borrowed by library members and not returned. These were valued at £159,797.

In order to reduce the non-return of stock items fines are imposed on members holding overdue books. Three reminders are issued to members seeking the return of overdue books. Once overdue fines amount to £10, adult members are banned from further borrowing for a period of 2 years.

2 Stock Taking discrepancy

40,700 items of library stock (valued at £98,988) were identified as missing while carrying out physical stock counts in a number of libraries.

The Education and Library Boards had not carried out these physical counts for several years and therefore these discrepancies will have arisen over this period of time, although they were all accounted for in the 2009-10 Report and Accounts.

Libraries NI is implementing a rolling programme of annual physical stock counts to ensure a more prompt identification of discrepancies. In addition Libraries NI is investing in security gates in a number of libraries and security tagging a proportion of stock to act as a deterrent to the theft of stock.

The remaining store losses of £28,000 consist of vandalism costs of approximately £26,000 and vehicle accidents of approximately £2,000.

Libraries NI

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the reasons for the £3000 in compensation paid out by Libraries NI in the 2009/10 financial year.

(AQW 1791/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI have informed me that in 2009/10 financial year four Industrial Tribunal cases were settled following conciliation.

Three cases were internal grievances relating to terms and conditions of employment.

One case was in relation to a procedural error in a recruitment exercise conducted by a transferor organisation. In line with transfer provisions under TUPE, liability for the case transferred to Libraries NI on 1 April 2009.

Libraries NI

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why Libraries NI cannot identify the VAT debtor for its 2008 and 2009 balances which are currently valued at £650,000; and what action is being taken to recover this money.

(AQW 1794/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI was established on 1 April 2009 and this issue relates to expenditure on library services by the Education and Library Boards before that date.

Libraries NI inform me that they have been unable to obtain from the Education and Library Boards the analysis of their VAT debtor relating to public libraries for 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009. Therefore

Libraries NI are unable to show the comparative figures for the 2 years before it began operations in their 2009/10 Report and Accounts.

The Education and Library Boards advised that it was not possible to identify this figure without incurring significant costs. The Education and Library Boards have recovered the total amounts owing to them as at 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009.

Libraries NI assure me that they have recovered their VAT debtor of £655,000 as at 31 March 2010.

Football Clubs

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what assistance her Department provides for football clubs such as Glebe Rangers who play in the IFA Championship.

(AQW 1797/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is the lead development agency for sport in the north of Ireland with responsibility for the distribution of funding. In the last three financial years, Sport NI has provided £2,487,971 of exchequer funding to association football clubs who play in the IFA Championship. A breakdown of this funding is set out in the table below. Furthermore, a number of Championship clubs have applied for assistance under Sport NI's Sport Matters Community Capital Programme. These applications have been assessed and are presently on a waiting list for awards subject to available funding and meeting project management requirements. Sport NI is also currently operating a revenue based, small grants programme, Awards for Sport, to which Championship clubs, such as Glebe Rangers, may be eligible to apply. This programme is due to close for applications on 26 September 2011. In the future, there will be potential for Championship clubs to benefit from sub-regional development funding. This funding has been endorsed by the Executive as a priority area of spend in the next CSR period (2015) and a Strategic Outline Case is currently being developed having regard to strategic needs.

SPORT NI FUNDING TO CHAMPIONSHIP CLUBS

Year	Club	Project	Award
2009/10	Institute FC	Stadia Safety Programme	£727,200
2009/10	Knockbreda FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£87,100
2009/10	Newry City FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£231,500
2009/10	Sport & Leisure FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£87,050
2009/10	Armagh City FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£84,080
2009/10	Ballyclare Comrades FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£232,000
2009/10	Ballinamallard United FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£87,050
2009/10	Portstewart FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£79,713
2009/10	Moyola Park AFC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£83,079
2009/10	H&W Welders FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£75,488
2009/10	Annagh United FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£84,872
2009/10	Lurgan Celtic FC	Soccer Strategy Facilities	£77,905
2009/10	Dergview FC	Floodlighting	£152,084
2009/10	Ballinamallard United FC	Floodlighting	£132,978
2009/10	Newry City FC	Purchase of equipment	£8,500
2009/10	Ballymoney United FC	Awards for Sport	£5,033

Year	Club	Project	Award
2010/11	Newry City FC	Stadia Safety Urgent Works	£58,687
2010/11	Ballyclare Comrades FC	Stadia Safety Urgent Works	£59,652
2010/11	Larne FC	Stadia Safety Urgent Works	£53,200
2010/11	Institute FC	Stadia Safety Programme	£80,800
Totals			£2,487,971

Funding for Irish League Football

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding her Department has given to Irish League football in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1798/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is the lead development agency for sport in the north of Ireland with responsibility for the distribution of funding. In the last three financial years Sport NI has provided £7,038,307 of exchequer funding to Irish League clubs in the IFA Premiership and Championship 1 and 2 leagues. A breakdown of this funding is set out below.

IFA PREMIERSHIP

Year	Club	Amount
2008/09	Cliftonville FC	£300,000
2008/09	Donegal Celtic FC	£824,133
2009/10	Ballymena United FC	£1,025,035
2009/10	Crusaders FC	£448,706
2009/10	Dungannon Swifts FC	£232,000
2009/10	Glenavon FC	£347,000
2009/10	Portadown FC	£314,495
2010/11	Carrick Rangers FC	£52,760
2010/11	Coleraine FC	£67,067
2010/11	Crusaders FC	£704,070
2010/11	Donegal Celtic FC	£48,954
2010/11	Glenavon FC	£24,404
2010/11	Glentoran FC	£59,350
2010/11	Linfield FC	£53,582
2010/11	Portadown FC	£48,780
Total		£4,550,336

IFA CHAMPIONSHIP 1

Year	Club	Amount
2008/09	Dergview FC	£152,084

Year	Club	Amount
2009/10	Ballinamallard United FC	£220,028
2009/10	H&W Welders FC	£75,488
2009/10	Newry City FC	£240,000
2010/11	Institute FC	£808,000
2010/11	Larne FC	£53,200
2010/11	Newry City FC	£58,687
Total		£1,607,487

IFA CHAMPIONSHIP 2

Year	Club	Amount
2009/10	Annagh United FC	£84,872
2009/10	Ballyclare Comrades FC	£232,000
2009/10	Ballymoney United FC	£5,033
2009/10	Knockbreda FC	£87,100
2009/10	Lurgan Celtic FC	£77,905
2009/10	Moyola Park AFC	£83,079
2009/10	Portstewart FC	£79,7132
2009/10	Sport & Leisure FC	£87,050
2010/11	Armagh City FC	£84,080
2010/11	Ballyclare Comrades FC	£59,652
Total		£880,484

Ballymoney Library

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the reasons for the proposed reduction in the opening hours of Ballymoney Library.

(AQW 1830/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I recognise that both my Department and sponsored bodies have already had to take very difficult decisions in planning to live within reduced budget allocations over the next four years.

In managing these new pressures, the Department will work closely with sponsored bodies to minimise impacts on front line services and protect priority areas.

Libraries NI have commenced a review of Library opening hours, including those in Ballymoney Library, which will allow Libraries NI to achieve the savings required to live within their budget allocations over the next four years

I would emphasise that nothing has been finalised by the Libraries NI Board at this stage. I understand that a consultation has commenced and that will include a conversation with each community about when they would like to see their library opened. I would encourage people to take part in the consultation.

Decisions will not be made until all the information from the consultation has been collated and presented to the Board of Libraries NI. The Board of Libraries NI contains councillors from the DUP, the SDLP, my own party and the UUP.

Ballymoney Library

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps she has taken to safeguard the long-term future of Ballymoney Library.

(AQW 1831/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I recognise that both my Department and its sponsored bodies have already had to take very difficult decisions in planning to live within reduced budget allocations over the next four years.

In managing these new pressures, the Department will work closely with its sponsored bodies to minimise impacts on front line services and protect priority areas.

In the light of the budget settlement and the level of savings that are required the Board of Libraries NI determined, reluctantly, that it was preferable to reduce opening hours across the entire library network rather than close a substantial number of libraries. Libraries NI informed me that they took this approach to protect the network of sustainable libraries over the longer term.

The operation and viability of specific libraries is a matter for the Board of Libraries NI.

Decisions will not be made until all the information from the consultation has been collated and presented to the Board of Libraries NI. The Board of Libraries NI contains councillors from the DUP, the SDLP, my own party and the UUP.

Ballymoney Library

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what weight she will attach to the responses to the public consultation on the proposed reduction in the opening hours of Ballymoney Library.

(AQW 1832/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Board of Libraries NI has commenced a review of Library opening hours, including those in Ballymoney Library.

I would emphasise that nothing has been finalised by the Libraries NI Board at this stage. I understand that a consultation has commenced and that will include a conversation with each community about when they would like to see their library opened. I would encourage people to take part in the consultation.

Consideration of the responses made to the public consultation is a matter for the Board of Libraries NI.

Decisions will not be made until all the information from the consultation has been collated and presented to the Board of Libraries NI. The Board of Libraries NI contains councillors from the DUP, the SDLP, my own party and the UUP.

Ballymoney Library

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what equality proofing has been carried out in relation to the proposed reduction in the opening hours of Ballymoney Library.

(AQW 1833/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I recognise that both the Department and its sponsored bodies will to take very difficult decisions while planning to live within reduced budget allocations over the next four years.

In order to deliver some of these savings Libraries NI have commenced a review of Library opening hours, including the opening hours of Ballymoney Library. I would emphasise that nothing has been finalised by the Libraries NI Board at this stage. I understand that a consultation has commenced and

that will include a conversation with each community about when they would like to see their library opened. I would encourage people to take part in the consultation.

The operation of specific libraries is a matter for the Board of Libraries NI.

A draft Equality Impact Assessment and a draft Rural Impact Assessment have been published as part of the consultation process. The documents are available on the Libraries NI website and consultees are invited to comment on these documents as well as through questionnaires. Contact is being made with groups representative of the Section 75 categories and of rural interests.

Conservation Limits

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the conservation limits for each index river.

(AQW 1838/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The table below contains details of Conservation Limits for each index river within the DCAL jurisdiction. The Department does not retain details of the individual river Conservation Limits in the Loughs Agency area (Foyle & Carlingford).

River	Region	CL ova deposition range (000's ova)
Bush	Northern	2310
Glendun	Northern	361-540
Shimna	South east	209-314
Main	Lough Neagh	2184-3265
Blackwater	Lough Neagh	1725-2578
Garvary	South West	84-125

Library Opening Hours and Provision

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the rationale for the proposal to reduce library opening hours and provision.

(AQW 1839/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: In the light of the budget settlement and the level of savings that are required the Board of Libraries NI determined, reluctantly, that it was preferable to reduce opening hours rather than close a substantial number of libraries. The Libraries NI Board felt that this approach would protect the network of sustainable libraries into the future and could be reversed if additional funding becomes available.

I would emphasise that nothing has been finalised by the Libraries NI Board at this stage. I understand that a consultation has commenced and that will include a conversation with each community about when they would like to see their library opened. I would encourage people to take part in the consultation.

Decisions will not be made until all the information from the consultation has been collated and presented to the Board of Libraries NI. The Board of Libraries NI contains councillors from the DUP, the SDLP, my own party and the UUP.

I recognise that both the Department and its sponsored bodies have already had to take very difficult decisions in planning to live within reduced budget allocations over the next four years.

In managing these new pressures, the Department will work closely with its sponsored bodies to minimise impacts on front line services and protect priority areas.

Odyssey Trust Company Limited

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the governance accountability arrangements for the Odyssey Trust Company Limited; and to explain (i) how and by whom directors are appointed; (ii) whether public procurement rules apply and for her assessment of whether they are satisfactorily applied; and (iii) what control mechanisms exist within her Department. (AQW 1858/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Odyssey Trust Company (OTC) Limited is a charity and an independent company limited by guarantee.

OTC's obligations to DCAL and DCAL's corresponding rights are contractual and governed by the 1998 Funding Agreement.

- (i) Appointments of Directors are the responsibility of the OTC. Directors are appointed by the OTC Trustees. DCAL plays no part in the recruitment, selection or appointment of directors.
- (ii) The OTC is a private company with charitable status, and therefore is not bound by public procurement rules.
- (iii) Control mechanisms are as set out in the 1998 funding agreement.

Odyssey Trust Company Limited

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given its charitable status and reliance on public money, for her assessment of the detail contained in the annual accounts published by the Odyssey Trust Company Limited; and to detail how (i) establishment costs of £3m per annum; and (ii) miscellaneous or sundry expenses of £100,000 per month arise. (AQW 1859/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Odyssey Trust Company (OTC) Limited is a charity and an independent company limited by guarantee. The OTC therefore publishes annual accounts in line with company law and under charities regulations. These accounts are independently audited and available from company registry.

OTC has no ongoing reliance on public money other than the money for the provision of the science centre, W5 Ltd.

As with any other charitable organisation, those responsible for OTC are duty bound to ensure that they operate efficiently and effectively within the framework of its Memorandum and Articles, and in full accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Odyssey Trust Company Limited

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given its charitable status and reliance on public money, for her assessment of the fact that the Odyssey Trust Company Limited holds around £40m in the bank; and to detail any charitable causes that have been supported by the Trust over the last five years. (AQW 1860/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Odyssey Trust Company (OTC) Limited is a charity and an independent company limited by guarantee.

The OTC has no ongoing reliance on public money other than the money for the provision of the science centre, W5 Ltd.

The Department understands that balances held by the OTC are for the furtherance of the Trust's charitable obligations, and include money held for advanced tickets sales, other creditors and in relation to a Capital Leasing Scheme.

OTC exercises its charitable objectives through the provision of the science centre.

Community Festival Funding in 2012

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline her Department's plans for Community Festival Funding in 2012.

(AQW 1865/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The budget for the Community Festivals Fund (CFF) has been £450k per annum and Councils are required to provide match-funding. The Department is in the process of undertaking an evaluation of the operation of the CFF and, whilst the findings from this will inform the future delivery of the Fund, it is expected that the funding in 2012 will again be £450k. Figures for 2012 are indicative only as there may be further annual budget exercises and you will also be aware existing pressures around student fees.

Licensed Fishing Engines

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of licensed fishing engines that are operating within her Department's jurisdiction; and how long they have been in operation.

(AQW 1902/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL is empowered to licence fishing engines within its jurisdiction by the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 and the current licensing system was introduced in 1967. The Lough's Agency is responsible for the licensing of fishing engines in the Foyle and Carlingford areas.

A "fishing engine" as defined in the Act, is a net, instrument or device whatsoever capable of being used for taking or killing fish and as such a fishing rod used by a recreational angler is classed as a fishing engine.

Fishing rod licences are issued annually and the table below outlines the various types of licences available and the numbers issued in 2010.

Type of licence	No. sold
Game Season	8143
Foyle Endorsement	638
Coarse Season	2603
Disabled Licence Game	1795
Disabled Licence Coarse	132
Game Senior Citizens	4489
Game Juvenile	2261
Game 14 Day	54
Game 3 Day	685
Coarse Senior Citizens	237
Coarse Juvenile	525
Coarse 14 Day	67
Coarse 3 Day	347
Joint Coarse 14 Day	996
Joint Coarse 3 Day	1015

Type of licence	No. sold
Joint Game 14 Day	334
Joint Game 3 Day	2172

The table below outlines the various types of commercial licences available and the numbers issued in 2010.

	No. sold
Eels	
Eel Weirs	3
Eel Draft Nets (Lough Neagh)	37
Eel Long Line (Lough Neagh)	79
Eel Long Line (Lough Neagh)	2
Eel Long Line (Lough Erne)	1
Eel Long Line (Lough Erne)	-
Eel Fyke Nets	71
Freshwater other than eels	
Lough Neagh Draft Nets	16
Lough Neagh Trout Nets	114
Trammel Nets Coarse	491
Bait Nets	45
Salmon fishing (Sea & Tideways)	
Bag Nets	2
Fixed Tidal Draft Nets	-
Drift Nets	2
Draft Nets	2

Licensed Fishing Engines

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many fish have been harvested from each of her Department's licensed coastal fishing engines in each year since 2005.

(AQW 1903/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Below are details of how many fish have been harvested from each of the Department's licensed coastal fishing engines since 2005

COMMERCIAL SALMON CATCH RETURNS

Net name	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
North Coast	1068	673	680	427	482	437
North Coast	24	32	176	nil	64	26

Net name	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Ballyteerim	1167 (10)	891 (3)	881	740 (1)	420	636 (36)
Torr Head	871	788	888 (4)	748 (28)	550 (7)	783
South Eastern coast	24	35	22	20	21	23
South Eastern coast	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Carrick-a-rede	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil
Total	3154 (10)	2419 (3)	2647 (4)	1935 (29)	1537 (7)	1905 (36)

NB - Catch figures in brackets are for sea trout

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the cost to her Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 1945/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The table below details funding (either by grant or by grant in aid) provided to the Department's arm's length bodies in the financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11:

Arm's-length Body	2010-11 £'000s	2009-10 £'000s
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	27,178	27,481
National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland	24,499	17,462
Northern Ireland Library Authority	37,958	34,285
Sports Council for Northern Ireland	25,400	25,377
Waterways Ireland	4,667	5,521
North/South Language Body (comprising the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge)	6,978	6,909
Northern Ireland Museums Council Ltd	324	361
Armagh Observatory and Planetarium	2,055	1,530
Northern Ireland Screen Commission Ltd	1,378	1,450
Northern Ireland Events Company Ltd	94	1,127
Total Cost £'000s	130,531	121,503

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether her Special Adviser is paid within Band A or Band B of the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scale; and, if it is within Band B whether, in light of the DFP decision to increase the upper limit of the Band B scale to £90,000, there has been an increase in salary or an increase is planned.

(AQW 1976/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL appointed a Special Adviser on 17th May 2011 and her salary has yet to be finalised.

Greystone Library

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the future of Greystone Library.

(AQW 1998/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The future of Greystone library was subject to recent public consultation as part of Libraries NI ongoing strategic Review of the libraries estate. Following this public consultation Libraries NI decided to postpone any library closure decisions until October 2011. I wish to emphasise that nothing has been finalised by the Libraries NI Board at this stage.

The possible closure of any public library is of great concern to me. I am acutely aware of the potential impact that such an action can have on the whole community that it serves.

However this is fundamentally an operational issue for Libraries NI; the Board of which includes councillors from my own party, the DUP, the SDLP and the UUP

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

Libraries NI will keep me fully informed on the decision making process. This will help to ensure that the best decisions are taken in this very challenging financial environment.

Licensed Fishing Engines

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the effects of fishing engines on her Department's priority to manage salmon fisheries and their long-term sustainability.

(AQW 2080/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The central requirement for sustainability of any fishery is adequate survival of the fish population or stock to replace itself generation to generation and generate an exploitable surplus. Catching and removing fish from a population, by whatever means, will contribute to a reduction in survival at population level.

There is a wide range of complex factors that affect wild Atlantic salmon stocks, including habitat degradation, barriers to migration, poor water quality and predation. There is particular concern about the increase in mortality of salmon during the oceanic phase of their life cycle and international research is on-going to increase understanding of the factors influencing this trend.

The use of licensed fishing engines, be they commercial nets or rods used by recreational anglers, exploits wild salmon stocks and is regulated by the Department by virtue of powers contained in the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966. The Department continually monitors the status of wild salmon populations within its jurisdiction and based on scientific consideration of this evidence, new or additional conservation measures may be introduced.

Over recent years the Department has introduced a range of salmon conservation measures including compulsory catch and release in the early part of the angling season and restricting the commercial exploitation of salmon through a voluntary buy out schemes.

Re-Imaging Communities Programme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether any funding from the Re-imagining Communities Programme has been spent on murals in West Belfast depicting the hunger strikes.

(AQW 2142/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: No funding has been made available for murals in West Belfast depicting the hunger strikes.

Reduced Opening Hours of Libraries

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an estimate of the projected savings that will be made from the proposed reduced opening hours of libraries.

(AQW 2143/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I recognise that both my Department and its sponsored bodies have already had to take very difficult decisions in planning to live within reduced budget allocations over the next four years.

Libraries NI have commenced a review of Library opening hours which will allow Libraries NI to achieve the savings required, mainly through the reduction of staff costs.

The following table shows the estimated forecast of savings from these measures over the next four years.

Forecast of Savings Accruing from Savings Measure (£000's)

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Admin				
Resource	100	500	1563	2492
Total	100	500	1563	2492

Expenditure on Libraries

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail her Department's total expenditure on libraries in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2144/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI was established on 1 April 2009 prior to which the public library service was administered by Education and Library Boards. The table below provides the figures for the total (resource and capital) expenditure on public libraries in each of the last five years:

Year	Spend on Libraries £000's
2006/07	32,867
2007/08	35,191
2008/09	34,055
2009/10	36,931
2010/11	38,049

Funding for Marching Bands

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding her Department plans to provide to marching bands over the next twelve months.

(AQW 2150/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has no plans to provide funding to marching bands in the next twelve months.

There are, however, a number of funds available through the Arts Council and the Ulster Scots Agency to which marching bands may apply for support in replacing instruments and for tuition.

Greenisland and Whitehead Libraries

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps she has taken, and intends to take, to secure the long-term futures of Greenisland and Whitehead libraries.

(AQW 2202/11-15)

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

I also recognise that both my Department and its sponsored bodies have already had to take very difficult decisions in planning to live within reduced budget allocations over the next four years.

Libraries NI has recently started a Review of its opening hours. The purpose of this Review is to deliver the savings required while protecting a network of sustainable libraries into the future.

Greenisland and Whitehead Libraries

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what weight she will attach to the responses to the public consultation on the proposed reduction in the opening hours of Greenisland and Whitehead libraries.

(AQW 2203/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Board of Libraries NI has commenced a review of library opening hours, including those of Greenisland and Whitehead libraries.

I would emphasise that nothing has been finalised by the Libraries NI Board at this stage. A consultation has commenced and that will include a conversation with each community about when they would like to see their library opened. I would encourage people to take part in the consultation.

Consideration of the responses made during the public consultation is a matter for the Libraries NI Board.

Decisions will not be made until all the information from the consultation has been collated and presented to the Libraries NI Board. The Board of Libraries NI contains councillors from the DUP, the SDLP, my own party and the UUP.

Líofa 2015

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether the Líofa 2015 campaign will include efforts to de-politicise the Irish language.

(AQW 2249/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am keen to ensure that the Irish language is not seen as a threat to any member of our society. Part of the Líofa initiative is about breaking down the barriers and preconceptions which have surrounded the Irish Language, and opening Irish up to everyone.

Líofa 2015

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what analysis she has carried out into the view, set out in her Líofa 2015 press release, that some people have sought to portray the promotion of the Gaelic culture and Irish language as the preserve of one section of our community.

(AQW 2251/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: No formal analysis has been carried out.

Fish Poaching in Inland Waterways

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for her assessment of the extent of fish poaching in inland waterways in the Upper Bann constituency.

(AQW 2252/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Poaching is an illegal fishing activity and DCAL is concerned with any illegal fishing activity taking place throughout its operational area, which includes inland waterways in the Upper Bann constituency. The Department accepts that illegal fishing does take place in the Upper Bann constituency, particularly on the main rivers discharging to Lough Neagh and on Lough Neagh itself.

There is a wide range of complex factors that affect fish stocks and without precise and detailed information on the numbers of fish being taken by poachers or the numbers of poachers involved, it is difficult to give any meaningful assessment of the extent of poaching.

However, the loss of any adult fish has the immediate effect of reducing the numbers available for anglers and commercial fishermen and in the longer term reduces the potential breeding stock in that water.

Fish Stocks in Inland Waterways

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps her Department has taken to protect fish stocks in inland waterways in the Upper Bann constituency.

(AQW 2253/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL is concerned with any illegal fishing activity taking place throughout its operational area, which includes inland waterways in the Upper Bann constituency.

Illegal fishing activities take place in the Upper Bann constituency, particularly on the main rivers discharging to Lough Neagh and on Lough Neagh itself. A team of 3 DCAL Fisheries Protection Officers, under the management of a Senior Fisheries Officer operate from their base at Derrycrow covering the Upper Bann constituency and Lough Neagh itself.

When necessary a team of 2 Fishery Protection Officers operating out of Castlewellan and managed by a Senior Fisheries Officer can be called upon to assist and cooperate in operations dealing with illegal fishing activity in the Upper Bann constituency.

DCAL Fisheries Protection staff also work closely with local angling clubs, many of which have Private Water Bailiffs who play an important role in supporting the Department in combating illegal fishing activities.

DCAL Fisheries Protection staff undertakes regular patrols on land and water, on rivers, lakes and coastal areas throughout the DCAL operational area. They also carry out intelligence led operations to detect, disrupt and deter those involved in illegal fishing activities.

In addition Fisheries Protection Officers undertake inspections of fish dealers' premises and businesses selling fish such as hotels, restaurants and commercial outlets to ensure that those engaged comply fully with the 1966 Fisheries Act and Fisheries Regulations.

Gilford Library

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions she intends to have with Libraries NI prior to a final decision being made on the future of Gilford Library.

(AQW 2254/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The second stage of the Review of the public library estate, including the proposals regarding Gilford Library, is an operational issue for Libraries NI.

Libraries NI have already briefed me on the Review and have undertaken to brief me further in October before the Board makes final decisions.

Capital Arts Projects

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what capital arts projects her Department plans to fund in each of the next three years; and to detail the amount of funding that will be allocated to each project.

(AQW 2290/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department has no plans to fund capital arts projects over the next three years. There has been a significant investment in capital arts projects in recent years as a result of which there are a number of high quality arts venues across the north of Ireland including the Crescent Arts Centre, Lyric Theatre, Playhouse Theatre and Waterside Theatre.

There is however, capital funding of £200k available per year over the next three years for equipment and £200k for musical instruments for bands. This funding will be administered by the Arts Council.

Community Festival Fund

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the total funding allocated to the Community Festival Fund by her Department in each of the last three years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 2293/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department allocates Community Festivals funding to the local councils and does not hold information at constituency level.

I have therefore listed the initial allocations to each council over the last three years. Figures may change slightly in year, due to underspends or overspends by councils in the previous year.

If you require a further breakdown, you should contact the councils directly.

Council	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Antrim	12,300	12,400	13,000
Ards	18,000	18,000	18,800
Armagh	13,700	13,700	14,300
Ballymena	15,600	15,600	16,300
Ballymoney	5,000	4,000	4,000
Banbridge	10,600	10,700	11,200
Belfast	77,300	77,300	79,000
Carrickfergus	9,700	9,700	10,000
Castlereagh	15,800	15,600	16,300
Coleraine	14,200	14,000	14,600

Council	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Cookstown	8,500	8,600	9,000
Craigavon	22,600	22,900	24,100
Derry	31,200	31,100	32,100
Down	16,500	16,500	17,200
Dungannon & South Tyrone	12,800	13,100	13,900
Fermanagh	15,000	15,100	15,700
Larne	8,000	8,390	8,200
Limavady	8,900	8,800	9,000
Lisburn	28,400	28,200	29,500
Magherafelt	9,900	9,900	10,500
Moyle	4,400	4,400	4,600
Newtownabbey	20,400	20,300	21,300
Newry & Mourne	25,400	25,700	26,900
North Down	18,600	4,000	4,000
Omagh	13,000	13,100	13,600
Strabane	12,400	12,400	12,700

Creative Industries

Ms Ruane asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the extent of her Department's engagement with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education in developing a Creative Industries Strategy.

(AQO 416/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: My Department is the government lead on the creative industries and as such seeks to work in partnership with all Departments and agencies to grow and develop this key sector.

The Departments mentioned in the question, along with agencies such as Invest NI, have a key role to play with DCAL in sustaining a creative pipeline from which creative ideas, creative people and creative businesses emerge.

My officials and Arms-Length Bodies such as the Arts Council and NI Screen work closely with these Departments to advance the skills agenda and support creative businesses.

Barriers remain to realising the potential of our creative industries. These include a diverse but fragmented sector but also a range of government interventions which, at times, lack effective co-ordination.

These are challenges which I aim to tackle. I will work with Ministerial and Assembly colleagues to develop a joined-up framework to support our creative industries.

Gaeltacht Quarter, Belfast

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the development of the Gaeltacht Quarter.

(AQO 419/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL part funded the capital project of An Cultúrlann which reopened on Monday, 19th September 2011 following a £2m extension and refurbishment project. The project has provided increased work and exhibition space, improved accessibility, gallery space and an enhanced tourist information area providing a wider range of services and products.

Any future Departmental expenditure in relation to the Gaeltacht Quarter will be subject to a business case.

Libraries: Rural Communities

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action she is taking to ensure that the service currently provided by small libraries in rural communities is maintained.

(AQO 420/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I recognise the valuable contribution that the public library service makes to our local communities and I remain fully committed to the provision of a comprehensive library service throughout the North of Ireland.

The recent Budget 2011-15 presents a challenge to all of my Department's sponsored bodies. The Board and Senior Management Team of Libraries NI had to consider how the public library service could be most effectively managed within available resources.

Library services in rural communities are being considered within Libraries NI's ongoing strategic Review of the libraries estate. I wish to emphasise that nothing has been finalised by the Libraries NI Board at this stage.

These reviews are operational matters for Libraries NI, the Board of which includes councillors from the DUP, the SDLP, my own party and the UUP.

A full public consultation on the Review proposals was carried out from January to April. The Board of Libraries NI will carefully consider the information collected during the process before they come to any final decision.

Libraries NI have informed me that they expect to be in a position to make final decisions regarding the Review in October.

Arts: Programme for Government

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she will support measures to promote the arts sector to be included in the Programme for Government.

(AQO 421/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I recognise the value of the arts and am mindful of the contribution of the arts to the north of Ireland's cultural development and tourism product.

Through partnership working with key stakeholders, customers and sectoral groups, DCAL will seek to develop and deliver programmes and services that achieve the policies of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Sectors. The Programme for Government is currently in the draft stages and I will ensure that my Department is represented within it as appropriate.

Following the public consultation on the draft budget, the resource funding for the Arts Council was increased by £2.75m over the four years of the budget - evidence of the Executive's appreciation for the hugely important role played by the arts in our society.

Famine Commemoration

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail her role in the National Famine Commemoration in Clones, County Monaghan on 10 September 2011.

(AQO 422/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I received an invitation from the National Famine Commemoration Committee to attend the National Famine Commemoration on the 10th September in Clones, Co Monaghan.

I was grateful to accept the invitation and attended the event as a guest.

Arts: STEM Subjects

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline her plans to promote the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) agenda through investment in the arts and culture.

(AQO 423/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: An exciting curriculum and inspirational learning experiences are crucial to engaging young people and maintaining an interest and motivation in STEM.

Promoting STEM is one of my priorities and my Department has a very important role through its investment in arts and culture. Examples include the learning environments, content, exhibitions and programmes provided by our museums, libraries, W5, Creative Learning Centres, and the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium.

These support and enhance delivery of the curriculum and provide STEM experiences and insights that inspire and add value to teachers and the learning experiences of students and lifelong learners.

My Department will also support implementation of the Executive's STEM strategy and further enhance the STEM offering across our sponsored bodies by implementing the DCAL Learning Strategy.

Tollymore National Outdoor Centre

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps she has taken to ensure that the funding her Department provides to the Tollymore National Outdoor Centre does not disadvantage other private outdoor activity providers in South Down.

(AQO 424/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I am aware of the concerns of some private activity providers in South Down which alleged that Tollymore National Outdoor Centre is displacing activity from other outdoor providers in the area.

In order to address these concerns my Department brought forward the Post Project Evaluation for the Centre by 6 months. This work is currently being considered by my department, and I will wish to consider its recommendations carefully before asking Sport NI to implement them.

Sports Stadia

Mr Sheehan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the development of Casement Park, Ravenhill and Windsor Park.

(AQO 425/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The Executive has provided a funding package of up to £110m in the current CSR period for regional stadium development. £25.2m is to be allocated to the IFA towards the redevelopment of Windsor Park to accommodate 18,000 spectators; £61.4m is to be allocated to the GAA who plan to build a new stadium at Casement Park to accommodate a maximum spectator capacity of 40,000; and £14.7m is to be made available to the Ulster Branch of the IRFU to enhance their stadium at Ravenhill to bring the capacity to 15,000 spectators.

Sport NI have actively engaged with the Governing Bodies to progress the structures and other arrangements essential to bring capital projects of this scale to fruition. The Sports' Governing Bodies have established Project Boards to progress their individual stadiums and take forward the day-to-day arrangements. Business Plans have been developed and key roles identified to take forward this work.

My department oversees this work, and is currently reviewing these arrangements to ensure that appropriate structures and management arrangements are in place to deliver fit-for-purpose regional stadiums to meet the future needs of the three sports.

Department of Education

Common Funding Formula

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education why changes have been made to the common funding formula which now requires schools to meet the cost of a substitute teacher when the absent teacher moves onto half pay, while the Education and Library Board meets the cost of the absent teacher's salary.

(AQW 1702/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): Changes have not been made to the Common Funding Formula arrangements for schools. Schools were consulted earlier this year on proposals for changes to the centre substitution arrangements as detailed in the Common Funding Scheme, which took effect from 1 September 2011. An outline of the changes, together with an associated Equality Impact Assessment, was provided to the Education Committee on 8 March 2011, followed on 17 August by an analysis and summary of responses to the consultation from schools.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in their follow-up report on The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers raised serious concerns in relation to the continuing practice and cost of schools employing prematurely retired teachers. In addressing the PAC recommendations, my Department proposed a number of changes including making schools responsible for meeting the costs of a substitute teacher when the absent teacher moves onto half pay, with the funding authority meeting the cost of the absent teacher's salary

Prior to 1 September 2011, schools were able to make a saving when an absent teacher moved on to half pay (after 100 days' sick absence), as the cost of substitution continued to be met by the funding authority. It was only when the absent teacher moved on to no pay (after a further 100 days' sick absence) that the cost of substitution transferred to the school. This change to the common funding scheme is intended to address this anomaly and to serve as an incentive to schools to employ newly or recently qualified teachers as substitutes, thus effecting a reduction in overall expenditure on substitution. It should also provide additional encouragement to schools to pro-actively manage the return to work of the permanent teacher in line with the Teacher Attendance Procedure agreed at the Teachers' Negotiating Committee.

Unfilled Places in Schools

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of schools, funded by his Department, which have unfilled places; and (ii) the total number of unfilled places broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 1735/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In the academic year 2010-11 there were 1016 funded schools (including 25 nursery schools) which had unfilled places, out of 1161 schools (including 98 nursery schools). There were a total of 84,605 unfilled places (including 119 unfilled places in nursery schools) distributed across the Education and Library Board areas as follows:-

Belfast Board	Western Board	North-Eastern Board	South-Eastern Board	Southern Board
16,072	18,755	17,109	15,800	16,869

The figures exclude the enrolments of 9563 pupils in receipt of a statement of special educational needs, and 138 pupils admitted on appeal by the Education and Library Board appeal tribunals or by direction of the independent Exceptional Circumstances Body, as they are admitted over and above a school's approved enrolment number.

Schools Expenditure

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last three years, to detail the spend in the (i) maintained; (ii) controlled; (iii) Irish-medium; (iv) voluntary grammar; and (v) integrated sectors, broken down by (a) primary school and post-primary school; and (b) Education and Library Board.

(AQW 1738/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The latest full financial year for which this data is available is 2009/10. The total amount of recurrent expenditure for each of the education sectors and phases in each of the financial years 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 is shown in the tables below.

BELFAST EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

Belfast ELB			
School Type	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2007/08 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2008/09 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2009/10 £
Controlled Nursery	2,972,912	3,900,505	2,865,011
Maintained Nursery	3,414,390	3,596,191	3,672,206
Controlled Primary	36,697,608	39,240,442	34,215,777
Controlled Integrated Primary	588,216	1,908,572	2,298,633
Controlled Irish Medium Primary	300,080	275,575	-
Maintained Primary	38,393,740	38,761,567	39,524,851
Irish Medium Primary	3,712,497	3,975,195	4,194,760
Controlled Secondary	24,299,581	23,205,270	20,162,674
Controlled Integrated Secondary	-	-	-
Controlled Grammar	7,842,098	8,145,645	8,201,201
Maintained Secondary	42,535,414	41,250,546	41,819,099
Irish Medium Secondary	2,124,752	2,706,299	2,606,784
Voluntary Grammar	62,373,725	65,123,386	66,413,019
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary	1,984,109	2,262,053	2,253,427

Belfast ELB			
School Type	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2007/08 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2008/09 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2009/10 £
Grant-Maintained Integrated Secondary	7,914,228	8,392,905	8,869,135
Total	235,153,350	242,744,151	237,096,577

NORTH-EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

North-Eastern ELB			
School Type	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2007/08 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2008/09 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2009/10 £
Controlled Nursery	3,091,406	3,232,729	3,295,001
Maintained Nursery	413,265	414,475	450,626
Controlled Primary	71,515,541	74,739,065	75,151,896
Controlled Integrated Primary	2,624,232	2,856,512	3,883,565
Maintained Primary	37,127,452	38,752,506	40,276,335
Irish Medium Primary	413,889	614,952	848,778
Controlled Secondary	47,926,182	50,448,416	50,164,552
Controlled Integrated Secondary	1,698,434	1,725,601	1,704,726
Controlled Grammar	19,054,984	20,089,476	20,447,151
Maintained Secondary	29,139,500	31,635,729	32,117,719
Irish Medium Secondary	-	-	-
Voluntary Grammar	38,739,257	40,236,094	40,936,798
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary	3,809,197	4,104,706	4,171,922
Grant-Maintained Integrated Secondary	10,429,183	10,799,539	11,062,690
Total	265,982,522	279,649,800	284,511,759

SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

South Eastern ELB			
School Type	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2007/08 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2008/09 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2009/10 £
Controlled Nursery	2,047,436	2,259,897	2,468,081

South Eastern ELB			
School Type	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2007/08 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2008/09 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2009/10 £
Maintained Nursery	1,581,362	1,753,507	1,675,007
Controlled Primary	71,295,955	77,544,709	74,365,906
Controlled Integrated Primary	4,113,852	4,395,076	4,741,449
Maintained Primary	34,503,129	35,142,488	37,154,754
Irish Medium Primary	697,506	725,617	745,539
Controlled Secondary	37,282,936	40,409,886	41,027,822
Controlled Integrated Secondary	7,296,830	7,369,209	6,667,415
Controlled Grammar	15,470,581	15,240,639	15,933,600
Maintained Secondary	21,956,717	22,965,131	23,594,964
Irish Medium Secondary	-	-	-
Voluntary Grammar	30,129,799	31,406,199	32,143,269
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary	3,867,670	4,227,973	4,559,198
Grant-Maintained Integrated Secondary	10,041,707	12,020,921	13,350,072
Total	240,285,480	255,461,252	258,427,076

SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

Southern ELB			
School Type	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2007/08 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2008/09 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2009/10 £
Controlled Nursery	2,772,279	2,713,607	2,665,138
Maintained Nursery	1,194,567	1,231,705	1,218,289
Controlled Primary	47,823,057	49,475,784	50,149,418
Controlled Integrated Primary	330,505	343,680	407,528
Maintained Primary	73,560,346	77,775,227	81,043,215
Irish Medium Primary	738,455	795,937	888,604
Controlled Secondary	40,479,328	42,330,415	42,354,731
Controlled Integrated Secondary	2,123,705	2,218,766	2,297,643

Southern ELB			
School Type	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2007/08 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2008/09 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2009/10 £
Controlled Grammar	10,415,346	11,007,569	11,576,633
Maintained Secondary	55,768,541	58,359,863	60,314,246
Irish Medium Secondary	-	-	-
Voluntary Grammar	37,661,532	39,340,216	39,514,518
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary	4,026,617	4,567,406	4,461,905
Grant-Maintained Integrated Secondary	6,403,227	6,599,650	5,655,311
Total	283,297,505	296,759,825	302,547,179

WESTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

Western ELB			
School Type	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2007/08 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2008/09 £	Total Recurrent Expenditure 2009/10 £
Controlled Nursery	2,736,839	2,960,145	2,722,351
Maintained Nursery	-	-	-
Controlled Primary	30,842,081	34,769,972	32,480,529
Controlled Integrated Primary	170,892	194,118	193,822
Maintained Primary	65,757,472	68,043,941	70,115,733
Irish Medium Primary	1,581,982	1,875,232	2,101,465
Controlled Secondary	24,694,495	21,122,162	19,544,837
Controlled Integrated Secondary	-	-	-
Controlled Grammar	10,915,226	12,155,969	11,399,747
Maintained Secondary	52,431,577	56,648,248	57,818,298
Irish Medium Secondary	-	-	-
Voluntary Grammar	38,145,288	39,263,416	39,685,089
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary	3,536,397	3,963,011	4,034,791
Grant-Maintained Integrated Secondary	9,200,537	10,008,927	10,161,664
Total	240,012,786	251,005,141	250,258,326

Pupil Capacity in Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last three years, including this financial year, to detail the pupil capacity in the (i) maintained; (ii) controlled; (iii) Irish-medium; (iv) voluntary grammar; and (v) integrated sectors, broken down by (a) primary school and post-primary school; and (b) Education and Library Board; and how many of those spaces were not filled.

(AQW 1746/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Details of school pupil capacities and the number of places which were unfilled in each of the last 3 years, are set out in the attached tables:-

(1) POST-PRIMARY

2010-11

Post-Primary	Controlled (Note a)	Maintained	Irish Medium	Vol Grammar	Integrated (Note b)
BELB					
Capacity	5,760	9,419	585	14,556	1,625
Unfilled Places	564	1,923	48	232	108
WELB					
Capacity	6,695	12,540	0	8,590	1,780
Unfilled Places	950	2,970	0	193	18
NEELB					
Capacity	15,685	7,465	0	8,560	3,355
Unfilled Places	2,418	778	0	143	341
SEELB					
Capacity	11,422	5,210	0	6,855	3,880
Unfilled Places	1,684	1,017	0	17	172
SELB					
Capacity	12,277	13,269	0	8,525	1,450
Unfilled Places	1,747	2,272	0	50	136
Totals					
Capacity	51,839	47,903	585	47,086	12,090
Unfilled Places	7,363	8,960	48	635	775

2009-10

Post-Primary	Controlled (Note a)	Maintained	Irish Medium	Vol Grammar	Integrated (Note b)
BELB					
Capacity	5,770	9,449	585	14,556	1,590
Unfilled Places	540	1,723	32	294	94

Post-Primary	Controlled (Note a)	Maintained	Irish Medium	Vol Grammar	Integrated (Note b)
WELB					
Capacity	6,695	12,650	0	8,660	1,780
Unfilled Places	796	3,069	0	286	13
NEELB					
Capacity	15,685	7,465	0	9,170	3,355
Unfilled Places	2,369	778	0	212	297
SEELB					
Capacity	11,462	5,210	0	6,870	3,880
Unfilled Places	1,617	1,081	0	36	166
SELB					
Capacity	12,277	13,374	0	8,545	1,450
Unfilled Places	1,770	2,338	0	64	145
Totals					
Capacity	51,889	48,298	585	47,801	12,055
Unfilled Places	7,092	9,784	32	892	715

2008-09

Post-Primary	Controlled (Note a)	Maintained	Irish Medium	Vol Grammar	Integrated (Note b)
BELB					
Capacity	6,375	9,479	570	14,580	1,590
Unfilled Places	1075	1,685	62	308	44
WELB					
Capacity	6,695	12,670	0	8,690	1,780
Unfilled Places	796	2,984	0	288	7
NEELB					
Capacity	16,810	7,615	0	9,170	2,610
Unfilled Places	2,538	1,648	0	263	227
SEELB					
Capacity	11,882	5,210	0	6,920	3,870
Unfilled Places	1,912	1,110	0	66	180
SELB					
Capacity	12,277	13,459	0	8,575	1,690
Unfilled Places	1,727	2,360	0	65	298

Post-Primary	Controlled (Note a)	Maintained	Irish Medium	Vol Grammar	Integrated (Note b)
TOTALS					
Capacity	54,039	48,433	570	47,935	11,540
Unfilled Places	8,048	9,787	62	990	756

(2) PRIMARY**2010-11**

Primary	Controlled	Maintained	Irish Medium	Integrated (Note b)
BELB				
Capacity	14,389	17,213	1,388	1,197
Unfilled Places	5,855	6,596	506	233
WELB				
Capacity	11,635	27,777	521	1,172
Unfilled Places	4,106	10,271	122	91
NEELB				
Capacity	28,754	15,375	315	3,359
Unfilled Places	7,714	4,503	75	1,078
SEELB				
Capacity	26,021	14,570	232	2,793
Unfilled Places	7,531	5,036	68	259
SELB				
Capacity	18,632	27,979	274	1,384
Unfilled Places	5,529	6,948	26	158
Totals				
Capacity	99,431	102,914	2,730	9,905
Unfilled Places	30,735	33,354	797	1,819

2009-10

Primary	Controlled	Maintained	Irish Medium	Integrated (Note b)
BELB				
Capacity	14,582	17,212	1,367	1,197
Unfilled Places	6,049	6,541	456	244
WELB				
Capacity	11,635	27,849	496	1,136
Unfilled Places	3,938	10,232	119	86

Primary	Controlled	Maintained	Irish Medium	Integrated (Note b)
NEELB				
Capacity	29,462	15,435	243	2,982
Unfilled Places	8,075	4,542	50	897
SEELB				
Capacity	25,927	14,585	232	2,706
Unfilled Places	7,418	5,061	59	236
SELB				
Capacity	18,585	28,265	274	1,359
Unfilled Places	5,573	7,313	38	130
Totals				
Capacity	100,191	103,346	2,612	9,380
Unfilled Places	31,053	33,689	722	1,593

2008-09

Primary	Controlled	Maintained	Irish Medium	Integrated (Note c)
BELB				
Capacity	14,699	17,214	1,350	1,197
Unfilled Places	5,924	6,093	397	225
WELB				
Capacity	11,635	28,174	398	1,113
Unfilled Places	3,604	9,817	58	76
NEELB				
Capacity	29,844	15,434	189	2,543
Unfilled Places	8,034	4,250	32	743
SEELB				
Capacity	26,814	14,523	232	2,428
Unfilled Places	7,597	4,662	55	133
SELB				
Capacity	18,624	28,212	254	1,305
Unfilled Places	5,259	6,698	25	48
TOTALS				
Capacity	101,616	103,557	2,423	8,585
Unfilled Places	30,418	31,520	567	1,228

Notes

- (a) numbers include controlled grammar schools
- (b) numbers include controlled integrated post-primary schools
- (c) numbers include controlled integrated primary schools

Pupils in primary and post-primary schools who are in receipt of a statement of special educational needs, or who were (in the last year) admitted on appeal by the Education and Library Board appeal tribunals or by direction of the independent Exceptional Circumstances Body, are “supernumerary”. In the context of the data above this means they are not counted within the number of occupied places within a school. In 2010-11 there were 9,499 pupils in mainstream primary and post-primary schools with a statement of special educational needs, and 119 further supernumerary pupils who were admitted on appeal by the Education and Library Board appeal tribunals or by direction of the independent Exceptional Circumstances Body.

School enrolment figures can only be collected with reference to academic years because they are significantly determined by the annual admissions process that precede each academic year. The figures provided reflect the census returns of individual academic years. Figures for the 2011-12 academic year will not be available until after the annual schools’ census exercise has been completed in October 2011.

Bus Routes for School Buses

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education (i) what criteria is used by the Education and Library Boards and Translink to determine the bus routes for school buses; and (ii) what changes have been made to the school bus routes in the North Antrim area since the end of the 2010/11 academic year.

(AQW 1806/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: Designated school buses are provided within the home to school transport scheme, by the Education and Library Boards, by private operators and by Translink.

Routes for Education and Library Boards buses and those hired from private operators are determined by a number of factors such as: - the number of eligible pupils, their age, physical needs and distribution; the opening and closing times of schools; the length of journey, the suitability of routes; the ability to undertake more than one trip and the efficient use of resources and cost comparisons relating to other modes of transport assistance available.

Routes for Translink designated school buses are determined by the need to maximise operational scheduling efficiency between standard timetabled public services and the additional provision required during school terms to provide transport for both eligible and non-eligible pupils from different educational sectors to travel to various schools. Routes also vary as to whether designated buses start or finish at educational establishments or if they can double trip for a more efficient service. Pupils may use a combination of services for their journey to and from school.

Routes remain largely unaltered, unless affected by a rise or decline in a school’s popularity. Routes may also vary due to road works and weather conditions. The only significant changes to date to routes in the North Antrim area for the 2011/12 school year have involved Translink buses - a double-deck bus was introduced on the Ballymena to Rasharkin (service 115) service in the afternoon and the Marshall’s Cross to Ballymena (service 123) was merged with the Millquarter bus.

Home Schooling

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education (i) how many children are registered for home schooling, broken down by children of (a) primary school age; and (b) post-primary school age; and (ii) how this figure compares to the figure five years ago.

(AQW 1914/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Parents can choose to home educate and there is no legal requirement for them to advise their Education and Library Board (ELB) or the Department of their decision. The information in the following table has been provided by the Boards and is based on notifications received that a child is being home educated. These notifications may have been made by parents, a child's previous school, a Board's Transfer Department or its Education Welfare Service. The numbers being home educated fluctuate during the course of a year. Therefore, the figures provided by the ELBs reflect a snapshot in time on the date on which a request is made.

	2006/07			2010/11		
	Primary Age	Post-Primary Age	Total	Primary Age	Post-Primary Age	Total
BELB	2	3	5	6	2	8
NEELB	34	26	60	33	16	49
SEELB	18	4	22	27	18	45
SELB	5	20	25	13	18	31
WELB	26	19	45	25	18	43
Total	85	72	157	104	72	176

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education whether his Special Adviser is paid within Band A or Band B of the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scale; and, if it is within Band B, whether, in light of the DFP decision to increase the upper limit of the Band B scale to £90,000, there has been an increase in salary or an increase is planned.

(AQW 1980/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The salary level for my Special Adviser has not yet been agreed.

Northern Ireland Youth Forum

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Education for an update on the future funding of the Northern Ireland Youth Forum.

(AQW 1984/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not fund the Youth Forum directly. The Forum is funded by the Youth Council, which is responsible for funding Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations (RVYOs). The Forum can also access funding from other programmes and initiatives from a variety of organisations.

The Chief Executive of the Youth Council has advised that it provides approximately £2.5m to RVYOs on an annual basis. The funding is available to organisations who meet the Youth Council's criteria under different funding streams.

In the 2011/12 financial year, the Youth Forum has been allocated approximately £103,000 to date by the Youth Council, without competition as a result of one provision contained within DE Circular 1979/10 'Greater Involvement of Young People in the Youth Service'.

The withdrawal of the 1979 DE circular will not impact on the ability of the Forum to carry on providing services for young people. Transitional arrangements will be put in place by the Youth Council from 1st April 2012 for a period not lasting more than 24 months to help the Forum prepare for new arrangements, after which time the Forum can apply to the Youth Council for funding in the same way as other Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations do.

Capital Projects in East Antrim

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education what capital projects are planned for the East Antrim area in the next three years.

(AQW 1985/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I am not currently in a position to indicate which major capital investment projects will be taken forward in the next three years. My Department is faced with significant reductions in the capital budget available over the next four years and this will impact on the ability to deliver new school building projects.

As I outlined in my statement to the Assembly on Monday 26 September, I must be certain that we are investing our resources in the right schools. I have asked the managing authorities to conduct a viability audit to be submitted before the end of the year, and I have commissioned the Education and Library Boards, working with CCMS, to co-ordinate a strategic planning exercise based on each Board area to shape the future pattern of education delivery.

Any proposals for future capital investment must be founded in an area plan agreed by the sectors and approved by my Department.

School Bus Routes in the Upper Bann Area

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education what changes have been made to the school bus routes in the Upper Bann area since the end of the 2010/11 academic year.

(AQW 2006/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Southern Education and Library Board has informed me that from 1 September 2011 approximately 110 pupils in the Upper Bann area attending Banbridge Academy, 110 pupils attending Newbridge Integrated College and 20 pupils attending Dromore High School have been allocated seats on Board buses and will no longer be issued with Translink bus passes. These changes are part of the Board's on-going review of operations to ensure that services represent efficient use of resources. All other dedicated school bus routes operated by the Board remain the same and Translink has confirmed that no changes have been made to their dedicated school bus routes.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Education how much funding his Department has allocated to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2042/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funding has been allocated from my Department to the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment in each of the last three years as follows:

Year	Resource £'000	Capital £'000	Total £'000
2008/09	22,602	385	22,987
2009/10	21,422	215	21,637
2010/11	20,770	86	20,856

Notes:

1. Resource budget reflects net position (i.e. gross budget less income)
2. Figures include non-cash element in respect of depreciation

Teacher Training Days

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education whether he will request that schools arrange teacher training days, as far as possible, during periods when the school is closed to avoid disruption to pupils' education.

(AQW 2058/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All grant aided schools must be open to pupils for 190 days, less any School Development Days (SDDs) which the school decides to take. Schools may take up to 5 SDDs for the purposes of self evaluation and continuing professional development. Where a school decides not to use all or some of its SDDs it must remain open as normal to pupils.

I am mindful of the need to balance the training and development needs of school staff with avoiding undue disruption to pupil's learning. Schools must therefore ensure that any planned SDDs are justified and co-ordinated between themselves and the education support bodies.

In addition to these days when schools are closed to all pupils, teachers may also engage in training and development which requires time out from their classroom duties. On these occasions schools may decide to engage the services of a substitute teacher to keep the disruption to pupils' education to a minimum.

Teachers are also engaged for 5 days per year in whole school training and development which are additional to the 190 days they must be open to pupils. These days are more commonly referred to as "Baker Days" and do not impact on pupil education.

Pupils Expelled from Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many pupils have been expelled from primary schools and post-primary schools in each of the last three years, broken down by (i) Education and Library Board (ii) maintained; (iii) voluntary grammar; (iv) grant maintained; and (v) Irish medium schools.

(AQW 2109/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department collects expulsion statistics from each of the Education and Library Boards annually. The statistics for the last school year, 2010/11, are currently being analysed by the Department. A summary of the data will be published on the Department's website (www.deni.gov.uk) in due course.

For the purpose of statistical collection, school management types are amalgamated into three groups: 'controlled', 'Catholic maintained' or 'other'. The 'other' classification includes grant maintained and controlled integrated schools, voluntary grammar schools and other maintained schools. Therefore, the Department does not hold expulsion information broken down at the level requested.

In line with the confidentiality principle of the Statistics Authority's 'Code of Practice on Official Statistics', small numbers are suppressed to prevent the identification of an individual. Should the statistics be broken down by school management type and Education and Library Board, the vast majority of the data would be suppressed, rendering the information meaningless.

The table below shows the number of pupils expelled broken down by school management type for the previous three school years:

PUPILS EXPELLED BY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TYPE:

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Controlled	*	10	*
Catholic Maintained	16	17	12
Other	#	9	#

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Total	25	36	22

Notes:

1. Figures include pupils undertaking Key Stages 1 to 4. For special schools pupils, curriculum year is used as a proxy for key stage.
2. * denotes figures less than 5.
3. # denotes a figure which has been treated to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

Chief Executive Designate of the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education (i) for an update on the contract for the Chief Executive designate of the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team; and (ii) to detail the cost of the Team to date.

(AQW 2110/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department does not provide information on the employment details of individual members of staff. However, the Chief Executive (designate) post was advertised on the basis of a 5 year fixed-term appointment, renewable subject to review. The costs of the Education and Skills Authority Implementation team are as follows:

	05-06 £'000	06-07 £'000	07-08 £'000	08-09 £'000	09-10 £'000	10-11 £'000	11-12 April to August (5 months)	Totals £'000
ESA Implementation Team	-	258	1,032	1,909	2,697	2,314	609	8,819

Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education (i) to detail the number of (a) directors; (b) management; and (c) staff in the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team; and (ii) to outline their contract details.

(AQW 2111/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team (ESAIT) is headed by the Chief Executive (Designate) of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA), who is also currently interim Chief Executive of CCEA.

Six Directors (Designate) were selected through a recruitment competition. Pending the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority, they remain employed by other education organisations. One of the Directors (Designate) is seconded full time to the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team (ESAIT). The employers of the remaining five are reimbursed for any work they do on behalf of ESAIT.

Additionally, there are three staff at NICS Grade 6/7, one of whom is currently on unpaid leave.

Four full-time and four part-time staff work on specific projects in HR, Finance, ICT and Irish Medium education.

There are a further 10 support staff (including one part-time and one on a career break).

The Department does not release details of the employment circumstances of individuals.

Meetings with Organisations

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many meetings he has had with organisations since taking up office.

(AQW 2112/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since taking up office, I have had twenty eight meetings with various organisations.

Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many times he has met with (i) the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards; and (ii) the acting Chief Executive of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

(AQW 2113/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since taking up office, I have met with each of the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards (ELB's) once. I have met with the acting Chief Executive of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) on three occasions, two of which were as part of a larger delegation.

You will wish to note that Chief Executives are designated as the ELB's Accounting Officer by the Department of Education's Accounting Officer (Permanent Secretary) and are responsible directly to him for safeguarding the public funds for which they have charge; for ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds; and for the day to day operation of the ELB.

I have also met with the Chairpersons of each of the ELBs and CCMS. They are responsible to me as Minister, their key role being to ensure that their Board's policies and actions support my wider strategic policies; and that their Board's affairs are conducted with probity.

Recycling in the School Estate

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what policies are in place to encourage recycling in the school estate.

(AQW 2130/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department's Education & Library Boards have an Environmental Policy and Improvement Programme in place which focuses on improving the sustainability of operations across the schools' estate including procurement, energy consumption, transport, waste, recycling, water, paper and bio-diversity.

In respect of procurement, the Department and its arms-length bodies utilise CPD Guidance as standard and follow sustainable procurement practices to ensure that in all new construction projects a minimum of 10% of material value is derived from recycled or re-used content; that timber is from sustainable sources and that the over-arching design promotes low energy and water consumption, with low carbon emissions.

At school level, Boards act in partnership with Councils to promote recycling in a number of ways. These include:

- Support for delivery of waste education and training programmes.
- Development of financial incentives through differential charging which increase waste recovery rates across schools and kitchens.
- Support for Eco-schools' initiatives through the provision of qualified in-house assessors and other practical support.

The Boards also support the work of the Environmental Education Forum, a key element in developing an over-riding framework for waste education.

In relation to the classroom, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has been integrated into the revised curriculum for all key stages in the North of Ireland. At Primary level, ESD is built into the statutory area of learning 'The World Around Us' (Geography, Science and Technology). At Key Stage 3, it is included in the statutory areas of 'Learning for Life and Work' (Local and Global Citizenship, Employability), 'Environment and Society' (Geography and History) and Science and Technology.

Through ESD, pupils will explore issues such as environmental and climate change and the need to manage human impact on the environment. They will come to understand the interdependence of society, the economy and the environment; to develop respect for the needs of both present and future generations and to act towards promoting an improved environment.

Students Undertaking Upper Sixth Year

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the level of funding allocated to schools in each of the last three years for students repeating Upper Sixth Year, compared with the level of funding allocated for students undertaking Upper Sixth Year for the first time; (ii) how many students repeated Upper Sixth Year in the 2010/11 academic year, broken down by Education and Library Board area; and (iii) whether there is any departmental policy on re-admittance to students who wish to repeat Upper Sixth Year.

(AQW 2163/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is as follows.

- (i) Pupils in Year 15, who are not over age*, receive the same level of funding as those pupils undertaking Upper Sixth Year for the first time (Year 14 pupils). Pupils will count for core Age Weighted Pupil Unit funding, premises related per pupil funding and any other additional factors relying on pupil counts, in the same way as all other sixth form pupils. In the current 2011/12 financial year, the core per pupil element for such pupils in Year 15 is £2,041.01 x 2.18 (the same as pupils in year 13 or year 14).

Note: * Over age pupils are those pupils who have attained the age of 19 before 2 July, prior to the start of a school year, and these pupils are weighted zero in the calculation of a school's budget share.

- (ii) The number of pupils registered in schools at the last Census (October 2010), broken down by Education and Library Board area is shown on the table below. The annual school census collects information on the number of pupils in Year 15 and does not separately identify those pupils in Year 15 who are repeating A-level. However, it is likely that the majority of pupils in Year 15 are pupils who stay on to repeat their studies in Upper Sixth Year.

YEAR 15 PUPILS

ELB	Total pupils
Belfast	56
Western	21
North Eastern	18
South Eastern	42
Southern	15
Total	152

Source: NI school census.

Note:

1. Figures relate to pupils in Year 15 with highest level of study at A-level or equivalent.
2. While it is likely that the majority of pupils recorded as Year 15 are repeating A-level, it may be the case that some are not.

The Department is not able to distinguish those cases where pupils are repeating A-level from the data it holds.

(iii) In relation to overage retention of pupils the Department's view is that

- a person should not be enrolled in a school if he/she is over 18 years of age, except on transfer from another school;
- a pupil should not be retained in a school beyond the end of the school year following his/her 19th birthday;
- a pupil aged 19 years and over who wishes to continue, or return to, full-time education should be registered at institutions of further education;
- an exception may be granted due to special circumstances e.g. if a pupil had missed a year due to illness.

A school's Board of Governors is entirely responsible for setting the admissions criteria required for the re-admittance of a pupil to repeat the upper sixth year and for deciding whether or not to accept a pupil.

A Level Students

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education what payments A Level students receive to compensate them for travelling to schools and colleges using their own transport.

(AQW 2177/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All transport assistance provided to 'A' level students attending grant aided schools is provided in accordance with Department of Education Circular 1996/41 – School Transport (updated 2009). The Education and Library Boards provide transport assistance in a variety of ways, including the payment of a car allowance in certain circumstances, but only where this is compatible with the efficient use of resources. Where pupils are deemed eligible and awarded transport assistance on an Ulsterbus service the Board will consider providing a car allowance in lieu of the pass on request. Any payment will not exceed the cost of an individual Ulsterbus pass of £649.39.

The further education home to college transport budget is administered by the Education and Library Boards on behalf of the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) to facilitate the attendance of students following a full-time course at a further education college. Those who are under 19 years of age on the day they commence their course of study and whose home is located over the statutory distance of three miles from any college are eligible for travel assistance. Students receive an annual travel ticket for use on public transport or, alternatively, students who chose to use their own cars can receive financial assistance up to the same value of the travel ticket which is £649.39.

Students aged 18 and over attending further education colleges may also be eligible for assistance with travel costs through the Hardship Fund, which is means tested. Funding is based on actual public transport costs. For students whose cheapest option is to travel by car, the college will calculate the travel costs based on a travel rate of 25p per mile.

Schools Cleaning Services

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail the total cost of cleaning services for (i) primary schools; and (ii) post-primary schools in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2182/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

Year	2008/09 (000s)	2009/10 (000s)	2010/11 (000s)	Total (000s)
Primary	11,066	11,913	11,997	34,976

Year	2008/09 (000s)	2009/10 (000s)	2010/11 (000s)	Total (000s)
Post Primary	13,010	13,503	13,539	40,052
Total	24,076	25,416	25,536	75,028

The above details relate to controlled and maintained schools managed by Education and Library Boards. Information in respect of Voluntary Grammar Schools and Grant Maintained Integrated Schools is not readily available and an exercise to provide this would result in disproportionate cost

Early Years (0-6) Strategy

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education (i) for an update on the implementation of the Early Years (0-6) Strategy; and (ii) how it will be linked to the proposed Childcare Strategy.

(AQW 2197/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Departmental officials are currently considering the nearly 2,000 responses to the consultation on the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy. In addition, my Department has established a Stakeholder Advisory Group to contribute to the way forward for the Strategy. The Group has met twice to date and will meet again in November. I intend to publish the Strategy as soon as possible. However, it is important that the views raised in the consultation are fully considered before establishing the way forward .

OFMDFM officials are working on the development of a Childcare Strategy. In finalising the draft Strategy, officials will take account of any proposals on a Childcare Strategy.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for an update on any work his Department has carried out in relation to the Education Maintenance Allowance.

(AQW 2198/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department shares responsibility with the Department of Employment and Learning for the development of policy on the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) Scheme. Both Departments, last year, commissioned a review of the policy which was carried out by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC). The review raised a number of issues about the scheme which need to be considered, particularly, in light of the current budgetary position.

You will also be aware that the Executive, at its meeting on 8 September 2011, agreed that my Department and the Department of Employment and Learning should undertake an urgent review of the EMA Scheme, with a view to bringing proposals to the Executive in the autumn, and that any expected savings flowing from such a review should, in the first instance, be used to address the balance of the funding gap held centrally as a consequence of the Executive's decision on university tuition fees. This review will build on the work done by PWC.

I have agreed, with the Minister for Employment and Learning, to the establishment of a joint project team (consisting of DE and DEL officials) to take forward work on the review. I am currently considering the terms of reference for the team and a timeline for their work. The timeline takes account of the Executive's request for proposals to be presented to them in the autumn.

The project team will be reporting on progress to me and to the Minister for Employment and Learning. I will keep the Education Committee informed of developments and will seek their views before any final decisions are made.

Nursery School Places

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education how many children were unable to obtain a nursery school place in each of the last five years in the (i) Craigavon Borough Council area; (ii) Banbridge District Council area.

(AQW 2218/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Funded pre-school places are available in statutory nursery schools and nursery units attached to primary schools and in voluntary/private settings in receipt of funding under the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme. Both sectors are equally valued with each following the same pre-school curriculum and being subject to the same inspection standards.

The aim of the Programme is to provide a funded pre-school place for every child, in their final pre-school year, whose parent wishes to avail of it.

It is not possible to determine the number of children who did not get a place in a nursery school as, in applying for a funded place, parents are invited to list a number of preferences across the range of statutory and voluntary/private providers. When a setting is unable to accommodate a child the application is passed on to the next provider on the parent's list of preferences. A child is not considered to be unplaced until all parental preferences on an application form have been exhausted.

The table below, therefore, shows the number of children, in their final pre-school year, who did not get a pre-school place in any DE funded setting in the

Craigavon Borough and Banbridge District Council areas in the last five years:

CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No. of Unplaced Children	69	51	124	108	9

BANBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
No. of Unplaced Children	38	77	42	37	8

Academic Selection

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 1669/11-15, to list the schools which have used academic selection in each of the last five years 'to prevent young people from accessing' them.

(AQW 2219/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below contains a list of the schools that have used academic admissions criteria, in the majority of cases referenced to a test, in the last five years. Entrance tests can present a barrier to children for reasons other than purely academic ability. The stress associated with unnecessary testing is, in itself, an obstacle to some children. Coaching, which appears to be widely available and may improve performance in tests, is only accessible to those families' who can afford it, placing some young people at a disadvantage in competing for places in these schools. This may explain the relatively low percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals in selective schools compared to the percentage of such pupils in non-selective schools.

It is wrong that many young people continue to be disadvantaged in this way, but I am pleased to note that some schools have moved away from academic selection within the last couple of years and would urge others to follow their lead.

Schools that have used Academic Admissions Criteria in each of the last five years,

- Antrim Grammar School
- Ballyclare High School
- Ballymena Academy
- Belfast High School
- Cambridge House Grammar School
- Carrickfergus Grammar School
- Coleraine Academical Institution
- Coleraine High School
- Dalriada School
- Dominican College, Portstewart
- Larne Grammar School
- Loreto College, Coleraine
- Rainey Endowed School
- St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena
- St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt
- Slemish College (bi-lateral school, 35% admitted using academic criteria)
- Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh
- Collegiate Grammar School, Enniskillen
- Foyle and Londonderry College
- Limavady Grammar School
- Loreto Grammar School, Omagh
- Lumen Christi College
- Mount Lourdes Grammar School
- Omagh Academy
- Portora Royal School
- Thornhill College
- St Columb's College
- St Michael's College, Enniskillen
- Strabane Grammar School – now part of the new controlled post-primary school, Strabane (bi-lateral school admitting 50% of pupils using academic selection since September 2011)
- St Patrick's Grammar School, Armagh
- Armagh Royal School
- Banbridge Academy
- St Joseph's Grammar School, Dungannon
- St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon
- Royal School, Dungannon
- Abbey Christian Brothers' School, Newry
- Our Lady's Grammar School, Newry

- Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry
- St Colman's College, Newry
- St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel
- St Michael's Grammar School, Lurgan
- Lurgan College
- Portadown College
- Regent House Grammar School
- Our Lady and St Patrick's College
- Assumption Grammar School
- Down High School
- St Patrick's Grammar, Downpatrick
- Friends' School
- Wallace High School
- Bangor Grammar School
- Glenola Collegiate School
- Sullivan Upper School
- Lagan College (bi-lateral school admitting 35% of intake using academic criteria)
- Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School
- Belfast Royal Academy
- Bloomfield Collegiate School
- Campbell College
- Dominican College, Belfast
- Grosvenor Grammar School
- Hunterhouse College
- Methodist College
- Rathmore Grammar School
- St Dominic's High School
- St Malachy's College
- St Mary's Christian Brothers
- Strathearn School
- Royal Belfast Academical Institution
- Victoria College
- Wellington College

Schools that have used Academic Admissions Criteria in some of the last five years

- Holy Cross College, Strabane (bi-lateral school admitting 35% of intake using academic selection up to 2009, now assesses children for entry to the grammar stream after admission)
- St Patrick's College Maghera (bi-lateral school admitted 35% of intake using academic selection up to 2009, now assesses children for entry to the grammar stream after admission)

- St McNissi's College (used academic selection up to 2010 when it merged with two other schools to become St Killian's College which does not use academic selection)

Líofa 2015

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 1686/11-15, given his intention 'to support Líofa 2015 in whatever ways might be possible through the education system', whether this support will include efforts to de-politicise the Irish language.

(AQW 2220/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My focus as Education Minister is to create an education service that ensures that all our schools, regardless of the sector from which they come, deliver high quality educational outcomes for all our young people and for the economy in general. The review of Irish-medium education did however also recognise the aspirations, articulated by representatives of that sector, for Irish-medium education to be accessed across all of society here. The review recommended that outreach to those not currently accessing Irish-medium education should be taken forward, through a staged approach reflecting shared linguistic heritage. I welcome any initiative which challenges and attempts to break down traditional misconceptions about Irish language and culture being the preserve of one section of our community.

Líofa 2015

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 1686/11-15, given his intention 'to support Líofa 2015 in whatever ways might be possible through the education system' whether he has carried out any analysis on the prevalence of the view of the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure that some people have sought to portray the promotion of Gaelic culture and the Irish Language as the preserve of one section of our community.

(AQW 2221/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My focus as Education Minister is to create an education service that ensures that all our schools, regardless of the sector from which they come, deliver high quality educational outcomes for all our young people and for the economy in general. The review of Irish-medium education did however also recognise the aspirations, articulated by representatives of that sector, for Irish-medium education to be accessed across all of society here. The review recommended that outreach to those not currently accessing Irish-medium education should be taken forward, through a staged approach reflecting shared linguistic heritage. I welcome any initiative which challenges and attempts to break down traditional misconceptions about Irish language and culture being the preserve of one section of our community.

Free School Transport

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education to detail how the Education and Library Boards determine whether pupils are eligible for free school transport, broken down by education sector.

(AQW 2228/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards determine whether a pupil is eligible for home to school transport assistance in line with the Department's transport policy Circular 1996/14 (as amended).

Eligibility is determined based on two criteria.

- (a) distance – a pupil is eligible if he/she lives more than 2 miles from a primary school or 3 miles from a post primary school and where the pupil has applied to and been refused admission from all suitable schools of the same educational sector within those distances.
- (b) suitable school – is defined as a grant aided school in any of the educational categories of integrated, maintained, controlled, Irish medium, denominational grammar and non-denominational grammar.

The eligibility criteria are the same for all educational sectors.

Once a pupil is eligible for transport assistance, Boards consider how best to provide that assistance based on the number of pupils and their location, whilst ensuring the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure. Most pupils travel using Translink bus passes as it has the widest network. Thereafter, Board buses are used, primarily in rural areas, followed by private operator buses, taxis, or the provision of a parental allowance.

Free School Transport

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education how many children received free school transport in the (i) 2009/10; (ii) 2010/11; and (iii) 2011/12 academic years, broken down by (a) Education and Library Board; and (b) education sector.

(AQW 2229/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards have confirmed that the numbers of pupils who received free school transport in 2009/10 and 2010/11 are as set out in the tables below. The figures are not available yet for the 2011/12 academic year.

TRANSLINK, METRO OR NI RAILWAY SERVICES

Year 2010/11	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
Controlled	81	2755	1701	1474	944
Maintained	60	3856	1317	2344	1493
Controlled Integrated	77	193	507	18	0
Grant Maintained Integrated	923	1214	881	673	473
Irish Medium	62	17	117	21	3
Controlled Grammar	14	2076	2346	1319	1362
Voluntary Grammar	273	5982	6019	5496	3729
Special	112	337	709	10	164
Alternative Education Provision	0	3	22	0	2
Total	1602	16433	13619	11355	8170

TRANSLINK, METRO OR NI RAILWAY SERVICES

Year 2009/10	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
Controlled	78	2976	1781	1589	984
Maintained	63	3178	1380	2480	1548
Controlled Integrated	84	115	527	21	0
Grant Maintained Integrated	965	1191	950	657	482
Irish Medium	71	18	108	13	3
Controlled Grammar	17	2089	2355	1293	1374
Voluntary Grammar	282	6505	6001	5332	3667

Year 2009/10	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
Special	71	326	642	0	134
Alternative Education Provision	1	2	17	0	6
Total	1632	16400	13761	11385	8198

EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD BUS, PRIVATE OPERATOR BUS OR TAXI HIRED BY THE BOARD

Year 2010/11	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
Controlled	64	1022	835	3696	3419
Maintained	275	1197	605	5622	5255
Controlled Integrated	5	19	129	244	0
Grant Maintained Integrated	20	110	125	208	1244
Irish Medium	1	82	2	44	121
Controlled Grammar	4	4	16	20	451
Voluntary Grammar	12	33	198	1141	1549
Special	1189	1283	1964	1253	1284
Alternative Education Provision	0	57	35	68	26
Total	1570	3807	3909	12296	13349

EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD BUS, PRIVATE OPERATOR BUS OR TAXI HIRED BY THE BOARD

Year 2009/10	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
Controlled	46	1055	854	4097	3503
Maintained	259	1120	517	6049	5590
Controlled Integrated	3	34	106	242	0
Grant Maintained Integrated	20	110	97	204	1235
Irish Medium	1	71	2	33	138
Controlled Grammar	4	7	16	1	469
Voluntary Grammar	15	49	184	979	1548
Special	1228	1368	1968	1066	1253
Alternative Education Provision	5	74	27	103	34
Total	1581	3888	3771	12774	13770

Funding for Preparatory Schools

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Education for an update on the funding for preparatory schools, given that the closing date for the consultation was 18 months ago.

(AQW 2262/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Over 400 responses were received in respect of the EQIA consultation on the proposal to withdraw funding from the preparatory departments of grammar schools. Following the consultation, the then Minister for Education, Catriona Ruane, maintained the view that the funding of preparatory schools is an inequitable use of public funding. She did, however, take account of comments received as part of the EQIA consultation exercise and recognised that the ending of funding completely may have caused difficulties for parents and children and possible disruption to some schools. Hence her decision to continue funding preparatory departments, but to reduce the level of funding by one-third (ie, 20% of an Age Weighted Pupil Unit) with effect from September 2010.

The budget for this year has been decided and no changes were made to the level of funding provided to preparatory departments.

School Travel in a Hired Bus or Taxi

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education how many pupils who travel to school in a hired bus or a taxi provided by an Education and Library Board have been late or have not attended school as a result of adverse weather conditions, broken down by Education and Library Board area in the (i) 2009/2010; (ii) 2010/11; and (iii) 2011/12 academic year.

(AQW 2265/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Education and Library Boards, the bodies responsible for transport, have advised me that the information is not recorded in the requested format.

Pre-school Places

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Education how many pre-school places were available in each nursery school in the East Londonderry area in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2292/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are 3 nursery schools in East Derry. The number of places available in the each of the schools remained the same in each of the last three years and was as follows:-

NAME OF SCHOOL PLACES AVAILABLE IN 2008-09, 2009-10 AND 2010 -11

Limavady Nursery	Kylemore Nursery	Ballysally Nursery
78	104	52

Protestant Teachers Employed in Catholic Maintained Schools

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how many Protestant teachers are employed in Catholic maintained schools, broken down by (i) nursery school; (ii) primary school; and (iii) secondary school.

(AQW 2316/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 56/11-15, tabled by David McIlveen MLA and published in the Official Report on 27 May 2011.

Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education (i) to outline the main findings of the consultation document 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion'; (ii) whether his Department intends to implement any of the recommendations; and (iii) to outline the timeframe for the implementation of the recommendations.

(AQW 2327/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The consultation document, 'Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion' contained a broad range of proposals, which included: reduction in the bureaucracy of the current SEN framework; greater consistency in assessment and provision; improved collaborative working arrangements; and promotion of the professional development of school staff. The consultation exercise generated a high level of interest resulting in over 2900 responses. The Department has given full consideration to these responses and has taken care to fully understand and reflect the range of perspectives that the respondents provided. I have recently considered the draft summary report of the responses to the consultation.

I expect that this summary response report will issue later in the autumn, along with an indication of the broad direction of travel that I propose the policy will take. I envisage that any resultant legislative proposals would be drafted for consideration in early 2012.

In the meantime a capacity building programme for schools based on disseminating best practice is underway to enable schools to meet more effectively the needs of children with special educational needs within their current responsibilities, and will prepare the education workforce to implement any future policy changes which emerge from the review.

Review by the Public Health Agency on Allied Health Professional Services

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education (i) for his assessment of the potential impact that the review by the Public Health Agency on Allied Health Professional Services to children with special needs will have on the policy proposals contained in 'Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion'; and (ii) what is the likely timeframe for the implementation of any recommendations arising from the review.

(AQW 2329/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Proposals contained in the consultation document: 'Every School a Good School - The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion' identified partnership arrangements between the education sector and allied health professionals as being key to the successful delivery of support services for children with special educational needs (SEN). It is both relevant and encouraging that working in partnership runs through the draft Strategy for Allied Health Professions (AHP) issued by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

I welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on this strategy. I also endorse the continued opportunity as recommended in the strategy, for the health, social care and education sectors to work collaboratively in the development and implementation of policies and practices to address the needs of SEN children.

The timescale for implementation of any recommendations arising from the AHP review will be a matter for DHSSPS in the first instance. In relation to the review of SEN and inclusion, I expect that a summary response report will issue later in the autumn, along with an indication of the broad direction of travel that I propose the policy will take.

Services for Children with Special Needs

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education what joint arrangements are in place between his Department and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to the on-going review and provision of services for children with special needs.

(AQW 2330/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion has established a steering group of key statutory partners to oversee progress on the review. That group also acts as project board for the recently approved pilots in SEN supports for early years' settings and in level A educational assessment. Since improvements in collaborative working across education and health and social care sectors is a key theme within the review, the steering group includes representation from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

The Department of Education and DHSSPS continue to work collaboratively on a range of policy issues which impact on provision for children with SEN including:-

- a cross-departmental autism strategy and an education strategic framework;
- the DHSSPS Speech, Language and Communication Plan (2011/12-2012/13) – the health and education sectors will be working collaboratively to take forward a number of actions;
- the Ministerial Sub Committee on Children and Young People which is considering the provision for children with SEN when they make the transition from school to post school placements or employment;
- protocols to improve services for children and young people with significant challenging behaviours through improved collaboration between education and health sectors which is being progressed under the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability.

In addition I met with Minister Poots on 4 July 2011 to discuss how both departments can further strengthen links to enhance the education and welfare needs of children across a number of areas including children with SEN.

Early Years (0-6) Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what discussions his Department has had with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to the implementation of the Early Years (0-6) Strategy.

(AQW 2346/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Early Years Strategy has a specific focus on Department of Education interventions but includes other departments as appropriate.

The Department works closely with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to ensure that our policies on Early Years services bring together support for parents and children in a coherent and cost effective way. DHSSPS has been involved in and consulted throughout the development of the draft Strategy. In addition, it is represented on the Stakeholder Advisory Group that has been established to contribute to the way forward for the Strategy.

Departmental officials are currently considering the nearly 2,000 responses to the consultation on the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy. In finalising the draft Strategy, officials will liaise with DHSSPS colleagues to ascertain how it can be implemented most effectively.

Review of Teacher Education

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Education when the review of teacher education will commence.

(AQW 2381/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The review of teacher education was launched jointly by the Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) in 2003.

Following a series of teacher education conferences and a consultation exercise which closed on 8 November 2010, my Department, in liaison with DEL, is currently in the process of developing a strategy/action plan for the way forward for teacher education, with a view to publishing it by Spring 2012.

Careers Guidance Teachers

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) his plans to implement training for careers guidance teachers; and (ii) for his assessment of whether they should have a specific careers guidance qualification.

(AQW 2387/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The joint DE DEL "Preparing for Success" careers strategy endorses the partnership model of careers guidance as the preferred model of provision for young people. The strategy makes clear that careers teachers and careers service advisors have distinct but complementary roles. Schools are responsible for providing effective careers education for which a specific careers guidance qualification is not required but should provide access to the qualified professional expertise and impartial advice and guidance available through the careers service.

My officials are currently exploring the extent to which continuing professional development opportunities currently exist and are available for careers teachers to enable them to build capacity in designing and delivering an effective careers information and guidance programme in schools

Promoting Racial Equality in Northern Ireland's Post-Primary Schools

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what consideration he has given to the recommendations in the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities report on, 'Promoting Racial Equality in Northern Ireland's Post-Primary Schools'.

(AQW 2409/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I was pleased to help launch the report in June 2011 and at that time I gave NICEM an undertaking that I would formally respond to the report's recommendations.

In the interim, officials within my Department have liaised with colleagues in the Council for the Curriculum Examinations & Assessment and the Inclusion and Diversity Service.

I intend to provide the Executive Director of NICEM with my response in the near future. I will arrange for you to receive a copy.

Schools Milk Scheme

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the Schools Milk Scheme; and (ii) how many schools in the North Antrim area offer this scheme.

(AQW 2410/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Milk and dairy products are excellent sources of nutrients such as calcium, protein and vitamins and, for this reason, they are included in the Department of Education's Nutritional Standards for School Lunches and for Other Food and Drinks in Schools. Every lunch served in school must contain at least one portion of food from the milk and dairy foods group and, in addition, drinking milk must be available as an option every day.

The EU School Milk Subsidy Scheme, which is administered by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, provides a valuable way for children to obtain these nutrients at a very reasonable cost and I would encourage all parents to take advantage of it.

I have been advised that 55 grant-aided schools in the North Antrim area offer the EU Scheme. This represents around two thirds of all the schools in the constituency.

Council of Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) annual salary cost; and (ii) number of staff at the Council of Catholic Maintained Schools in (a) 2009/10; (b) 2010/11; (c) 2011/12; and (d) projected for 2012/13 through to 2014/15.

(AQW 2414/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The annual salary costs and number of staff in post at CCMS for 2009/10 and 2010/11 is detailed in the table below. CCMS are not in a position to provide similar information for 2011/12, 2012/13 to 2014/15, as it is currently going through a phase of substantial staff restructuring and it is not possible to provide projected figures at this time.

	No of Staff	Annual Salary Cost £000s
09/10	88*	2,947
10/11	85#	3,218

* includes 2 agency staff

includes 1 agency staff

Líofa 2015

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 1686/11-15, to detail the expenditure incurred by his Department in supporting the Líofa 2015 project.

(AQW 2450/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department has incurred no expenditure in direct support of the Liofa project.

Department for Employment and Learning

Veterinary Degree Students

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans are in place to allow veterinary degree students to study and train in Northern Ireland rather than having to travel to Great Britain; and what veterinary courses are currently available.

(AQW 1942/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): Educational Attainment for the Residents of the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has that should result in an increase in educational attainment for the residents of the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor.

(AQW 1973/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department is committed to widening access to educational opportunities for individuals across Northern Ireland.

As the main providers of adult education throughout Northern Ireland, Further Education (FE) Colleges continue to encourage access to FE by delivering a wide and varied curriculum through their main campuses and network of community outreach centres. The Bangor campus of the South Eastern Regional College offers a range of full-time and part-time courses across the 15 sector subject classifications. These qualifications range from Entry level to level 5, and are available to people of all abilities. The

subjects cover Health and Care, Business and Management, Computing, Construction, Hairdressing and Beauty, and Hospitality, as well as a range of non-accredited hobby and leisure type provision. More detail on the actual courses on offer is available from the College's prospectus and website.

In addition, my Department has developed and implemented the Learner Access and Engagement Programme (LAE). This programme, which is currently being piloted, allows FE Colleges to contract with third party organisations for the provision of learner support. This support is directed at those 'hard to reach' adults who are economically inactive, disengaged from the labour market, with few or no qualifications, to encourage them to enrol on, and to complete, FE courses. In the 2009/10 academic year, the Further Education Statistical Record (FESR) indicated that 442 learners had been enrolled by the South Eastern Regional College on the LAE programme.

My Department is also committed to widening participation in higher education by students from those groups who are currently under-represented, in particular, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities. In order to achieve this goal we clearly need to reach out to groups which have not traditionally benefitted from higher education. The Department is leading on the development of a new integrated Regional Strategy for Widening Participation in Higher Education. The vision is that people who are most able but least likely to participate should be given every encouragement and support to achieve the necessary qualifications to apply to, and to benefit from, the higher education provision that is right for them. The widening participation strategy will be published as part of the Higher Education Strategy later in the year.

The Department, and the further and higher educational institutions, place a high priority on the quality of provision delivered, leading to higher rates of retention and achievement. Those residents of the Kilcooley Estate who participate in further or higher education provision will benefit from this focus on quality and performance.

The Department's training programmes, ApprenticeshipsNI and Training for Success, are also available across Northern Ireland. Training for Success provides a guaranteed training opportunity for all eligible unemployed young people aged 16 and 17, in an occupational area of their choice and following appropriate qualifications at Levels 1 and/or 2. There is also extended eligibility for those with a disability and from an in-care background. The ApprenticeshipsNI programme is a work-based employed provision at Level2/Level3 and is open to all people who have reached the minimum school leaving age, and who meet the entry requirements set out by the sector.

These programmes are delivered, on behalf of the Department, by contracted training providers. Two providers are located in North Down, namely Rutledge Recruitment and Training (Bangor), and Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland. In addition, a number of other training providers are contracted to operate in North Down, namely Belfast Central Training Limited, Belfast College of Training & Education Ltd, DFPF Ltd (People 1st), Hair Academy/Jennymount, North Down Training, Seven Towers Training, First4Skills, and the South Eastern Regional College.

Quality and achievement are also priorities in the delivery of training and apprenticeship programmes.

In relation to Essential Skills, needs (and any other barriers to employment) are identified at the earliest possible opportunity by Employment Advisers in Bangor JobCentre. Such clients are encouraged and supported to avail of the support available to help address their needs and barriers . This information is then relayed to the Lead Contractor (SERC) for them to take forward as prescribed in the StW guidelines. SERC has fully complied with their contractual obligations in relation to Essential Skills and the position is reported on at the monthly Lead Contractor meetings.

Essential Skills is an integral part of the StW programme and all clients in North Down, irrespective of their postcode, get the opportunity to avail of this once a need has been identified.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Special Adviser is paid within Band A or Band B of the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scale; and, if it is within Band B

whether, in light of the DFP decision to increase the upper limit of the Band B scale to £90,000, there has been an increase in salary or an increase is planned.

(AQW 1977/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Special Adviser is paid on Pay Band B. There has been no increase in salary and no increase is planned in the context of the DFP decision to increase the upper limit of the Band B scale to £90,000.

AccessNI Checks

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the total number of students at (i) Stranmillis University College; and (ii) St Mary's University College who have been subject to an AccessNI check in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1996/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department does not hold this information, however, the two university colleges have provided the requested figures attached at Annex A.

ANNEX A

STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACCESS NI CHECKS

Year	Number of Checks
2010/11	711
2009/10	696
2008/9	591
Total	1998

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACCESS NI CHECKS

Year	Number of Checks
2010/11	273
2009/10	278
2008/9	453
Total	1004

As Access NI checks were introduced in April 2008, the tables detail the number of checks in each academic year since that date. Total figures for the current academic year are not yet available.

Kilcooley Women's Education Centre in Bangor

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

(AQW 2047/11-15)

Dr Farry: I would hope to be in a position to accept an invitation in the future, subject to diary pressures. My predecessor visited the Centre on 3 March 2011 and I am aware of the ongoing situation regarding funding, due to an unsuccessful bid by a third party under the European Social Fund.

Students Leaving Northern Ireland

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to address the large number of student leaving Northern Ireland.

(AQW 2048/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department has no plans to discourage students from opting for universities elsewhere as their first choice rather than universities in Northern Ireland. Students should continue to have a free choice of academic institute within the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and elsewhere.

Moreover, research has indicated that, in the main, those who opt for a university place in Great Britain as their first choice do so because they believe that that institution is the best place to study their chosen subject and gives them the development opportunity to live and study away from home. In that respect, these students are 'determined leavers'.

However, you should note that, as part of the package agreed with the Executive in relation to tuition fees for local students in Northern Ireland, limited funding will be made available to allow for a modest increase in the number of student places across our higher education providers.

Given the potential for alterations in student flows as the result of differential tuition fee levels across the United Kingdom, the Department will be monitoring the overall situation.

Young People not in Education, Employment or Training

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of young people not in education, employment or training in each constituency.

(AQW 2062/11-15)

Dr Farry: Estimates of those young people not in employment, full time education or training (NEET) are derived from a sample survey (LFS) survey and are available at NI level. It is not possible to disaggregate these to constituency level. The most recent (Quarter 2 2011) LFS data on the numbers of young people aged 16 to 24 estimate that there are 41,000 young people who were not in employment, participating in government training schemes or in full time education in Northern Ireland. It is not possible to identify separately those in part-time education or non-government sponsored training.

Creative Blueprint Document

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how the objectives outlined in the Creative Blueprint Document produced by Creative and Cultural Skills in 2008 are being met.

(AQW 2081/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Creative Blueprint Document is the Sector Skills Agreement, produced by, and for, employers in the creative and cultural sector, to identify their skills needs and set out an action plan for addressing these needs. The Blueprint Document has 10 key objectives, which Creative and Cultural Skills is working to meet and progress against these objectives is outlined below.

- 1 **Creative Apprenticeships** – A pilot Creative Apprenticeship Scheme was set up in April 2011. This pilot is delivered in partnership with Belfast Metropolitan College and is funded by the Department for Employment and Learning. There are currently 5 Apprentices undertaking the Technical Theatre pathway.
- 2 **Creative & Cultural Leadership Programme** - A successful leadership programme was delivered in 2009/10. It was hoped to deliver it again in 2010/11, however, the timing of a second programme so soon after the first was deemed inopportune. Leadership is still a priority issue, however and Creative and Cultural Skills are currently working with Arts & Business to support their existing provision and explore new ways of enabling development in this area.

- 3 **Northern Ireland Careers Strategy** - This was developed to shape the content of the 'Creative Choices' website, which was set up to offer dedicated careers information, advice and guidance. In 2010, the Department of Employment and Learning funded Creative and Cultural Skills to develop specific Northern Ireland content. This content is now online.
- 4 **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)** - In collaboration with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Creative and Cultural Skills conducted research into the CPD needs of the Arts sector in Northern Ireland. This research has informed subsequent activity and resulted in the production of a document entitled 'Thriving or Surviving' to increase CPD engagement across the sector. This document was produced in collaboration with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Arts & Business and Audiences NI to provide a coherent voice on the importance of CPD. Creative and Cultural Skills delivered a 'Professional Development Through Mentoring' programme, focusing on 3 of the core themes identified in 'Thriving or Surviving', that is, marketing, audience development and fundraising. This programme was successful and delivered specific outcomes for each of the 13 organisations involved.
- 5 **UK Design Skills Alliance in Northern Ireland** - The Northern Ireland Design Alliance was established in November 2009 with the aim of building a design community which drives professional standards in Northern Ireland and provides a voice for the Design industry within Education and Government.

Creative and Cultural Skills have facilitated a number of well attended CPD events involving renowned design speakers. They have also facilitated smaller events with local designers either speaking about their own practice, or facilitating discussion, for example, the Design By Committee Day. In addition, they organised a design competition with the University of Ulster in January 2011.

Interest in the Northern Ireland Design Alliance has grown steadily and it now has over 500 subscribers to the website (www.nidesignalliance.com). The Design sector in Northern Ireland has increased in size significantly and now comprises over half the Creative and Cultural Skills footprint in terms of employment.

- 6 **National Skills Academy (NSA)** - Research was conducted in 2009/10 regarding the sector's awareness of the NSA model and how it might be received in Northern Ireland. The recommendation was to wait until the NSA model in England had been up and running for longer and then to revisit the potential for Northern Ireland. This concept has received support from both the education and industry sectors. Developing an NSA model is seen as pivotal to the future work of Creative and Cultural Skills in Northern Ireland.
7. **Qualification Reform** - Creative & Cultural Skills work alongside both Higher Education and Further Education, sharing research and facilitating links with industry, for example, Creative Apprenticeships and the design competition with the University of Ulster.

All education bodies in Northern Ireland were invited to contribute to the recent Sector Qualifications Strategy published in July 2011. Creative & Cultural Skills have been actively involved in the migration qualifications from the National Qualifications Framework to the Qualifications and Credit Framework. They have also been involved in developing new National Occupational Standards for their sector, where there has been industry demand, for example, working with Craft NI to develop National Occupational Standards for the Craft sector.

8. **Business Skills and Enterprise** - This is part of ongoing discussions with Education. In April 2010, Creative & Cultural Skills held an event with Further Education and the industry to share ideas and projects which education can incorporate into their teaching programmes to help address the issue of business awareness.

Creative & Cultural Skills has also developed a bespoke website called 'Business Survival toolkit': www.business-survival-toolkit.co.uk. This offers practical step-by-step advice to anyone seeking to start up a creative business, or grow it further.

9. **Creativity and Culture in Schools** - Creative and Cultural Skills currently work with the Department of Education and CCEA on the school curriculum.

10. **Diversity** - A commitment to diversity and equality is embedded across all programmes. Creative and Cultural Skills plan to specifically address diversity in the workplace, through a wider roll-out of their Creative Apprenticeship, when the pilot programme has been completed.

University Places

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how his Department will seek to address the pressure on students with median grades who are applying for university places, given that there has been only a small increase in the number of university places in this Comprehensive Spending Review period.

(AQW 2166/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department anticipates that increased fees in the rest of the United Kingdom will result in greater demand from Northern Ireland students to have the opportunity to study at home and we need to be responsive to this demand. While the decisions on meeting the overall budget shortfall mean that I have very limited funding available to allow me to increase the number of student places in Northern Ireland, part of the package agreed with the Executive will allow for a modest increase in supply across higher education providers. My officials will work with higher education providers on this issue.

My Department is also committed to widening participation in higher education by students from those groups which are currently under-represented, in particular, students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The Department is leading on the development of a new integrated Regional Strategy for Widening Participation in Higher Education, which will be published as part of the Higher Education Strategy later in the year.

However, it should be recognised that applying for University is a competitive process and Northern Ireland's Higher Education Institutions should continue to be able to select the highest achieving applicants for the most desirable courses. Any increase in the calibre of Northern Ireland students opting to study at home will only serve to strengthen our already first-rate Higher Education Sector.

Those students who fail to obtain an offer of a place on a higher education course can avail of the advice provided by my Department's professionally qualified Careers Advisers to discuss other modes of learning or employment opportunities. Careers Advisors are based in JobCentres, Jobs and Benefits Offices and Careers Offices throughout Northern Ireland.

Steps to Work and Steps Ahead Programmes

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the number of people from West Belfast who have taken part in the programmes (a) Steps to Work; and (b) Steps Ahead; (ii) the placements arranged for programme clients; (iii) the number of clients who retained jobs after their placements finished; (iv) the amount of money an employer receives for each placement hosted; and (v) the amount of money received by the programme client while on a placement.

(AQW 2173/11-15)

Dr Farry: From the introduction of Steps to Work in September 2008 until June 2011, 8,585 participants from the West Belfast contract area have participated on the Steps to Work programme.

All participants receive an initial period of advice and guidance from an Employment Service Adviser (Step 1 of the programme) at their Jobs and Benefits office with the aim of assisting them find work. Those who do not find work move to the next stage of the programme (Step 2) where they have access to work experience, training, subsidised employment, self - employment and Step Ahead jobs.

(i)(a) Out of the 8,585 participants above, 5,025 took part in Step 2 provision.

(i)(b) Of the 5,025 who commenced Step 2 provision in the period September 2008 to June 2011, 339 availed of Step Ahead employment.

(ii) Work experience placements for StW Step 2 participants are arranged in line with participants' job goals and can range from placements in the retail sector to those in information technology.

- (iii) The Department records the number of participants who find work following their participation on StW regardless of whether or not it is with the work experience placement provider. In the period September 2008 until December 2010 (the latest date for which these statistics are available), of the 2,567 people from West Belfast who left Step 2 provision 522 moved into subsidised/ unsubsidised employment.
- (iv) The Department does not make payments to employers who offer work experience placements.
- (v) Participants on Step 2 provision in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) receive a Benefit Based Training Allowance equivalent to their former rate of JSA plus a top-up of £15.38 per week. Other participants receive a Training Bonus of £15.38 per week in addition to any other benefits currently in payment. In addition reimbursement of travel expenses in excess of £4 per week is payable to those on work experience placement and assistance towards the cost of childcare, depending on individual circumstances, for those who are eligible.

Steps to Work and Steps Ahead Programmes

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what training is undertaken by advisers for the programmes (a) Steps to Work; and (b) Steps Ahead.

(AQW 2174/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Steps to Work programmes were first introduced on a pilot basis in 2007 and rolled out across Northern Ireland in 2008. From that time Advisers in the Employment Service have received training in all aspects of the programme. The classroom based training is 4 days in duration and at the end of the course the Advisers will have an understanding of the objectives of the programme, the eligibility criteria for clients, how to explain to clients the various options which are available to them and the support that they can avail of. This training is then further consolidated in the live office environment. When the Step Ahead element was introduced to the Steps to Work Programme in 2009, this was also incorporated into the Steps to Work Training programme.

Between April 2007 and June 2011 just under 850 Employment Service staff have participated in Steps to Work Training.

Steps to Work and Steps Ahead Programmes

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when the (i) Steps to Work; and (ii) Steps Ahead programmes will be reviewed.

(AQW 2176/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department keeps all aspects of Steps to Work, including Step Ahead, under continuous review. In addition a formal independent evaluation of the Steps to Work programme is currently underway. Step Ahead, which is one of the strands within the Steps to Work programme, will be included within the evaluation. The evaluation of Steps to Work is expected to be completed by the end of 2011.

Sponsored Training Schemes

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to make the tendering process for his Department's sponsored training schemes more competitive; and what he would define as an appropriate rate for lead contractors to charge those delivering the services, given that some are currently charging as much as 20 percent.

(AQW 2233/11-15)

Dr Farry: Public procurement processes and methodology are guided by legislation and are designed to be open, fair, transparent and fully competitive in order to deliver value for money for the public purse. Under the partnership with the Department of Finance and Personnel's Central Procurement Directorate, I am content that procurement exercises undertaken by my Department meet these parameters.

Contracted main suppliers of training programmes are reimbursed at predetermined rates based on delivery outcomes. My Department does not define a separate rate for the delivery of sub-contracted

services. This is a matter for negotiation between the respective parties who enter into arrangements on a commercial basis.

Land Deemed Surplus to Requirements

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what land in the North Down area his Department has deemed surplus to requirements.

(AQW 2244/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning does not own any land in the North Down area.

St Mary's University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many Protestant staff are currently employed at St Mary's University College, Belfast.

(AQW 2281/11-15)

Dr Farry: St Mary's University College has advised me that, as of 22 September 2011, the College employs 12 staff with a Protestant background which represents 7% of the workforce.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Moratorium on Lignite Prospecting Licences

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the extension of the moratorium on lignite prospecting licences in North Antrim.

(AQW 1747/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): I expect to be in a position to announce an extension of the moratorium on the issue of Mineral Prospecting Licences shortly. This extension, which will run until 25th October 2013, will be accompanied by a lignite policy statement.

Following discussions between DETI and Planning Service officials the lignite policy has been revised to ease the planning restrictions over the Ballymoney lignite resource area, initially for a period of two years. Planning applications will be monitored during this period to ensure that a balance is achieved between permitting development and the protection of this strategic energy resource, in accordance with the Strategic Energy Framework 2010.

Procurement

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 1118/11-15, why her Department would incur disproportionate cost in answering when all other Departments have been able to produce this information.

(AQW 1758/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The information sought for the period May 2007 to March 2010 would require a departmental wide request across 26 business areas. This would involve disproportionate cost

Invest NI

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) how many new jobs have been created by Invest NI in each constituency in each of the last five years; (ii) of those how many still exist; and (iii) how many potential foreign investors visited each constituency over the same period and what were the outcomes from the visits.

(AQW 1803/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Table 1 shows (i) the number of jobs expected to be created, which are described as 'Jobs Promoted', by investors that had an offer of assistance approved by Invest NI between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2011, broken down by Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA). This represents the number of jobs that investors plan to create over the lifetime of assisted projects.

The geographic location of projects is determined by those businesses which bring forward projects suitable for Invest NI assistance and are based on their specific requirements. It is also not possible to align visits with specific investment. A company may visit any number of times before investing, or indeed choose not to invest.

TABLE 1: INVEST NI JOBS PROMOTED BY PCA (2006-07 TO 2010-11)

PCA	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Total
Belfast East	678	304	1,089	396	925	3,392
Belfast North	91	51	117	472	66	797
Belfast South	966	527	358	642	703	3,196
Belfast West	58	178	92	46	5	379
East Antrim	69	284	42	53	222	670
East Londonderry	56	389	58	73	63	639
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	722	250	397	149	198	1,716
Foyle	875	994	217	265	365	2,716
Lagan Valley	143	107	102	186	251	789
Mid Ulster	270	398	356	228	177	1,429
Newry and Armagh	424	427	928	135	613	2,527
North Antrim	246	95	191	42	106	680
North Down	255	60	91	172	25	603
South Antrim	48	65	212	134	715	1,174
South Down	93	61	569	148	115	986
Strangford	86	61	134	137	33	451
Upper Bann	147	102	269	713	116	1,347
West Tyrone	116	199	71	106	70	561
Not yet located	-	-	-	20	545	565
Total	5,343	4,552	5,293	4,113	5,312	24,612

Note: Invest NI revises performance data on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects implemented projects; therefore, the data above may differ to previously published information.

In addition, Invest NI supported over 8,500 new jobs indirectly through its Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) – formerly the Start A Business Programme. Table 2 shows the breakdown of these jobs across PCAs.

TABLE 2: INVEST NI ESTIMATED NUMBER OF JOBS INDIRECTLY SUPPORTED THROUGH THE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (EDP) BY PCA (2006-07 TO 2010-11)

PCA	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	Total
Belfast East	59	84	68	58	92	362
Belfast North	58	77	63	78	108	383
Belfast South	81	86	73	76	120	436
Belfast West	81	85	61	62	78	368
East Antrim	104	97	65	56	68	389
East Londonderry	120	149	99	87	139	595
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	184	202	143	124	148	800
Foyle	125	164	97	74	84	545
Lagan Valley	81	78	53	58	94	364
Mid Ulster	141	166	105	124	181	718
Newry and Armagh	112	136	86	81	116	532
North Antrim	122	142	81	52	81	477
North Down	69	56	50	34	69	278
South Antrim	80	76	57	53	88	355
South Down	102	132	79	79	105	497
Strangford	80	72	47	42	76	317
Upper Bann	85	108	93	67	101	454
West Tyrone	121	148	109	111	134	623
Total	1,806	2,058	1,431	1,318	1,881	8,494

Notes:

1. 10 jobs could not be allocated at PCA level.
2. These figures are based on an estimate of jobs created by an individual EDP offer. This estimation process is derived from an independent evaluation of the programme.

Individual projects supported, and the associated job creation, may take up to 5 years to be fully implemented. Whilst individual projects are monitored on an ongoing basis, information on the number of jobs in existence at a particular point in time is not centrally collated and the costs in doing so would be disproportionate.

Table 3 below shows the number of visits by potential foreign investors to each PCA during the period under review.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF VISITS BY POTENTIAL FOREIGN INVESTORS BY PCA (2006-07 TO 2010-11)

PCA	2006-07	2007-08	*2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Belfast East	42	36	85	34	47
Belfast North	18	9	13	17	22
Belfast South	46	51	96	48	54
Belfast West	15	6	13	12	7
East Antrim	14	6	4	9	19
East Londonderry	0	3	2	5	2
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	0	0	0	0	0**
Foyle	15	4	7	13	10
Lagan Valley	0	1	45	3	7
Mid Ulster	4	0	4	0	0
Newry & Armagh	5	3	3	1	6
North Antrim	0	0	0	0	2
North Down	1	0	44	5	2
South Antrim	5	5	17	4	2
South Down	2	0	1	1	0
Strangford	0	0	1	2	1
Upper Bann	6	4	7	0	0
West Tyrone	5	1	2	0	0
Total	178	129	344	154	181

* Visit figures for 2008-09 include visits associated with the USNI Investment Conference.

** It should be noted that Invest NI assisted the administrators in their management of the sale of Quinn Insurance. The sales process included multiple visits to Fermanagh and South Tyrone PCA in 2010-11 by international companies who were considering submitting a bid. These visits are not represented in the above figures.

Securing an inward investment may span a considerable period (18 to 24 months) and is the result of many factors which may, or may not, include visits to different locations. There is often a further time lag between securing an investment and jobs ultimately being created. It should be noted that the number of jobs promoted in Table 1 includes all jobs promoted by Invest NI. This includes both new and repeat indigenous investors, new inward investors and reinvestments by existing inward investors.

It is therefore not possible to directly link the number of visits in Table 3 to the number of jobs in Table 1.

Project Kelvin

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the uptake in the Coleraine Borough Council area of the opportunities presented by Project Kelvin.

(AQW 1828/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI does not hold details of the uptake by businesses in the Coleraine Borough Council area of the services offered by Project Kelvin, as these are commercial transactions between Hibernia Atlantic and their customers.

Invest NI's role is to promote Northern Ireland as an attractive and viable location for new inward investment opportunities. Its regional office network works closely with local stakeholders to encourage the development of regional propositions which can help ensure that the offering for their area is maximised to attract visits by potential investors. In doing so, Invest NI uses the benefits that Northern Ireland's telecoms infrastructure, and the new direct international link that Kelvin delivers, to position Northern Ireland as a location capable of providing solutions to the business needs of both new and existing investors.

The benefits of Northern Ireland's telecoms infrastructure are also promoted in overseas markets via a number of channels, including Invest NI's corporate website, sector brochures and during visits by potential investors. However, it is important to note that, whilst the telecommunications infrastructure is important to many potential investors, it remains only one area of consideration when choosing a location.

During the 2010/11 financial year, Invest NI clients initiated projects which will lead to the investment of £6m being undertaken within the area, which illustrates the attractiveness of the Coleraine Borough Council area proposition.

Project Kelvin

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how her Department has promoted Project Kelvin.

(AQW 1829/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI has completed extensive research on the benefits that Project Kelvin has brought to our already robust digital infrastructure and has identified and developed key sales messages to incorporate into the region's proposition. The sales messages on Project Kelvin focus on resilience, security, speed and cost.

These benefits are promoted to potential investors in overseas markets via a number of channels including the corporate website, sector brochures, presentations to potential investors, during journalist visits to Northern Ireland and during inward visits by potential investors.

Invest NI liaises with Hibernia Atlantic, the company responsible for building and operating Project Kelvin, and its partners to identify up-to-date and relevant messages that can be incorporated into its sales messages and to identify reference companies for its target sectors. It also liaises with representatives from Digital NI 2020, telecoms providers, economic development staff in local councils and Matrix, the Northern Ireland Science Industry Panel.

Invest NI has also been working to identify new opportunities for inward investment from companies in sectors that would specifically benefit from the advantages that Project Kelvin provides. For example, in financial services, Invest NI promotes the latency angle to companies that rely on the high speed transfer of data. Another area is film and TV post production, where Invest NI is seeking to build on its recent success in attracting major companies, including HBO, Universal and Playtone Studios.

Invest NI will continue to work with Hibernia and other stakeholders to build the benefits of Project Kelvin into its sales messages and identify new opportunities to sell the region as an inward investment location.

ESB Independent Energy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she is satisfied that ESB Independent Energy and its satellites are not passing on inefficiency costs to customers in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 1863/11-15)

Mrs Foster: ESB Independent Energy, along with ESB Customer Supply, were the electricity supply businesses within the Irish semi-state owned Electricity Supply Board, and have been merged and rebranded as Electric Ireland. The company offers electricity supply to some business customers in Northern Ireland and has recently expressed an interest in supplying the domestic market here.

All participants in the energy market in Northern Ireland, including the ESB owned NIE networks business, the ESBI owned Coolkeeragh power station, and Electric Ireland, are subject to various degrees of regulatory oversight by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation, however Electric Ireland's final consumer tariffs will not be specifically controlled by the Utility Regulator as they will be operating as a competitor in the business and domestic electricity markets.

The entry of new suppliers to the electricity market will offer households and small businesses greater choice and competitive pricing.

Power Station in Northern Ireland

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of whether a new efficient and flexible power station in Northern Ireland would create employment and better serve local interests rather than the erection of a second north-south electricity interconnector.

(AQW 1904/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Investment in new electricity power generation is a commercial decision that depends on a company's ability to trade competitively within the cross border wholesale electricity market.

A new power station could create employment but whether it would better serve local interests depends on a plant being able to produce its power more cheaply than competitors. It must also be able to move its power through a reliable electricity grid infrastructure with adequate interconnection capacity with Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Competition will be greatly improved by the construction of a second North-South interconnector.

Electricity Market

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she is content that although the regulator in Great Britain, OFGEM, is investigating its electricity market, the regulator in Northern Ireland is taking no such action despite electricity costs here being significantly higher.

(AQW 1905/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The electricity supply markets in Northern Ireland and Great Britain are significantly different, with the domestic and small business supply market in Great Britain having more suppliers and having been open to competition for much longer.

However, the historic dominance of Power NI (formerly NIE Energy) within the domestic and small business electricity supply market in Northern Ireland means the Utility Regulator retains a role in the rigorous scrutiny of Power NI's electricity tariffs, with the Regulator only permitting efficiently incurred costs to be passed on to customers along with tight control of permitted profits levels.

The Regulator monitors the operation of Northern Ireland's energy markets closely and will act to protect consumer interests, as it did in 2010 when it conducted an investigation into business electricity tariffs.

Mutual Energy

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) for her assessment of the role and value of Mutual Energy as a contributor to the development of an accountable energy strategy; (ii) to outline any accountability mechanisms that are in place which give control to her Department; and (iii) why the functions of Mutual Energy could not be performed by her Department.

(AQW 1907/11-15)

Mrs Foster:

- i. Mutual Energy Ltd plays a key role within the Northern Ireland energy industry through its ownership and operation of the Moyle electricity interconnector, the Scotland to Northern Ireland gas pipeline, and the Belfast gas transmission pipeline which was acquired from Phoenix Natural Gas.
- ii. Within the group of companies which make up Mutual Energy Ltd, Premier Transmission Ltd and Belfast Gas Transmission Ltd operate in line with the conditions of a gas conveyance licence granted by the Utility Regulator under the Gas (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, and Moyle Interconnector Ltd operates in line with the conditions of an electricity licence granted under the Electricity (Northern Ireland) Order 1992. Full details on the operating conditions placed on these licences are available on the Utility Regulator's website at www.uregni.gov.uk.
- iii. Following privatisation of the energy infrastructure in Northern Ireland in the early 1990's, government policy has moved away from State ownership and involvement in the day to day operation of energy assets.

Funding for Local Businesses

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what funding is available from her Department for local businesses seeking to expand their operations.

(AQW 1982/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department, through Invest NI, offers a wide range of financial assistance, as well as non-financial support, to established local businesses which are at the growth stage and which can demonstrate that their plans will contribute to increasing Northern Ireland's productivity. Support can cover key areas such as skills, research and development, strategy and capital development, with the financial assistance package tailored to the needs of each individual company.

For local businesses seeking to expand into external markets, Invest NI can help companies develop a sound business and marketing strategy and the financial assistance available in this area can facilitate preliminary project scoping, the preparation of an appropriate business plan and assistance to employ a non-executive director to oversee the direction and management of the business.

Financial support is also available to help businesses improve the skills of both managers and employees with the aim of boosting productivity and increasing profits.

Invest NI may also be able to offer funding towards strategically important or critical activities aimed at helping a business secure its position and grow. This can include support to help companies overcome short-term barriers that have arisen due to difficult economic conditions, help with strategic projects that are focused on exploiting new markets or products, assistance with medium to long term projects aimed at increasing turnover and employment.

In order to help companies develop and maintain a competitive edge, extensive financial and advisory support is available to help companies undertake new research and development projects. This is backed up with a wide range of advisory services including workshops related to research and development and one to one advice on planning an R&D project.

A comprehensive guide to Invest NI's financial and advisory support is available from the agency's website at www.investni.com. In addition, Invest NI's nibusinessinfo.co.uk website offers easy to use, comprehensive and up to date practical advice and guidance on all aspects of starting, running and

growing a business with access to over 70 business support tools, best practice case studies and access to funding options as well as wider support.

Westminster Government's Proposed Enterprise Zones

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the Westminster Government's proposed Enterprise Zones.

(AQW 1983/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am aware of developments in Great Britain in relation to Enterprise Zones and my officials continue to assess the implications for Northern Ireland as they are implemented.

I continue to believe that Northern Ireland as a whole should be treated as an Enterprise Zone, through the devolution of corporation tax varying powers, as well as other fiscal incentives being offered to businesses in enterprise zones in Great Britain. Her Majesty's Treasury consultation on Rebalancing the Northern Ireland Economy seeks to create a larger, more sustainable private sector in Northern Ireland, and we await the Government's response to that consultation later this year.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the cost to her Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 1990/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The cost to DETI of its arms length bodies (NDPBs) in each of the last two years is detailed in the table below;

BODY	2009/10/£M	2010/11/£M
Invest NI	170.2	147.6
NITB	41.1	39.6
HSENI	6.0	6.1
Consumer Council NI	1.6	1.4
Total	218.9	194.7

Events Funding Programme for 2012

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given that the Tourist Board has indicated a preference for funding events which focus on the Titanic, Harland and Wolff and Derry's Walls, how the newly launched Events Funding Programme for 2012 will help those areas outside Belfast and Derry to host large events; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the funding will be fairly distributed.

(AQW 2015/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) Tourism Events Fund 2012-2013 launched on the 6th September 2011 and will close on the 7th October 2011 at 12:00 noon.

NITB will provide financial support for events that cover a broad range of our cultural, arts and sporting offerings which bring the Northern Ireland tourism brand to life. They will reflect the friendliness of our people, the vibrancy of our cities, the beauty of our landscapes and commonality of our rich heritage.

NITB held a number of road shows in Belfast, Enniskillen, Coleraine and Londonderry during the week of the launch of the NITB Tourism Events Fund 2012/13 to discuss the application process and the 2012/13 themes. The feedback from the road shows was positive and everyone wished to be involved in the 2012/13 celebrations 'Our Time, Our Place'.

NITB is encouraging the events industry to link with the 2012/13 themes; however it is not a mandatory criteria and does not disqualify an applicant from applying to the NITB Tourism Events Fund.

Increase in Renewable Energy Production

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of how an increase in renewable energy production will affect the volatility and high level of electricity prices for consumers. (AQW 2069/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Strategic Energy Framework, adopted by the Executive in September 2010, estimated that the combined cost of renewable electricity installations, together with the cost of the grid investment necessary to meet the 40% target by 2020, could be between £49 and £83 per household on an annual basis at current prices.

Northern Ireland's current energy mix is very reliant on gas, oil and coal thereby making Northern Ireland very exposed to wholesale price rises of these fuels. Increasing the amount of renewables in our energy mix offers not only long term benefits in terms of security of supply but also the opportunity to insulate us to some extent against future wholesale energy price increases.

The costs of increasing renewable electricity production must therefore be considered in the context of the wider benefits, and indeed the cost of not integrating renewables.

Introduction of Social Tariffs

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline her position on the introduction of social tariffs and any proposals her Department is considering. (AQW 2070/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The introduction of a social tariff would be extremely complex and unlikely to solve the hardships caused by fuel poverty.

Leisure Tourism on the Lower River Bann

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has to promote leisure tourism on the Lower River Bann system from Coleraine to Lough Neagh. (AQW 2073/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) implements a series of seasonal marketing campaigns in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to grow both visitor numbers and spend to Northern Ireland. Lough Neagh has featured extensively in the spring, summer and autumn campaigns with the most recent being summer 2011 and NITB will continue to market the destination throughout 2011.

Tourism Ireland features Lough Neagh as part of its extensive global destination marketing programme. The aim is to raise awareness of Lough Neagh, and the areas surrounding it, as a tourism destination.

NITB, in partnership with the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN), continues to develop and promote outdoor recreation opportunities. NITB also works with a number of activity providers who operate within the Lough Neagh and Lower Bann destination. The Lower Bann featured in the NITB Adventureland promotion in April 2011 and ran canoeing events to tie in with the major campaign. The plan is to repeat the Adventureland promotion in April 2012.

Recent capital investment by Ballymena Borough Council, including financial assistance from NITB, will enhance the water based infrastructure at Portglenone marina with plans to complete the final phase by 2013.

The draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020 has identified Lough Neagh as a potential "key tourism area". To successfully develop and promote product within relevant "key tourism areas"

the Strategy recommends that it is the primary responsibility of the Local Authorities to develop and implement Tourism Area Plans in partnership with local tourism providers in the public and private sector.

NITB will support local areas by providing research, intelligence and advice in developing plans, aligning marketing and promotional activity and developing and implementing technology solutions to transform the provision and distribution of visitor information.

Multi-National Companies

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what measures are in place to prevent multi-national companies from undercutting local firms that cannot compete at the same price.

(AQW 2079/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Businesses operating in Northern Ireland are subject to the same competition legislation that applies in the rest of the United Kingdom. Price differences on the same goods or services is not, in itself, evidence of a breach of competition laws. Any information that a business is engaging in anti-competitive agreements or abuse of a dominant market position should be reported for investigation to the Office of Fair Trading. Their website address is www.oft.gov.uk.

Presbyterian Mutual Society Savers

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the payments to Presbyterian Mutual Society savers, particularly those who lost over £100,000.

(AQW 2086/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Joint Supervisors of the Presbyterian Mutual Society (in Administration) issued payments, in accordance with the Scheme of Arrangement which was sanctioned by the High Court, to all creditors and shareholders who had proved their claims on 1st August 2011.

Domestic Electricity Consumption

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what proportion of domestic electricity consumption is sourced from nuclear power plants located outside Northern Ireland.

(AQW 2127/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The energy physically transferred into Northern Ireland from Great Britain through the Moyle Electricity Interconnector was 2496 Giga Watt hours over a twelve month period from September 2010 to August 2011. While nuclear energy provided some 16% of electricity consumed in Great Britain in 2010, the figures are not available to identify what proportion of the electricity transferred to Northern Ireland came from nuclear power plants and was used by domestic consumers.

Social Economy

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what contact she has had with the Minister of Finance and Personnel in relation to the need to measure and consider the benefits of the Social Economy in the procurement process.

(AQW 2137/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Minister of Finance and Personnel leads in relation to procurement processes. While I have had no formal discussions with the Minister in relation to the need to measure and consider the benefits of the Social Economy in the procurement process, my officials have met with their DFP counterparts to consider wider social economy issues in relation to developing and supporting the sector through the cross-departmental Social Economy Policy Group. This group is currently developing a new action plan, within the context of the Executive's emerging Economic Strategy, to further develop and support the social economy sector. This action plan will include targets in relation to procurement for the social economy sector.

I also understand that in August this year Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) published revised guidance specifically for Social Economy Enterprises designed to demystify the public procurement process and enable these bodies to better access procurement opportunities.

Land Deemed Surplus to Requirements

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what land in the North Down area her Department has deemed surplus to requirements.

(AQW 2141/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI holds land in support of economic development projects brought forward by qualifying businesses. In accordance with Department of Finance and Personnel guidelines, the organisation keeps its landholding under continual review.

In the North Down Council area Invest NI owns 60 acres of land of which 20 acres remain available to lease. It does not regard any of this land holding to be surplus to its requirements.

Tourism Ireland's Chief Executive

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the current salary of Tourism Ireland's Chief Executive.

(AQW 2152/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The current salary for the Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland can be found in the Tourism Ireland Annual Report.

Superfast Broadband

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of whether the £4.4 million allocation from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to roll out superfast broadband across Northern Ireland is sufficient to meet need.

(AQW 2206/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is estimated that, with the completion of my Department's Next Generation Broadband Project and the roll-out of BT's own superfast broadband investment programme, by March 2012 approximately 89% of premises in Northern Ireland will be connected to a fibred access point.

This leaves around 11% of premises, which will tend to be located in the most expensive to reach areas, to which it will be necessary to find alternative means of deploying broadband services with speeds that are in line with the commitments of the UK Broadband Strategy. It is disappointing that Northern Ireland has been allocated only £4.4m under the UK Broadband Fund which is considerably less than the £10m bid that we submitted. I have written to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to voice my concern but am reassured that he is considering funding a pilot project in Northern Ireland to explore ways of taking superfast broadband to all homes and businesses. My officials are continuing to engage with their counterparts in DCMS on this issue.

Ballycastle and Rathlin Island

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what the Tourist Board has done to market (i) Ballycastle; and (ii) Rathlin Island in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2213/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) remit is to promote Northern Ireland (NI) to the domestic and Republic of Ireland (ROI) markets and each year a series of seasonal marketing campaigns are implemented in both markets to grow both visitor numbers and spend. Products featured are based on what motivates our key segments which were identified in a substantial research project and also what our research tells us the consumer wants to purchase.

In terms of Rathlin Island, it is featured within the NITB TV ads (30 seconds & 60 seconds) which appeared during the spring 2009, summer 2009 and spring 2010 campaigns. Further to this, Rathlin Island is referenced in each campaign within our Causeway Coastal Route advertorial which runs in both NI and ROI from spring 2009 (now 8 campaigns in total) until the present day.

In terms of the broader Causeway Coastal Route promotion, on which Ballycastle is situated, the area is always one of the key destinations featured in NITB campaigns and gains lots of exposure through press, advertorials, TV, and outdoor advertising.

Energy Prices

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she will take to introduce social tariffs as a means of mitigating the harmful effects of energy prices on communities. (AQW 2217/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I do not propose taking any steps to initiate social tariffs. To introduce such tariffs would be extremely complex and unlikely to solve the hardships caused by fuel poverty.

Cost of Motor Insurance

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with the Office of Fair Trading regarding the cost of motor insurance. (AQW 2269/11-15)

Mrs Foster: None. Insurance is a reserved matter, outside the remit of my Department and, therefore, it would be inappropriate for me to make representations to the Office of Fair Trading.

Electricity Customers Who Use the Keypad Tariff

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she is taking to prevent electricity customers who use the keypad tariff from being disadvantaged because of credits in their meters being defrayed when the increase in the electricity rate is applied on 1 October 2011. (AQW 2283/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Power NI and Airtricity keypad pre-payment meter customers are currently being issued with a new code which they must use at their next top-up. Once a customer tops up their meter using this new code, their electricity use will be charged at the new rate from 1st October 2011. Customers with existing credit on their keypad meter who have not yet used this new code will continue to benefit from pre-increase electricity prices until they next top up their meter.

Jobs Created by Inward Investment and Indigenous Investors

Ms Ritchie asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of jobs which have been created by (i) inward investment; and (ii) indigenous investors in each financial year since 2007 and to date in this financial year, broken down by district council area. (AQW 2295/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Table 1 below shows the number of jobs expected to be created, which are described as 'Jobs Promoted', by (i) inward investment and (ii) indigenous investors; that had an offer of assistance approved by Invest NI between 1 April 2007 and 31 August 2011, broken down by District Council area and financial year. This represents the number of jobs that investors plan to create over the lifetime of assisted projects.

However, it should be noted that Invest NI does not allocate budgets by geographic areas such as District Councils. The geographic location of projects is determined by those businesses which bring forward projects suitable for Invest NI assistance and are based on their specific requirements.

TABLE 1: INVEST NI JOBS PROMOTED BY INWARD INVESTMENT AND INDIGENOUS INVESTORS IN EACH DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA (1ST APRIL 2007 TO 31ST AUGUST 2011)

DCA	External					Local				
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Antrim	-	106	21	130	54	63	61	88	526	11
Ards	-	16	-	4	-	11	49	123	18	51
Armagh	-	-	3	-	-	84	80	71	40	36
Ballymena	-	-	17	-	-	56	151	16	50	11
Ballymoney	-	-	-	-	-	5	24	9	43	-
Banbridge	-	-	2	-	-	19	7	29	12	5
Belfast	737	1,255	1,128	1,430	3	194	292	242	194	68
Carrickfergus	-	-	-	196	-	13	22	29	7	11
Castlereagh	52	1	10	1	-	51	98	61	77	17
Coleraine	361	17	-	2	-	19	25	46	29	5
Cookstown	3	-	-	-	-	127	102	100	65	15
Craigavon	5	163	2	37	-	89	106	703	79	29
Derry	915	30	86	297	88	79	187	201	73	12
Down	-	-	15	-	-	64	73	41	59	25
Dungannon	81	27	53	1	-	132	218	95	163	59
Fermanagh	120	129	16	1	-	71	60	44	63	12
Larne	235	-	-	1	-	28	18	12	18	1
Limavady	-	-	2	-	-	9	16	3	27	-
Lisburn	12	29	106	131	1	118	85	90	136	176
Magherafelt	-	-	-	1	1	114	217	70	81	13
Moyle	-	-	-	-	-	37	16	8	14	-
Newry & Mourne	59	1,149	12	4	-	318	260	144	633	66
Newtownabbey	-	2	89	-	-	13	40	33	36	46
North Down	-	-	150	-	-	59	91	21	22	74
Omagh	95	27	-	35	-	39	9	35	26	38
Strabane	-	-	34	-	-	65	35	37	9	1
Not Yet Located	-	-	20	545	996	-	-	-	-	4
Total	2,675	2,951	1,766	2,816	1,143	1,877	2,342	2,347	2,496	786

Notes:

- Jobs promoted represent the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
- 2011-12 figures are provisional and subject to change.

In addition, Invest NI supported over 7,500 new jobs indirectly through its Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) – formerly the Start A Business Programme. Table 2 shows the breakdown of these jobs across DCAs.

TABLE 2: INVEST NI ESTIMATED NUMBER OF JOBS SUPPORTED THROUGH THE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (EDP) BY DCA (1ST APRIL 2007 TO 31ST AUGUST 2011)

DCA	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Antrim	41	28	26	44	17
Ards	55	43	23	58	26
Armagh	61	44	50	62	31

DCA	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Ballymena	63	36	23	37	23
Ballymoney	42	28	16	26	12
Banbridge	61	39	33	50	25
Belfast	235	187	196	293	120
Carrickfergus	22	21	17	18	17
Castlereagh	61	54	42	61	27
Coleraine	76	57	51	75	30
Cookstown	63	44	49	72	25
Craigavon	70	71	49	74	43
Derry	169	100	76	89	71
Down	92	55	62	67	25
Dungannon	79	69	79	106	46
Fermanagh	147	94	69	80	33
Larne	56	32	31	36	19
Limavady	69	40	34	59	28
Lisburn	90	63	72	101	45
Magherafelt	78	42	50	71	22
Moyle	45	19	14	19	10
Newry & Mourne	125	69	61	100	47
Newtownabbey	59	47	51	82	36
North Down	52	42	32	66	25
Omagh	93	75	63	89	33
Strabane	55	34	49	45	20
Total	2,058	1,431	1,318	1,881	857

Notes:

1. An additional 10 jobs could not be allocated at DCA level.
2. These figures are based on an estimate of jobs created by an individual EDP offer. This estimation process is derived from an independent evaluation of the programme.
3. 2011-12 figures are provisional and subject to change.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Mr Nesbitt asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) whether the Northern Ireland Tourist Board was ever offered the opportunity to sponsor (a) Graeme McDowell; (b) Rory McIlroy; or (c) Darren Clarke; (ii) whether the opportunity was refused or accepted; and (iii) at what cost was the sponsorship available.

(AQW 2389/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has never been offered an opportunity to sponsor (a) Graeme McDowell; (b) Rory McIlroy; or (c) Darren Clarke. However, NITB previously had an agreement with Rory McIlroy from 25th October 2007 to 31st December 2008 which allowed the use of his name and images in promotions. The cost for this agreement was £20,000.

Manufacturing Industry

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance her Department is providing to the manufacturing industry in the (i) Ballymena Borough Council area; (ii) Ballymoney Borough Council area; and (iii) Moyle District Council area.

(AQW 2451/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The table below shows the amount of assistance offered by Invest NI to projects approved in the manufacturing and services sectors in (i) Ballymena, (ii) Ballymoney and (iii) Moyle District Council Areas (DCA) between 1st April 2006 and 31st March 2011.

ASSISTANCE OFFERED (£M) IN BALLYMENA, BALLYMONEY AND MOYLE DCAS BY GENERAL SECTOR (2006-07 - 2010-11)

DCA	Manufacturing	Services	Total
BALLYMENA	16.50	3.67	20.17
BALLYMONEY	1.11	0.59	1.70
MOYLE	0.39	0.82	1.21

Notes:

- 1 An additional £1,175 of assistance was offered, for which this level of detail is not available.
- 2 An additional £60,851 was offered to External Delivery Organisations, which are not classified by sector.
- 3 Sectors are based on the UK Standard Industrial Classifications (SIC) 2003.
- 4 Invest NI also indirectly offered support across the 3 DCAs totalling £180,000 through its Enterprise Development Programme (formerly Start A Business) delivered in partnership with Enterprise NI.

However, it should be noted that Invest NI does not allocate budgets by geographic areas such as District Councils. The geographic location of projects is determined by those businesses which bring forward projects suitable for Invest NI assistance and are based on their specific requirements.

Department of the Environment

National Park for Northern Ireland

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to establish a national park for Northern Ireland.

(AQW 1810/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): The Department has recently embarked on a public consultation exercise to take forward enabling legislation for national parks. There are a number of areas in Northern Ireland with the potential for designation as national parks. Therefore, in tandem with the consultation exercise, I am bringing together a panel of experts to advise me on which areas most closely fit the proposed criteria.

I am a strong believer in a model of national park being developed, different from other parts of these islands, in sympathy with our needs. This model would protect park areas and be a mechanism for positive economic growth.

Odour Pollution in the Countryside

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what protections are in place to restrict odour pollution in the countryside.

(AQW 1935/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Pollution Prevention and Control (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2003 (as amended) operate a permitting regime for specific installations which have the potential to cause environmental pollution. Permits require that installations are operated in such a way that no significant pollution is caused (including odour pollution). These Regulations cover large installations with potentially odorous activities such as intensive agriculture, rendering plant and landfill sites, and are enforced by NIEA and district councils. Non-compliance with permit conditions can lead to enforcement action, including the revocation of the permit.

Odours which cause a statutory nuisance and which emanate from smaller installations not covered by the PPC Regulations are dealt with under the Public Health (Ireland) Act 1878 by district councils, who can investigate complaints from the public and if necessary take enforcement action. Such installations would include small, less intensive farms which are not regulated under the PPC regulations.

DARD advises that it has no protections in place to restrict odour pollution in the countryside. However DARD provides advice to farmers within the Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water, Air and Soil on reducing odour in the countryside related to agricultural activities. The advice focuses on steps farmers can take to minimise the risk of smell during storage and spreading of slurry, livestock manure and organic wastes. Full details of this advice are available in Section 11 of the Code on the DARD website at the link below.

http://www.dardni.gov.uk/ruralni/code_of_good_agricultural_practice_2008_cmb-3.pdf

Road Safety Grant Budgets

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department will give to delegating road safety grant budgets to local councils, rather than to a company in England to administer.

(AQW 1936/11-15)

Mr Attwood: In 2009 officials were tasked with reviewing Department policy with a view to engaging more fully on road safety issues with the voluntary and community sector. The outcome of that review was the decision to appoint an Intermediary Funding Body (IFB) to manage and deliver DOE funding to road safety projects proposed by the voluntary & community sector. It was envisaged that the engagement with an IFB would create potential to make full efficient and effective use of the available budget for allocation to the voluntary and community sector, increase the opportunity for the Department to engage with a wide range of bodies, thereby promoting an integrated partnership across Northern Ireland and address local road safety issues while mitigating against the risk of discrimination from local groups who wish to avail of funding.

In March 2011 the Department was notified that the company responsible for administering funding to the voluntary & community sector for 2010/11 would not be seeking to extend their contract.

Following an open competition managed by Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), a contract was awarded on 14 July 2011 to Community Transport Association (CTA) to act as the Department's Intermediary Funding Body (IFB) to administer grants to local road safety projects for the 2011/12 financial year with an option to extend the contract for a further two periods of one year each.

CTA (UK) is a charitable company registered in England, with a director and staff team operating as CTA (NI). CTA (NI) is the regional office of the CTA (UK). The Northern Ireland team has responsibility for delivering the Northern Ireland specific work programme and contracts. CTA (NI) is responsible for its own budget, business plan and operations. The NI Director is part of the CTA (UK) Senior Management Team.

The DOE road safety grant programme is being promoted, managed, delivered and monitored entirely by the team in Northern Ireland, the exception to this is the banking service which is being managed from England.

At the end of the first year of the contract an evaluation will be carried out to determine how effective the programme has been in delivering the objectives of the road safety grants scheme. Following the outcome of the evaluation a decision will be taken on the way forward; i.e. taking up the option to extend the contract with CTA for a second year or consider alternative options.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost to his Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 1947/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The table below provides details of the costs associated with the Department's arms-length bodies for financial years 2009/10 to 2010/11.

	2009-10	2010-11
Statutory Advisory Councils	£128,977.17	£108,235.48

There was no cost to the Department for the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee or the Local Government Staff Commission.

Road Safety Grants for Community Groups

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment why the application period for road safety grants for community groups is for the month of September only.

(AQW 2003/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The funding available for the 2011/12 road safety grants programme needs to be spent by 31st March 2012 in accordance with government accounting procedures.

Applications for grants would normally be invited in April or early May once availability of funding has been confirmed. However, the Department's appointed Intermediary Funding Body, at short notice, declined to the opportunity to extend their contract which made it impossible, in this financial year, to go out with an early call inviting applications for grants.

As my Department is committed to engaging with the voluntary and community sector and addressing local road safety issues through the provision of an effective funding model, officials quickly initiated a new public competition through Central Procurement Division (CPD).

Following open competition Community Transport Association (CTA) were awarded the contract on 14 July 2011, to act as the Department's new Intermediary Funding Body (IFB) to administer grants to local road safety projects.

CTA launched the new road safety grants scheme on 1st September inviting applications for grant funding. Applications for grants need to be received by 30th September 2011, for this first call for applications.

The short window of opportunity to submit applications is regrettable but necessary to ensure that all government accounting procedures are correctly followed and successful projects are given adequate time to draw down awards and spend the funding within the available timescale.

Community Transport Association will monitor the uptake of the road safety grants programme and if funding remains unallocated after the September applications have been assessed, a further promotion campaign will be initiated and a second call for application will be made, timescales permitting.

Twelfth of July Bonfire Sites

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the costs incurred by each local council for cleaning and repairing Twelfth of July bonfire sites in 2011.

(AQW 2022/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The costs incurred by individual councils are set out in the table below.

District Council	2011 £
Antrim	1,500
Ards	3,920
Armagh	1157
Ballymena	7,807
Ballymoney	3,600
Banbridge	1,000
Belfast	20,346
Carrickfergus	300
Castlereagh	8,097
Coleraine	300
Cookstown	3,000
Craigavon	16,514
Derry	3,384
Down	Nil
Dungannon and South Tyrone	Nil
Fermanagh	Nil
Larne	7,985
Limavady	668
*Lisburn	4,326
Magherafelt	2,800
Moyle	1,473
Newry and Mourne	Nil
Newtownabbey	770
North Down	1,000
Omagh	Nil
Strabane	Nil
Total	89,947

* One fire caused significant damage to a football pitch owned by Lisburn City Council. The costs of repair are not yet available.

Deaths on the Roads

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he had to address deaths on the roads. (AQW 2049/11-15)

Mr Attwood: My Department has lead responsibility for coordinating and driving forward road safety and a great deal is being done to move forward quickly measures that I believe will save lives on our roads.

As members will know, I am finalising plans and measures to deter drink driving, including reducing the drink drive limit. Subject to Executive approval, I expect to consult in early 2012 on a Road Traffic Amendment Bill to make the necessary legislative changes.

My Department consulted earlier this year on a range of measures aimed at reducing road deaths involving new drivers. Taking account of the consultation responses, an options paper is being prepared on the way forward on reform of the Learner and Restricted Driver schemes and the possible introduction of a system of Graduated Driver Licensing. I will advise further on this in due course.

I am moving forward the mutual recognition of lesser road traffic infringements (offences incurring penalty points) across the island. Initial discussions with the Irish Minister for Transport are focusing on speeding, drink/drug driving, seat belt wearing and use of mobile phones while driving.

The Driver and Vehicle Agency is currently finalising an Enforcement and Compliance Strategy which will support regulations being introduced by my Department in respect of taxis, buses and goods vehicles.

Through its ongoing programme of road safety awareness campaigns my Department will continue to deliver road safety messages to all road users, with particular emphasis on those responsible for causing casualties and those most at risk.

Following an independent review of the Department's Road Safety Education Officer Service, which confirmed that the range of services and resources currently offered are in line with good practice, DOE will continue to inform and prepare children and young people to be safe and responsible road users.

My Department will continue to research road safety issues to ensure that we better target appropriate measures to address key problems. A current project will help inform how we address road safety problems experienced by older road users.

I would refer you to the Road Safety Strategy up to 2020 for details on other planned road safety measures.

Dog Fouling Offences

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many people have been convicted of dog fouling offences in each of the last five years, in each local council area.

(AQW 2063/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Convictions for dog fouling offences for the last five years are listed below. District councils are more likely to offer the opportunity of discharging any liability to conviction for the offence by payment of a fixed penalty.

District Council	No. of successful prosecutions				
	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Belfast City Council	7	3	3	6	84
Coleraine Borough Council	-	-	1	3	-
Cookstown District Council	-	-	-	-	1
Craigavon Borough Council	-	1	-	8	2

District Council	No. of successful prosecutions				
	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Down District Council	1	1	-	1	-
Larne Borough Council	1	1	1	-	-
Moyle District Council	-	-	2	-	-
Newtownabbey Borough Council	4	1	-	1	1
Strabane District Council	-	-	-	-	1
Totals	13	7	7	19	89

Tree-Cutting

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) what provisions are in place to ensure that routine preventative trimming occurs outside the main bird nesting season; (ii) what mechanisms of enforcement are in place to ensure that tree-cutting stops upon discovery of a bird's nest; and (iii) how many fines have been issued in the last year against those who have removed or destroyed birds' nests in order to cut or trim trees.

(AQW 2085/11-15)

Mr Attwood: All nesting birds are protected under the terms of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985(As amended). This legislation states that if any person intentionally or recklessly kills, injures or takes any wild bird; or takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; obstructs or prevents any wild bird from using its nest; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

The Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 does not specify dates in relation to a bird breeding season; however my department advises the public not to trim hedges or cut trees between March and August, as this is the main breeding period for most of our resident bird species.

The situation is slightly different for farmers. In order to receive their full agricultural subsidy, farmers must adhere to a range of conditions that have been set by the Department of Agriculture (DARD). One of these conditions specifies that hedges must not be cut between 1st March and 31st August.

NIEA staff refer callers reporting disturbance of nesting birds to their local PSNI station, as wildlife crime is investigated by the police. The PSNI may decide to ask that no further work is undertaken until either the end of the bird breeding season, or until a decision has been made on a case for prosecution.

The Department receives a large volume of telephone enquiries during the bird breeding season and the majority of responses are mainly advisory in nature. The PSNI prefer to have the report first hand from the individual callers forwarding bird disturbance complaints. The PSNI do not generally inform the Department of the eventual outcome and hence details of prosecutions relating to these offences are not kept by NIEA.

Planning Enforcement Notices

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of Planning Enforcement Notices served for illegal developments in each of the last five years, broken down by Planning Service office.

(AQW 2092/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The number of planning enforcement notices served in each of the last five years broken down by Divisional Office is set out in the table below.

Division	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Ballymena	12	11	15	48	22
Belfast	11	22	47	36	19
Craigavon	55	16	44	136	121
Downpatrick	7	11	6	0	9
Northern	28	23	23	53	23
Omagh	77	98	96	110	69
HQ	7	13	27	45	40
Total	197	194	258	428	303

Road Safety Grants: Budgets

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how much funding was (i) spent on administration; (ii) allocated; and (iii) unspent in the last tranche of the road safety grant budget for community groups.

(AQW 2106/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The 2010/11 contract to deliver funding to the voluntary and community sector in respect of road safety projects was managed by UnLtd. The total budget available was £160,000. The funding breaks down as follows:

Administration	Grant allocations	Unspent
£22,400	£159,308	£7,031.80

Road Safety Grants

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how much funding is available for allocation to road safety grants for community groups.

(AQW 2107/11-15)

Mr Attwood: For 2011/12 the Department has an overall budget of £160,000 of which £140,000 is available for specific road safety projects proposed by the voluntary and community sector, subject to completion of the normal bidding and evaluation procedures.

Road Safety Grants

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost of administering road safety grants in the current tranche of the road safety budget for community groups.

(AQW 2108/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The cost of administering road safety grants for the voluntary and community sector for 2011/12 will not exceed £20,531 (12.8% of the total budget).

Draft Magherafelt Area Plan

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the draft Magherafelt Area Plan.

(AQW 2168/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Department received the Report on the Independent Examination into Objections to the Draft Magherafelt Plan from the Planning Appeals Commission on 31 January 2011.

The Department expects to complete its consideration of the Commissioners' Report in the very near future. Adoption of the final Plan is currently programmed for December 2011.

Rose Energy's Proposal for an Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr Frew asked the Minister of the Environment, given the concerns of the poultry sector, when a decision will be made on Rose Energy's proposal for an incinerator at Glenavy.

(AQW 2273/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The former Minister's announcement of August 2010 was the subject of judicial review proceedings. Lord Justice McCloskey adjourned the judicial review proceedings on 2 March 2011 on the basis that the application process had not been completed.

The applicants subsequently submitted further environmental information that is currently being considered by the Department. When the consideration of this information has been finalised the Department will then make a recommendation to the Minister on the way forward.

Rose Energy's Proposal for an Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr Swann asked the Minister of the Environment why Planning Service has not implemented the decision of the previous Minister to approve Rose Energy's application for an incinerator at Glenavy.

(AQW 2342/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The former Minister's announcement of August 2010 was the subject of judicial review proceedings. Lord Justice McCloskey adjourned the judicial review proceedings on 2 March 2011 on the basis that the application process had not been completed.

The applicants subsequently submitted further environmental information that is currently being considered by the Department. When the consideration of this information has been finalised the Department will then make a recommendation to the Minister on the way forward.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Secondments to the Private Sector

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) what opportunities exist for senior civil servants to be seconded to the private sector; and (ii) in such cases, what arrangements are in place to deal with pension contributions and other employer contributions.

(AQW 1925/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): Outward secondment is an integral part of the HR policies of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). There is scope to second senior civil servants to a range of organisations, including to the private sector, using NICS secondment arrangements and through the Northern Ireland Interchange Scheme, of which the NICS is a partner.

During a period of secondment the secondee remains a civil servant and remains subject to NICS terms and conditions of service. The NICS continues to be responsible for the payment of salary costs, pension and other employer contributions.

Secondments to the Private Sector

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) under what conditions might senior civil servants be seconded to the private sector; and (ii) how his Department ensures that there is no conflict of interest, particularly if the seconding employer is, or was or may in the future be in, a position in the future to provide advice to the Government.

(AQW 1927/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Outward secondment is an integral part of the HR policies of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). There is scope to second all civil servants, including senior civil servants, to a range of organisations, including to the private sector, using NICS secondment arrangements and through the Northern Ireland Interchange Scheme of which the NICS is a partner.

When a secondment is arranged a tripartite agreement between the employing department, the secondee and the host organisation is normally drawn up and covers, amongst other things, issues relating to conflict of interest.

Former Permanent Secretary to the Department for Regional Development

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) to which company the former Permanent Secretary to the Department for Regional Development has been seconded; and (ii) whether any part of his salary or pension is being paid out of public funds.

(AQW 1944/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The secondment agreement between the employing department, the host organisation and the secondee makes provision for confidentiality regarding the details of the secondment, including the name of the host organisation.

During a period of secondment a secondee continues to be a civil servant and is subject to NICS terms and conditions of service. The NICS continues to be responsible for making salary payments directly to the secondee, for arranging deductions from salary in respect of income tax, National Insurance and pension contributions and for making employers' contributions in respect of National Insurance and pension contributions, provided that the secondee remains in the civil service superannuation scheme. On occasions, the NICS will recoup salary costs from the host organisation.

Grievances and Dignity at Work Complaints

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) how many grievances and dignity at work complaints have been closed in the Civil Service in each of the last three years, broken down by each Department; and (ii) the average time it took for these complaints to be closed.

(AQW 1968/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information requested is set out in the attached tables.

The total number of dignity at work cases closed by department for each of the last three financial years.

Department	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
DARD	3	4	11
DCAL	0	0	0
DE	0	2	2
DEL	1	1	4
DETI	0	0	0
DFP	3	9	14
DHSSPS	0	0	0
DOE	1	9	14
DOJ*	N/A	N/A	2
DRD	3	3	15
DSD	12	10	28

Department	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
NIO*	2	6	N/A
OFMDFM	0	1	0
PPS**	N/A	N/A	3

The total number of grievance cases closed by department for each of the last three financial years.

Department	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
DARD	11	15	30
DCAL	0	1	3
DE	2	5	5
DEL	1	11	11
DETI	2	1	0
DFP	4	11	30
DHSSPS	1	3	1
DOE	11	17	9
DOJ*	N/A	N/A	3
DRD	6	16	25
DSD	19	68	88
NIO*	3	11	N/A
OFMDFM	0	0	0
PPS**	N/A	N/A	1

* DOJ came into existence in April 2010 following devolution of policing and justice.

** Public Prosecution Service was a legal office of the NIO prior to the 12th April 2010.

The average (median) time taken to close dignity at work cases over the three year period 2008/09 - 2010/11 was 121 days.

The average (median) time taken to close grievance cases over the three year period 2008/09 - 2010/11 was 163.5 days.

Speed Detection Equipment in the Stormont Estate

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the cost of installing the speed detection equipment in the Stormont Estate.

(AQW 1986/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The cost to install the speed detection equipment is not available as a separate item. The equipment is being installed as part of a traffic calming study being undertaken by DRD Roads Service at a total cost of £800.

Belfast Harbour Commissioners

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) for an update on the Executive's pursuit of funds held by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners; and (ii) whether these funds can be lawfully

released to the Executive in view of the statutory framework within which the Belfast Harbour Commissioners operate.

(AQW 2101/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The DRD Minister is currently pursuing the issue of a contribution from the reserves managed by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners. The DRD Minister will then report his recommendations to the Budget Review Group. Whatever he recommends will take account of the legal position regarding the Commissioners making such a contribution.

Peace III Funding

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action his Department can take to reduce the bureaucracy and paper work involved in the delivery of Peace III funding for community organisations.

(AQW 2231/11-15)

Mr Wilson: My Department and the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), PEACE III Managing Authority, acknowledge the complexity of EU funding requirements. DFP's role in this programme is purely as sponsor department for SEUPB. It has no direct role in the delivery of the programme, this responsibility lies solely with SEUPB as managing authority.

SEUPB is continually looking at means for simplifying its administrative processes and has produced comprehensive guidance notes to assist applicants and project managers to handle the procedures relating to PEACE III funding. The guidance notes are distributed to all projects, and are available on the SEUPB's website at www.seupb.eu.

However, the administrative requirements for EU funding derive from the rules of the EU itself and from our own regulations and guidance regarding the management of public money. These are a necessary and integral part of the management of EU funds, intended to ensure probity and value for money.

Tourism Industry: VAT

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what discussions he has had with Her Majesty's Treasury in relation to reducing VAT for the tourism industry.

(AQW 2238/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The rate of Value Added Tax (VAT) is a Reserved Matter for HM Treasury to determine. In announcing the increase in the standard rate of VAT to 20 per cent in Budget 2010, the Chancellor indicated that this was one of a series of measures to tackle the deficit. There are no indications that the Government would be willing to consider reducing VAT on tourism related products and therefore I have not had any discussions with the Treasury in this regard.

Civil Partnerships

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many civil partnerships, to date, have been (i) registered; and (ii) dissolved.

(AQW 2242/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Between 19th December 2005 and 31st March 2011 there were 549 civil partnerships registered in Northern Ireland.

During the same period three civil partnerships have been legally dissolved in Northern Ireland. Civil partnerships entered into in Northern Ireland can be legally dissolved outside Northern Ireland and civil partnerships legally dissolved in Northern Ireland may have been entered into outside Northern Ireland.

Energy Efficiency for Newly Built Housing

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) what standards of energy efficiency are in place for newly built housing; and (ii) whether he has considered introducing legislation to increase these standards, given the increasing prevalence of fuel poverty.

(AQW 2274/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Measures relating to conservation of fuel and power, which apply to all new buildings, have been included in the Northern Ireland Building Regulations since 1973. Current requirements for the energy efficiency of new housing are as set out in The Building (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, SR 2006 No.440, which came into operation on 30 November 2006.

A proposed amendment, further tightening these standards, is currently out for public consultation. Details are included in "Consultation on proposals for the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland): Phase Two" which may be viewed at: www.buildingregulationsni.gov.uk .

Green New Deal Housing Pilot Programme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if the Green New Deal Housing Pilot Programme is successful, whether he will provide funding to the Minister for Social Development to implement the scheme across Northern Ireland.

(AQW 2275/11-15)

Mr Wilson: As illustrated in the published document Budget 2011-15, the Executive has made provision for Green New Deal funding at a level of £4 million per annum across the years 2012-13 to 2014-15. This funding is predicated upon a business case being approved by the Department for Social Development and subsequently, by the Department of Finance & Personnel.

Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has considered implementing any of the recommendations made in the Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress.

(AQW 2345/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is taking forward a programme of work aimed at defining and measuring National Well-being. This is consistent with wider international projects including the report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress. Officials in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency are closely monitoring developments.

End Year Flexibility

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) what access to the reserve has been necessary in each financial year since 2007/08; and (ii) what recoupment there has been from End Year Flexibility.

(AQW 2397/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Northern Ireland Executive has been given permission to access the HM Treasury reserve on five occasions since 2007-08. These are detailed in the table overleaf.

On each of these occasions the Executive obtained agreement from HM Treasury that these amounts would not be recouped from End Year Flexibility stocks that existed at that time.

Reserve Claim	Financial Year	Resource DEL	£million
			Capital DEL
Equal Pay	2009-10	131.0	-
PSNI Funding to deal with the exceptional Security funding	2010-11	37.4	12.9
Student Loans	2010-11	50.0	-
PSNI Hearing Loss Funding	2010-11	11.0	-
Legal Aid Funding	2010-11	19.2	-

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost to his Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years. (AQW 2013/11-15)

Mr Poole (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The total allocations made by my Department to its Arm's-Length Bodies in the last two years are set out below. The majority of these allocations fund health and social care provision across N. Ireland.

	2009/10				2010/11			
	Current £k	Capital £k	Non-cash £k	Total £k	Current £k	Capital £k	Non-cash £k	Total £k
Health & Social Care Board (1)	3,174,528	4,219	7,431	3,186,178	3,841,564	4,011	10,451	3,856,026
Public Health Agency	68,643	104	0	68,747	69,636	76	77	69,789
Patient Client Council	1,548	0	10	1,558	1,639	15	12	1,666
Business Services Organisation	37,326	3,222	5,471	46,019	23,964	4,878	6,059	34,901
NI Fire & Rescue Service	79,608	3,335	0	82,943	77,315	6,066	0	83,381
NI Blood Transfusion Service	0	254	803	1,057	0	132	425	557
NI Medical & Dental Training Agency	49,471	0	0	49,471	52,220	9	0	52,229
NI Practice & Education Council	1,428	0	35	1,463	1,307	20	383	1,710
NI Social Care Council	3,123	0	53	3,176	3,116	19	32	3,167
NI Guardian ad litem Agency	3,521	58	84	3,663	3,642	50	86	3,778

	2009/10				2010/11			
	Current £k	Capital £k	Non-cash £k	Total £k	Current £k	Capital £k	Non-cash £k	Total £k
Registration & Quality Improvement Authority	6,087	50	74	6,211	6,312	12	89	6,413

Note: (1) Includes allocations to HSC Trusts – see table below.

	2009/10				2010/11			
	Current(1) £k	Capital(2) £k	Non-cash(2) £k	Total £k	Current(1) £k	Capital(2) £k	Non-cash(2) £k	Total £k
Belfast Trust	985,781	87,629	74,667	1,148,077	1,024,385	63,511	44,797	1,132,693
Southern Trust	452,286	25,573	20,882	498,741	460,569	35,148	20,514	516,231
South Eastern Trust	435,893	34,755	25,284	495,932	447,361	40,883	24,244	512,488
Northern Trust	529,206	20,169	26,925	576,300	532,837	10,634	20,118	563,589
Western Trust	424,773	21,097	26,982	472,852	442,845	25,304	17,400	485,549
NI Ambulance Service	52,608	4,612	4,554	61,774	49,043	2,969	3,448	55,460

Allocations to the HSC Trusts were as follows:

Notes: (1) Current expenditure allocations to Trusts are made by the HSCB, not the Department.

(2) Capital and non-cash allocations are made directly to Trusts by the Department.

PARIS System

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the commercial arrangement that is in place between the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and Civica and Hewlett-Packard for the delivery of the PARIS system; and (ii) whether he will make the business case that was submitted for the approval of spend available to the public.

(AQW 2025/11-15)

Mr Poots: The PARIS system has been procured for the Belfast Trust under the Technology Partner Framework Agreement. Hewlett-Packard is the Contractor and Civica is the sub-contractor.

The Business Case can be made available to the public.

Waiting Times for Cancer Treatment

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what positive lessons have been learnt through information sharing with other UK administrations about waiting times for cancer treatment, as referred to in the Department of Finance and Personnel's memorandum on the eighth and ninth reports from the Public Accounts Committee.

(AQW 2045/11-15)

Mr Poots: I can advise that officials from the HSC Board are in regular contact with colleagues in the other UK administrations to share information, identify best practice and learn any positive lessons. In particular, the Northern Ireland Cancer Network (NICaN) regularly attends meetings with other UK-wide cancer networks, where information is exchanged and best practice is shared.

Engagement with Welsh and English administrations has highlighted the importance of areas such as patient pathways, information systems, prospective patient management, inter trust transfer mechanisms, clinical engagement and clear communication of targets in achieving and sustaining improved waiting times for cancer treatment.

Action to take forward improvements in these areas is ongoing across the region. For example, a range of regionally agreed patient pathways have been developed to improve patient flow (i.e. referral to a central point; one stop shops etc). Patient Navigators are employed at each Trust to proactively manage patients through the pathway so that potential breaches are avoided or delays minimized. Inter Trust diagnostic protocols have also been agreed which outline the patient information and tests that need to travel with the patient in order to allow the receiving trust to commence investigations and treatment as early as possible.

I want to assure you that my Department and the HSC Board will continue to work closely with the Trusts and NICaN to ensure patients have timely access to diagnosis and treatment.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Guidance

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether his Department has endorsed any of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance published since 1 July 2006; and (ii) how his Department assesses the implementation of any such guidance endorsed for use by Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 2046/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has either reviewed or is in the process of reviewing all National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Technology Appraisals and Clinical Guidelines published since 1 July 2006 for their applicability in Northern Ireland and endorsed them where appropriate. A list of this endorsed guidance can be found on my Department's website.

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is responsible for reviewing clinical and social care governance arrangements in individual HSC Trusts against a range of quality standards on an on-

going basis. This includes compliance with best practice guidance concerned with safe and effective care such as NICE guidelines.

The process for the endorsement, implementation, monitoring and assurance of NICE Technology Appraisals and Clinical Guidelines has recently been reviewed. Under the new arrangements my Department requires the Health and Social Care Board to formally report annually on the progress made generally in commissioning services in accordance with Departmentally-endorsed NICE guidance.

For further independent assurance, the Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN) and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) will review the implementation of a small number of Technology Appraisals and Clinical Guidelines respectively each year. The circular outlining the new process can be found on my Department's website.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Guidance

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the average length of time taken by his Department to review the applicability of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance.

(AQW 2089/11-15)

Mr Poots: Until now the length of time taken by my Department to review the applicability of National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Technology Appraisals and Clinical Guidelines has varied depending on the complexity of the guidance and the contextual issues relating to implementing the guidance in Northern Ireland.

The process for the endorsement, implementation, monitoring and assurance of NICE Technology Appraisals and Clinical Guidelines has recently been reviewed. Under this new process, the local review of the applicability of NICE technology appraisals is expected to be complete within 4 weeks of the final publication by NICE and the majority of NICE clinical guidelines are expected to be reviewed within 8 weeks of publication by NICE. The circular outlining the new process can be found on my Department's website.

Emergency Ambulances

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, for this year, to date, in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, to detail (i) the average response times of emergency ambulances to 999 calls; (ii) the proportion of 999 calls which resulted in the need for a patient to be transferred to hospital; and (iii) the (a) average; and (b) longest waiting times for the arrival of an ambulance capable of transferring a patient to hospital.

(AQW 2102/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department currently monitors ambulance response times on the basis that 72.5% of all Category A (life-threatening) calls are responded to within eight minutes (and not less than 67.5% in any Local Commissioning Group (LCG) area).

- (i) Information on the average response times of emergency ambulances to 999 calls in the Northern HSC Trust since 1st January 2011 is not available. However, information is available on the proportion of Category A (Immediately life threatening) calls which resulted in the arrival of an emergency response at the scene within 8 minutes. Between 1st January and 31st August 2011, 64.3% of all Category A calls in the Northern LCG area resulted in an emergency response vehicle arriving at the scene within 8 minutes, with 96.5% arriving within 21 minutes.
- (ii) Information on the percentage of 999 calls which resulted in the need for a patient to be transferred to hospital is not available. However, information is available on the number of patients who were transported to hospital following the arrival of an emergency response vehicle responding to a Category A call. Between 1st January and 31st August 2011, 5,773 patients were transported to hospital by an emergency response vehicle responding to a Category A call in the Northern LCG area.

- (iii) (a) Between 1st January and 31st August 2011, the average length of time for the arrival of an ambulance capable of transferring a patient to hospital in the Northern LCG area, following a Category A call, was 10 minutes 34 seconds. However, during this time, the average response time by all types of emergency response vehicles (ambulance or rapid response vehicle) to Category A calls in the Northern LCG area was 7 minutes 34 seconds.
- (b) Since 1st January 2011, the longest waiting time for the arrival of an ambulance capable of transferring a patient to hospital in the Northern LCG area following a Category A call, was 1 hour 23 minutes. On this occasion, the reasons for the delay were that the address provided by the caller did not match the details on the navigational equipment used by the NIAS, and at the time the NIAS were experiencing a high volume of calls.

Locum Appointments for Service Grade

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the benefits for (i) patients; (ii) junior doctor training; and (iii) the taxpayer of the introduction of locum appointments for service grade and the responsibility for the allocation of training posts being given to the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency in August 2010.

(AQW 2103/11-15)

Mr Poots:

(i) Benefit of LAS appointments for the Patient;

LAS appointments are used by Trusts to fill short-term vacancies, which would otherwise remain vacant. These appointees are required to meet specific criteria which has been (nationally agreed), thus ensuring that appointees are competent to undertake the duties given to them. This, together with robust recruitment protocols, ensures that patients are seen by competent junior doctors, who are supported by an appropriate clinical supervisor.

(ii) Benefit to junior doctors in training.

Appointees can use their time in LAS appointments to study for Royal College Examinations, and may also be helpful in allowing appointees to develop skills in a different area, prior to applying for a placement in a specified training programme.

In addition time spent in LAS posts can be used as part of the evidence required for a CESR (Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration) application.

(iii) Benefit to the taxpayer.

The rates at which LAS payments are made are struck at national level using advice independent of Government. This helps ensure rates offer value for money for the taxpayer.

As an arms length body of the Department, the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA), like similar deaneries in the United Kingdom, can provide the necessary level of expertise and knowledge to ensure that regulated standards of training and education for junior doctors are sufficiently met and, simultaneously, operationally manage a complex recruitment, selection and placement process. The role of NIMDTA was not changed in 2010, it has always been the case that Deanery approval is required for all training posts in Northern Ireland.

MRI Scan Performed at the Antrim Area Hospital

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of an MRI scan performed at the Antrim Area Hospital, including the appointment letter and report in (i) 2008; (ii) 2009; and (iii) 2010.

(AQW 2116/11-15)

Mr Poots: The table below details the information requested:

Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Cost	£185.11*	£176.03*	£140.80*

*Average costs as provided by Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Independent Community Pharmacies

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will carry out a needs assessment of independent community pharmacies taking account of Northern Ireland factors.

(AQW 2117/11-15)

Mr Poots: Community Pharmacy NI, the representative body for community pharmacists in Northern Ireland, successfully sought a Judicial Review of newly introduced remuneration and reimbursement arrangements for community pharmacists. Until the result of the recent hearing is known, it would not be appropriate for me to make any further comment on this issue.

Community Pharmacies

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration has been given to the proposals by community pharmacies in relation to savings within his Department's budget.

(AQW 2118/11-15)

Mr Poots: Community Pharmacy NI, the representative body for community pharmacists in Northern Ireland, successfully sought a Judicial Review of newly introduced remuneration and reimbursement arrangements for community pharmacists. Until the result of the recent hearing is known, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the detail of any such proposals.

Provision of Pharmaceutical Care Services

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will examine the contract in Scotland for the provision of pharmaceutical care services when considering a new pharmacy contract.

(AQW 2119/11-15)

Mr Poots: The HSC Board have been mandated by my Department to develop a Community Pharmacy Contract with Community Pharmacy NI (CPNI), which is the representative body for community pharmacy in Northern Ireland. Examples of good practice from Scotland and elsewhere will be considered in the development of a new contract,

Due to the ongoing Judicial Review instigated by CPNI of the recently introduced remuneration and reimbursement arrangements for community pharmacists it would be inappropriate for me as Minister to comment further on the development of a pharmacy contract for Northern Ireland until the outcome of the hearing is known.

Diabetes Clinic: Bangor Hospital

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the reasons for the closure of the diabetes clinic in Bangor Hospital.

(AQW 2132/11-15)

Mr Poots: The provision of outpatient clinics is an operational matter for Health and Social Services Trusts. The South Eastern Trust has advised that the weekly diabetic clinic held in Bangor Community Hospital has been discontinued on a temporary basis as a result of a consultant retirement. The Trust will be recruiting a new consultant and in the interim patients will be seen at either the Ulster or Ards Hospitals.

Nurses Specialising in Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of (a) full-time; and (b) part-time nurses specialising in Inflammatory Bowel Disease; (ii) where they are based; and (iii) whether he has any plans to expand this service.

(AQW 2164/11-15)

Mr Poots:

(i) (ii)

At September 2011, there was 1 (0.33 Whole-time Equivalent) nurse specialising in Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) based at Causeway Hospital.

Source: Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts

(iii)

In 2011/12, the Health and Social Care Board will invest an additional £1.5m in biologic therapies to make further progress with the implementation of NICE guidance for the treatment of Crohn's disease.

It is expected that by the end of 2011/12 Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts should have increased the number of IBD clinical nurse specialists so that there is 0.5WTE in each of the Northern, Southern, Western and South Eastern HSC Trusts and 0.75 WTE in the Belfast HSC Trust, that is 2.75WTE in total. This will provide an enhanced level of care for patients with severe IBD.

Sale of Methadone by Registered Users

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of the four deaths from methadone abuse in Gateshead, England, a contributory factor to which appeared to be a loophole in legislation allowing the sale of methadone by registered users, whether he will review the relevant legislation to ensure that similar tragedies are avoided in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 2170/11-15)

Mr Poots: Substitute prescribing is the controlled prescribing of opiate medication to illicit opiate users, usually heroin users, as part of an overall care plan. The aim is to improve the physical and mental health of local opiate users and substitute prescribing has been shown to increase engagement with overall treatment plans, reduce illicit opiate use and its associated harm, and also contribute to lifestyle stabilisation. As part of this initiative, clients can be prescribed a range of substances but most commonly methadone or buprenorphine.

All substitute prescribing in Northern Ireland is undertaken in accordance with the Drug Misuse Dependence UK Guidelines on Clinical Management 2007 (the "Orange Book"). This recommends daily supervision, with one weekly take home dose for a period of three months for clients. It is only when the patient is assessed by Community Addiction Teams as "stable" that the multidisciplinary decision for additional unsupervised doses is taken.

It would be inappropriate for me to comment directly on any of the individual cases in Gateshead. However, under the Misuse of Drugs Act it is illegal for anyone in receipt of a prescribed medication, including methadone, to sell on that medicine. Once a patient takes possession of any prescribed medication, the prescriber cannot retain control over the medication, as at that point it becomes the clients property and responsibility.

A number of governance arrangements are in place to minimise the risk associated with unsupervised swallow, these include:-

- shared care arrangements for clients to have their medication dispensed;
- availability of training for all health care professionals involved in the Substitute Prescribing process;
- prior to the commencement of a shared care arrangement, an agreement is drawn up between the client, the prescriber, the key worker and the dispensing pharmacist which outlines the

responsibilities of the client committing to this service. This includes emphasising to the client that it is illegal to divert their medication;

- undertaking a detailed client assessment before unsupervised swallow is allowed;
- regular patient review during treatment – this includes ongoing risk assessment, regular drug testing and assessment of suitability for take home dose.

Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety given that the number of cases of Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis in London has doubled in the last two years, whether he will liaise with his counterpart in England to ensure that Northern Ireland is ready for any increase in cases in the coming months.

(AQW 2171/11-15)

Mr Poots: TB is a notifiable disease and all confirmed and suspected cases are notified to the Public Health Agency (PHA) to enable appropriate public health measures to be taken. The PHA carefully monitors the number of cases of Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR TB) in Northern Ireland and liaises with Health and Social Care Trusts about the appropriate public health measures for these patients. It also works closely with the Health Protection Agency about the trends in England. In Northern Ireland the Health and Social Care service is prepared should there be an increase in cases of MDR TB.

Fire and Rescue Service: False Alarms

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how many people have been prosecuted in each of the last three years for calling out the Fire and Rescue Service on false alarms; and (ii) the total cost of these false alarms.

(AQW 2184/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) does not hold information on prosecutions for offences relating to false alarms; such prosecutions are a matter for the PSNI.

The estimated total cost of false alarms to NIFRS in each of the last three years is shown in the table.

False Alarms (Mobilised)	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
False Alarms - Malicious (Hoax Calls)	£2,824,430	£2,693,000	£2,064,699

The costs are based on an average NIFRS cost per mobilised incident for each of the respective years.

Ambulances

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how many ambulances are currently available for use by emergency services; and (ii) what is the average (a) year of manufacturer; and (b) mileage of these vehicles.

(AQW 2185/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have been advised by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service that it has 120 emergency ambulances currently available for use by the emergency services; the average age of these vehicles is 4.2 years and average mileage, 131,587 miles.

Nurses on Temporary Contracts

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of nurses on temporary contracts; and (ii) the average length of each contract, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 2186/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is provided in the table below.

Number of Qualified Nurses employed on temporary contracts within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care and the average length of each contract by Trust at September 2011

Trust	Headcount	WTE	Average Contract Length
Belfast	54	44.52	34 months
Northern	77	57.83	15 months
South Eastern	52	42.66	Under 12 months
Southern	31	23.61	19 months
Western	224	201.59	22 months

Source: Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

1. WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
2. Figures include qualified nurses only and exclude bank nurses.

Nurses Specialising in Multiple System Atrophy

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many nurses are specialising in Multiple System Atrophy.

(AQW 2188/11-15)

Mr Poots: Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) is a rare condition that causes symptoms similar to advanced Parkinson's Disease. There are no nurses specialising in Multiple System Atrophy employed within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care. Instead these patients will be seen by nurses specialising in Parkinson's Disease. Information on the number of nurses specialising in Parkinson's Disease is provided in the table below.

Nurses specialising in Parkinson's Disease employed within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care by Trust at September 2011

Trust	Headcount	WTE
Belfast	2	1.80
Northern	1	1.00
South Eastern	0	0.00
Southern	1	1.00
Western	2	2.00
Total	6	5.80

Source: Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts

Notes:

1. WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.
2. The 2 (1.80 WTE) staff based at Belfast Trust also cover the South Eastern Trust area and parts of the Northern Trust area as well as Belfast.

Multiple System Atrophy

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has discussed, or intends to discuss, with his counterpart in Dublin the development of an all-island strategy on the treatment of people with Multiple System Atrophy and support for their carers.

(AQW 2191/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are currently no plans to develop a cross-border strategy on the treatment of people with Multiple System Atrophy (MSA). However, my Department is currently developing policies which will benefit those with MSA and their carers, including a Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy and Action Plan, and a Policy Framework "Living with Long Term Conditions". In addition, the Health and Social Care Board is currently evaluating the implementation of the 2002 Review of Adult Neurology Services.

Furthermore, a Neurological Conditions Network has been established by my Department to ensure, through a multi-disciplinary and coordinated approach, the best possible outcomes for people with long term neurological conditions, such as MSA, and it is progressing well.

Prescribing Generic Drugs

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has had any discussions with GPs and pharmacies in relation to the savings that could be made by prescribing generic drugs instead of branded drugs.

(AQW 2193/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department's policy is that, where it is appropriate to do so, a medicine should be prescribed generically. The use of generic medicines in favour of branded equivalents is a central strand in the Department's strategy to promote improved quality in medicines management through cost effective prescribing. GPs and pharmacists are updated regularly on generic prescribing policy. In July and August this year the Department also wrote to the HSC Board and Trusts and to all GPs and community pharmacists to re-affirm the Department's policy on the best use of medicines – including the need to adhere to the policy on generic prescribing.

The current position is for the clinician or GP, in consultation with their patient, to decide on the most appropriate course of treatment for the patient and to prescribe the medication to best support that treatment. There have always been clear instructions for prescribers and dispensers that there are situations where it remains appropriate for branded drugs to be prescribed and dispensed.

Northern Ireland Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Working Group

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the last meeting of the Northern Ireland Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Working Group took place and when it is next due to meet.

(AQW 2195/11-15)

Mr Poots: I refer the member to the answer I gave in AQW1335/11-15 answered on 14 July 2011.

Looked After Children

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what financial assistance is available in each Health and Social Care Trust for looked after children who wish to undertake third level education.

(AQW 2196/11-15)

Mr Poofs: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has provided information on the financial assistance provided by each Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) to looked after children who wish to undertake third level education; it is set out in the table below. The HSCB is currently undertaking a regional exercise, the aim of which is to establish a consistent approach to providing financial support to looked after children engaging in higher education across all HSCT areas. This exercise is intended to report by the end of 2011.

Trust	Student Fees	Student Loan	Maintenance Grant/SSG/HE Bursary	Accommodation Costs	Weekly Maintenance including – Vacation periods	Travel	Vacation accommodation	Other
Belfast	Paid in full by Trust	NO	–	Paid in full by Trust	Paid by Trust at £64.30 per week	Contribution made by Trust	Paid by Trust	Trust assistance with purchase of books, stationery, laptop
Northern	Fees not paid by Trust, Student Loan	YES	–	Paid in full by Trust	Paid by Trust at £53.45 per week (Income Support rate for 16 – 24yr)	Met in full by Trust	Paid by Trust	As above
South Eastern	Paid in full by Trust	NO	–	Paid in full by Trust	No payment by Trust	Met in full by Trust	Paid by Trust	As above
Southern	Fees not paid by Trust, Student Loan	YES	–	50% of costs met by Trust	Top ups provided by Trust based on other sources of income	Met in full by Trust	Paid by Trust	As above

Trust	Student Fees	Student Loan	Maintenance Grant/SSG/HE Bursary	Accommodation Costs	Weekly Maintenance including – Vacation periods	Travel	Vacation accommodation	Other
Western	Fees not paid by Trust, Student Loan	YES	Maintenance Grant	Variable amount paid by Trust. Amount paid by Trust based on calculation of income and costs. Deficit in accommodation and maintenance met by Trust	Variable amount paid by Trust based on calculation of income and costs	Met in full by Trust	Paid by Trust	Trust reimburses cost of books and equipment

Accident and Emergency Referrals from Nursing and Care Homes

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of accident and emergency referrals from nursing and care homes within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three financial years; and (ii) how many of these referrals could have been dealt with by a GP, if one was available.

(AQW 2200/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) Information on the number of referrals from nursing and care homes to the four emergency care departments within the Northern HSC Trust for the last three financial years is not currently available. However, information is available on the number of patients aged 65 & over referred from nursing and residential homes to both Antrim Area and Causeway emergency care departments for the last 18 months.

During 2010/11, 2,774 patients aged 65 & over were referred to Antrim Area and Causeway emergency care departments by nursing and residential homes, with a further 975 patients being referred between April and August 2011.

- (ii) Information on the number of these referrals which could have been dealt with by a GP is not available.

Surplus Land

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list any surplus land in the North Down area owned by his Department.

(AQW 2230/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Department does not own any surplus land in the North Down area.

Day Procedure Operations

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number and type of day procedure operations carried out at the Mid-Ulster Hospital in (i) 2010; and (ii) 2011.

(AQW 2308/11-15)

Mr Poots: In 2009/10, there were 3,624 acute day case admissions to the Mid-Ulster Hospital where at least one procedure was carried out.

The ten most common primary procedures detailed below, account for 71.6% of the 3,624 day case admissions to the Mid-Ulster Hospital during 2009/10.

Procedure	Number Carried Out
Diagnostic fiberoptic endoscopic examination of upper gastrointestinal tract	870
Diagnostic endoscopic examination of colon	312
Other excision of lesion of skin	303
Simple extraction of tooth	263
Diagnostic endoscopic examination of lower bowel using fiberoptic sigmoidoscope	248
Blood withdrawal	226
Diagnostic endoscopic examination of uterus	108
Other vaginal operations on uterus	99

Procedure	Number Carried Out
Endoscopic extirpation of lesion of colon	91
Release of entrapment of peripheral nerve at wrist	76

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

In 2010/11^P, there were 4,392 acute day case admissions to the Mid-Ulster Hospital where at least one procedure was carried out.

The ten most common primary procedures detailed below, account for 72.0% of the 4,392 day case admissions to the Mid-Ulster Hospital during 2010/11^P.

Procedure	Number Carried Out
Diagnostic fibreoptic endoscopic examination of upper gastrointestinal tract	1,054
Simple extraction of tooth	515
Diagnostic endoscopic examination of colon	342
Other excision of lesion of skin	340
Diagnostic endoscopic examination of lower bowel using fibreoptic sigmoidoscope	217
Blood withdrawal	178
Excision of vas deferens	170
Endoscopic extirpation of lesion of colon	134
Prosthesis of lens	124
Other intravenous injection	89

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

^P Information for 2010/11 is provisional and may be subject to changes.

Mood and Anxiety Disorders

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to reduce the number of people with mood and anxiety disorders in the East Antrim area.

(AQW 2317/11-15)

Mr Poots: Most people with mood and anxiety disorders are seen by Primary Care who have access to services such as computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), anxiety management groups and counselling services.

Within Northern Trust Mental Health Services, there are 8 Community Mental Health Teams for adults, 6 Community teams for older people with mental health problems, a CBT service and a psychology service. These teams all provide services for mood and anxiety disorders as part of the Trust's overall mental health services.

Work is also being done to reduce the number of people with mood and anxiety disorder through the Public Health Agency, such as through the Protect Life Strategy work and Community Development projects promoting good mental health..

Dementia Strategy

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what is the status of the Dementia Strategy; and (ii) whether a cost/benefit analysis has been conducted.

(AQW 2324/11-15)

Mr Poots: Dementia care is an important issue facing us all in Northern Ireland. The expected increases in numbers of people with dementia will bring further pressures on our health and social care services.

Recognising these pressures my Department has developed and consulted on a regional strategy for improving dementia services. Given the current financial climate, I am giving careful consideration to realistic and meaningful options to progress implementation of the strategy. I hope to make a statement to the Assembly regarding this matter in the near future.

Consideration was given throughout the development of this strategy to the benefits achievable for those with dementia in respect of early diagnosis, specialist treatments, and specialist care, support and advice to the person, their carers and family. This allowed for analysis of the longer term efficiencies deliverable and the costs to implement the necessary service enhancements.

Land Owned by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the land owned by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust in the Ballymena Borough Council area, including (i) the address; (ii) the size in acres of each site; and (iii) what each site is used for.

(AQW 2336/11-15)

Mr Poots: Northern Health and Social Care Trust owns two sites in the Ballymena Borough Council Area which comprise both land and buildings as detailed in the table below.

Facility Description	Address 1	Address 2	Site area (acres)
Ballee Childrens' Home	5a Hollybank Park	Ballymena	2.07
Braid Valley Hospital	52 Cushendall Road	Ballymena	6.47

Community Information System

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many administration staff will be recruited to implement the new Community Information System; and (ii) how this relates to the policy to redirect more resources to front-line staff.

(AQW 2340/11-15)

Mr Poots: There will be 11 administrative staff with service background and knowledge directly involved in the deployment of the Community Information System.

The application assists front line staff to deliver a better level of service to the patients and clients of Belfast Trust. The staff that are used in the implementation of this application are directly enhancing the resources, efficiency and information provided to front line staff.

Early Years (0-6) Strategy

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions his Department has had with the Department of Education in relation to the implementation of the Early Years (0-6) Strategy.

(AQW 2347/11-15)

Mr Poots: As the Department for Education has yet to finalise the Early Years (0-6) Strategy my Department has not held any discussions with that Department regarding its implementation directly.

My Department continues to contribute to the development of the strategy through representation on the Stakeholder Advisory Group established and led by the Department for Education.

I have met with the Department of Education Minister to discuss how we can act collaboratively on a range of issues including early years. I intend to schedule another of these meetings shortly.

Children: Dentists

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children were registered with (i) an NHS dentist; and (ii) a private dentist in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 2396/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of children, 0 – 17 years of age, registered with a Health Service dentist in each of the last ten years is shown in table 1 below. The count of registrations is taken at September of each year.

TABLE 1: REGISTRATIONS WITH A HEALTH SERVICE DENTIST FOR CHILDREN AGED 0-17 YEARS.

Year	Number of children registered
2002	284,230
2003	280,226
2004	274,364
2005	270,903
2006	271,147
2007	266,203
2008	267,956
2009	274,790
2010	279,145
2011	314,509

Source: Family Practitioner Services, Information and Registration Unit - HSC Business Services Organisation

The information is not available as registration information for private dentists is not held centrally.

Registered NHS Dentists

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of registered NHS dentists in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 2398/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of dentists registered to provide Health Service treatment in each of the last eight years is shown in table 1 below. Figures for the last ten years are not available; the earliest available figures are from October 2004.

It should be noted that Oasis and Salaried dentists have been included in Business Service Organisation records from 2010 onward, and this has resulted in an increase in the number of dentists compared to previous years.

TABLE 1: REGISTRATIONS WITH A HEALTH SERVICE DENTIST FOR CHILDREN AGED 0-17 YEARS.

Date	Number of dentists ¹
October 2004	732
September 2005	778
September 2006	837
September 2007	852
September 2008	894
September 2009	889
September 2010	984
September 2011	1,033

Source: Family Practitioner Services, Information and Registration Unit - HSC Business Services Organisation

Notes:

- 1 Dentist numbers for 2004 - 2009 include principals, associates, assistants and trainees. Dentist numbers for 2010 and 2011 include principals, associates, assistants, trainees, Oasis and salaried dentists.

In-Patients Admitted to the Causeway Area Hospital

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total number of in-patients admitted to the Causeway Area Hospital in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2453/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of inpatient and day case admissions to Causeway Area Hospital in each of the last five years is shown in the table below.

Financial Year	Day Cases	Inpatients	Total Admissions
2006/07	6,204	12,596	18,800
2007/08	6,713	13,952	20,665
2008/09	7,332	14,236	21,568
2009/10	7,497	13,959	21,456
2010/11	7,399	13,837	21,236

Source:- KH03a & Hospital Inpatient System (HIS)

Notes

- A Day case admission is defined as a patient who is admitted electively during the course of a day with the intention of receiving care who does not require the use of a hospital bed overnight and who returns home as scheduled. Regular day and night attendances are also classified as a day case admission.
- An inpatient admission includes both (a) patients admitted electively with the expectation that they will remain in hospital for at least one night, and (b) non-elective admissions (e.g. emergency admissions). A patient who is admitted with this intention but who leaves hospital for any reason without staying overnight is still counted as an inpatient.

Brendan Lillis

Mr Givan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) what representations his Department made to the Minister of Justice in relation to Brendan Lillis being considered for release by the Parole Commissioners; and (ii) what information the Minister of Justice sought from his Department in relation to his medical condition and treatment.

(AQW 2573/11-15)

Mr Poots:

- (i) I raised the matter with the Minister of Justice on the 10 August 2011 during a bi-lateral meeting. Further to this, I wrote to the Parole Commissioners on 17 August 2011 outlining the scale of the treatment available to Mr Lillis and wrote to the Minister of Justice on 26 August 2011 seeking details of any healthcare advice provided in the report to the Parole Commissioners for NI, when they were considering their decision to release Mr Lillis.
- (ii) No specific information on the medical condition and treatment of Mr Lillis was requested from my Department by the Minister of Justice.

Department of Justice

Rioting Offences Over the 12 July 2011 Period

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the current total of legal aid payments made in relation to the rioting offences which occurred over the 12 July 2011 period, broken down by court division.

(AQW 1827/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): To date, only one claim for fees has been received in respect of representation at the Magistrates' Court. This claim has not yet been assessed.

The total paid to date with regard to Green Form/Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) payments is £1,357.29 (including VAT of £201.09). A breakdown of payments by court division is not readily available at this stage.

New Legislation

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what new legislation he intends to introduce over the next four years.
(AQW 1841/11-15)

Mr Ford: I will shortly bring forward proposals for a Bill to change our laws on fingerprint and DNA sample retention and to improve the notification and review requirements for sex offenders. I will then bring forward a more wide ranging Bill to speed up and improve the efficiency of the justice process, provide better services to victims, and to tackle particular types of offending.

It is also my intention to improve the law on how people with mental illness are dealt with in the justice system reflecting and preferably in conjunction with legislative changes being made by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in light of the Bamford Review.

I will also be considering how I might legislate for a number of major policy reviews currently underway or which have recently reported. These include the Prisons Review, the Youth Justice Review, the Access to Justice Review and the Community Safety Strategy. I will also be considering how best to deliver tribunal reform.

The Northern Ireland Law Commission will be producing proposals for new bail legislation which I will be considering in due course. The outworkings of the Law Commission's work programme may also require other legislative work in due course just as I would anticipate that other legislative requirements will emerge over the next four years.

Jose Ignacio de Juana Chaos

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what is the total legal aid cost to date for Jose Ignacio de Juana Chaos.

(AQW 1889/11-15)

Mr Ford: To date, the solicitor's legal aid costs paid in respect of legal representation for José Ignacio de Juana Chaos are £21,980.53 (including VAT of £2,829.15 and disbursements of £2,984.82).

It is anticipated that costs for Junior Counsel will be £18,169.03 (including VAT of £2,706.03), and costs for Senior Counsel to be £24,197.95 (including VAT of £3,603.95).

Lawyers' Strike Over Legal Aid Rates

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what resolutions were reached which led to the end of the lawyers' strike over legal aid rates.

(AQW 1890/11-15)

Mr Ford: Members of the legal profession who had come off record from the middle of April onwards decided to resume representing their clients on the basis of the new fees agreed to by the Assembly in the Legal Aid for Crown Court Proceedings (Costs) (Amendment) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the "2011 Rules"). These new fees are expected to reduce spending on criminal legal aid by approximately £18m each year.

During discussions with officials from the Courts and Tribunals Service in August, representatives of the legal profession identified a number of anomalies relating to the operation of the 2011 Rules. Arising from these discussions, I decided that new fees should be introduced for Proceeds of Crime and Confiscation hearings. I have also agreed to create a new category of fee for certain applications to the court in respect of sexual and other offences, to be known as Public Protection Applications. The cost of addressing these anomalies is estimated to be less than £15,000 each year.

I have also undertaken that my officials will keep the general operation of the Rules under review on a continuing basis.

Training College at Desertcreat

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice the extent to which suppliers within the Mid-Ulster and South Tyrone areas will be employed in the construction of the joint training college at Desertcreat.

(AQW 1892/11-15)

Mr Ford: Until approval is obtained and the procurement process completed, it is impossible to determine the extent to which local suppliers will be employed in the construction of the college. However, my Department intends to do everything within legal parameters, to benefit local firms and professional staff.

Training College at Desertcreat

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice the extent to which firms and professional staff from the Mid-Ulster and South Tyrone areas will be employed in the construction of the joint training college at Desertcreat.

(AQW 1893/11-15)

Mr Ford: Until procurement process is completed, it is impossible to determine the extent to which local firms and professional staff will be employed in the construction of the college. However, my Department intends to do everything within legal parameters, to benefit local firms and professional staff.

Training College at Desertcreat

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice the extent to which firms and professional staff from the Mid Ulster and South Tyrone areas will be employed in the care and maintenance of the completed joint training college at Desertcreat.

(AQW 1894/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are a number of potential contracts to be let in association with the new college that will require new posts, including ICT and facilities management. Given that the contracts will be subject to procurement and legal regulations, it is not possible at this stage to determine the extent to which local firms and professional staff will be employed in the care and maintenance of the completed college. However, my Department intends to do everything within legal parameters, to benefit local firms and professional staff.

Training College at Desertcreat

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Justice for an estimate of the number of construction jobs that will be created by the building of the joint training college at Desertcreat.

(AQW 1895/11-15)

Mr Ford: My Department estimates that throughout the life of the construction project there will be a requirement for between 1,500 and 1,700 construction jobs.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice how many late applications were received for the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

(AQW 1910/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been 32 late applications received.

Sentences for Civil Unrest and Riotous Behaviour

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what plans he has to increase sentences for civil unrest and riotous behaviour.

(AQW 1913/11-15)

Mr Ford: The offence of riot was considered in the review of the sentencing framework legislated for in the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 which introduced public protection sentences. Riot was included in Schedules 1 and 2 of the Order as a specified violent offence and so can attract an indeterminate or extended public protection sentence. Under common law in Northern Ireland, the maximum sentence available for riot is life. Sentencing decisions, within the legislative framework, are a matter for the judiciary, taking account of all the factors pertaining in individual cases.

Last year, I issued a consultation which considered a range of potential mechanisms by which greater transparency, consistency and understanding of sentencing practice might be achieved. I hope to announce proposals later in the autumn on how best these might be delivered in a way that will promote public confidence.

Suspended Sentences

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice what steps he will take to ensure that an offender with five suspended sentences, who is found guilty of a violent crime, will not receive a sixth suspended sentence rather than having the previous suspended sentences activated.

(AQW 1950/11-15)

Mr Ford: Sentencing decisions are a matter for the judiciary, taking account of all considerations relevant in individual cases. In taking such decisions, judges take account of a number of factors: the seriousness of the offence; the circumstances of the offender; the protection of the public; the impact on the victim and any aggravating and mitigating factors.

Last year, I issued a consultation which considered a range of potential mechanisms by which greater transparency, consistency and understanding of sentencing practice might be achieved. I hope to announce proposals later in the autumn on how best these might be delivered in a way that will promote public confidence.

Suspended Sentences

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice the number of occasions in the past twelve months where an offender has received a sixth suspended sentence rather than having any of the previous suspended sentences activated.

(AQW 1951/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is not available. Court conviction and sentencing datasets and the measures of reconviction rates mentioned by the Department are not collated in the format which would allow for identification of previous disposals in the manner requested.

Suspended Sentences

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice to outline the circumstances in which an offender with five suspended sentences would receive a sixth suspended sentence, rather than having the previous suspended sentences activated.

(AQW 1952/11-15)

Mr Ford: Sentencing decisions are a matter for the judiciary, taking account of all considerations relevant in individual cases. In taking such decisions, judges take account of a number of factors: the seriousness of the offence; the circumstances of the offender; the protection of the public; the impact on the victim and any aggravating and mitigating factors.

Last year, I issued a consultation which considered a range of potential mechanisms by which greater transparency, consistency and understanding of sentencing practice might be achieved. I hope to announce proposals later in the autumn on how best these might be delivered in a way that will promote public confidence.

Information on Child Abusers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how he will impose the law for priests who fail to disclose information on child abusers that is heard in Confession.

(AQW 1958/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not a matter for the Minister of Justice to 'impose' the law. The investigation of offences and the enforcement of the law are operational matters for the PSNI. Section 5 of the Criminal Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 makes it an offence not to provide information to the police in relation to relevant offences, such as child abuse, unless there is a reasonable excuse. The police are required to bring such offences to the attention of the Director of Public Prosecutions who determines whether or not the Test for Prosecution has been met. Where a prosecution is instituted it is a matter for the court or jury to decide whether or not an offence has been committed.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many appeals against the refusal of an award under the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme have been (i) granted; and (ii) rejected.

(AQW 2002/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are 57 applications pending Appeals Panel decisions against refusal of an award. At its first meeting the Appeals Panel identified further investigations that needed to be completed before final decisions could be made on a number of appeals. It will need to reconvene to consider further appeals as a consequence of the payments having been made. A proportion of the funds have been set aside to make payments to successful appellants.

£250,000 has been identified to cover the cost of administering the PartTime Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many appeals have been lodged against refusal of an award under the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

(AQW 2004/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are 57 applications pending Appeals Panel decisions against refusal of an award. At its first meeting the Appeals Panel identified further investigations that needed to be completed before final decisions could be made on a number of appeals. It will need to reconvene to consider further appeals as a consequence of the payments having been made. A proportion of the funds have been set aside to make payments to successful appellants.

£250,000 has been identified to cover the cost of administering the PartTime Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost to date of administering the Part-Time Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

(AQW 2005/11-15)

Mr Ford: There are 57 applications pending Appeals Panel decisions against refusal of an award. At its first meeting the Appeals Panel identified further investigations that needed to be completed before final decisions could be made on a number of appeals. It will need to reconvene to consider further appeals as a consequence of the payments having been made. A proportion of the funds have been set aside to make payments to successful appellants.

£250,000 has been identified to cover the cost of administering the PartTime Reserve Gratuity Scheme.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether his Special Adviser is paid within Band A or Band B of the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scale; and, if it is within Band B whether, in light of the DFP decision to increase the upper limit of the Band B scale to £90,000, there has been an increase in salary or an increase is planned.

(AQW 2040/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice Special Adviser is paid within Band B of the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scale; and there has been no increase in salary in light of the DFP decision to increase the upper limit of the Band B scale to £90,000. The Special Adviser's salary has remained at the same level since his appointment in April 2010, and no increase is planned.

Custodial Sentences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many custodial sentences handed down at Magistrates' Courts in each of the last two years have, on appeal, been (i) reduced; (ii) suspended; or (iii) replaced with an alternative disposal broken down by court division.

(AQW 2052/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been more than 5,200 custodial sentences handed down at the Magistrates' Court which have been appealed. A further breakdown in the form requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Information on the outcome of all Magistrates' Court appeals is set out in Tables 1 to 3 below.

Prison Officers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many prison officers are currently suspended from duty due to facing prosecution.

(AQW 2053/11-15)

Mr Ford: One Prison Officer is currently suspended from duty, pending the outcome of a prosecution case against him.

Fines Handed Down with Custodial Sentences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he will consider introducing legislation in which fines handed down with custodial sentences remain outstanding after release, instead of the individual being subject to an immediate warrant.

(AQW 2054/11-15)

Mr Ford: In appropriate circumstances, a court has the power to impose a fine in addition to a custodial sentence without the issue of a warrant committing the person to prison forthwith. The fine would then still require to be paid.

I have a policy consultation currently underway which contains proposals to tackle the problem of fine default in Northern Ireland. Along with proposals for the direct deduction of money from earnings or benefits to clear fines, and a non-police civilian-led collection and enforcement system, the consultation contains proposals to increase the penalties for those who nevertheless default. The consultation seeks views on, amongst other proposals, an increase in the period to be served in custody for default.

Production Order

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost, in each of the last three years, of bringing a prisoner to court following a Production Order, broken down by court division.

(AQW 2055/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information is not available in the format requested. However, the charges levied by Prisoner Escort and Court Custody Service for prisoners involved in a civil action were as shown:

Court District	Cost per prisoner 2008/09 & 2009/10	Cost per prisoner 2010/11
Antrim	£227.00	£171.00
Armagh	£211.00	£159.00
Belfast	£196.00	£148.00
Craigavon	£189.00	£142.00
Newtownards	£214.00	£161.00
Fermanagh Tyrone	£281.00	£212.00
Londonderry	£266.00	£200.00

These costs are based on staffing for vehicles and vehicle running costs only. The reduction in costs from April 2010 is due to the appointment of Prisoner Custody Officers (PCOs) to provide this service instead of Prison Officers, and the consequent reduction in salary costs.

Tougher Laws to Deal With Individuals Selling Drugs

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to introduce tougher laws to deal with individuals selling drugs.

(AQW 2056/11-15)

Mr Ford: The legislative provisions underpinning drug offences and penalties in Northern Ireland are set out in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the subject matter of which (including in relation to drugs offences and penalties) is reserved.

My officials maintain links with the Home Office and the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to ensure that I am fully informed of any plans to amend the legislation. I will continue to monitor the situation and review as necessary.

Domestic Violence Legislation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice what measures his Department has in place to educate members of the travelling community on domestic violence legislation.

(AQW 2090/11-15)

Mr Ford: A key initiative within the current Action Plan which supports the 'Tackling Violence at Home' strategy is to engage with 'hard to reach' groups. In taking this forward a Forum, at which the travelling community will have representation, has been established and will have its inaugural meeting on 18 October 2011. The Forum will develop a plan of activities aimed at enhancing engagement of 'hard to reach' groups through the provision of dedicated information, advice, services and training on domestic and sexual violence issues.

Additionally, 'The law can help', a leaflet providing information about criminal and civil law for all victims of domestic violence and abuse, was developed and widely distributed across public places including doctors' surgeries, health centres, and hospitals.

Preliminary Enquiries

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether it is necessary for remand or sentenced prisoners to be produced in court for preliminary enquiries or could such hearings be carried out by video-link.

(AQW 2091/11-15)

Mr Ford: An individual on remand will normally be present in court for a Preliminary Inquiry (PE). There are, however, certain circumstances in which a Preliminary Inquiry may be conducted without the accused being physically present:

- where he has been transferred to a hospital for treatment for a mental disorder, the court is satisfied that he is unfit to take part in the proceedings, and he is legally represented; or
- where he is prevented from effectively participating in the proceedings by reason of his being under 18 or suffering from a mental disorder. In these circumstances, the court may allow an accused to give evidence at a Preliminary Inquiry via live link.

Preliminary Inquiries have also been held by live link in a number of cases at the direction of the District Judge (Magistrates' Courts). I understand this to be with the consent of the parties.

I intend to publish proposals for consultation on the use of video-links soon and any change to the existing arrangements will be considered in that context.

Unless it is for a separate matter for which they are being prosecuted, a sentenced prisoner will not appear for a Preliminary Inquiry.

Operation Mazurka

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many convictions have been secured in each court division as a result of Operation Mazurka, which targeted Chinese-owned cannabis factories.

(AQW 2093/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is not available. Court conviction data do not contain background information in relation to offences committed, and it is therefore not possible to give the number convicted as a result of a specific operation. If the Member would want any further information on the police operations he may wish to contact the Chief Constable.

Prison Officers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number prison officers currently employed.

(AQW 2094/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service currently employs 1752 (full time equivalent) staff of all operational grades, of which 1017 are prison officers.

Prison Service

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Justice how much the Prison Service has paid to the Transport Training Service in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2133/11-15)

Mr Ford: In the last five years the Prison Service has paid the Transport Training Service:

Financial Year	Net amount	VAT	Amount Paid
2006-07	£ 119	£ 10	£ 129
2007-08	£ 5,343	£ 796	£ 6,139
2008-09	£ 2,172	£ 289	£ 2,461
2009-10	£ 1,627	£ 191	£ 1,818
2010-11	£ 13,639	£ 1,933	£ 15,572
Total	£ 22,900	£ 3,219	£ 26,119

Convictions for Motoring Offences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many vehicles have been seized and destroyed as a result of convictions for motoring offences in the last twelve months, broken down by court division.

(AQW 2135/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is not available. Court conviction and sentencing datasets are not collated in the format which would allow for identification of disposals in the manner requested. The data records the disposal reached by the court and takes no account of any subsequent seizures or destruction orders.

Custodial Sentences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many custodial sentences handed down by Magistrates' Courts, in each of the last three years, have been increased on appeal, broken down by court division. (AQW 2136/11-15)

Mr Ford: I would refer the Member to the reply I gave on 30 September 2011 to AQW2052/11-15. The information as requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Criminal Justice Inspection Report into the Office of the Police Ombudsman

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Justice what work his Department will undertake in response to the issues raised in the recent Criminal Justice Inspection report into the Office of the Police Ombudsman. (AQW 2139/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police Ombudsman has set out the plans he has to implement the recommendations in full. I intend to meet with him and senior officials in early October to discuss progress to date on the implementation of these plans. My Department is ready to provide support to the Office of the Police Ombudsman (OPONI) throughout the improvement process, at the end of which independent validation will be sought from CJINI that the necessary actions to address the recommendations have been successfully completed. I have also offered to provide support in any way to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in the conduct of the appointments process for the new Police Ombudsman.

The Department has also been working in support of OPONI to develop a business case for funding and resourcing historical investigations and the case is now being given full consideration. This consideration will be given in the context of those concerns in the CJINI report being fully addressed.

Land Deemed Surplus to Requirements

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what land in the North Down area his Department has deemed surplus to requirements.

(AQW 2140/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department has no land deemed as surplus in the North Down Area.

Charges for Assault

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to clarify the difference in charges for assault occasioning actual bodily harm, common assault and grievous bodily harm.

(AQW 2165/11-15)

Mr Ford: The distinction between common assault and assault occasioning actual bodily harm (AOABH) is generally based on the degree of injury which results from the assault or battery.

Common assault is an assault or battery which may result in very minor injury. Examples might include striking at a person and making contact or even if the person striking out misses his or her aim. Tried summarily it carries a maximum penalty of 6 months' imprisonment or a level 3 (£1000) fine. On indictment it carries a maximum penalty of 2 years' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine though this too can be tried summarily subject to the consent of the prosecution and accused with a maximum penalty of 12 months' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5000.

AOABH occurs when a person assaults or inflicts a battery upon another person and that assault or battery causes bodily harm to the victim. Examples might include a broken tooth, minor fractures, or multiple bruising. Tried summarily with consent it carries a maximum penalty of 12 months' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5000. On indictment it carries a maximum penalty of 7 years' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

Grievous bodily harm (GBH) means really serious bodily harm and could include injury resulting in permanent disability or lengthy treatment and wounding which breaks the whole of the outer skin – a small cut or abrasion would not normally be sufficient. GBH itself has two separate charges available distinguished on the basis of intent - (i) wounding/inflicting GBH and (ii) wounding/causing GBH with intent to cause GBH or to resist apprehension. The former carries a maximum penalty of 7 years' imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine on indictment and 12 months' imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5000 when dealt with summarily on consent. The latter is an indictable only offence and carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

These are but general descriptors of the three types of charge and there may be exceptions distinguished on the particular facts and circumstances of any individual case. It is the role of the Public Prosecution Service to select the appropriate charge following a careful assessment of the available evidence.

Food and Drinks Supplied to Prisons

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost of food and drinks supplied to prisons for consumption by (i) prisoners; and (ii) prison staff in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2183/11-15)

Mr Ford: The cost of food and drinks supplied to Northern Ireland prisons for consumption by (i) prisoners and (ii) prison staff in each of the last three financial years is set out in the table below:

Financial Year	Cost of food and drinks provided to:	
	(i) prisoners (£)	(ii) prison staff (£)
2008-09	1,556,945	110
2009-10	1,538,859	3,463
2010-11	1,524,649	2,119

Glen House

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 1560/11-15, who authorised the expenditure at Glen House; and who recommended that these items be purchased.

(AQW 2208/11-15)

Mr Ford: The expenditure was authorised by the Governing Governor of Maghaberry, supported by the Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the criteria that has to be met to qualify for legal aid at all court levels.

(AQW 2209/11-15)

Mr Ford: Eligibility for legal aid in Northern Ireland is determined for all court levels by the application of a means test and a merits test for the legal aid appropriate to the proceedings. The criteria are set out in the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. All applicants are subject to both tests unless the legislation states otherwise. The means and merits tests differ for each of the three types of assistance: Criminal Legal Aid, Civil Legal Aid and Assistance By Way of Representation (ABWOR).

Criminal Legal Aid

The availability of Criminal Legal Aid in Northern Ireland is currently governed by Articles 28 to 31 of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (NI) Order 1981 (the 1981 Order). This provides for the grant of

legal aid in a Magistrates' Court, the Crown Court and on appeal, in circumstances where the court considers the defendant to be of insufficient means to pay for legal representation and that it is in the interests of justice that legal aid be granted. The availability of criminal legal aid in the Court of Appeal and in the House of Lords is governed by sections 19 and 37 of the Criminal Appeal (Northern Ireland) Act 1980, which makes similar provisions to the 1981 Order.

The "interests of justice" are not defined in the 1981 Order, but successive Lord Chancellors have endorsed what are commonly referred to as the "Widgery criteria" which are that:

- the charge is a grave one, in the sense that the accused is in real jeopardy of losing his liberty or livelihood, or suffering serious damage to reputation;
- the charge raises a substantial question of law;
- the accused is unable to follow the proceedings and state his own case because of inadequate knowledge of English, mental illness or other mental or physical disability;
- the nature of the defence involves tracing and interviewing of witnesses, or expert cross-examination of a witness for the prosecution; or that
- legal representation is desirable in the interest of someone other than the accused, for example in a case involving a sexual offence where it would be undesirable for the accused to cross-examine the witness.

Civil Legal Aid

The means test for Civil Legal Aid is set out in Article 9 of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 (details attached). The merits test is set out in Article 10 of the Order and comprises two limbs as follows –

- a person shall not be given legal aid in connection with any proceedings unless he shows that he has reasonable grounds for taking, defending or being a party thereto; and
- a person may be refused legal aid if, in the particular circumstances of the case, it appears –
 - (a) unreasonable that he should receive it; or
 - (b) more appropriate that he should receive assistance by way of representation.

Court levels for which Civil Legal Aid may be granted

- the House of Lords;
- the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council;
- the High Court and the Court of Appeal;
- any County Court;
- proceedings in the Crown Court under certain sections of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002;
- some proceedings in a court of summary jurisdiction (Magistrates' Court) or Family Proceedings Court;
- the Lands Tribunal for Northern Ireland;
- the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal or the Special Immigration Appeals Commission;
- proceedings in the Enforcement of Judgments Office; or
- proceedings brought by an individual before a Proscribed Organisations Appeal Commission.

Advice By Way Of Representation (ABWOR)

The means test for 'ABWOR' is set out in Regulation 7 of the Legal Advice and Assistance Regulations (NI) 1981 (details attached) and the merits test is set out in Regulation 17(3) of the same Regulations. The merits test is as follows:

- a person applying for ABWOR must show that there are reasonable grounds for taking, defending or being a party to the proceedings to which the application relates; or
- that it is made in respect of proceedings set out in Regulation 17(3)(b)(i) to (vi).

This level of representation is mainly available for proceedings which take place in the Magistrates' Courts or Family Proceedings Court.

CIVIL FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Type of assistance	Financial limits
Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Green Form) (Governed by Regulation 4 of the Legal Advice and Assistance Regulations (NI) 1981)	Disposable Income limit Lower limit £100 per week Upper limit £234 per week
	Contributions from income Table of contributions ranging from £7 to £134
	Disposable Capital limit £1,000 per annum £1,335 with 1 dependant £1,535 with 2 dependants £1,635 with 3 dependants (+ £1,000 for each additional dependant)
Assistance By Way of Representation (ABWOR)	Disposable Income limit Lower limit £100 per week Upper limit £234 per week
	Disposable Capital limit £3,000 per annum £3,335 with 1 dependant £3,535 with 2 dependants (+ £100 for each additional dependant)
	Contributions Table of contributions ranging from £7 to £134

Type of assistance	Financial limits
Civil Legal Aid	Disposable Income Lower limit £3,355 per annum Upper limit £9,937 per annum Personal injury - £10,955 per annum
	Contributions from income 1/3 of the excess or such other proportion of the excess or such other amount as may be prescribed. (Article 12(1)(a) 1981 Order)
	Disposable Capital Lower limit £3,000 Upper limit £6,750 Personal injury £8,560 per annum

Contribution calculations are set out in Rules 1-14 of Schedule 1 of the Legal Aid (Assessment of Resources) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1981.

It should be noted that these rates are a guide; the full detail of each scheme to include the various deductions, allowances and disregards, can be found within the related Regulations. Eligibility based on passported benefits may vary from scheme to scheme.

Prison Officers

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Justice why a rolling style Patton pension deal is not being considered for Prison officers as part of the pension reform.

(AQW 2260/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prison officers are part of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland). This is a statutory scheme and redundancy payments are made within the rules of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (Northern Ireland). As I have previously indicated, a Patten-type package would not be affordable in the current economic climate.

Cost of Keeping a Prisoner

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Justice to detail the cost of keeping a prisoner for (i) one year; (ii) three years; and (iii) five years.

(AQW 2268/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Northern Ireland Prison Service does not calculate the cost per prisoner but rather the average cost per prisoner place, which is published in its Annual Report and Accounts.

Using the average cost per prisoner place for 2010-11, the costs for keeping a prisoner for (i) one year; (ii) three years; and (iii) five years are set out in the table below:

Period	1 year	3 years	5 years
Average cost of keeping a prisoner	£73,762	£221,286	£368,810

Custodial Sentences for Smuggling Cigarettes

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Justice how many custodial sentences have been handed down to people convicted of smuggling cigarettes in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2560/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested is not available. Court conviction and sentencing datasets do not distinguish cigarette smuggling from other evasion of duty or intent to defraud offences which would be prosecuted under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 and/or the Criminal Attempts and Conspiracy (Northern Ireland) Order 1983.

Department for Regional Development

Coleraine to Londonderry Railway Line

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development whether as a demonstration of his commitment to the upgrading of the Coleraine to Londonderry rail line, he will commit funds in this financial year to the building of the required passing loop.

(AQW 1571/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development): As there is currently no separate Economic Appraisal for a passing loop to be installed independently of the main relay work, no costings are currently available. It is therefore difficult to put an estimate of cost on such a proposal. However the expense of signalling for a passing loop would be much more cost effectively incorporated into the complete re-signalling of the entire Coleraine-Londonderry section.

I have already demonstrated my commitment to upgrading the line. My Department is providing funding of £7m to enable Translink to complete essential works on the line and £20m has been allocated to 2014/15 year to allow the main works to commence. I will continue to review options and discussions will continue about what is technically and financially feasible.

Comber to Newtownards Dual Carriageway

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development what work is planned for the Comber to Newtownards dual carriageway in this financial year; and the cost of this work.

(AQW 1801/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes planned for the Comber to Newtownards dual carriageway during this financial year can be found in its Spring and Autumn Reports to Ards Council. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

Grit Boxes: Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any plans to increase the number of grit boxes in Carrickfergus this winter.

(AQW 1814/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it plans to place new grit boxes in Windsor Parade and Donegall Avenue in Whitehead, and Bradford Heights in Carrickfergus.

Footpath Resurfacing Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the footpath resurfacing schemes that are planned for Donaghadee in the next two years.

(AQW 1815/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drjni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Land Deemed Surplus to Requirements

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what land Roads Service has deemed to be surplus to requirements in the North Down constituency.

(AQW 1820/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service collates details of land for sale by its four Divisional areas rather than on a constituency basis.

However, details of land/property within the North Down area that Roads Service has declared surplus and is currently in the process of being disposed of, in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Land and Property Services, are provided in the table below.

House No	Street	Town
1	Redburn Square	Hollywood
208	Bangor Road	Hollywood
	Priory Park	Hollywood
	Cayman Cottages, Balloo Road	Bangor
265	Old Belfast Road	Bangor
	Gransha Road	Bangor
2	Green Lane	Conlig
	Hamilton Road	Bangor
81	High Street	Hollywood
49	Belfast Road	Hollywood
	Park Drive/Hamilton Road	Bangor
31a	Ashdale Crescent	Bangor
41	Marlo Heights	Bangor
1a	Robinson Road	Bangor
	Shaftesbury, Belfast Road	Bangor

Car Parking Charges in Town Centres

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the proposed introduction of car parking charges in town centres.

(AQW 1822/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer to my oral statement of 13 September 2011 to the Assembly, when I announced that I will not introduce new on-street car parking charges in the proposed 30 towns and cities across Northern Ireland.

Footpath Resurfacing Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the footpath resurfacing schemes that are planned for Millisle in the next two years.

(AQW 1842/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

Street Lighting Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the new street lighting schemes that are planned for Donaghadee in the next two years.

(AQW 1843/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

NI Water Tender C071

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail why NI Water tender C071 has been further extended; and who made the decision to extend the tender.

(AQW 1866/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that C071 has been further extended as a result of a legal challenge to the tender process for the award of a replacement contract to C071. In accordance with NIW's policies, the decision to extend the contract was taken by NIW's Board of Directors and approved by the Department for Regional Development and the Department of Finance & Personnel.

Criteria for Road Gritting and the Provision of Grit Boxes

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the criteria for road gritting and the provision of grit boxes.

(AQW 1878/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the winter service policy and procedures, which set out the criteria for road gritting and the provision of grit boxes, are based on the established practice of targeting the limited resources available for this service on the busier main through routes.

As a result, Roads Service salts the main through routes that carry more than 1,500 vehicles per day. In exceptional circumstances, roads with difficult topography that carry between 1,000 and 1,500 vehicles per day, are also salted. Special consideration is given to buses, including school buses, when determining whether a road should be included in the salting schedule. For example, a 40-seat bus is counted as 40 vehicles for the purposes of identifying qualifying routes. In addition, links to small settlements containing one hundred dwellings or more, are also included in the gritting schedule.

Over the past number of years, and as a result of the severe wintry conditions which have been experienced in recent years, the gritting policy has been extended to provide enhanced communication

and secondary salting to those rural schools which have previously had to close, solely due to inaccessibility arising from the presence of ice and snow on the adjacent road network. A list of schools included in this secondary salting schedule is maintained by Roads Service's local Section Offices.

The application of this policy ensures that 28% of the total road network, which carries around 80% of traffic, is salted at an annual cost of approximately £7 million, based on the last five year average. Any extension of the schedule to cover 90% or 100% of traffic volumes would increase the cost to approximately £14 million or £28 million per annum, respectively.

Roads Service provides grit boxes and grit piles on those roads maintained by Roads Service, which do not qualify for inclusion in the gritting schedule, for use by the public on a self help basis. Grit boxes can also be provided to schools which are regularly affected by severe wintry weather. There are no limits placed on the number of grit boxes which may be provided, although they will not normally be provided within 100m of another box, with the criteria for their provision as follows:

- the location in question must be on the publically maintained road network;
- the gradient of the road in question must be over 5%;
- no reasonable alternative route shall be available; and
- the subject road attains a minimum overall score, derived using a specific formula, where points are awarded depending on road geometry, residential usage, community welfare and commercial usage.

New grit boxes will not be provided unless requested by a member of the public, who also agrees to spread the salt provided. Roads Service commits significant resources to maintaining, and regularly replenishing, approximately 4,200 grit boxes and over 39,000 grit piles provided on public roads.

Gritting of Roads and Footpaths

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development to clarify the policy of his Department and Roads Service on the gritting of roads and footpaths during bad weather.

(AQW 1883/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the winter service policy and procedures, which set out the criteria for the salting of roads, are based on the well established practice of targeting the limited resources available for this service on the busier main through routes.

Roads Service has no statutory obligation to salt roads, but it does earmark funds to provide a salting service with the aim of helping main road traffic to move safely and freely in wintry conditions.

Roads Service salts main through routes carrying more than 1,500 vehicles per day. In exceptional circumstances, roads with difficult topography carrying between 1,000 and 1,500 vehicles per day will also be salted. The application of this policy ensures that 28% of the total road network, which carries around 80% of traffic, is salted. In an average winter Roads Service would usually use around 50,000 tonnes of salt at a cost of around £5 million. During last year's severe weather, Roads Service used over 100,000 tonnes of salt at a cost of over £10 million.

In addition, small settlements in rural areas containing 100 dwellings or more also have salted links to roads on the main salted network and, priority "secondary" salting is provided to around 50 rural schools most affected by weather conditions. Salting may also be undertaken in urgent situations such as to provide access for the emergency services, unforeseen occurrences such as funerals or to help get fuel or feed stocks to farmers.

Arrangements are also in place to use farmers and contractors to assist with clearing snow from local roads and for the provision of approximately 4,200 salt bins and over 39,000 grit piles on public roads.

I understand that over 14% of the total amount of salt, used during last winter, was applied to local roads not on the salted network to help alleviate conditions in appropriate situations and to replenish salt bins and grit piles.

In relation to footpaths, neither Roads Service nor Councils have a statutory obligation to salt these areas, however, I do not believe it is acceptable for busy town centres to remain treacherous, for long periods, because of this legislative position. In an attempt to address this situation, Roads Service has held a series of meetings with representatives from the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers, Northern Ireland (SOLACE NI).

During the course of these meetings, a consensus was established on a number of points of principle that can be used as a starting point for negotiations between Roads Service and Councils on the removal of snow and ice from busy town centre footways, during prolonged periods of wintry weather. It is the intention that these points will form the basis of a draft agreement, which could be amended at local level to take account of individual Council preferences, and ultimately provide schedules of footways, call-out arrangements, or salt delivery arrangements for each Council area.

I would hope that such arrangements could be agreed before the winter season starts, however, each individual Council will have the final decision on whether or not it signs up to provide this service to the public.

Consultants for the A5 Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent to date on consultants for the A5 project.

(AQW 1906/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department, Roads Service has advised that at the end of August 2011, approximately £38 million has been spent on development of the A5 project. This total includes £29.8 million on the cost of professional services provided by project consultants and £2.8 million on the cost of contractors' design advice.

Road Resurfacing Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what road resurfacing schemes his Department has planned for the Donaghadee area.

(AQW 1909/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

Footpath Resurfacing Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the footpath resurfacing schemes that are planned for Holywood in the next two years.

(AQW 1911/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

Street Lighting Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the new street lighting schemes that are planned for Millisle in the next two years.

(AQW 1912/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 1815/11-15.

Connell Street Car Park, Limavady

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development why the car parking charge in the Connell Street car park in Limavady was increased from 40p per hour to 50p per hour; and what steps have been taken to reimburse people who paid the higher charge.

(AQW 1922/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware that new car park tariffs were introduced throughout Northern Ireland recently. Almost 130 car parks were subject to a change in tariffs and this involved the recalibration of 482 'pay and display' machines.

The new tariff in the Connell Street car park in Limavady was implemented on Monday 5 September. Unfortunately, an error occurred and the wrong tariff was applied to the 'pay and display' machines in Connell Street car park. A 20p/hour increase was applied, taking the tariff to 50p/hour, when it should have been a 10p/hour increase setting the new tariff at 40p/hour. The error was corrected on Friday 9 September.

I wish to apologise for any inconvenience the error may have caused to members of the public who used the Connell Street car park during the period from 5 - 9 September inclusive.

Roads Service has offered to issue proportionate refunds for any over payments incurred during the Monday 5 and Friday 9 September period. Anyone wishing to avail of a refund should send their parking ticket along with an explanatory letter to Roads Service's parking service provider, NSL Limited, whose address is 1st Floor, Lindsay House, 10 Callender Street, Belfast, or if further information is required, they should contact the enquiries line on 0845 603 9337.

Traffic Calming Measures in the Glencolin Estate, Belfast

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any plans to install traffic calming measures in the Glencolin Estate, Belfast.

(AQW 1929/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service receives numerous requests for traffic calming measures. It is therefore important that they are assessed as objectively as possible, to enable decisions to be made on the basis of need and resources available. When Roads Service receives a request for the provision of traffic calming measures, officials carry out an assessment of the area in question.

Roads Service carried out an assessment of Glencolin Estate for the provision of traffic calming measures, which considered various factors, including the likely speed and volume of traffic, the previous three years' personal injury collision statistics, environmental factors, the presence of schools, playgrounds, hospitals, clinics, shops, public buildings, etc and whether or not the road in question is used as a through route.

The outcome of the assessment indicated that the Glencolin Estate does not achieve a high enough priority, when compared against many of the other sites, competing for inclusion in Roads Service Eastern Division's traffic calming programme. Therefore, given the number of requests which have been assessed and have achieved a higher priority, Roads Service currently has no plans to provide traffic calming measures in Glencolin Estate.

Coleraine to Derry Railway Line

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail Translink's projected costings for the upgrade of the Coleraine to Derry railway line.

(AQW 1933/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that projected costs for this project, as detailed in the 2010 Economic Appraisal, are as per the table below:-

Cost Description	(£)
Infrastructure costs	57,602,786
Other Capital costs (including provision of temporary bus service)	5,534,577
Adjustment for Optimism Bias on Capital costs	12,607,293
Capital adjusted cost	75,744,656

The adjustment for optimism bias is in line with recommended best practice. The actual cost of any project will, of course, depend on the subsequent procurements.

Car Parking Policy on Charging

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to address the inequalities that exist in relation to his Department's car parking policy on charging, which means that motorists in some towns have to pay for parking while others in similar sized towns do not.

(AQW 1956/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: As the Member will be aware, I recently announced that I will not be introducing new on-street car parking charges in the proposed 30 towns and cities across Northern Ireland.

However, as has been the case for many years, any future introduction and review of car parking tariffs will be carried out by my Department's Roads Service. In doing so, it will take account of, amongst other things, the levels of traffic congestion and turnover of spaces to discourage all day parking, which usually tend to vary from town to town and may lead to different outcomes in similar sized towns. Any proposed changes will be consulted upon with local councils and other bodies such, as local Chambers of Commerce.

Perry Street Car Park, Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will review the position at Perry Street car park, Dungannon, where parking is divided into a fee paying section and a free parking section and parking bays for people with a disability are only located in the fee paying section.

(AQW 1957/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Member will be aware that my Department's Roads Service received general guidance from a local access group in relation to the positioning of disabled parking bays within car parks.

In a car park that has both pay and display parking and free car parking spaces, it is normal practice to provide the disabled spaces within the pay and display parking, due to such spaces being closer to the business centre and the car park exit/entrance. Pay and display disabled parking also ensures that there is a regular turnover of short duration disabled parking spaces within a car park.

I understand that the disabled parking spaces at Perry Street have been provided adjacent to the pay and display machine and close to the car park exit. If disabled parking bays were provided in the free area Perry Street car park, disabled people would have further to walk to the car park exit.

During parking usage surveys, disabled parking space is normally available in this car park. Roads Service has therefore no plans to alter the disabled parking provision within the car park.

Road Safety Schemes

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what road safety schemes are planned for the North Antrim area over the next twelve months.

(AQW 1962/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that information on completed and proposed roads schemes in the North Antrim area for the current financial year can be found in its Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Car Parking Charges in Quay Lane South Car Park, Enniskillen

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasons for the increase in car parking charges in Quay Lane South car park, Enniskillen; and what level of consultation was held or notification was put in place for users of the car park prior to the increase.

(AQW 1964/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department is required to recover the full cost of its car parking operations in line with guidance set out by the Department of Finance and Personnel and HM Treasury. However, while the cost of maintaining and operating car parking has been increasing year on year, around half of the Department's car park tariffs have remained largely unchanged, or free, over the past 12 years.

In its current Budget Savings Delivery Plans, my Department has made a commitment to increase car parking income by 15% over each of the next four budget years (2011-2015). The specific detail on how this will be achieved over this period will be given further consideration by Roads Service in its Annual Car Park Tariff Reviews. However, I can advise that car parking tariffs are structured so that the more expensive tariffs apply to car parks nearer the centre of our towns and cities. This encourages those parking all-day to use the free or less expensive car parks on the periphery, thereby freeing up the most convenient spaces for shoppers or other visitors.

I understand that the Quay Lane South car park was normally fully utilised by all-day parkers before the tariff increase which meant there were no available spaces for shoppers or visitors wishing to park in that part of the town. As part of the recent Northern Ireland wide tariff review, the Quay Lane South car park tariff was changed from the 30p per three hour tariff, to the new Enniskillen town centre hourly tariff of 40p per hour. In making this change, it was anticipated that motorists, who parked their vehicles all day within this car park, would move to take advantage of the 187 parking spaces in the Holyhill Car Park that are currently free. While the current utilisation of Quay Lane car park has reduced significantly since the new charges were introduced, this is likely to increase as more shoppers and visitors become aware of the increased availability of parking.

In relation to the level of consultation or notification of the increase for users of Quay Lane car park, I can advise that while my Department has no legislative requirement to consult on increasing existing car park and on-street tariffs, a public notice was advertised in the local press on 6 April 2011. Legislation to amend the tariffs came into effect in May 2011, while tariffs in car parks in Enniskillen were increased on 29 August 2011.

NSL Services Group

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the extent to which the work of NSL Services Group contributes to traffic management in towns such as Ballymoney, Ballymena and Ballycastle.

(AQW 1969/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that NSL Services Group (NSL) has been contracted to carry out traffic enforcement duties during the period November 2006 until October 2012.

The enforcement of parking restrictions aims to reduce the number of illegally parked vehicles on our roads. Traffic Attendants are employed to issue parking tickets or Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to illegally parked vehicles. The work of NSL has enabled Roads Service to reduce traffic congestion, improve road safety and enhance accessibility for all road users, including Blue Badge holders.

The towns of Ballymena, Ballycastle and Ballymoney have also benefited commercially from the work of NSL, as the resultant greater turnover of parking spaces in each respective commercial centre has provided the public with improved levels of access to businesses.

Grit Boxes

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any plans he has to increase the number of grit boxes in (i) the Banbridge District Council area; and (ii) the Craigavon Borough Council area in preparation for winter.

(AQW 1987/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it currently has no plans to increase the number of grit boxes in Banbridge and Craigavon Council areas. Requests for additional grit boxes are dealt with on an ongoing basis and each request is assessed against the relevant criteria.

Footpath Resurfacing Schemes

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development what footpath resurfacing schemes are planned for (i) the Banbridge District Council area; and (ii) the Craigavon Borough Council area in each of the next three years.

(AQW 1988/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that information on completed and proposed roads schemes in the Banbridge District Council and Craigavon Borough Council areas for the current financial year can be found in its Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformatiotype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Off-Street Parking Charges

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he expects off-street parking charges in (i) the Banbridge District Council area; and (ii) the Craigavon Borough Council area to increase following his statement to the Assembly on 13 September 2011.

(AQW 1989/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My decision not to introduce on-street parking charges to our regional towns during this difficult economic time will benefit local traders. However, as I advised in my statement on 13 September 2011, this decision will result in a funding gap of some £8.8 million within my Department. To offset part of this shortfall and protect frontline services, an additional £2.1 million of income must be generated from off-street parking charges in regional towns.

Therefore, I anticipate that off-street parking charges will increase in all local council areas, including Banbridge and Craigavon, over the course of this budget period. However, the resultant impact will be less than if the original proposal to implement on-street charging had been progressed.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost to his Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 1992/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department's arm's length bodies are Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) and Northern Ireland Water (NIW). The cost to my Department is as detailed in the table below.

Arms Length Body	Total value of grants/subsidy paid by Department		Dividend and Interest Income		Loans Notes		Cost of governance mechanisms within the Department	
	2010-11 £'m	2009-10 ¹ £'m	2010-11 £'m	2009-10 £'m	2010-11 £'m	2009-10 £'m	2010-11 £'m	2009-10 ¹ £'m
NITHC								
Resource	75.5	72.7					0.43	0.43
Capital	60.9	49.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
NIW								
Resource ²	263.12	257.78	(71.3)	(61.9)			1.27	1.29
Capital ²	-	-	-	-	110	170	-	-

Notes

- 1 To allow for consistency the 2009-10 figures included in the table above exclude cost of capital. This accounting policy was no longer applied from 1 April 2010.
- 2 The figures in the table above reflect the outturn position against the net voted position. The Department's public expenditure budget (2009-10 Resource £192.7m Capital £254.3m, 2010-11 Resource £198.2m Capital £158.5m) differs from the figures quoted above as it includes all of NIW's resource and capital expenditure.
- 3 Cost of governance mechanisms is an estimate of staff time.

Graffiti on Road Signs

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development how many instances of graffiti on road signs have been reported in (i) the West Tyrone area; and (ii) Northern Ireland in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1993/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service does not hold information in the form requested, as all instances of graffiti are categorised and recorded in the same manner and therefore it is not possible to provide of a specific break down of those involving road signs.

However, local officials estimate that in the West Tyrone area, there is an average of around 1 incident a year.

Roads Signs

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what Roads Service policy is on the use of the name Londonderry on roads signs; (ii) whether he is aware of significant vandalism on road signs which feature the name Londonderry; (iii) the estimated cost of repairing one of these vandalised roads signs; and (iv) the total number and cost of these road signs repaired in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1994/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it uses Ordinance Survey mapping references as a guide to determine the names and spelling of destinations used in the design of direction signage. It is Roads Service practice to use the full place name of any destination on a sign and for this reason, 'Londonderry' is always used on direction signs for the city.

Roads Service is aware of vandalism on some road signs which feature the name Londonderry and it estimates that this problem occurs 12 times per year, within its Western Division alone.

With regard to the cost of removing graffiti from road signs, I can advise the Member that these costs are low as it is usually combined with other maintenance activities. Roads Service estimates that the cost of repair, in the area covered by its Western Division, is £50 per sign.

In relation to the total number and cost of repairing vandalised signs, Roads Service has advised that this information is not recorded separately, as it is normally combined with information on other maintenance activities. However, it has been estimated that within its Western Division, this problem has occurred on 60 occasions in the last five years, at an approximate annual cost of £600.

Street Lighting Schemes

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development what new street lighting schemes are planned for (i) the Banbridge District Council area; and (ii) the Craigavon Borough Council area in each of the next two years.

(AQW 2007/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that information on completed and proposed roads schemes, including street lighting schemes, in the Banbridge District Council and Craigavon Borough Council areas for the current financial year can be found in its Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Gritting of Roads

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development what preparations he has made to ensure that roads in (i) the Banbridge District Council area; and (ii) the Craigavon Borough Council area will be adequately gritted during the winter months.

(AQW 2009/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has in place sufficient finance, labour and materials to satisfactorily carry out the Winter Service programme for the incoming winter season of 2011/12.

Although Roads Service has no statutory obligation to salt roads, it does earmark funds with the aim of helping main road traffic to move safely and freely in wintry conditions, through the removal of snow and gritting of the salted network across Northern Ireland.

Roads Service undertakes a significant amount of pre-planning to ensure a state of readiness prior to the start of each winter service season. As well carrying out a number of routine pre-season checks, arrangements are in place to ensure that adequate staffing arrangements are in place, including training for new staff, where required, there is an adequate supply of salt and winter service equipment is in working order.

It is Roads Service's policy to salt main through routes carrying more than 1,500 vehicles per day and other busy through routes which are hilly and carrying more than 1,000 vehicles per day. In applying the criteria, buses get a high weighting. For example, a 40 seater bus is counted as 40 vehicles. This policy

results in the provision of a salted network of approximately 7,000 km (4,300 miles) covering 28% of roads in Northern Ireland, and ensures that Roads Service's resources are targeted at the busier routes carrying most traffic.

Efforts are also made to ensure that small settlements of more than 100 dwellings have a treated link to the salted network and consideration is given to placing grit piles or salt bins at hills, bends or junctions on roads which are not salted.

In addition, Roads Service has introduced improvements to its operational response around rural schools regularly affected by adverse weather conditions. These improvements have ensured better communications between Roads Service and schools which experience difficulties and has allowed Roads Service to provide a more flexible and timely response as and when road conditions necessitate.

Whilst it is never possible to completely counteract the full forces of nature, based on the information currently available, I am confident that Roads Service is well prepared to deal with the incoming winter season.

Traffic Calming Measures

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development what traffic calming measures are planned for (i) the Banbridge District Council area; and (ii) the Craigavon Borough Council area in each of the next two years.

(AQW 2011/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2007/11-15.

Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Special Adviser is paid within Band A or Band B of the Department of Finance and Personnel's salary scale; and, if it is within Band B whether, in light of the DFP decision to increase the upper limit of the Band B scale to £90,000, there has been an increase in salary or an increase is planned.

(AQW 2041/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Special Adviser is paid within Special Adviser Pay Band B.

There is no annual pay progression in respect of Special Advisers' remuneration over the period 1 April 2010-31 March 2012, consistent with the freeze on any base pay award in respect of Senior Civil Service remuneration over this period.

My Special Adviser's salary has not increased since his appointment to the post on 8 June 2011. At present, there are no plans to review his salary before 31 March 2012.

Road Lighting Schemes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any road lighting schemes planned for the Ards Borough Council area in the next four years, including the wards in which they will take place.

(AQW 2061/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not record information on proposed street lighting schemes by ward area. However, information on completed and proposed street lighting schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drdsn.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Road Lighting Schemes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any road lighting schemes planned for the North Down Borough Council area in the next four years, including the wards in which they will take place.

(AQW 2064/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2061/11-15.

Gritting of Roads

Mr Irwin asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the difficulties experienced by producers and suppliers in Newry and Armagh in the transporting of fresh food produce as a result of the treacherous road conditions last winter; if he will ensure that these key urban and rural routes within the constituency are gritted regularly to avoid a negative impact on the local economy.

(AQW 2066/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has in place sufficient finance, labour and materials to satisfactorily carry out the Winter Service programme for the incoming winter season of 2011/12.

Although Roads Service has no statutory obligation to salt roads, it does earmark funds to provide a salting service with the aim of helping main road traffic to move safely and freely in wintry conditions, through the removal of snow and the gritting of the salted network across Northern Ireland.

Prior to the start of each winter service season, Roads Service undertakes a significant amount of pre-planning to ensure a state of readiness for the coming winter. As well as a number of routine pre-season checks, planning incorporates ensuring that adequate staffing arrangements are in place, including training for new staff, where required, there is an adequate supply of salt and winter service equipment is in working order.

It is Roads Service's policy to salt main through routes carrying more than 1,500 vehicles per day and other busy through routes, where there are difficult circumstances such as steep hills, carrying more than 1,000 vehicles per day. In applying the criteria, buses get a high weighting. For example, a 40 seater bus is counted as 40 vehicles. This policy results in the provision of a salted network of approximately 7,000 km (4,300 miles) covering 28% of roads in Northern Ireland, targeting Roads Service's resources to the busier routes carrying most traffic.

In addition, small settlements in rural areas containing 100 dwellings or more also have salted links to roads on the main salted network and, priority "secondary" salting is provided to around 50 rural schools most affected by weather conditions. Salting may also be undertaken in urgent situations such as to provide access for the emergency services, unforeseen occurrences such as funerals or to help get fuel or feed stocks to farmers.

Arrangements are also in place to use farmers and contractors to assist with clearing snow from local roads and, for the provision of approximately 4,200 salt bins and over 39,000 grit piles on public roads throughout Northern Ireland.

I understand that over 14% of the total amount of salt, used during last winter, was applied to local roads not on the salted network to help alleviate conditions in appropriate situations and to replenish salt bins and grit piles.

Whilst it is never possible to completely counteract the full forces of nature, based on the information currently available, it is my assessment that Roads Service is well prepared to deal with the incoming winter season thus minimising any adverse impacts on the local economy.

NI Water

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development what contingency plans NI Water has in place in the event of a disruption to water supply as a result of adverse weather conditions this winter. (AQW 2074/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: NIW's response to severe winter weather conditions will be based on its Major Incident Plan (MIP) which has been revised following lessons learnt from last winter. It reflects current water industry best practice and incorporates lessons learned from wider industry events. The MIP aims to provide a fully planned response to all types of emergency. NIW emergency planning also includes a range of contingency plans for specific types of event including severe weather conditions during the winter months. NIW will be testing these before the winter.

Improvements to NIW's arrangements include: staff availability and training; transport; contractors; fuel; water storage; liaison with third parties; alternative water supplies and telephone communications. In addition, NIW will be launching a winter publicity campaign to help customers prepare for the winter. This will include advice and information on lagging pipes and on dealing with burst pipes.

Following its publication on 3 March 2011, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) has been working to implement the recommendations made in the Report of the Investigations into the Freeze/Thaw incident 2010/11. These recommendations, covering communications, contingency planning, assets, governance and leadership and resilience, are intended to ensure that NIW is better prepared to handle the effects of severe weather conditions similar to those experienced last Christmas. NIW currently plans to have approximately 90% of the short/medium term recommendations complete by December 2011, with the final 10% being completed by June 2012. There are a further ten actions that are of a long term nature and will be completed by 2015.

Watermains

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the percentage of watermains made from each type of material; and (ii) the proportion of pipes of each type of material which burst during last winters' severe weather.

(AQW 2075/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the information requested is as set out in the table below.

Type of Material	(i) Percentage of Watermains by Type	(ii) Percentage of Bursts by Type
Asbestos Cement	6	4.5
Cast Iron	8	45
Ductile Iron	11	2
Polyethelyne	21	5
PVC	43	17
Spun Iron	10	25.5
Other & Unknown	1	1

Safe Routes to School Initiative

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the schools in each constituency involved in the safe routes to school initiative (a) prior to the 2011/12 financial year; (b) in the current financial year; and (ii) schools on the waiting list.

(AQW 2078/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Safer Routes to Schools Initiative (SRS) aims to encourage parents, children and teachers to use sustainable modes of travel for the “School Run”. Since the inception of the SRS initiative in 2005 233 schools have benefited from a range of physical infrastructure improvements as well as classroom based awareness resources. My Department’s Roads Service aims to have implemented a further 42 schemes by the end of the 2011/12 financial year.

1a) The schools in each constituency prior to the 2011/12 financial year are shown in Table 1

TABLE 1- NUMBER OF SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN SRS PRIOR TO 2011/12

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of schools
Belfast North	7
Belfast East	7
Belfast South	9
Belfast West	9
East Antrim	9
North Antrim	14
South Antrim	13
Lagan Valley	13
North Down	12
South Down	14
Foyle	14
East Londonderry	14
Strangford	12
Newry and Armagh	14
Upper Bann	12
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	25
West Tyrone	13
Mid-Ulster	22

1b) The schools in each constituency in the current financial year are shown in Table 2

TABLE 2 - NUMBER OF SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN SRS IN 2011/12

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of schools
Belfast North	3
Belfast East	2

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of schools
Belfast South	0
Belfast West	0
East Antrim	3
North Antrim	3
South Antrim	2
Lagan Valley	2
North Down	3
South Down	2
Foyle	2
East Londonderry	2
Strangford	3
Newry and Armagh	2
Upper Bann	2
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	5
West Tyrone	3
Mid-Ulster	3

18 further schools were completed as part of the DARD/Sustrans Rural Safer Routes to Schools project. These were broken down into the following parliamentary constituencies.

TABLE 3 – DARD/SUSTRANS RURAL SAFER ROUTES TO SCHOOLS PROJECT

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of schools
Mid Ulster	2
North Antrim	3
South Antrim	2
East Londonderry	1
Foyle	2
Newry and Armagh	3
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	2
Upper Bann	1
West Tyrone	1
Strangford	1

2) Schools on the Waiting List

My Department's Roads Service has advised that with regard to schools on a waiting list, it currently has a list of around 410 schools that are located across its four Divisions and which cover all parliamentary constituencies.

This list contains the names of schools identified as being on the 'waiting list'. The schools have been prioritised as being potential schemes for future years, although the listing may change as further requests are received and assessments are carried out. It should be noted that a number of the schools assessed have scores indicating a low priority rating against the criteria.

The delivery programme will be dependent upon the availability of funding for this type of work in future years.

Cycle Lanes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to increase the number of cycle lanes on roads.

(AQW 2100/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service, in the current challenging financial circumstances, is faced with the difficult task of having to allocate a finite resource to numerous competing demands. In these circumstances, it is therefore not possible to continue to fund all functions at the same level as in previous years.

However, it remains Roads Service's intention to continue to implement, in so far as available resources permit, the cycling infrastructure as set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) and the Regional Transport Strategy, which will complement the existing National Cycle Network.

Cycle Lanes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cycle lanes which currently exist in the North Down constituency.

(AQW 2104/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: You will be aware that my Department's Roads Service is committed to providing safer roads for vulnerable road users, including cyclists, by using a range of measures, such as road safety engineering, traffic calming and enhancement of the cycling network.

Details of the 15.9 km of cycle lanes (on road) and 3.96 km of cycle tracks (on footway) which currently exist in the North Down constituency are provided in the table below:

Location	Type of facility	Cycle lane (km)	Cycle track (km)
Balloo Road, Bangor	Cycle track	-	1.9
Gransha Road, Bangor	Cycle track	-	0.3
A2 Tillysburn to Holywood	Cycle lane	4.7	-
A2 Belfast Road, Bangor	Cycle lane/track	4.5	1.1
Silverbirch Road, Bangor	Cycle lane	1.9	-
Bexley Road, Bangor	Cycle lane	1.0	-
Ballycrochan Road, Bangor	Cycle lane	2.8	-
Green Road, Bangor	Cycle track	-	0.66
Abbey Street, Bangor	Cycle lane	0.5	-
Newtownards Road, Bangor	Cycle lane	0.5	-
	Totals	15.9	3.96

Roads Service's long term Target for cycling is set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) and identifies a Northern Ireland wide target to quadruple the number of trips by cycle (based on 2000 figures) by the end of 2015. I am fully committed to achieving this target.

The BMTP, which aims to provide for and encourage use of public transport and greater levels of walking and cycling, can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address: www.drdni.gov.uk/bmtp. The cycling proposals are contained within Chapter 4 of the BMTP, with specific proposals for North Down within Chapter 8.

Major Emergency Response Plan

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development on what date the review of the Major Emergency Response Plan will be completed.

(AQW 2115/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The review of the Major Emergency Response Plan was completed on 26 September 2011.

Training will be provided to relevant staff on the Major Emergency Response Plan in October 2011 and it is planned to test the revised plan in November 2011.

Roads System

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development what advice he has received pertaining to how severe the impact of the winter weather in 2011/12 will be on our roads system compared to the winter of 2010/11.

(AQW 2138/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service fully recognises the importance of early planning as part of the outworking of its winter service programme. This is especially true given the experiences dealing with the types of severe weather encountered in Northern Ireland during recent winter seasons. Current indications from the Met Office do not suggest that we will face the extreme weather conditions that were experienced last year, however, more up-to-date forecasts will issue in due course.

To aid this planning process, Roads Service uses specialist Met Office Winter Service forecasting that provides detailed 1-5 day forecasts and warnings of winter weather. These forecasts provide good short term accurate advice, and are used for planning purposes with a relatively high degree of confidence. I understand that these forecasts form an integral part of the decision making process on when and where salting takes place, with the intention of minimising the impacts of severe weather on the Northern Ireland Roads Network.

Prior to the start of each winter service season, Roads Service carries out a significant amount of pre-planning to ensure a state of readiness for the coming winter. As well as a number of routine pre-season checks, planning includes ensuring that adequate staffing arrangements are in place, including training for new staff, where required, winter service equipment is in working order and there is an adequate stock of salt.

Salt barns, which are strategically placed in depots throughout Northern Ireland, are normally stocked to hold sufficient quantities of salt to provide the winter service programme for a full season without the need to restock. However, following last year's severe weather, Roads Service has reviewed these levels and has increased stocks significantly in order to be well prepared in the event of potential, prolonged wintry weather. If necessary, Roads Service has arrangements in place to supplement stocks of salt during the winter period.

While Roads Service targets the limited resources available for winter service on the busier main through routes, salt bins or grit piles may be provided for use by the public, on a self help basis, on other routes adopted or maintained by Roads Service, which do not qualify for inclusion onto the gritting schedule. Roads Service currently provides approximately 4,200 salt bins and 39,500 grit piles on public roads.

In addition, I have asked Roads Service to work with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA), to develop a broad framework of principles which will set out the basis of partnering arrangements between Roads Service and Councils for the removal of snow and ice from busy town centre footways, during prolonged periods of wintry weather. When finalised, it is hoped that agreements based on the broad framework can be put in place, specifically tailored for each individual council. I would hope that such arrangements could be agreed before the winter season starts, however, each individual Council will have the final decision on whether or not it signs up to provide this service to the public.

Road Safety Schemes

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what road safety schemes are planned for the North Down constituency over the next twelve months.

(AQW 2145/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Roads Signs

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what repairs to roads signs are planned for the North Down constituency over the next twelve months.

(AQW 2146/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that as defective road signs are identified during cyclical safety inspections, it is not possible to describe the next 12 month's work at this stage.

Speed Bumps

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has any evidence of speed bumps causing accidents; and to provide further details.

(AQW 2189/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that since the Road Hump Regulation (NI) 1999 was introduced, extensive research has been carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), an independent and impartial research consultancy, into many of the concerns expressed about traffic calming measures.

The results of this research into the impact of humps are set out in the TRL report 614, titled 'Impact of Road Humps on Vehicles and Their Occupants'. This report states that trials have established that if humps are designed in accordance with the regulations, and are crossed at appropriate speeds, they should not cause traffic accidents or damage to the underside of vehicles.

Roads Service designs and implements all Traffic Calming measures in accordance with the Road Hump Regulations and has no record of any road humps causing a traffic accident.

Wire Rope Safety Barriers on the A1, A2 and A6

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he plans to replace the existing Wire Rope Safety Barriers on the A1, A2 and A6 with a more motorcycle-friendly type of barrier.

(AQW 2192/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that when designing carriageways, it adheres to the standards set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, which is the standard for major roads in Northern Ireland as well as in England and Wales. This manual takes account of current best practice, safety, value for money and environmental considerations, as well as the current UK and European Standards.

Similarly, the current specification for the provision of safety barriers in central reservations on new and improvement works on trunk roads permits the use of any normal containment system.

This permits contractors to install any European Standard EN1317 certified system (EN1317), which includes the use of wire rope with steel posts, corrugated steel beam with steel posts or a concrete containment system. Any contracting authority failing to use EN1317 is in breach of public procurement law and risks being subject to domestic or EU infraction proceedings.

A European Road Assessment Programme position paper entitled "Barriers to change – Designing safe roads for motorcyclists", published in 2008, concluded that despite the amount of high profile coverage that wire rope barriers have attracted, the limited research available does not warrant the inference that they are more, or less, dangerous than other types of barrier available for use.

Fare Evasion on Translink Services

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development how many people have been charged with fare evasion on Translink services in each of the last three years; and how much revenue this generated.

(AQW 2204/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The table below shows how many people have been charged with fare evasion on Translink services in each of the last three years.

Calendar Year	NIR	ULSTERBUS	CITYBUS (METRO)
2008	32	4	0
2009	54	7	3
2010	25	8	1

Translink report that these cases do not generate revenue and fines are allocated to the court services.

Farm Diversification Business Near Garvagh

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he is aware of a farm diversification business near Garvagh, one of a number being filmed to appear in a forthcoming television series about such businesses, and the problems this business is facing trying to get the appropriate directional brown tourist roads signage.

(AQW 2235/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it is currently considering a request from a Mr Paul Craig, Arkhill Farm, for a replacement of the existing 'white on brown' tourist signage which provides direction to 'Arkill Farm Centre'.

Mr Craig, who will be responsible for the costs of any new signage, has requested a change to the wording on the existing signage to include:-

- Arkhill Farm
- Tea Room
- Open farm and Farm Shop

The request is being considered in accordance with Roads Service Policy and Procedures Guide (RSPPG_E029) "The Signing of Tourist Attractions and Facilities, which was developed in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

Land Deemed Surplus to Requirements

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what land in the North Down area his Department has deemed surplus to requirements.

(AQW 2245/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department does not collate details of land deemed surplus to requirements on a constituency basis. However, details of land/property within the North Down area that my Department's Roads Service has declared surplus to requirements and is currently in the process of being disposed of, in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Land and Property Services, are provided in the table below.

Location	Town
1 Redburn Square	Holywood
208 Bangor Road	Holywood
Priory Park	Holywood
Cayman Cottages, Balloo Road	Bangor
265 Old Belfast Road	Bangor
Gransha Road	Bangor
2 Green Lane	Conlig
Hamilton Road	Bangor
81 High Street	Holywood
49 Belfast Road	Holywood
Park Drive/Hamilton Road	Bangor
31a Ashdale Crescent	Bangor
41 Marlo Heights	Bangor
1a Robinson Road	Bangor
Shaftesbury, Belfast Road	Bangor

In addition, I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that properties at the following locations in the North Down area, are currently considered surplus to requirements and consequently are deemed suitable for disposal in the future:

Location

- Conlig Depot
- Seaside Tavern, Holywood (old pumping station)
- Portavo Impounding Reservoir
- Conlig Upper Impounding Reservoir
- Conlig Lower Impounding Reservoir
- Ballysallagh Upper Impounding Reservoir

- Ballysallagh Lower Impounding Reservoir
- Creightons Green Impounding Reservoir
- Whinney Hill Service Reservoir
- Ballyminetragh Old Service Reservoir, Groomsport
- Church Road Impounding Reservoir, Holywood

Street Lighting Schemes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what new street lighting schemes are planned for Holywood over the next two financial years.

(AQW 2246/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drndi.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Personal Injury Claims

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development how many personal injury claims were made against his Department in each of the last three years because of defective footpaths in the East Londonderry area; and how much compensation was paid as a result.

(AQW 2255/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that that it does not record information on claims for compensation on a constituency basis. However, information on personal injury claims and the amount of compensation paid due to defective footpaths in the Coleraine and Limavady Section Office areas, in each of the last three financial years, is provided in the table below:

Year	Claims Received	Compensation
2008/2009	17	£12,750.00
2009/2010	14	£9,750.00
2010/2011	13	£35,400.00

It should be noted that the amount of compensation paid in any specific financial year may not necessarily relate to claims received in that year as the time delay, from the date a claim has been received to when it has been settled, may span a number of years.

NI Water

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development what action NI Water has taken to militate against the repetition of the problems that resulted from last winter's severe weather.

(AQW 2256/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Following its publication on 3 March 2011, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) has been working to implement the recommendations made in the Report of the Investigations into the Freeze/Thaw incident 2010/11. These recommendations, covering communications, contingency planning, assets, governance and leadership and resilience, are intended to ensure that NIW is better prepared to handle

the effects of severe weather conditions similar to those experienced last Christmas. NIW currently plans to have approximately 90% of the short/medium term recommendations complete by December 2011, with the final 10% being completed by June 2012. There are a further ten actions that are of a long term nature and will be completed by 2015.

NIW's response to severe winter weather conditions will be based on its Major Incident Plan (MIP) which has been revised following lessons learnt from last winter. It reflects current water industry best practice and incorporates lessons learned from wider industry events. The MIP aims to provide a fully planned response to all types of emergency. NIW emergency planning also includes a range of contingency plans for specific types of event including severe weather conditions during the winter months. NIW will be testing these before the winter.

Improvements to NIW's arrangements include: staff availability and training; transport; contractors; fuel; water storage; liaison with third parties; alternative water supplies and telephone communications. In addition, NIW will be launching a winter publicity campaign to help customers prepare for the winter. This will include advice and information on lagging pipes and on dealing with burst pipes.

Northern Corridor Railways Group

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development what consultation he has had with the Northern Corridor Railways Group over his decision to delay funding for the upgrade of the railway line between Coleraine and Londonderry.

(AQW 2257/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The decision to delay funding for the upgrade of the railway line between Coleraine and Londonderry was taken by my predecessor in February 2011.

The draft budget allocations announced in December 2010 and the actual budget announcements in January 2011 meant that the necessary funding to allow the project to proceed as planned was not available. Funding of £20 million was allocated to year 4 of the budget period (2014/15) to allow the project to start in 2014.

The draft budget figures were subject to public consultation and my Department published its own consultation paper on 13 January 2011 which all groups were invited to participate in. Officials from my Department met with the Regional Development Committee to discuss the implications of the budget outcome. I have asked officials to review options and this work is currently being pursued.

Large-Scale Railway System Projects

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has considered public private partnerships to finance large-scale railway system projects.

(AQW 2258/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Economic Appraisals are submitted to my Department by Translink for all major railway projects. The appraisals assess various options for delivering the project in order to demonstrate Value for Money. The financing of large-scale railway system projects by public private partnerships is not an approach that has been considered to date. However, it is something that I would consider if Value for Money and the impact on Translink as a group of companies had been considered.

Alley-Gating

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what funding, if any, is available from his Department for alley-gating.

(AQW 2259/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I should advise that my Department's Roads Service does not have responsibility for promoting or installing alleygates. Roads Service's role is to approve and facilitate the promotion of

allegating schemes by external providers, such as local councils, by making a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to give legal force to the restrictions on access.

Roads Service will meet the cost of making the TRO and the erection of any necessary traffic signs. However, Roads Service does not have funds allocated to its budget to enable it to contribute to the general costs associated with alleygating schemes.

Translink

Mr Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development how much money Translink has spent on the purchase of privately-owned land from farmers, where the land contained a farm crossing, in each of the last two years, broken down by constituency and the acreage of the land.

(AQW 2264/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that in the financial year 2010/11, £1,388,615.00 was spent specifically on the purchase of privately owned land.

This action resulted in the closure of 24 User Worked Crossings (UWC) and land, thus acquired, may be sold to reduce the eventual cost of closing these crossings.

The figure quoted excludes:

- Solicitor and Land Agent fees and costs;
- Project Management Costs;
- Costs of UWC Closure Works;
- Locations where only the right of way was extinguished; and
- VAT

No land purchases have been made to date in the current financial year.

Translink is unable to provide details of such acquisitions on a constituency basis or by acreage without incurring disproportionate cost and for commercial reasons.

Culture of Car Dependency

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he is taking to address the culture of car dependency.

(AQW 2280/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is clear that current patterns of transport in Northern Ireland and the high level of dependency upon the private car are not sustainable. In order to reduce the culture of car dependency and its significant impact on our CO2 emissions, a move towards more sustainable transport choices will be required.

The current Regional Transportation Strategy published in 2002 presented a range of initiatives to improve our transportation infrastructure, promote sustainable travel and encourage the use of modes of travel other than the car. While this has resulted in increased investment the evidence suggests that car ownership has continued to rise as our population increases.

The Regional Transportation Strategy has recently been reviewed with a view to build on what has been achieved. A new approach is proposed to refocus our transport policy that concentrates on moving people and goods rather than vehicles. It also suggests a better means of prioritising transportation interventions at a time of financial constraint.

Under the Sustainable Transport Enabling Measures of the Belfast on the Move Transport Masterplan, my Department is delivering dedicated bus lanes and associated traffic management measures in Belfast city centre. These measures will improve the public transport services in the city centre and

encourage people to use these services instead of the private car. The facilities provided will also benefit walking and cycling in the city centre.

My Department is currently preparing an Outline Business Case for a pilot Belfast Rapid Transit system. Belfast Rapid Transit represents a key element in the delivery of a step change in the quality of public transport in the city. The main aim of Belfast Rapid Transit is to increase the use of public transport and reduce reliance on the private car.

Further, my Department's Travelwise Northern Ireland initiative is seeking to promote, and generally raise the awareness levels of the general public, towards more sustainable transport options including cycling, walking, greater use of public transport, as well as car sharing and park and ride facilities, in order to encourage a change in public attitudes away from the private car as the main mode of travel in Northern Ireland.

Footpath Resurfacing or Upgrade Schemes

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the footpath resurfacing or upgrade schemes planned for the Cookstown District Council area in each of the next two years.

(AQW 2303/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from my Department's internet site at the following web address:

http://www.drndni.gov.uk/index/freedom_of_information/customer_information/cinformationtype-results.htm?signpost=Customer+information&informationType=Roads+Service+reports+to+councils

I can advise that the detailed budget for subsequent years has not yet been finalised and it is therefore not possible to provide details of future works programmes at this time.

Traffic Calming Schemes

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the traffic calming schemes planned for the Cookstown District Council area in each of the next two years.

(AQW 2304/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2303/11-15.

Street Lighting Schemes

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the street lighting schemes planned for the Cookstown District Council area in each of the next two years.

(AQW 2305/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2303/11-15.

Rural and Farm Dwellers Along the Route of the Proposed A5

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures her Department has put in place to assist rural and farm dwellers along the route of the proposed A5.

(AQO 408/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: It is acknowledged that the construction of any new road will impact on certain landowners and, in the case of the A5 scheme, these are predominantly rural and farm dwellers. My Department's Roads Service has had lengthy discussions with all affected landowners, with the objective of mitigating the impacts as far as is reasonably practicable. Typical mitigation measures include the provision of structures to access severed lands, low noise surfacing to reduce noise

impacts on adjacent property and, where appropriate, the use of temporary access agreements to allow shorter term control of land that may be required temporarily to facilitate construction of the works.

Where it is not possible to fully mitigate the impacts of the project, compensation is offered, which is assessed independently by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Land and Property Service.

Department for Social Development

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Social Development what plans he has to assess Disability Living Allowance, following the introduction of Welfare Reform.

(AQW 1918/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): I am considering a number of areas relating to welfare reform which will mirror provisions contained in the Welfare Reform Bill currently before Parliament. This includes replacing Disability Living Allowance with a new Personal Independence Payment which will support disabled people who face the greatest barriers to leading full and independent lives.

The proposals for a Personal Independence Payment are currently being consulted on as part of an Equality Impact Assessment and include-

- new assessment criteria designed to deliver more consistent outcomes and greater transparency for individuals;
- two components based on an individual's mobility needs and their ability carry out other key activities necessary to be able to participate in daily life;
- a facility to regularly review awards; and
- maintaining existing special rules to fast track claims for people who are terminally ill.

I want the assessment criteria to reflect a more complete consideration of the impact of an individual's health condition or impairment on their ability to perform everyday activities, for example, how they manage their personal care and treatment, communicate or get around.

The criteria have been tested to give a better understanding of their likely impact. Northern Ireland cases have been included in that testing. Once the findings have been evaluated the assessment criteria will be refined if necessary and published for further consideration.

Subject to completing the consultation on the proposals and Executive approval, I anticipate introducing an Assembly Bill after the corresponding Westminster Bill has received Royal Assent.

New Housing for the Rasharkin Area

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development (i) what new housing is planned for the Rasharkin area in the next three years; and (ii) to detail if he is aware of any obstacles to the proposals.

(AQW 1971/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Triangle Housing Association is preparing to build 11 units of general needs accommodation at Church Road, Rasharkin. This scheme had initially been programmed to start during 2009/10; however the scheme is now unlikely to start until 2012/13 (pending approval)

The delay is because Triangle have been unable to obtain planning approval for this site as an upgrade to the existing sewerage works is required before NI Water will allow any new connections to the system. Triangle has been unable to ascertain a date for upgrade works to commence.

The most recent Housing Need Assessment indicates that the projected social housing need for Rasharkin has declined. This reflects the reduction in Housing Stress applicants on the Social Housing Waiting List. This Housing Need Assessment is currently under review. In the short term, housing need in the area is being addressed through the turnover of existing stock.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development in total, how many (i) applications; and (ii) successful applications have been made to the Boiler Replacement Scheme to date, broken down by (a) constituency; and (b) council area.

(AQW 2008/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not available by constituency or council area. All potential eligible applicants have been contacted by leaflet. To date, the Housing Executive, who administer the Boiler Replacement Scheme, has approved 94 eligible applications. A further 218 successful applications are being processed. I now intend to extend the pilot scheme to another vulnerable group and from October lone householders aged 70 and over who receive Lone Pensioner Allowance and with a boiler aged 15 years or older will be eligible for the assistance from the pilot scheme.

Capital Projects

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the capital projects planned for each constituency in the next three years.

(AQW 2010/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The capital projects planned in the next three years by my Department are detailed in the following table. However, it should be noted that details in respect of Housing projects are listed by District Office Area, as the information requested is not available by constituency.

Housing			
District Office Area	Description	No of Dwellings	Year
East Antrim	Craigyhill, Larne	31	2012/13
	Taylor's Avenue, Carrickfergus	24	
East Londonderry	Sperrin Road/Rathbeg, Limavady	50	
Foyle	High Park, Londonderry	16	
	Balbane / Linsfort Londonderry	55	
Mid Ulster	Edinburgh Drive, Cookstown	31	
Newry & Armagh	Daisy Hill/O'Neill's Avenue, Newry	41	
North Antrim	Lime Park Kitchens, Ballymoney	9	
North Belfast	Abbeyville Park, Belfast	20	
North Down	Bloomfield Bungalows Phase 3, Bangor	27	
	Bloomfield Bungalows Phase 2, Bangor	45	
	Kilcooley Phase 1A, Bangor	24	
South Antrim	Grant Avenue, Antrim	8	
South Belfast	Belvoir Bedsit Flats, Belfast	32	

Housing			
District Office Area	Description	No of Dwellings	Year
South Down	South Down Kitchens	52	
Strangford	Castlereagh Rurals	3	
Upper Bann	Wellington Street, Lurgan	32	
	Abercorn/Brownstow, Craigavon	46	
	Rural Cottages, Lurgan	17	
West Tyrone	29-33 Melmount Villas, Strabane	4	
Newry & Armagh	High St/Church St, Newry	39	2013/14
	John Mitchell Street, Newry	20	
North Antrim	Granville Drive, Ballymena	19	
North Belfast	Hazeldene/Strathroy/Northwick, Belfast	33	
West Tyrone	Coalisland Kitchens	45	
	Castleberg/Sion Mills	40	
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Augher, Dungannon	22	2014/15
Foyle	Beechwood Crescent, Londonderry	40	
West Tyrone	Ardmore Coalisland	54	

Urban Regeneration - Contractually Committed Projects		
Constituency	Description	Year
East Antrim	Carrickfergus Town Centre Public Realm	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Public Realm Phase 1	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13
Lagan Valley	Banbridge - Rathfriland St Public Realm	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13 & 2013/14
Newry & Armagh	Newry - Monaghan St / Hill St Public Realm	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13
	Armagh City Centre Revitalisation Project	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13
	Lisburn Public Realm	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13 & 2013/14
Upper Bann	19-21 High St, Lurgan	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13
	Lurgan Public Realm Phase 2	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13 & 2013/14
East Londonderry	Coleraine Rural & Urban Network	Starts & finishes 2012/13

Urban Regeneration - Contractually Committed Projects		
Constituency	Description	Year
Belfast East	Skainos	Started 2008/09 -continuing into 2013/14
	Connswater Community Greenway	Started 2008/09- continuing into 2014/15
	Ravenhill/Short Strand Gateway	Started 2010/11- continues into 2013/14
	Templemore School – Provision of Civic Hub	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13
	East Belfast Community Development Agency	Starts & finishes 2012/13
Belfast South	Elmoreton Ltd., Donegall Road	Starts2011/12- continues into 2012/13
	St Malachys – Provision of Youth Club	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2013/14
Belfast North	Ardoyne Shops Junction	Starts2011/12- continues into 2012/13
	S P Graham, Ligoneil Road	Starts2011/12- continues into 2012/13
Belfast West	Andersonstown Road Public Realm Environmental Improvement (PREI) Scheme	Started 2009/10-continuing into 2013/14
	Colin Gateway	Started 2010/11- continues into 2013/14
	Andersonstown Roundabout PREI Scheme	Starts 2011/12- continues into 2012/13
	Laser Prototypes, Whiterock Business Park	Starts2011/12- continues into 2012/13

Urban Regeneration - Other Capital Projects (not yet contractually committed)		
Constituency	Description	Year Scheduled Date(s)
East Londonderry	Disability Action	Start date not yet agreed -possibly 2012/13 or 2013/14 completing in 2014/15
Belfast North	Girdwood Park – Infrastructure Costs for a Community Hub	2011/12 – 2012/13
	13-31 York Road acquisition	2012/13
	Sites Adjacent to Crumlin Rd Courthouse acquisition	2012/13
	Shops at Shore Crescent acquisition	2012/13
	York/Shore Road PREI Scheme	2012/13
	Clifton Street Gateway PREI Scheme	2012/13
	Oldpark Road PREI Scheme	2012/13
	JGB Developments; Derrycoole Way	2012/13

Urban Regeneration - Other Capital Projects (not yet contractually committed)		
Constituency	Description	Year Scheduled Date(s)
	HHD Solicitors; Oldpark Rd	2012/13
	Dunluce Properties; Shore Road	2012/13
	Colinward Pharmacy; Antrim Road	2012/13
Belfast South	Mencap	2012/13
	An Droichead	2012/13
	Sussex Place	2012/13
	Markets Area	2012/13
	Rainbow Developments; Donegall Pass	2012/13
	A Steele; Shaftesbury Square	2012/13
	Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 2	2014/15
Belfast West	Woodvale Park – Railings, etc.	Starting 2011/12-continues into 2012/13
	Bank Square Public Realm Scheme	2012/13
	Ballymac Friendship Trust – Provision of Community Centre	2012/13
	Twinbrook Pitches - improvements	2012/13
	Footprints Women's Centre – Kitchen Refurbishment	2012/13
	Sally Gardens Community Centre - Refurbishment	2012/13
	St Marys Christian Brothers School Glen Rd Pitches	2012/13
	St Peters Boxing Club	2012/13
	Land at Shankill Terrace acquisition	2012/13
	Land at Townsend St / Westlink acquisition	2012/13
	Shankill Rd Car Wash acquisition	2012/13
	Shankill Kentucky Fried Chicken Site acquisition	2012/13
	Vacant Land/derelict Warehouses, Distillery Street acquisition	2012/13
	Andrews Flour Mill, Falls Rd acquisition	2012/13
	Colin Town Centre - Various Acquisitions	2012/13
	Lands at Glen Rd - Various Acquisitions	2012/13
	Andersonstown Gateway - Various Sites acquisition	2012/13
	Peters Hill Gateway PREI Scheme	2012/13
	Divis Street Gateway PREI Scheme	2012/13

Urban Regeneration - Other Capital Projects (not yet contractually committed)		
Constituency	Description	Year Scheduled Date(s)
	Gaeltacht Quarter PREI Scheme	2012/13
	Dunville Park – Railings, etc.	2012/13
	Fullarrmoon Ltd., Shankill Road	2012/13
	Global Country for World Peace; Townsend St/ Peters Hill	2012/13
	Rathen Ltd; Lanark Way	2012/13
	Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaiochta (InaG); Falls/ Broadway	2012/13
	D McSherry; Suffolk Rd	2012/13
	Granite Properties; Springfield Road	2012/13
	Land at Agnes St acquisition	2013/14
Belfast East	Queens Quay	2012/13
	Connswater St / Newtownards Rd Apex site acquisition	2012/13
	1-21 Castlereagh Road acquisition	2012/13
	70 Beersbridge Road acquisition	2012/13
	Portview/Browns Mill, Newtownards Rd acquisition	2012/13
	Various Sites East Belfast Development Strategy acquisition	2012/13
	3 Stormont Lane acquisition	2012/13
	7 Mountpottinger Rd acquisition	2012/13
	269-271 Newtownards Rd acquisition	2012/13
	242-244 Newtownards Rd acquisition	2012/13
	R&K Matthews; Beersbridge Rd	2012/13
	Nigel Barr; Woodstock Road	2012/13
	Bryson Street Surgery	2012/13
	Pinnacle Properties	2012/13
Belfast West & North	Cross Community Corridor PREI Scheme	2012/13
East Antrim	Ballymena Masterplan Public Realm Programme	2013/14 - 2014/15
	Ballymena Town Centre Public Realm	2013/14 - 2014/15
	Carrickfergus ReStore	2013/14
	Ballymena ReStore	2014/15
	Larne Masterplan public realm programme	2014/15

Urban Regeneration - Other Capital Projects (not yet contractually committed)		
Constituency	Description	Year Scheduled Date(s)
East Londonderry	Milburn Community Centre Modernisation	2012/13
	Portrush Main Street ReStore	2013/14
	Portstewart Front Public Realm	2014/15
	Coleraine ReStore	2014/15
	Portstewart ReStore	2014/15
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	Kilmacormick Resource Centre extension	2011/12 - 2012/13
	Enniskillen Neighbourhood Renewal Area EI capital works 11/12 (Inishkeen)	2011/12 - 2012/13
	Enniskillen West End Community Provision	2012/13
	Disabled access to lakeshore pathways	2012/13
	Enniskillen Public Realm	2012/13 - 2014/15
	Dungannon Public Realm Scheme	2012/13 - 2013/14
Lagan Valley	Dromore Revitalisation Project	2012/13
	Lisburn Bridge St ReStore Project	2014/15
Mid Ulster	Mountcairn Multi-Use Games Area	2011/12 - 2012/13
	Coalisland Enhancing Employment Prospects - continuation	2011/12 - 2012/13
	Fianna Sports Facility	2012/13
	Sandy Row EI Scheme	2012/13
	Cookstown Molesworth Street	2013/14
	Magherafelt Public Realm Scheme	2013/14
Newry & Armagh	Kilkeel - Revitalisation Project	2011/12 - 2012/13
	Newry Revitalisation Project	2012/13
	Armagh St Patricks Family Learning Centre	2012/13
	Armagh - Mullacreevie Sports changing facilities	2012/13
	Community Information & Resource Centre	2012/13
	3 Ways Community Centre Extension	2012/13
	Crèche Facilities	2012/13
	Armagh - Naoiscoil Ard Macha New Classroom etc.	2012/13
	Armagh - Drumarg Allotments	2012/13
	Newry - Derrybeg Community Centre	2012/13

Urban Regeneration - Other Capital Projects (not yet contractually committed)		
Constituency	Description	Year Scheduled Date(s)
	Armagh Harps - New Sports Facilities	2012/13
	Newry - Martins Lane External Maintenance Scheme	2012/13
	Armagh - Shop Frontage Scheme – Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2012/13
	Armagh - Soft Play Areas Drumarg and Callanbridge	2012/13
	Armagh - Soft Play Area Naiscoil Ard Mhacha	2012/13
	Newry - The Quay Public Realm	2012/13 - 2013/14
	Armagh - Community Hub - Old Parochial Hall	2013/14
	Warrenpoint - Church St	2013/14
	Newry - Town Hall Public Realm	2013/14
	Armagh – NI Housing Executive - External Improvements Scheme	2013/14
	Newry - Carnagat Enterprise Centre Site Development Study	2013/14
North Antrim	Ballee Community Centre Refurbishment	2012/13
	Ballycastle ReStore	2014/15
	Ballyclare ReStore	2014/15
	Ballymoney ReStore	2014/15
	Ballyclare Six Mile Water Public Realm	2014/15
	Ballymoney Linenhall Street Public Realm	2014/15
	Ballycastle River Path Public Realm	2014/15
North Down	Bangor - Kilcooley Allotments & Healthy Living Facility	2012/13
	Bangor – Kilcooley 3G Pitches	2012/13
	Kilcooley - Multi-Functional Centre	2013/14
	Bangor Public Realm Scheme	2013/14 - 2014/15
	Donaghadee Public Realm	2014/15
	Bangor Abbey Street Revitalisation Project	2014/15
	Hollywood Public Realm	2014/15
South Antrim	Antrim EI - High Street	2011/12 - 2012/13
	Glengormley ReStore	2012/13
	Ballyclare Rashee Road Public Realm	2013/14
	Antrim ReStore	2013/14

Urban Regeneration - Other Capital Projects (not yet contractually committed)		
Constituency	Description	Year Scheduled Date(s)
	Ballyclare Lower Main Street Public Realm	2014/15
	Glengormley Antrim Road/Antrim Line/Ballyclare Road Public Realm	2014/15
	Randalstown New Street Public Realm	2014/15
	Randalstown ReStore	2014/15
South Down	Downpatrick - Revitalisation Project	2011/12 - 2012/13
	Downpatrick - Allotments	2012/13
	Downpatrick Irish Street	2013/14
	Downpatrick – Meadowlands Walk EI Scheme	2013/14
Strangford	Ballynahinch Public Realm	2012/13 - 2013/14
	Comber Public Realm	2013/14
	Ballynahinch - Revitalisation Project	2013/14
	Newtownards Town Centre Public Realm	2013/14
	Newtownards Regent Street Revitalisation Project	2013/14
Upper Bann	St. Marys Youth Club - Phase 2	2011/12 - 2012/13
	Lurgan Rugby Football & Cricket Club - Regeneration and Improvements phase 2	2012/13
	Portadown Restore Project	2012/13
	Portadown Tunnel	2013/14
	Lurgan Public Realm Phase 3	2014/15
West Tyrone	Omagh Riverside Development - Strathroy Bridges	2011/12 - 2012/13
	Strathroy Football Pitch & Lighting	2012/13
	Omagh Public Realm Scheme	2012/13 - 2013/14

In addition to those projects listed, the Social Security Agency will incur capital expenditure to replace/upgrade the Medical Examination Centres in Dungannon, Armagh and Portadown in the financial year 2012/13. These cover the constituencies of Fermanagh & South Tyrone, Newry & Armagh and Upper Bann respectively. The Agency will also incur spend in line with its extensive Welfare Reform and Modernisation programme, which will be subject to developments in the Department of Work and Pensions, and may include the replacement of the Social Fund IT system by April 2013. This would cover all eighteen constituencies and cannot be apportioned.

It should be noted that these schemes are all subject to funding and the necessary approval processes being completed.

Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost to his Department of its arm's-length bodies in each of the last two years.

(AQW 2012/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The cost of arm's length bodies to my Department in each of the last two years was as follows:

	2009-10 £'m	2010-11 £'m
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	490.41	449.48
Charities Commission for Northern Ireland	0.36	0.83
Ilex – Urban Regeneration Company - (co-funded with OFMDFM)	1.70	2.36

Social Housing

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what steps the Housing Executive is taking to increase the supply of social housing required over the next four years in (i) Coleraine Town; (ii) Portstewart; (iii) Portrush; (iv) Portballintrae; and (v) and Castlerock.

(AQW 2071/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the following schemes are in the 2011/12 Social Housing Development Programme in the East Londonderry area which encompasses the areas in question:-

Hass Road, Dungiven	Tamlough Park, Ballykelly	Lerwill House, Coleraine	Mullaghacall Road, Portstewart	Parker Avenue, Portrush
10 Units	13 Units	14 Units	1 Unit	1 Unit

The Social Housing Development Programme has not yet been approved beyond 2011/12.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many householders in the East Londonderry area have applied under the Boiler Replacement Scheme to date; and of these, how many were successful.

(AQW 2072/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information requested is not available by constituency or council area. All potential eligible applicants have been contacted by leaflet. To date, the Housing Executive, who administer the Boiler Replacement Scheme, has approved 94 eligible applications. A further 218 successful applications are being processed. I now intend to extend the pilot scheme to another vulnerable group and from October lone householders aged 70 and over who receive Lone Pensioner Allowance and with a boiler aged 15 years or older will be eligible for the assistance from the pilot scheme.

Enniskillen Town Masterplan

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Enniskillen Town Masterplan.

(AQW 2082/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department appointed the Consultancy firm URS Scott-Wilson to undertake the preparation of a Town Centre Masterplan for Enniskillen on 15 March 2010. At that time, it was anticipated that the work would take approximately one year to complete.

The terms of reference for the consultants require the consultants to consider the future use of the current Erne Hospital site, which will be vacated in 2012. During the course of the initial survey work, which has now been completed, Fermanagh District Council indicated that they wished to explore the possibility of creating a public-services hub on the Erne Hospital site. As this would have major implications for the future development of the town centre, not least in terms of the uses of the sites and buildings vacated by any relocating service providers, the Council asked my Department to pause the work on the Masterplan while it undertakes a detailed study of the public service hub proposal.

This was agreed with the Masterplan Steering Group and the consultancy team. Preparation of the final draft of the Masterplan will resume as soon as Fermanagh District Council has completed its work.

The timetable to complete the masterplan depends on when the Council's study is completed. However, the work required to complete the Masterplan, including a period of public consultation, will take approximately 6 months from that date that work resumes.

Housing Associations: Service Charges

Mr Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the guidelines used by housing associations to determine the service charges for tenants and householders who have bought their properties from the same housing association in the same area.

(AQW 2120/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Housing Associations determine service charges based on the services they provide. The Housing Association Guide requires Associations to ensure that any service charge is in reasonable proportion to the cost to the Housing Association of providing the service. The Associations are also required to inform their tenants how their service charges have been calculated.

The services can differ significantly from housing scheme to housing scheme and services may differ between tenants and householders dependant on the service provided to each.

Eligibility for Housing

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the criteria and point levels used by the Housing Executive to assess an individual's eligibility for housing; and (ii) whether he is aware of any proposed changes to the point levels.

(AQW 2131/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Rules of the Housing Selection Scheme govern access, assessment and allocation of social housing in Northern Ireland. Full details of the Scheme Rules can be found at: www.nihe.gov.uk/housing_selection_scheme_rules.pdf.

The Housing Executive recently carried out a preliminary consultation exercise on modernising certain aspects of the Scheme. Although the consultation has now closed, the full proposals can still be found at: www.nihe.gov.uk/index/sp_home/consultation/consultation_archive.htm.

Children in the North Down Area Living in Poverty

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many children in the North Down area are living in poverty.

(AQW 2153/11-15)

Mr McCausland: During the period 2005/09, 5,000 children in North Down Westminster Parliamentary Constituency were living below the relative poverty line, equating to 22% of children. This is slightly lower than for Northern Ireland overall where 24% of children were living below the relative poverty line. The results are produced using the Family Resources Survey datasets for Northern Ireland, and the Households Below Average Income datasets for Northern Ireland.

Surplus Land in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to list any surplus land in the North Down area owned by the Housing Executive.

(AQW 2154/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The table below details land owned by the Housing Executive within their Bangor District Office area which is considered surplus.

Location	Acreage
Old Belfast Road, Bangor	0.23
South Circular Road, Bangor	1.95
Rathgill, Bangor	7.34
Ava Street, Bangor	0.13
Hillview Place, Holywood	0.02

Housing Executive Properties: Double Glazing

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of (i) housing units; and (ii) senior citizen accommodations provided by the Housing Executive which do not currently have double glazing, broken down by district.

(AQW 2157/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that their properties are allocated based on the individual applicant's circumstances (and also on the circumstances of any members of their household) and therefore they do not have a category of stock for senior citizen accommodation.

They Housing Executive has advised that 60% of their stock currently does not have double glazing.

External Cyclical Maintenance Schemes

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the External Cyclical Maintenance Schemes that are planned for the current financial year in the (i) Ballymoney Borough Council; (ii) Ballymena Borough Council; and (iii) Moyle District Council areas.

(AQW 2199/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has the following External Cyclical Maintenance schemes in their programme for the current financial year:-

Ballymoney District Office Area:-

Clintyfinnan/Rasharkin	389 dwellings	On site May 2011
Glebeside Phase	167 dwellings	Reserve scheme January 2012

Ballymena District Office Area:-

Ballee	363 dwellings	On site August 2011
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Ballycastle District Office Area

Ballintoy/Liscolman	18 dwellings	Reserve scheme January 2012
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Reserve schemes are programmed subject to adequate finance becoming available.

Alley-Gating

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department has spent on alley-gating in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2239/11-15)

Mr McCausland: In the last three financial years from 2008/09 to 2010/11 my Department has spent a total of £64,685 on two alley-gating projects. Funding for both projects was awarded in 2010/11.

Alley-Gating

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what level of funding is currently available for alley-gating.

(AQW 2241/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not have a specific budget for alleygating. Funding in the past has been made available from the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund (NRIF) for alleygates for community safety reasons.

Funding from the NRIF has been awarded, subject to available resources, following the identification and prioritisation of a need for such measures by the Neighbourhood Partnership in the area's Action Plan. This is the basis on which any future Neighbourhood Renewal funding will be considered.

New Build Projects in East Londonderry

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development what new build projects the Housing Executive has planned for the East Londonderry area in (i) 2012; (ii) 2013; (iii) 2014; and (iv) 2015.

(AQW 2263/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has advised that the following schemes are in the 2011/12 Social Housing Development Programme in the East Londonderry area:-

Hass Road, Dungiven	Tamlough Park, Ballykelly	Lerwill House, Coleraine	Mullaghacall Road, Portstewart	Parker Avenue, Portrush
10 Units	13 Units	14 Units	1 Unit	1 Unit

The Social Housing Development Programme has not yet been approved beyond 2011/12.

Green New Deal Housing Pilot Programme

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development if the Green New Deal Housing Pilot Programme is successful, whether he intends to fund and implement the scheme across Northern Ireland.

(AQW 2276/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department's Permanent Secretary is chairing a cross Departmental group to examine the potential of the Green New Deal for Northern Ireland. The group is working with the Green New Deal consortium to help them formalise a business plan which can inform any economic appraisal developed by the Department on the best approach to allocating the £12 million the Executive identified in support of the concept. The Green New Deal Group expects to submit a business plan by the end of September.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development how many (i) applications; and (ii) successful applications have been made to the Boiler Replacement Scheme to date.

(AQW 2286/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Boiler Replacement Scheme is a pilot scheme targeted at owner occupiers or private tenants on low income who miss out on other Government energy efficiency improvement schemes such as the Warm Homes Scheme which is available to people who receive Housing Benefit. All potential Boiler Replacement Scheme beneficiaries have been identified and have been contacted by leaflet and this has resulted in over 300 successful applications.

I have now extended the pilot scheme to lone householders aged 70 and over who receive Lone Pensioner Allowance and have a boiler aged 15 years or older.

Housing Executive Properties

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development whether the Housing Executive intends to review its policy of not re-opening fire places in its properties.

(AQW 2288/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive has carried out a draft heating policy review which is currently with my Department for approval. The review did not recommend reopening fire places because, whilst the rising cost of oil deliveries and heating fuels were considered within the review, the Housing Executive concluded that the renewed use of redundant open fires would not be a viable option. There are environmental, maintenance and funding issues which would constrain such an approach. This decision was only taken after consideration of issues such as initial and regular maintenance costs, effectiveness, ease of use, health and safety and environmental/sustainability issues. It should be noted that the Housing Executive's existing heating policy is designed to reduce carbon emissions from their properties.

Children Living Below the Poverty Line

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Social Development how many children are living below the poverty line in each constituency.

(AQW 2326/11-15)

Mr McCausland: During the period 2005/09 the number and percentage of children living below the relative poverty line for each Westminster Parliamentary Constituency is presented in Table 1. The results are produced using the Family Resources Survey datasets for Northern Ireland, and the Households Below Average Income datasets for Northern Ireland.

Table 1:

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of children in relative low income	Percentage of children in relative low income
Belfast East	..	15
Belfast North	4,800	26
Belfast South	..	9
Belfast West	8,700	34
East Antrim	5,600	29
East Londonderry	5,100	23
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	7,400	33

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of children in relative low income	Percentage of children in relative low income
Foyle	11,200	40
Lagan Valley	..	14
Mid Ulster	9,600	31
Newry and Armagh	..	25
North Antrim	5,100	21
North Down	5,000	22
South Antrim	..	18
South Down	7,900	24
Strangford	..	14
Upper Bann	5,200	21
West Tyrone	6,100	25
Northern Ireland	103,600	24

Alleygating Schemes

Mr Durkan asked

(AQW 2354/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My Department does not have a specific budget for alleygating. Funding in the past has been made available from the Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund (NRIF) following the identification and prioritisation of a need for such measures by the Neighbourhood Partnership in the area's Action Plan. Subject to available resources, this is the basis on which any future Neighbourhood Renewal funding for alleygates will be considered.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development whether he will reconsider the criteria used to determine whether a person is eligible for the Boiler Replacement Scheme, to include people who are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

(AQW 2355/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Boiler Replacement Scheme is a pilot scheme targeted at owner occupiers or private tenants on low income who miss out on other Government energy efficiency improvement schemes such as the Warm Homes Scheme which is available to people who receive Housing Benefit. All potential Boiler Replacement Scheme beneficiaries have been identified and have been contacted by leaflet and this has resulted in over 300 successful applications.

I have now extended the pilot scheme to lone householders aged 70 and over who receive Lone Pensioner Allowance and have a boiler aged 15 years or older.

Crime Lock Out Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether he plans to initiate the Crime Lock Out Scheme for pensioners in the North Down area.

(AQW 2364/11-15)

Mr McCausland: During the period April 2004 to August 2007 the Housing Executive delivered the Lock Out Crime Scheme across Northern Ireland. That scheme was funded by the Northern Ireland Office and provided home security measures, irrespective of tenure, to households over the age of 65 years of age with a housing benefit or rates rebate entitlement.

There have been a number of previous requests asking for the scheme to be reintroduced. The Department of Justice has given no indication that it intends to do so.

Housing Executive: Winter Weather

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development, in light of the aftermath of last year's adverse winter weather conditions, what action the Housing Executive is taking to mitigate similar problems this winter.

(AQO 396/11-15)

Mr McCausland: A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to ensure that both Housing Executive staff and their Contractors will be in a position to respond effectively and speedily if there are severe weather conditions this winter.

The Housing Executive has advised that the following plans have been put in place:

- Enhanced their pool of staff resources willing and able to respond to an emergency across the province;
- Reviewed the "triggers" which provide pre warning of a potential emergency-such as volume of calls coming in to their Customer Services Units and the number of calls not being answered
- Reviewed all emergency plans at District, Area and Central level and put in place a formal annual review procedure;
- Reviewed all of the All Trades and Heating Contractor Emergency/ Contingency plans and put in place a formal annual review procedure;
- Put in place priority call handling ("silver numbers") for use by emergency services, public representatives and community representatives;
- Carried out tests of plans and procedures in three Housing Executive Areas, involving Area and District staff, Contractors and Community Representatives; these were successful but all involved learned small lessons from putting the theory into practice.
- Identified a range of technical improvements (particularly in relation to boilers/heating) and included these in ongoing work, for example, relocating gas condensate pipes internally, providing a frost stat (which will trigger the pump to circulate water around the system) at each new oil heating installation, etc;
- Agreed a menu of services including, sharing mobile contact numbers, opening Community facilities, assisting in identifying those who might be vulnerable, which community groups might provide - to be agreed locally (at District Office level) during September;
- Developed a series of information pages which can be activated at short notice on their web, dependant on the type of emergency, to provide clear advice and guidance to tenants.

Urban Regeneration: Belfast

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister for Social Development what plans he has for the further development of urban regeneration in Belfast.

(AQO 388/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Urban Regeneration in Belfast will continue to be delivered through current programmes in a way that maximises regeneration outcomes in our most deprived areas and reflects our budget allocation.

My Department will continue with the implementation of the Neighbourhood Renewal programme across Belfast, working with communities in identifying local social, community, economic and physical priorities, and where the resource is available, funding community-based collaborative services that address priority needs. We also aim to better align the priorities identified in local Neighbourhood Action Plans, the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and both existing Government and Council priorities, so as to provide a Belfast wide response to the regeneration of the City.

My Department will also continue with:

- Urban Development Grants which encourage private sector property development.
- Comprehensive Development Schemes which promote the regeneration of certain areas.
- Public Realm/Environmental Improvements which improve the visual appearance of an area.
- Masterplanning exercises which provide a framework for development of specific target areas to maximise economic and physical regeneration, deliver social benefits, and address planning and infrastructure constraints.
- My Department aims to build on the major transformation of Belfast City Centre over the past 15 years which has delivered over £1.5 billion of private and public investment at Laganside, Victoria Square and in the renewal of the main shopping streets.
- We will continue to take forward the implementation of our regeneration plans for Royal Exchange and the Northside and Westside of the city centre against the background of the squeeze on both public and private sources of investment.
- My officials are considering ways in which regeneration can be delivered by drawing upon forms of investment other than capital government funding.

Urban Regeneration: Fermanagh and South Tyrone

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development which towns in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency will be eligible for Urban Renewal grants.

(AQO 389/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Any settlement which has been designated as urban by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency is eligible for Urban Development Grants and other urban renewal programmes provided by my Department. In Fermanagh South Tyrone, the towns of Dungannon, Enniskillen and Coalisland are eligible for that support.

Universal Credit

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development to outline how Universal Credit will achieve its aims in view of the increasing levels of unemployment.

(AQO 390/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is intended that Universal Credit will be introduced from October 2013, subject to the necessary legislation process. Universal Credit will represent a major reform of welfare provision for working age customers.

Universal Credit will replace several existing in and out of work benefits and should make the benefit system less complex by simplifying the interaction between entitlement and earnings. By making the transition from out of work to in work easier, it should both encourage more people to enter employment and lead to an increase in the take-up of benefits amongst those who are eligible.

A key aim of Universal Credit is to make sure work pays by ensuring that claimants are better off in work than on benefits. This will be achieved by more generous disregards and a single constant tapered withdrawal at which benefit is reduced as income increases. Together, these measures will help to tackle the problem of worklessness in our society.

Universal Credit will ensure that contribution and responsibility are rewarded, not worklessness. The Mandated Work Element of Universal Credit will re-acquaint (or in some cases introduce) the long-term unemployed to the idea of work being an essential part of life.

I recognise the economic downturn presents a challenge in generating sufficient opportunities to facilitate the move into employment of many Universal Credit claimants however, it is clear a step change is needed if we are to address long term unemployment.

This is the first time in generations that government has sought to fully address this issue. I am keen to undertake the essential preparatory work now recognising that Universal Credit will not be introduced for new claimants until October 2013 with existing claimants moving to the new benefits by 2017. This lead in phase provides a period of time for the economic climate to improve and I am working with Executive colleagues to ensure that the impact of welfare reform on the new Economic Strategy for the Province is fully understood. In parallel, the Minister for Employment and Learning is considering whether a form of the Work Programme to assist employment uptake should be introduced to Northern Ireland by April 2013.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the likely impact of the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme on the most vulnerable people, particularly the elderly.

(AQO 391/11-15)

Mr McCausland: My department launched the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme in June 2011. The rationale for the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme is to offer assistance to a small group of older householders on low income who missed out on other energy efficiency improvement Government schemes such as the Warm Homes Scheme. A grant of £1,500 is available to approximately 1,330 eligible households. Once completed, the pilot scheme will be subject to a full evaluation to determine its effectiveness in tackling fuel poverty.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department has considered extending the Winter Fuel Payment to other vulnerable groups such as people with long-term health problems and families with children.

(AQO 392/11-15)

Mr McCausland: As the Member will know, the Winter Fuel Payments scheme in Northern Ireland operates in parity with the scheme in Great Britain and the eligibility conditions and rates of benefit are the same. There are no plans to extend the scheme to include other groups such as those with long-term health problems or families with children.

Any decision to extend eligibility in Northern Ireland only would have to be funded out of the Northern Ireland Block and compete with other priorities within the Executive's budget.

A range of social security benefits provides help to people suffering from illness or disability, including Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance. Support is available to families through Child Benefit and the tax credit system which are the responsibility of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Social Housing

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the availability and quality of social housing.

(AQO 393/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Each year we make an average 8,000 allocations in line with the Common Selection Scheme to those in need of housing. These allocations come from our current stock of 120,600

homes and are supplemented each year from the new homes delivered through the new build programme. In respect of the quality of these homes, in 2008 Savills, a renowned land and property consultancy carried out an independent assessment of the Housing Executive's stock. They concluded that their stock was by far the best they have ever inspected across the UK and this is supported by the findings of the House Condition Survey in 2009 that highlighted an overall unfitness rate of only 0.1% across social homes in Northern Ireland.

However, I recognise that there are small pockets of housing that must be improved and I have asked the Housing Executive to bring forward a strategy to tackle this poor housing.

DSD: Review

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development if he intends to carry out a review of his Department in the near future.

(AQO 394/11-15)

Mr McCausland: PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) have recently completed an independent report on the Review of the Housing Executive. I have requested that PwC now seek feedback on their recommendations from key stakeholders. These are scheduled to be completed by the end of September 2011. Following this I will consider the implications for my Department and make informed decisions on the best way forward based on the wide range of competing funding and strategic priorities.

Environmental Improvement Scheme: Carrickfergus

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Environmental Improvement Scheme for Carrickfergus.

(AQO 395/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am glad to advise that there has been good progress on the Carrickfergus Town Centre Environmental Improvement Scheme. I have approved the Department's funding contribution to the project and work is currently underway to appoint contractors for the scheme with construction planned to start in January 2012. Provision has been made for the estimated costs of the scheme in my Department's budgets for this financial year and 2012/13.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 30 September 2011

(AQW 1619/11-15)

The latest information available relates to the 2010/2011 school year. There are currently 42 integrated primary schools, and 20 post primary schools. Of these, 20 primary schools and 8 post primary schools do not have an intake of 30% or more from a minority community.

The tables below provide the religious breakdown of integrated schools, including the percentage of pupils from a minority community, attending each integrated school.

Religious Breakdown of Integrated Primary schools 2010/11			
School name	Protestant %	Catholic %	Other %
Cliftonville Integrated Primary School	36.6	35.29	28.34
Forge Integrated Primary School	29.84	25	45.16
Hazelwood Primary School	27.57	50.55	21.88
Cranmore Integrated Primary School	37.7	38.8	23.5
Groarty Primary School	#	70.73	*
Enniskillen Integrated Primary School	36.33	47.35	16.33
Omagh Integrated Primary School	32.94	52.82	14.24
Oakgrove Integrated Primary School	25.55	49.78	24.67
Roe Valley Integrated Primary School	26.58	58.86	14.56
Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School	44.68	36.17	19.15
Glengormley Integrated Primary School	22.77	43.07	34.16
Crumlin Primary School	63.74	11.7	24.56
Ballymoney Controlled Integrated Primary School	74.53	4.87	20.6
Carhill Integrated Primary School	46.15	26.92	26.92
Ballycastle Integrated Primary School	37.01	40.26	22.73
Rathenraw Integrated Primary School	36.36	36.36	27.27
Round Tower Integrated Primary School	35.82	27.24	36.94
Millstrant Integrated Primary School	41.97	37.82	20.21
Braidside Integrated Primary School	38.27	39.11	22.63
Corran Integrated Primary School	34.45	42.11	23.44
Acorn Integrated Primary School	50.88	36.84	12.28
Spires Integrated Primary School	35.32	34.33	30.35
Maine Integrated Primary School	32.11	37.61	30.28
Kircubbin Primary School	47.41	31.9	20.69
Portaferry Integrated Primary School	22.81	54.39	22.81
Bangor Central Primary School	57.34	14.16	28.5

Religious Breakdown of Integrated Primary schools 2010/11			
School name	Protestant %	Catholic %	Other %
Annsborough Primary School	#	47.37	*
Glencraig Integrated Primary School	59.73	18.14	22.12
Fort Hill Integrated Primary School	72.41	5.6	21.98
All Childrens Integrated Primary School	26.64	58.88	14.49
Loughview Integrated Primary School	40.75	33.02	26.23
Cedar Integrated Primary School	32.72	43.32	23.96
Oakwood Integrated Primary School	37.75	38.73	23.53
Millennium Integrated Primary School	32.59	45.09	22.32
Drumlins Integrated Primary School	39.66	35.34	25
Rowandale Integrated Primary School	18.63	43.14	38.24
Kilbroney Integrated Primary School	21.98	58.24	19.78
Bridge Integrated Primary School	37.84	47.17	14.99
Portadown Integrated Primary School	24.14	32.33	43.53
Windmill Integrated Primary School	31.44	44.98	23.58
Saints & Scholars Int Primary School	27.43	39.66	32.91
Phoenix Integrated Primary School	33.56	52.35	14.09
Total	39	37.24	24.18

Note:

- 1 Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 - 7 classes.
 - 2 Integrated schools includes 'Controlled integrated' and 'Grant maintained integrated'
- * relates to fewer than 5 pupils.
- # means a figure relating to 5 or more pupils has been treated to prevent disclosure.

Religious breakdown of Integrated post primary schools 2010/11			
School name	Protestant %	Catholic %	Other%
Hazelwood College	48.38	31.9	19.72
Malone Integrated College	41.33	45.73	12.93
Oakgrove Integrated College	30.8	67.33	1.87
Erne Integrated College	37.38	49.05	13.57
Drumragh College	28.4	58.8	12.81
Crumlin Integrated College	36.36	37.23	26.41
Parkhall Integrated College	81.38	2.64	15.98
Slemish College	43.69	33.47	22.84
North Coast Integrated College	57.69	21.66	20.65

Religious breakdown of Integrated post primary schools 2010/11			
School name	Protestant %	Catholic %	Other%
Ulidia Integrated College	54.48	33.96	11.57
Sperrin Integrated College	43.24	44.49	12.27
Priory College	73.6	12.27	14.14
Fort Hill College	73.33	8.59	18.08
Lagan College	42.5	36.61	20.89
Shimna Integrated College	31.43	49.14	19.43
Strangford Integrated College	52.04	25.44	22.52
Blackwater Integrated College	59.28	29.94	10.78
Brownlow Int College	33.41	51.09	15.5
New-Bridge Integrated College	43.88	46.52	9.6
Integrated College Dungannon	29.16	58.93	11.91
Total	47.53	36.79	15.69

My Department has no plans to develop a veterinary degree course in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland's Higher Education Institutions are responsible for their own policies and procedures, including course provision.

However, my Department will continue to provide financial support for eligible students from Northern Ireland who commence all undergraduate degree courses (including veterinary science) in Great Britain in academic year 2012/13.

You may wish to note that the availability, and other trends, within the veterinary profession are regularly surveyed by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). The most recent survey does not indicate any impending shortfall in the number of veterinary surgeons, nor has the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development identified any such difficulties within Northern Ireland. Furthermore, research undertaken by my Department in 2009, on forecasting future skills need in Northern Ireland, shows that the supply of veterinary science graduates is projected to meet the indicative graduate requirement up to 2020.

A veterinary public health post-graduate course is available at the University of Ulster in conjunction with University College Dublin and the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) provides part time courses in veterinary nursing. Veterinary science degree courses are available at seven universities across Great Britain and at University College Dublin.



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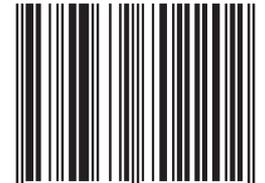
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